

# Franklin Gazette

A PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3, SUMMER, 1991

Friends of Franklin, c/o Dr. Larry Tise, Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, 20th and The Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103

"A Man of Knowledge like a rich Soil, feeds  
If not a world of Corns, a world of Weeds."

*B. Franklin*

## From the Desk of Larry Tise

Well, folks, when we said we wanted to hear from our readers about various Franklin happenings, activities, and notes, we clearly opened up a gusher. We could likely put out a *Gazette* every month with the good materials we are receiving. But don't let up. Just keep those cards and letters coming and we will report everything we can.

1. Phil Greenslet's Franklin Doll: Our fabulous flea-marketing Friend, Phil Greenslet has come up with another Franklin collectable, a Franklin doll of undetermined age. He describes it as being 5 inches in height, the body is solid, but hollowed out where the head and arms are attached. A single wire holds the appendages in place. A photo of the thing sent along by Phil shows the Franklin in this image to be pretty ugly. Somehow Franklin just does not make a very cuddly looking doll. Phil is interested in knowing if anyone else has encountered one of these dolls and can help out with information on their age and source. Phil W. Greenslet, Box 377, Reisterstown, MD 21136. Phone (301) 833-7753.

2. William Franklin's Proprietary House: While many folk are familiar with Benjamin's Franklin's various haunts in Philadelphia, London, and Paris (all except the London house were long since demolished), they may not be aware of another Franklin house that is still very much intact. William Franklin's Proprietary House, located in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was built between 1762 and 1764 by the proprietors of East Jersey. William Franklin, the last Royal Governor of New Jersey, lived in the house from 1774 until he was removed from office on June 19, 1776, by order of the Continental Congress. Owned by the State of New Jersey, the house is open for visitation. The house is also supported by a non-profit Proprietary House Association which, of course, would welcome Friends as members. The house is located at 149 Kearney Avenue. Proprietary House Association, P.O. Drawer 868, Perth Amboy, NJ 08862.

3. West Wycombe Park and the "Hell-Fire Club": Elly Fitzig, a novel-writing Friend from Wichita, Kansas, recently searched out another Franklin historic site in England, Sir Francis Dashwood's West Wycombe Park,

(see "From the Desk Continued", Page 2)

## ANNUAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN

The Friends of Franklin held its annual meeting at The Franklin Institute on April 17 between and among a day of substantive sessions on the historical Benjamin Franklin. Presiding over the business session was Frank B. Jones of Bloomington, Indiana, newly elected president of the Friends. Jones expressed warm appreciation for the service of outgoing president, Stuart Karu of Kennebunkport, Maine. Karu had taken the lead in organizing the Friends of Franklin and had contributed time, energy, and considerable financial resources in establishing the organization and guiding it from an initial affiliation with the University of Pennsylvania to a connection with The Franklin Institute.

Various reports were presented by Dr. Larry Tise, executive secretary for the Friends, on the financial status and membership of the organization. After essentially restarting the Friends organization in October, 1990, he reported that the membership was growing and a balance in excess of \$2,500 was in the Friends' bank account. He also reported on the editing and production of the *Gazette* thanking the dozens of Friends who are taking the time to send in information and materials. The *Gazette* is now on a firm footing and will be issued on a quarterly basis. He also described a subscription plan whereby individuals could purchase volumes of the Yale edition of *The Franklin Papers*. He detailed plans for a fall tour of Franklin's

historic England and other tours in the future.

Frank Jones concluded the meeting by describing the work of the Friends' Development Committee. The Committee is actively engaged in raising funds to support the Yale *Franklin Papers* project. Members of the committee include Malcolm Smith of Chicago, IL, Deane Sherman of Washington, D.C., George Waters of Rochester, MN, and Douglas Whitley of Springfield, IL.

Also announced at the meeting were the new slate of officers and directors elected by the board of governors of the Friends. The full slate appears below:

### OFFICERS

President: Frank Jones, Bloomington, IN  
1st Vice President: Malcolm Smith, Chicago, IL  
2nd Vice President: Deane Sherman, Washington, D.C.  
Executive Secretary: Dr. Larry E. Tise, Philadelphia, PA  
Secretary/Membership Chair: Ralph Archbold, Philadelphia, PA  
Treasurer: Pearl Grika, Philadelphia, PA

### DIRECTORS

Ex-officio: Stuart Karu, Kennebunkport, ME  
Barbara Oberg, New Haven, CT

### THREE YEARS

Joan Challinor, Washington, D.C.  
Dr. William Glenn, New Haven, CT  
Roy Goodman, Philadelphia, PA  
Claude-Anne Lopez, New Haven, CT

### TWO YEARS

William Carr, Washington, D.C.  
Martin Mangold, Hyattsville, MD  
Douglas Whitley, Springfield, IL

## THE QUEST FOR FRANKLIN

Sixty Friends of Franklin gathered at The Franklin Institute on April 17 to pursue the historical Benjamin Franklin. Over the course of eight hours of presentations and discussions, the eager participants came to some rather startling conclusions on the subjects of researching Franklin and collecting Franklin historical materials.

Dr. Larry Tise, Executive Director of the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, opened the conference by posing two basic questions. "After a year in which we have focused unmatched attention on Franklin," he asked, "is it possible that any major topic has remained overlooked? And by the same token, given the unbelievable prices for rare antiquities, is it today possible for anyone to collect Frankliniana

materials and artifacts?" He characterized the task of researching Franklin and finding the genuine historical Franklin as being somewhat akin to Albert Schweitzer's classic work *In Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Many, many scholars have sought out the real Franklin, but they have had to wade through mounds and layers of myth to find him.

The morning session then focused on the question, "What remains to be done?" Five historians answered the question resoundingly that there was plenty to go around. Leo Lemay of the University of Delaware outlined a host of topics he has uncovered in his research in those realms most people thought were exhausted, i.e.,

(see "Quest Continued", Page 3, Bottom)



## FRANKLIN INSURANCE COMPANY'S AMERICAN ACHIEVERS CONTEST

Every year the Franklin Life Insurance Company hosts a contest for fifth-graders. The Franklin American Achievers Contest provided the students with the opportunity and incentive to research the ideals of Benjamin Franklin as a writer, statesman, and scientist. The students then relate those ideals to research focusing on Illinois citizens whom the students consider great American achievers.



Natalie Swartz from the Iles School in Illinois was rewarded for her research and display in the Franklin Life Insurance Company-Franklin's American Achievers Contest.

Students did research on a variety of American legends from Wild Bill Hickok and Frederick Douglass to Walt Disney and Ronald Reagan. The students presented their research in the form of exhibits, first-person interpretations, and media presentations.

More than 100 projects were entered with two categories of winners. The "Outstanding Achievers" were awarded a levitating globe, while "Finalists" received a 12-inch statue of Benjamin Franklin. [BT]

## From the Desk Continued

now a property of the National Trust of England. Franklin and Sir Francis were frequent traveling companions and associates in the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts and the Society of Antiquaries. Whenever Franklin could, he visited the grand mansion at West Wycombe and probably participated in Sir Francis' secret Hell-Fire Club, a group of revelers who made use of the extensive caves adjacent to the village. The caves, too, have been well-preserved and can be visited. Publications, historical markers, and a life-size Franklin mannequin are used to tell the history of Franklin's involvement at the place. It was at West Wycombe, as well, that Franklin wrote his famous hoax known as the "King of Prussia Edict." In the fake edict, Franklin had Frederick the Great ordering residents of the old Saxon colonies in England to pay a tax to the Prussian state. For more information, West Wycombe Park, National Trust Property, A40 London/Oxford Road, Buckinghamshire, England.

4. Franklin in Barbados: From Patrick R. Hoyos, reporter for the Barbados Advocate, we have received an article charting the early history of printing and newspaper publishing in Barbados. It seems that Benjamin Franklin's successes had a direct link in bringing publishing to the island. Two of Franklin's printing rivals in Philadelphia, Samuel Keimer and David Harry, left Philadelphia for exile in Barbados. Franklin put Keimer out of business and bought from him the Pennsylvania Gazette that Franklin made so successful. He also routed Harry out of the Philadelphia scene. But in the case of Harry, Franklin attempted to enter into a partnership as he did with former apprentices in other American colonies. In Barbados, Harry hired his former master Keimer, but he soon lost interest and left Barbados publishing to Keimer alone. Then Keimer, taking a cue from his Philadelphia days, started up the Barbados Gazette in 1731. While Keimer died in 1742, this new Gazette continued as the island's principal newspaper until 1792.

While Franklin squelched his printing rivals in Philadelphia, his model and influence obviously spread through the western hemisphere. Patrick Hoyos, The

Advocate Company Limited, P. O. Box 230, Fontabelle, Bridgetown, Barbados, W.I.

5. Franklin's Image on the 1-cent Stamp: From 1908 to 1938 an image of Benjamin Franklin appeared on 13 different US postage stamps. Best remembered is the image as it appeared on the 1-cent stamp from 1922 until 1938. From the beginning to the present, philatelic records cited the famous bust by French sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon as the model for the popular Franklin image. A photograph recently discovered in the files of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, however, provides proof that the bust that actually inspired the stamp's design was a lost copy of a bust sculpted by Jean-Jacques Caffieri. The photograph, cleaned and retouched, reveals a scarf and curly hair depicted by Caffieri in a bust produced in Paris in 1777. While other versions of the Caffieri bust are known, the whereabouts of the one in the lost photograph with a sharply forward thrusting head for placement on a high pedestal is unknown. A complete examination of the photo is planned for a future issue of The United States Specialist, a publication of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington, D.C.

6. Franklin's Invention of Bifocals Reconfirmed: Most people who know very much about Benjamin Franklin are aware of the claim that Franklin invented bifocal spectacles. But the idea of two lenses for distant and near sighting seems so obvious that many historians have assumed that Franklin probably just borrowed the idea from someone else and made it popular as he became world renowned. Not so, says Charles E. Letocha, MD, of York, PA, in a special issue of Survey of Ophthalmology (vol. 35, no. 3, Nov.-Dec., 1990). In a careful analysis of many sources previously untapped, Letocha presents a convincing case that Franklin conceived the notion much earlier than 1784, the date usually ascribed. Letocha finds that Franklin was selling spectacles as early as 1738 and that he confided to John Fenno in 1789 that he had worn his special glasses as long as fifty years. Moreover, in the early correspondence of Charles Willson Peale, David Rittenhouse, and Thomas Jefferson, Franklin is routinely acknowledged as the original inventor.

Nice to have another Franklin basic soundly reconfirmed! Thanks for the good detective work, Dr. Letocha.

7. Franklin and Volcanoes: An article in the major newsletter that goes to science teachers on the secondary level titled "Shaping the Weather" reminds us that at least some perceptive individuals knew the effects of volcanic explosions long before the day of Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Pinatubo. Indeed, when Iceland's Laki volcano erupted in 1783, Benjamin Franklin began speculating on the effects it would have on the weather of Europe. The haze and "fog", as Franklin described it, that hung over Europe did indeed bring in the winter of 1783-1784 one of the coldest winters on record. Franklin submitted his speculations on this subject to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society and the report was published in their proceedings. Big Hopper: A Science Publication for Secondary Teachers (March/April, 1991, vol. 10, no. 4).

8. "Dr. Franklin Sets Sail": The Philadelphia Maritime Museum has opened an exhibit scheduled to continue throughout 1991 focusing on Benjamin Franklin's considerable contributions to nautical matters. In addition to charting out the Gulf Stream, describing how to use oil to calm waters, testing the ease of navigation in varying depths of water, Franklin also had many notions about how to take a long trans-oceanic trip. The new exhibit focuses on this facet of Franklin's interest. Philadelphia Maritime Museum, 321 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 (215) 925-5439.

9. "Many Bens": Renowned writer John Updike probably came as close as anyone in capturing the essence of Benjamin Franklin in a lengthy article in The New Yorker (February 22, 1988) titled "Many Bens." The more one reads by and about Franklin, Updike writes, "the reader seems to see many Franklins, one emerging from another like those brightly painted Russian dolls which, ever smaller, disclose yet one more, until a last wooden homunculus, a little smooth nugget like a soul, is reached." Among the facets of Franklin described by Updike are "the Founding Father," "the French Franklin," "the English Franklin," "the Philadelphia Franklin," and "the Boston Franklin."



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# ON THE TRAIL OF THE LAST FRANKLIN

## 1. WHO WAS TEMPLE?

by Claude-Anne Lopez

It sounds so enviable: to be Benjamin Franklin's grandson, his favorite grandson at that, the one who hardly ever left his side from the age of five to the age of thirty, the one who heard his stories, laughed at his wit, benefited from his teaching, basked in his kindness, reveled in his prestige. To be the key member among his descendants, the one and only male heir to his name.

Yet it was pathetic: to have been born under God knows what circumstances, from God knows which mother, a woman who just disappeared without leaving a trace, a woman obviously thought too despicable ever to be mentioned. To reach fifteen without a father or mother on the horizon, without a brother or sister, without even knowing one's real name. To grow up a bastard, nay twice a bastard, the son of another bastard, "a double-distilled bastard," in a society that never allowed the illegitimate to forget his inferior status.

It appears so glamorous: to live in London into one's teens, to land in Philadelphia just in time for the birth of the nation, to be a young man-about-town in the deliciously decadent Paris of the Ancien Regime on the wane, to frequent Lafayette and Turgot, Montgolfier and Marat, John Adams and John Jay, Mirabeau and Mesmer, John Paul Jones and Jefferson. But it was also devastating:

to have discovered one's father in mid-adolescence, a glamorous father to be sure, the Royal Governor of New Jersey, to have enjoyed his affection for a few exhilarating weeks, to have become part of a clan, at last, only to see one's new world torn asunder within less than two months; to become the impotent witness of a family breach that would

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*"I think the Doctor deviated from his usual wisdom in the manner he brought up Temple. Had he been taught to depend upon himself, his talents would have made him not only rich but respectable. His life has hitherto been spent in sensuality and the frippery of living."*

JONATHAN WILLIAMS, JR to  
WILLIAM FRANKLIN

October 7, 1807

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never heal, the bone of contention between this new-found father and the grandfather who had commanded exclusive loyalty so far; to be miserably aware, henceforth, that pleasing one of those gods would automatically displease the other. Never to be whole again. To strive to mature in the formidable shadow of such a genius as Benjamin Franklin, none the less oppressive for his benevolence. To be praised way beyond one's merits by those who were actually

fawning on him, Franklin, to be attacked way beyond one's faults by those who merely wanted to hurt him. Never to be looked upon as a separate, fallible, interesting human entity.

For the first 30 years, such was the life, all zigzags, always out of his own hands, of William Temple Franklin. Also called Temple, or Billy. Referred to by his Parisian friends by the affectionate but slightly derisive nickname of "Franklinet." By his adoring mistress as her "little Excellency." By the editors as WTF.

The odd circumstances of the boy's early life drew me to him years ago. Our own two sons were going through the pangs of adolescence at that time, searching for their identity and a way to separate themselves from us. Temple had his actual identity revealed in a flash and would keenly but briefly enjoy the ecstasy of belonging. What kind of man would such a childhood lead to? Would he ever surmount the stigma of his birth? Emerge from his grandfather's shadow? With the help of a \$1,000 grant from the American Philosophical Society, I searched through archives in Paris, London, New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere and found traces of William Temple Franklin's rise and fall. The results of my quest will appear in the coming issues of the Gazette.

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## QUEST CONTINUED

Franklin's early years in Boston, Philadelphia, and London. According to Lemay, historians have been prone to accept Franklin's account of these years without checking other contemporary sources. Lemay mentioned a host of previously untapped sources he will be using as he undertakes an exhaustive six volume biography of Franklin.

Historian William Pencak of Penn State Ogontz followed Lemay's lead by outlining his research into almanacs from the Franklin era and his efforts to understand the sources for Franklin's top selling Poor Richard's Almanack. Librarians James N. Green of the Library Company of Philadelphia and Roy Goodman of the American Philosophical Society described newly-available and/or overlooked sources for new Franklin studies. Green described the efforts of the Library Company to reconstruct and reassemble Franklin's grand library. Goodman described the vast store of manuscript materials at the American Philosophical Society, especially the recently opened Castle Collection. Owned by Governor Michael Castle of Delaware and loaned by him for microfilming by the Philosophical Society, the collection contains considerable heretofore unused sources

especially on Benjamin Franklin Bache and his descendants.

Susan Branson Heller, doctoral candidate from Northern Illinois University, concluded the presentations by describing her research into the women around Franklin during his final years in Philadelphia. Following Heller's talk a very lively discussion ensued. One and all agreed that Franklin research is heading into some very promising new fields.

The afternoon session turned to the topic of collecting Frankliniana, "What's Where and What's Left?" Jack Lindsay of the Philadelphia Museum of Art set the tone by illustrating objects and furnishings from the Franklin era that resemble items in Franklin's own inventory. E. McSherry Fowble of Winterthur Museum showed slides of the rather extensive collection of Franklin items in the collection of her museum. Lindsay and Fowble witnessed to the extraordinary monetary value of the items shown.

Just when participants were beginning to feel that Franklin collecting was beyond the realm of financial possibility, three additional speakers described areas of collecting available to almost anyone. Marian Carson, Philadelphia author and

collector, and John Dann, director of the Clements Library at the University of Michigan, described how one could begin collecting biographies about Franklin and editions of Franklin's works. Many of these are available at very reasonable prices from a variety of bookstores and dealers. Phil Greenslet, a Frankliniana collector from Reisterstown, Maryland, then described his many years of collecting Franklin medals, medallions, images, and other items primarily at flea markets. By persistence, he had acquired hundreds of images from the earliest known medals in the 1760's to the present. His story was inspiring to all present.

Following five informative presentations, the lively discussions of the day resumed. Various participants raised questions about the whereabouts of paintings, sculpture, objects, and books of interest to them. From among the program participants and others in attendance, many fugitive items were identified or made known. Just as the morning session seemed to inspire participants to new Franklin research, the afternoon session sent everyone out ready to collect Frankliniana. [LET]



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## COLLECTING FRANKLINIANA

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Although Clarence Wolf, owner of George S. MacManus Co., in Philadelphia could not be with us on the day of the conference, he supplied a computer printout of Franklin items available from his firm as of that date. The list is nothing short of astonishing. There are 127 entries on the printout ranging from a rare Franklin imprint from 1744 offered for \$8,500 down to quite a few items printed in the twentieth century for as little as \$10. Most items on his list are under \$50 and include a wonderful assortment of editions of Franklin papers, biographies, facsimile editions of many Franklin publications, and much else of related interest.

For example, the two volume edition of the *Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin*

published at New York in 1839 is available for \$35 and is in good condition. Various individual volumes of the Yale edition of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* are available for \$15 each. The 10-volume Smyth edition of the *Writings of Benjamin Franklin* is \$375. Biographies of Franklin by such as Catherine Drinker Bowen, Owen Aldridge, Ronald Clark, Bernard Fay, Paul L. Ford, Claude-Anne Lopez, Phillips Russell, Carl Van Doren, Esmond Wright and others are available for prices ranging from \$10 to a maximum of \$20.

If one is interested in the quite rare items, Wolf also has a good selection of things to choose from. The first, fourth, and fifth French editions of Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* can be had for \$3,000 or up to \$5,500. The first French edition of Franklin's *Works (Oeuvres)* in 1773 can be bought for \$750. Or one can have the only edition of his works approved by himself (Benjamin Vaughan's edition of 1779) for \$1,250. And much more is there for the Franklin collector. Inquiries should be directed to Clarence Wolfe, George S. MacManus Co., 1317 Irving

Street, Philadelphia 19107 (215) 735-4456.

At the same time we should mention that Christie's fairly regularly offers Franklin manuscript items at its auctions. In some recent correspondence with Chris Coover, Manuscript Specialist, at Christie's in New York, we received information that several items would be auctioned on May 17. A letter of introduction written by Franklin at Philadelphia February 13, 1787, for M. De Chaumont, a French acquaintance headed to New York on business was offered for a price range of \$6,000-\$8,000. Another item bearing Franklin's signature as Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly from September 22, 1764, was offered for \$3,000-\$4,000. At this sale Christie's even had one of the most famous Franklin forgeries executed by Joseph Cosey for a price range of \$200-\$300.

Inquiries for catalogues and notices of future sales should be directed to Chris Coover, Manuscript Specialist, Christie, Manson and Woods International, Inc., 502 Park Avenue, N.Y.C. 10022 (215) 546-1000. [LET]

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S ORANGE SHRUB

*From The Franklin Papers*

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 GALLON RUM          | 2 POUNDS SUGAR    |
| 2 QUARTS ORANGE JUICE | 1/2 DOZEN ORANGES |

"To a gallon of rum, two quarts of orange juice and two pounds of sugar...dissolve the sugar in the juice before you mix it with the rum... Put all together in a cask and shake it well. Let stand for 3 to 4 weeks and it will be very fine and fit for bottling. When you have bottled the fine, pass the thick through a philtring paper put into a funnell that not a drop may be lost. To obtain the flavor of the orange peel pare a few oranges and put it in rum for 12 hours and put that rum into the cask with the other for punch thought better without the peel."

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

All individuals, institutions, scholars, students, collectors and others are invited to become members of the Friends of Franklin at the annual membership rates indicated below.

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Institutional Member    | \$1,000.00 |
| Contributing Member     | 500.00     |
| Franklin Friend         | 100.00     |
| Annual Member           | 50.00      |
| Subscription to Gazette | 10.00      |

Please choose your category of membership and send a check made payable to:

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