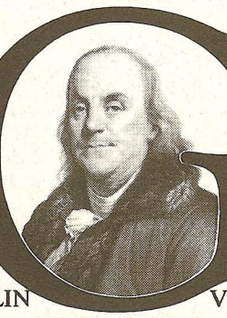
Franklin Gazette



A PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN VOLUME 3, NUMBER 3, SUMMER, 1992

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

"One To-day is worth two To-morrows."

B. Franklin

From the Desk of Larry Tise

It is in this spot that I collect all of the odd loose ends that continue to pile into our office at the National Memorial concerning Benjamin Franklin--past, present, and future. There's plenty of juicy stuff again to report.

1. Franklin's Europe Revisited: I just got back from an extended trip in Europe that took me to quite a few cities and seven countries where major awards are given for achievements in science, the arts and humanities, medicine, peace, and the environment. Everywhere I went I took the story of Benjamin Franklin, the Franklin Institute, and our activities to honor and perpetuate the memory of Franklin. Franklin's name and reputation provide instant entree to nearly any organization or office. Whether I was in Oslo, Stockholm, Cologne, Amsterdam, Brussels, or Paris, people I met always knew of Franklin and were eager to hear about his exploits. At the great weekly flea market in Paris that covers dozens of city blocks, I took great pleasure in asking various vendors about Franklin objects, medals, and images. They were there in abundance, ready and available for anyone with a pile of money to spend. I picked up a couple of medals that I bet even Phil Greenslet has not seen.

2. Franklin, the Optician: The most interesting evidence of Franklin's universality that I came across was in the city of Sens on the Yonne River south of Paris. After spending a couple of hours in the city's great Cathedral and the huge museum associated with it, I tried to get a photograph of the imposing edifice. As I looked through the camera's lens I saw before my eyes the unmistakable Franklin name. On the most prominent corner in the city is located a branch office of Franklin Opticiens, a national service chain providing glasses and contact lens to the French public. Of course I had to take a picture and to go into the store to confirm that we were thinking about the same old Benjamin Franklin. We were!

3. Our UNESCO Connection: Among other places I visited in Paris was the headquarters of UNESCO. My purpose was to find out about two significant prizes given by UNESCO to promote research and education in the realms of peace. While waiting for one of my appointments there, I picked up a brochure with a brief history of UNESCO and there, front and center, was none other than our Franklin Friend, Dr. William G. Carr. It seems that our good Bill Carr was one of the principal founders of UNESCO in 1945. Indeed, he served as Deputy Secretary-General of the 1945 conference in London that wrote the Preamble and Constitution of UNESCO. And then in 1966 he wrote a document officially adopted by UNESCO as its policy statement

(see "Larry Tise, Continued," Page 2 Column 1)

SOME NEW LIGHT ON FRANKLIN'S MOTHER

By Claude-Anne Lopez

The traditional sources of our knowledge about Franklin's mother are the Autobiography, the few letters between them that have survived, and the line dedicated to her on her tombstone in the Old Granary burial ground, Boston: "She was a discreet and virtuous woman."

From the Autobiography we learn that Abiah was the daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, esteemed "a godly learned Englishman" by no less than Cotton Mather, and the author of a published piece in favor of liberty of conscience. Whereas Franklin evoked his father's figure in loving detail, he had little to say about his mother beyond his admiration for her health and energy: She suckled all ten of her children, he relates, and he could not remember her ever being sick until her fatal illness at eighty-five. That she had also raised the brood left by her late predecessor, Anne, he takes for granted. All in all, what he says about her is pious, filial, and conventional.

She comes into somewhat sharper focus in the correspondence. In answer to a lost letter in which she expressed her worry about her son's spiritual orthodoxy, Franklin, then in his early thirties, made a respectful but spirited reply. After apologizing for any uneasiness he might have caused his "Honor'd Father and Mother," he wrote: "If it were a thing possible for one to alter his opinions in order to please another, I know none whom I ought more willingly to oblige in this respect than yourselves. But, since it is no more in a Man's Power to think than to look like another, methinks all that should be expected from me is to keep my mind open to conviction."

Then, in answer to his mother's grieving "that one of her Sons is an Arian, another an Arminian," he claimed that he hardly knew what Arians and Arminians were. He then unwittingly demonstrated his ignorance of those fine theological points by quoting Scripture to the effect that "at the last day we shall not be examin'd what we thought, but what we did... to our Fellow Creatures," which is precisely what the heresy of Arminius was about. It consisted in believing that good works could be an inducement for God to bestow his saving grace. Abiah, however, remembering that her own father had defended liberty of conscience for Quakers and Anabaptists against intolerant orthodoxy, was reassured by her son's letter and expressed satisfaction.[1] She was always among the first to receive his new Poor Richard, as well as the texts of the treaties with the Indians that he printed. He did not forget a little money "towards a chaise hire, that you may ride warm to meetings this winter...."

An affectionate letter Franklin wrote his mother, then widowed, on April 12, 1750, is of particular interest because it seems that he fibbed on William's age, making his son younger than he really was, so that the old lady, back in Boston, might believe that William was really Deborah's child and not the fruit of a previous liaison with an unknown woman, as was the case. Whereas he simply described his son as "a tall proper Youth, much of a Beau," he raved about seven-year-old Sally, so industrious with her needle, so dutiful and obliging, the greatest lover of her book and school, promising to become a worthy woman and, in the meantime, attending dancing school. Just the right message for a grandmother.

Abiah's only surviving letter was written six months before her death. Deep in his electrical exploration at that time, about to make his momentous leap from experiment to theory, Franklin was going up fast in the world. But his mother's mind was focused on the next world and the news of his having been chosen as alderman left her reticent, almost fearful: "I am glad to hear that you are so well respected in your toun for them to chuse you alderman alltho I dont know what it means nor what the better you will be of it beside the honer of it. I hope you will look up to god and thank him for all his good providences toward you. He has prospered you much in that place...." An attitude not unlike that of Napoleon's mother, who greeted her son's stupendous victories with a wistful "May it last!" pronounced the Corsican way: "Pourvu que ça doure!"

The new source on Abiah's role in her son's life comes from Paris. Franklin's closest circle of friends there lived in Auteuil, about one mile from his residence, in the welcoming house of Mme. Helvétius, the philosopher's widow. Three men shared that house with her, as more or less permanent guests, two of them middle-aged abbés, one a young medical student named Pierre-Georges Cabanis. All of them listened avidly to the Doctor's reminis-

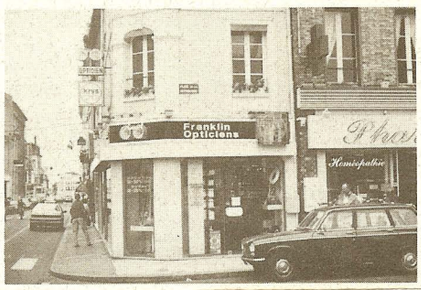
[1]For more details on that curious episode, which also involved free-masonry, see The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Yale edition, II, 202-4.

(See "Mother, Continued," Page 4 Bottom)

Larry Tise, Continued

on the "Status of Teachers" around the world. On October 24, 1991, our Bill was brought back to Paris on the 25th anniversary of that policy statement to give an address on the evolution of UNESCO. His speech appears in the Spring 1992 issue of ERS Spectrum: Journal of School Research and Information (pp. 42-46). Our amazing Dr. Carr is more than a little like our amazing Dr. Franklin.

4. M. Smith, Promoter: Speaking of wonders in the world of Franklin, our new president of the Friends of Franklin, Malcolm Smith, is getting in the news all over the place. A June 19 article in the Chicago Tribune by columnist Anita Gold revealed Malcolm's longtime interest in collecting Frankliniana and his present interest in the Friends. Information about our group was included in the article. A week later Pioneer Press, a Chicago North Shore publication, did a cover story on Malcolm complete with examples from his personal collections and with information on the Friends and the Yale Franklin Papers project. Malcolm is also augmenting the heroic efforts of immediate past president Frank Jones in soliciting funds for the Papers project. Between these two individuals, the Friends will meet our goal of $100,000 per year of support for the project. Right on Malcolm and Frank! Thanks.



Franklin Opticiens, France.

5. Good Stuff for Kids: In the realm of new products on Franklin, several of us have given a little advice and help to the editors of Cobblestone, publishers of a very good quality magazine written by students that produces special issues on historical topics and individuals. The September 1992 issue is titled Benjamin Franklin and it includes a number of excellent articles by students that have been carefully screened and edited. This special issue has articles on Franklin's boyhood in Boston, Silence Dogood, Deborah Franklin, Franklin's science, Franklin in France, and Franklin's writings on chess. And there's much more in the form of puzzles and activities for students. Copies may be bought individually or in bulk--individual copies $3.95 plus $1.75 for postage and handling; classroom sets of 15 copies or more for $3.50 per copy and 10% of the total for postage and handling. Orders should be placed directly with Cobblestone at 800-821-0115 or at 30 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire 03458.

6. Franklin Institute III: The January 1992 issue of Computer Shopper (pp. 402-04) brings us information on yet another Franklin Institute. It is not enough that there is one in Philadelphia and yet another in Boston. Now Salt Lake City is also in the act. This last Franklin Institute evidently produces computer software, especially in the realm of what it calls "Franklin Time Management." The Institute's latest product is some software called Ascend 3.14 described in this wise: "This Windows-based personal information manager brings the philosophy of Franklin Time Management to the PC. Ascend is a tool that can help you become more productive if you live in front of Windows and like (or are willing to learn) the Franklin method." So there! If you want more information contact NewQuest Technologies, Inc., 2550 S. Decker Lake Blvd., Salt Lake City, Utah 84119. Phone 800-877-1814.

7. Franklin Pornography, Revisited: Our authoritative and ever lively tabloid, the Philadelphia Daily News--which recently rated Charles Wilson Peale's rendering of Benjamin Franklin's coziness with a lady in London one of the best chunks of pornography in Philadelphia--has just issued a new set of rankings. In a regular column titled "Poor Ronald's Almanac," written by staff writer Ron Avery, the Peale sketch comes in a lowly fifth in a listing of "Philadelphia's Weirdest Stuff" in area museums. Placed ahead of the Franklin piece at the American Philosophical Society are Grover Cleveland's tumor at the Mutter Museum, the Atwater Kent Museum's gibbet, the Wistar Institute's brain collection, and a bucket of teeth extracted by a local dentist over a period of sixty years. But our Franklin relic beat out a chunk of James Garfield's scalp, a roach collection, and Shakespeare's suede gloves.

Keep those cards and letters coming in and be sure to join us in Boston, October 2-3. **[LET]**

FRANKLIN DESCENDANTS PROJECT

Richard Butler, an intern from Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania, is working at the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial this summer working on the Franklin Descendants project. A survey mailed to each living descendant asks his or her Franklin family connection, birth date, place of birth, spouse's name and birth date, children, and occupation, plus educational background, interests, hobbies, and publications and writings. Rich hopes to place the completed genealogy on a computer family tree program and feature this information in the Gazette.

If you know the whereabouts and current addresses of the below mentioned descendants please contact the National Memorial office at 215-448-1349:

Mrs. John C. Beauparlant
Mrs. Francis Burke
Mr. Harry Burke
Mrs. Richard Carmody
Miss Emily LaFarge Claxton
Mrs. James Wyley Ellis
Mrs. Mary Newbold Hendle
Mr. Charles Bache Jayne
Mr. Franklin Bache Jayne
Mr. Horace H.F. Jayne, Jr.
Mrs. Horace H.F. Jayne
Mrs. Dudley C. Lunt
Mr. Duane Norris Williams
[BT]

HATS OFF!

A member of the Friends of Franklin and his wife recently gave themselves an unusual anniversary gift: a $1,000 donation to Yale for The Papers of Benjamin Franklin. His company matched the funds 2 for 1, contributing $2,000 to Yale for the Papers. The entire $3,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by the NEH. Thanks to the creative generosity of one Friends of Franklin couple, the Papers is $6,000 closer to its fundraising goal. [BT]

FOCUS ON A FRIEND: MRS. CECILIA GNIEWEK-BRAUER

Benjamin Franklin invented the armonica in 1761 after watching a musical glasses concert in Europe. He fancied the sound but felt that the glasses were limited in their musical capability. In typical Franklin style he changed the design to include 37 glasses with holes attached to a spindle. When he wet his fingers and applied chalk an eerie sound arose and the glass armonica was born. Sally with her harpsichord and Franklin on his beloved armonica played duets. One armonica story has it while Deborah was sleeping she awoke to Franklin's armonica playing and thought she had died and gone to heaven--the music sounded like angels singing.

Armonicas soon lost their popularity because it was thought that the music drove people mad and caused death to the people who played them. This was probably because of the eerie sound they produced and the fact that the glass bowls were made with lead.

Today, there are only a few people in the United States who can play the armonica. Mrs. Cecilia Gniewek-Brauer of New York not only plays the armonica beautifully but also teaches school children an important lesson about Benjamin Franklin. She was formally trained as a celestist and pianist at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and has been a member of the Metropolitan Opera for 20 years.

She was first introduced to Franklin's armonica while watching a program on the Public Broadcasting System and by chance while performing a Mozart quintet. The piece had been written for oboe, flute, cello, violin and glass armonica. She ordered her up-to-date armonica from G. Finkenbeiner, Inc. in Waltham, MA (617-899-3138). She performs for occasions ranging from school groups and musicals to a wedding coming up in February!

Mrs. Gniewek-Brauer has a spirit very much like Benjamin Franklin and is sharing this spirit and her musical talent with the children who have the privlege of hearing her perform. If you would like to schedule a performance or get in touch with Mrs. Gniewek-Brauer please call 516-378-0449. **[BT]**

FRANKLIN THE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL DROPOUT, A.M., LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.S.

III. His Curiosity

by Max Hall

Benjamin Franklin's discoveries in electricity were not the only manifestations of his titanic curiosity--only the most dramatic ones. His lifelong urge to find out made him the book-reader he was, but books were only the beginning. Franklin's nature was to observe and experiment. He experimented on the absorption of solar heat by cloth. He discovered that Northeast storms move toward the northeast, even though the wind blows from the northeast, and he told why. When he saw a small whirlwind in the dust, his companions only stood looking at it, but Franklin rode beside it and later described its behavior in a vivid letter. Whirlwinds and waterspouts were among his favorite subjects. He took a deep scientific interest in colds and other diseases. He carried on an immense correspondence with leading thinkers in many countries.

Franklin studied the movement of hot and cold air and invented a new kind of fireplace, which, characteristically, he refused to patent. He also invented bifocal spectacles and many other articles, including a musical instrument, the "glass armonica," that consisted of 37 spinning glass hemispheres, and which became well known in Europe.

Franklin's inquiring mind even made him a sort of father of social science in America, for he published original thoughts on population growth, paper currency, and other matters.

On his eight arduous crossings of the Atlantic and on his coastal voyages, he busied himself experimenting with the effect of oil upon the waves, recording eclipses, observing wildlife, thinking up improvements in ship construction and navigation and the science of sailing, and taking the temperature of the air and water. He seems to have been the first scientist to study and explain the Gulf Stream.

But of course the electrical experiments were more important, and they led directly to the academic honors that began in the 1750s. I. Bernard Cohen, Harvard professor of the history of science (emeritus), has been for fifty years the authority on Franklin and electricity, and anyone interested in the technical details should consult his books. Following is a small nontechnical account of what Franklin did.

In the middle 1740s Franklin witnessed some lecture performances that showed the surprising behavior of static electricity. He saw, too, a few magazine articles on electrical research in Europe, and he received from Peter Collinson, an English patron of scientific enterprise, a gift of a glass tube of the sort used in experiments. Glass can be electrified by rubbing and can produce sparks when brought near certain objects. The nature of the "electrical fire" was a matter of wonderment and controversy.

Franklin's curiosity drove him to investigate. About this time he yielded the active management of his printing house to a partner, and this gave him leisure to experiment. He had some helpers, and he used pieces of apparatus that he bought or built. In March 1747 he wrote Collinson, "I never was before engaged in any study that totally engrossed my attention." During the next few years he sent Collinson an extraordinary series of progress reports, which were brought together into a book published in England and elsewhere. Though he took some wrong turns (and freely acknowledged them), he soon outran the numerous European investigators. By 1749 he was ready to make a comprehensive statement of the Franklinian theory. Its principles, with certain refinements, are still the basis of our explanations of electrical phenomena. As Professor Cohen has pointed out, such common terms as "plus" or "positive," "minus" or "negative," "battery," and others were first used in an electrical sense by Franklin.

Franklin came to think that lightning and electricity were the same thing. In November 1749 he listed twelve ways in which they behaved alike and asked whether it were not probable that lightning would agree with electricity in being attracted to points. "Let the experiment be made," he wrote. By the summer of 1750 he had worked out the details of the experiment, involving a sharp-pointed iron rod on a high tower. The proposal was published, and in May 1752 two Frenchmen, following Franklin's instructions, independently performed the "Philadelphia Experiment" with complete success. The same result was obtained in England and elsewhere. America for the first time had an internationally famous person.

Meanwhile Franklin, before learning of the events in France, had proved his hypothesis by still another ingenious method. Flying a kite with a sharp metal point on it, he drew electrical fire along the wet kite string and out through an ordinary key in the form of a spark. And now, having shown that clouds contain electricity, he took steps to protect buildings against it. In Poor Richard's Almanac at the beginning of 1753 he announced the invention of the lightning rod, and Franklin's lightning rods sprouted rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic. Professor Cohen says that many savants considered them the first example of a practical invention derived from pure science.

In the spring of 1753 Franklin learned from Collinson that the Royal Society was about to print four papers verifying the doctrine of metal points and electrified clouds, and that the King of France was sending his "thanks and compliments." Franklin wrote his friend Jared Eliot that he felt like a "girl who was observed to grow suddenly proud, and none could guess the reason, till it came to be known that she had got on a pair of new silk garters." The honorary degrees began coming three months later.

Franklin finding out was Franklin at his happiest. If America's political affairs had not consumed so much of his time during his remaining thirty years, what might he have discovered?

(To be concluded in the next issue)

Max Hall, a free-lance writer from Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the author of Benjamin Franklin and Polly Baker and is the former Social Science Editor of Harvard University Press. An earlier version of this article appeared in Harvard Magazine for May 1975.

MOTHER, CONTINUED

cences, took notes, and published their memoirs after his death. Cabanis, whose mother had died in childbirth and who did not get along with his father, had adopted the American as his spiritual guide. He could not hear enough stories about his hero's exotic childhood. No matter that, under his pen, Abiah's New England saltiness evolves into the refined discourse of an eighteenth-century Parisian maman, she shines through and comes to life in that French salon.[2]

Along with her husband Josiah, writes Cabanis she gave the children an untiring example of work, thrift, common sense, and the happiness to the derived from a laborious life. She was eminently reasonable and guided her children's minds toward the practical side of daily living. The famous story of the whistle is narrated in the form of a conversation with her. Hearing that the five-year-old Benjamin, given some money to visit the fair, impulsively spent it all on a whistle, she gently leads him to see that he could have bought many other toys with the sum at his disposal and advises him always to inquire in advance of the price of whatever whistle he covets--a lesson he would never forget. And here Cabanis quotes a Franklin aside, one that does not appear in any of his biographies and yet rings with authenticity. The Doctor used to say that when his son petitioned the Court of St. James for the position of governor of one of the colonies, he had warned him: "Think of what that whistle may cost you some day! Wouldn't you rather become a carpenter or a carter since the fortune I'll bequeath is not enough for you? The man who lives from his labor remains free." But, Franklin would add when recounting that episode, the young man was infatuated with the Excellency; he felt ashamed to resemble his father. Bitter words from a bitterly disappointed parent.

Another facet of Abiah's character was that she allowed her boy to romp in full freedom, be it in ice and snow, or in the sea, in which he would bathe for several hours at a time, and often more than once a day. All this, she felt, would strengthen his constitution. Even though he had a prodigious appetite, especially in the summer he felt so well, he remained extremely skinny.

Finally, when he had his bout with vegetarianism, she did not oppose him, convinced that his fancy would not last long. But she realized after awhile that she had been mistaken and when her friends asked her who on earth had put such a thought in her son's head, she would say: "Some mad philosopher." She would add quietly: "There is no harm in that; it gives him the habit of self-control. He learns that with a strong will one can do anything." Indeed, he did.

[2] Oeuvres posthumes de Cabanis (Paris, 1825). Notice sur Benjamin Franklin, pp. 222-25.

TOUR OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S BOSTON
OCTOBER 2-3, 1992

DAY ONE--FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

10:00-11:00 a.m.
Massachusetts Historical Society
1154 Boylston Street

Gather here for a tour of the Historical Society's library and their Franklin collection.

Noon-2:30 p.m.
The Harvard Club of Boston
Main Clubhouse, 374 Commonwealth Avenue

Join us for an elegant lunch in the Saltonstall Room followed by a Friends of Franklin Board Meeting.

3:30-5:30 p.m.
The Franklin Institute of Boston
41 Berkeley Street

Technical school established in 1905 with funds set aside in Franklin's will. Tour the school and enjoy a cocktail reception hosted by The Franklin Institute of Boston.

7:00-9:00 p.m.
Skipjack's Restaurant
199 Clarendon Street

Dinner at an authentic Boston-style restaurant for a taste of the sea.

DAY TWO--SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

10:00-1:30 p.m.
Benjamin Franklin's Boston Walking Tour
Gather at the Old South Meeting House, Corner of Washington & Milk Streets

Guided tour of the Freedom Trail led by Friends of Franklin member Bill Meikle as Benjamin Franklin. Sites include: location where Franklin was born and later lived, the Old Church Square and Town House, the Town Dock and Dock Square, the State House, the Mill Pond where he played and swam, site of James Franklin's printery, the Common, and the Old Granary Burying Ground with its Franklin obelisk. Includes lunch at Ye Olde Union Oyster House just around the corner from the site of Franklin's second childhood home featuring colonial fare.

1:30-3:00 p.m.
Free time with option of returning to The Old South Meeting House or visit other Franklin locations along the Freedom Trail.

3:00-4:00 p.m.
The Boston Athenaeum
10 1/2 Beacon Street

For a private viewing of the Athenaeum's Franklin collection.

4:00-5:00 p.m.
Peter Faneuil Hall
Dock Square

A guided tour of Boston's famed "Cradle of Liberty." (tentative)

7:00-9:30 p.m.
Maison Robert
45 School Street

Dine on the site of Benjamin Franklin's old school for a Franklin-inspired meal: potato soup, roast duck with fruit sauce and Les Oeufs à la Neige. Guest speaker to be announced.

(See Registration Form on Page 6)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, FUND RAISER

by Aaron Goldman

Benjamin Franklin has been aptly described as a 20th-century man who lived two centuries ahead of his time. Enormously curious and innovative, he was constantly conducting experiments in order to find out how things worked--electricity, whirlwinds, the Gulf Stream, the design of ships' hulls--and how to make daily living more comfortable--the Franklin stove, bifocal eyeglasses, lightning rods, simplified spelling, the superiority of light clothing vs. dark clothing in warm climates.

To a comfortably situated, vigorous, middle-aged businessman like Franklin, who had tasted the splendors of London as a young man, everything he now saw in his provincial hometown cried out for innovation, improvement, embellishment. And--not differently from today--there was never enough money for such purposes unless some interested person picked up the ball and ran with it. Or more to the point of this sketch: unless Mr. Franklin was that person.

In his Autobiography, Franklin, then 45 years old, recalls his pleasure at the success of a clever stratagem that he used to raise money for just such a publicly needed project in Philadelphia: "... I do not remember any of my political maneuvers the success of which gave me at the time more pleasure, or wherein, after thinking of it, I more easily excused myself for having made some use of cunning."

This remembered cunning, for which Franklin characteristically gives himself absolution, was employed in behalf of an excellent cause: the founding of one of the first publicly supported hospitals in America, the Pennsylvania Hospital, after 238 years still thriving. In today's terms, his money-raising scheme would have been called a matching grant, one that promises the donor that his or her contribution will trigger a matching gift from some other (usually wealthier) donor.

The original proposal for a hospital had come from physician Thomas Bond, who had studied in Paris and by 1750 had decided that Pennsylvania needed such an institution for the sick and insane. In those days the idea of a public hospital was so novel that it would never have gotten off the ground without the Good Housekeeping seal of approval from the city's foremost philanthropic authority. Franklin, again in character, records how Dr. Bond sought and obtained his support: "At length he came to me with the compliment that there was no such thing as carrying a public-spirited project through without my being concerned in it. 'For,' says he, 'I am often asked: Have you consulted Franklin about this business? and what does he think of it?' And when I tell them that I have not...then they do not subscribe...."

Once Franklin, convinced of a real need and succumbing to the flattery, came on board, prospects immediately began to brighten. First he did what was required of every first-class fund-raiser: He himself subscribed the generous sum of 25 pounds; and then he proceeded to become equally generous with his time and his promotional skills, essential in a community where public medical care was heretofore unknown except in prisons or almshouses.

After a time, despite increasing subscriptions, it became clear to Franklin that the required 4,000 pounds was not going to be raised without some help from the provincial Assembly (of which he was the Clerk), to which he thereupon drafted a petition for support. To no one's surprise the main opposition to his proposal came from the country members, on the grounds that the hospital would be useful only to the city folks and that, furthermore, there seemed to be no groundswell of support even from that part of the electorate.

Faced with these objections, our astute lobbyist came up with the following proposal: that the Assembly would vote 2,000 pounds to the hospital on condition that the subscribers raise a similar amount-- which, clearly, the legislators thought most unlikely. But, as Franklin had foreseen, the stratagem worked like a charm, as he relates: "The members who... now conceived they might have the credit of being charitable with the expense, agreed to [the bill's] passage; and then, in soliciting subscriptions among the people, we urged the conditional promise of the law as an additional motive to give, since every man's donation would be doubled; thus the clause worked both ways. The subscriptions accordingly soon exceeded the requisite sum, and we claimed and received the public gift, which enabled us to carry the design into execution...."

It was altogether a very happy ending, demonstrating that Franklin was as knowledgeable about human nature as he was about electricity; and we are delighted to join in excusing him for this beneficent use of what he called cunning.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE LAST FRANKLIN
V. SETTLING IN PARIS (1777-78)

by Claude-Anne Lopez

The crossing on the Reprisal was rough, brutally cold, but, for its day, remarkably quick: from October 27, 1776, to November 29, when they dropped anchor on the coast of Brittany. While the elder Franklin felt its physical rigors more than he generally did and was well aware that, if caught, he would be hanged for treason, the two grandsons he brought along--the adolescent Temple and seven-year-old Benny Bache--experienced the thrill of combat, for their sloop made two prizes on the way.

But the wind was too wild to go ashore and it was only on December 4 that the trio disembarked in the little port of Auray. Nobody there, of course, to greet them; no carriage to be had until the following day. And a wretched one at that, which stopped in the middle of the woods to show them the spot where travellers had been murdered by bandits a few days earlier.

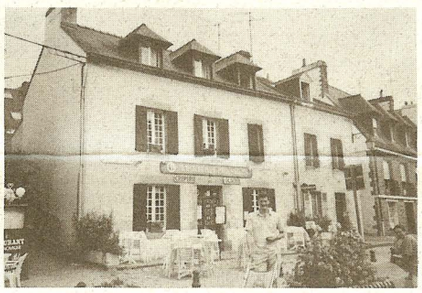
By the time they reached Nantes, word of the great man's arrival had spread and they were enthusiastically entertained for a week by the authorities and the merchant community. At a ball in their honor, Temple, who already had an eye for women, noted that the ladies' coiffures were an extravagant five to seven times the height of their faces. "Those who have practis'd Drawing, as he has, attend more to Proportions, than People in common do," remarked the proud grandfather.

As they proceeded to Paris, Temple's schoolboy French came in very handy. As soon as they got there he was dispatched to Versailles, on December 26, with a letter for Foreign Minister Vergennes, the man Franklin was most eager to contact in his hope to obtain some French money, aid, or at least recognition of his new country, all of which would eventually take much more time than Congress had anticipated. While the grandfather was keeping out of the limelight and hewing to the line that he had come purely as a private visitor, the boy was seeing to their immediate needs.

For the first two months of 1777, the three of them lived in a hotel on the rue Jacob, then moved to what was to become the first American embassy in a foreign country: the hôtel de Valentinois, in the charming village of Passy, then a few miles outside Paris, amid vineyards, greenery, and terraces sloping all the way down to the Seine. It belonged to a wealthy Breton merchant, M. LeRay de Chaumont, whose help to the American revolution, less glamorous than Lafayette's or Beaumarchais' but fully as important, has not yet been fully recognized.[1] The choice of the location, between Paris and Versailles, had certainly emanated from the French government, but the details of their living arrangement were worked out by Temple and Chaumont: how much the Americans would pay for their meals (they lived rent-free for the first few years), how much for hiring a carriage, for guests, etc.[2] Passy, these days, is right in the fashionable 16th arrondissement; Franklin's residence was near the Trocadero and a plaque marks the spot where the first lightning rod in France was erected under his supervision.

As soon as they had moved in, Benny was enrolled in a local boarding school, where he promptly proceeded to learn French and forget his English, while Temple assumed the duties of secretary, bookkeeper, and confidant.

In the early days, Franklin was still talking of higher education for this grandson, whom he described to a friend as "...a promising Youth of seventeen, whom I brought with me, partly to finish his Education, having a great Affection for him, and partly to have his Assistance as a Clerk, in which capacity he is very serviceable to me.' But law school soon disappeared from the horizon; it was vaguely talked about in 1784, after the Peace Treaty had been signed, but nothing came of it. Temple's formative years



The plaque records that Franklin landed in Auray on Dec. 4, 1776. The young man is Claude-Anne's nephew Robert.

had been wholly absorbed by his grandfather. That was the serious and irrevocable sin Franklin committed against the boy he loved so much. Was it because he felt somewhat overwhelmed by the magnitude, the difficulty of his mission? Lonely, in a country he would come to adore but that must have baffled him in the beginning? Did he perhaps, in his uncritical affection for Temple, see him as another self, one who would stop at nothing to gain knowledge, a self-starter? Whatever the reasons for his possessiveness, it was total ... and destructive. Handicapped emotionally by the lack of family in his early childhood, Temple was to mature without the framework of studies, the comradeship and competition of young men his own age, the self-confidence inspired by discipline and success.

He was an amenable youth, always ready to oblige and run a variety of errands for his elders. Silas Deane, Franklin's fellow-commissioner, called him "a young gentleman of great ingenuity, which gives the most favourable presages of future eminence. He has an animating example in his worth Grandfather...." Indeed, Congress received enough good reports about Temple's zeal and fidelity to allow him a salary of one thousand pounds a year.

But the news that filtered back, ever so slowly, from America was sad and alarming. He heard that his stepmother, Elizabeth, who had shown him affection and at whose side he had wanted to stay, had died. When General Howe evacuated Perth Amboy on the last day of June 1777, Elizabeth, who had remained in the governor's mansion while William was in confinement in Connecticut, was taken by the British to New York, with all her possessions, in order to protect her from the anger of the New Jersey Patriots. Once there, she could find no home where even a fraction of her furniture could fit--her residence had, indeed, been grandiosely appointed.

She stowed her things in a warehouse, fell ill, and succumbed a short while later--probably to asthma--on the very day, July 28, that Congress refused William permission to go to her deathbed. He had sent Washington a frantic message begging to be allowed to attend his wife in her final illness, but Washington, torn between personal friendship and the demands of politics, had referred the matter to Congress. William, wild with grief, turned more defiant than ever. His warden reported that on December 3, he caroused late into the night, toasting King George loudly with his companions--by coincidence, the very moment that his father was setting foot in France with the two boys.

So now William, the glamorous father, so much admired by his newfound son, was nothing more than a huge obstacle on the young man's path toward a career in public life.

We can only guess at Temple's emotions: he never expressed them. In the surviving documents, William's name appears only in the guise of his initials in the family accounts, next to expenses made on behalf of Temple, for which he is held accountable, in toto or in part. When, for instance, 42 livres tournois were spent in May 1777 for a pair of shoes for Temple, 30 of them were charged to William, the remaining 12 to Franklin. Same procedure for a tailor's bill and for wigs.

And Elizabeth? It was for her sake, as we have seen, that Temple had dared challenge his grandfather's authority for the first time, during the tense summer in 1776. He had brought back Franklin's answer to her cry of distress a few weeks after her husband's arrest. It contained sixty dollars--and a harsh rebuke for her complaints: "...I perceive that your Troubles lie heavy on your Mind. It may contribute a little to lighten them if you reflect sometimes, that you continue to possess your House and Goods, and that your Husband's life is safe, while Multitudes of Families have been burnt out of their Dwellings in the midst of last Winter, have lost their all by the Barbarity of the Tyrant's Troops & the Tories, and many are now grieving the Death of their Husbands and Sons, who have persisted in the War, while the only loss you have suffer'd in your Property is that of a few green Apples."

Now less than a year later, Elizabeth had lost not only her apples, but her house and her life. As to her goods, they would be totally destroyed a few months after her death, when the warehouse caught fire.

Shortly before her death, in 1823, Temple filed some documents to establish his identity for the French bureaucracy. He declared that he was the son of William Franklin and Elizabeth Downes, giving himself a legitimate mother, at last, and giving her the child she had pined for.

(To be continued in the next Gazette)

[1] Prof. Thomas Schaeper, of St. Bonaventure University, NY, will soon publish the first full-length study of that warm-hearted, ambitious, restless, and impetuous man.

[2] Philadelphia-born Meredith Martindale, who lives on the grounds of the now-disappeared Valentinois, has described the residence in The Magazine Antiques, CXII (1977), 262-3; 269-71.

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