

Franklin Gazette

A PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN

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

"People who are wrapped up in themselves make small packages."

B. Franklin

From the Desk of Larry Tise

It is simply amazing, this Franklin phenomenon. There we were, walking down the streets of Boston, touring the finest portions of Franklin's historic birthplace, with Franklin role-player Bill Meikle leading the way. From windows above, from passersby, and from hurtling automobiles (being driven in that special Boston style) there came shouts, "Hi, Ben. How you feeling today?" And back quipped Meikle, true to Franklin form and style, "I guess my image is too much abroad" or "No rest for the weary" and dozens of other instantaneous responses that kept our touring group entertained and enlightened. And the point was underscored for us yet again what a popular image Franklin was and is in American culture.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of the folks who opened their doors, their magnificent historical collections, and their hearts to a band of Franklin enthusiasts who descended on Boston on October 2 and 3. Everywhere we went we were treated as visiting dignitaries. While Boston has no Franklin structures left intact, much has been done there to preserve and interpret the Franklin heritage in the form of historical collections, interpretation, and statuary. Thanks, folks.

Some other passing Franklin phenomena:

1. **Murphy Brown.** Dan Quayle did not get the last word on Murphy Brown--Benjamin Franklin did. After the vice president's gaffe last June, the New York Times one-upped Quayle by publishing a column by one Benjamin Franklin. Under the title "Murphy Brown, Colonial Dame," the Times reprinted Franklin's bit of humor written in 1747 and first published on April 15 of that year in London's General Advertiser.

Franklin's title for the piece had been "A speech of Miss Polly Baker, before a Court of Judicature, at Connecticut in New England, where she was prosecuted the fifth Time for having a Bastard Child; which influenced the Court to dispense with her Punishment, and induced one of her Judges to marry her the next Day." Arguing that she is taking care of the children and is bothering no one, Miss Baker can think of no crime she has committed other than not paying a lawyer to represent her or a preacher to marry her. Since she is living blamelessly other than bringing on more children, she claims that she deserves "instead of a Whipping, to have a Statue erected to my Memory." Good work, ye editors.

2. **The Buried Past of Philadelphia.** We have a welcome letter from John L. Cotter, the distinguished Curator Emeritus of American Historical Archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania's University Museum, with the happy news that his long-awaited book The

HISTORIC BOSTON WALKING TOUR

Thirty-two eager Friends of Franklin descended on Boston on October 2 and 3 for a two-day sampler of the sites and cuisine of Benjamin Franklin's historic Boston. When it was all over, everyone seemed to agree that this tour exceeded all others to date in terms of the number and overall quality of activities.

Things got off to a rousing start at the ancient, distinguished Massachusetts Historical Society--the oldest historical organization in the United States. There the organization's director, Dr. Louis Tucker, introduced the group to the Society's extensive Franklin holdings, including a special exhibit on Franklin's Boston nativity. Friends also were able to tour the entire facility and observe many of its valuable treasures.

Following lunch at Boston's famous Harvard Club (suggested by Friend and Harvard grad George Waters), the group proceeded directly to the Harvard University campus and the Historic Scientific Instrument Collection in the university's Science Center. Curator Will Andrews showed how various pieces in the collection operate and are used from time to time as teaching devices. The centerpiece of the collection was the impressive telescope Benjamin Franklin bought for Harvard while he was in London.

Next on the tour was a visit to The Franklin Institute of Boston, a science and technology school built with funds from Benjamin Franklin's will in 1906. The school has remained true to Franklin's interests in assisting "young artificers" and, like its counterpart in Philadelphia, is still entirely private and operates without governmental subsidies. The group was treated to a very pleasant cocktail reception as President D'Onofrio explained the history and present plans of the Institute. After a long but exhilarating day, a fine and restful dinner was held at Skipjack's Restaurant.

On Saturday morning came perhaps the central treat of our visit. Bill Meikle, Boston's best-known Franklin role player and a Friend of Franklin, took the group on a walking tour that was lively and entertaining. The site of

Franklin's birth, Old South Meeting House, the Old Granary Burying Ground, and other places of interest were arrayed through the deft Meikle performance. After lunch at Ye Old Union Oyster House, where the Meikle show continued, the group proceeded to the Boston Athenaeum. Between statues wrought by Horatio Greenough and among books of architectural and historical distinction, we saw one of Boston's most elegant treasure troves

of history. The Athenaeum brought out books, pamphlets, and artifacts relating to our subject.

Many of the group took yet another tour--this one of Peter Faneuil Hall. Others rested up for our closing banquet at the Maison Robert, one of Boston's outstanding restaurants, located

in Boston's former City Hall and replete with one of the earliest and most beautiful statues of Benjamin Franklin. Chef Robert cooked up a Franklin banquet complete with roast duck and les oeufs à la neige. The surprise guest speaker for the evening was the author of this article, who held forth on the subject of Franklin's death, funeral, and eulogies in Philadelphia and France. A relatively small portion of the gathered throng slept through the lengthy discourse.

Also while in Boston the Friends of Franklin held a semi-annual board meeting to discuss the organization's business. In addition to routine reports on budget, membership, and the status of The Franklin Papers at Yale, the board voted to create a special new category of affiliate membership. This special status will be offered to other Franklin groups, such as juntos and friends groups, at a reduced rate of only \$15 per individual per year. Groups wishing to offer this affiliate membership to their members should call or write the Friends office. In another note of interest, the board decided to begin making annual contributions from membership income to The Franklin Papers project, beginning with an initial gift of \$1,000. This is, of course, in addition to the \$100,000 per year the Friends are raising from other sources for the project.

Boston and our Boston friends, thank you for a wonderful visit! [LET]



Some Boston Tour participants pause between tours and shopping at Quincy Market.

Larry Tise, Continued

Buried Past, an Archaeological History of Philadelphia will emerge from the University of Pennsylvania Press in December. Co-authored with Daniel Roberts and Michael Parrington, the book contains, Cotter says, a description of "the extensive archaeological work done at Franklin Court in Independence National Historical Park from 1954 to 1976, and...the fullest story to date on the remarkable house [Franklin] built for his family, relating the evidence in the ground to the character and contents of the house as he knew it before it was torn down twenty-two years after his death by his penurious grandchildren, to make way for real estate development." With 640 pages and 442 illustrations, this book sounds like a real bargain at \$39.95. Copies are currently available at \$31.96 (a 20 percent discount) plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling. Friends may wish to rush in an order to University of Pennsylvania Press, P.O. Box 4836, Hampden Station, Baltimore, MD 21211.

3. Washington Snubbed Franklin. As reported elsewhere in this issue, I filled in as after-dinner speaker when the Friends of Franklin were in Boston on October 3. My talk was about Franklin's death and all of the political squabbling that surrounded his funeral and various eulogies in America and in France. Now I have a letter from our most prolific scholar on Franklin's latter years, William G. Carr of Washington (The Oldest Delegate [1990]), who confirms something about George Washington's attitude toward Franklin. He writes, "Washington, I suspect, did not like Franklin. After his brief almost mandatory political courtesy

of a stop at President Franklin's home on May 13, 1787, Washington promptly moved to the well-to-do home of Robert Morris. He persistently sought the company of officers who had served under his command.... Finally, when Washington came to the big public dinner in Philadelphia, en route to his inauguration in New York on April 20, 1789, I have found no record that he even called on Franklin."

4. Franklin Radio Drama. The American Dialogues Foundation of Los Angeles recently announced the receipt of a second grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund the completion of the series titled "Craven Street," which is being prepared for public radio. This brings total NEH funding for the project to \$240,000 for research and scripting and now the production of the five-hour series. "Craven Street" will focus on Franklin's interesting activities during his two long residences in London from 1757 to 1762 and from 1764 to 1775. Two Friends of Franklin, Leo Lemay of the University of Delaware and Claude-Anne Lopez of The Franklin Papers at Yale, are involved as project advisors.

Elsewhere in this issue is information about our January 16 Franklin Birthday activities, including a full-day conference for Franklin Friends, students, and fans on "Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies." The conference will be on the third day of the third annual Bower Awards Convocation and will certainly shed a great deal of light on a side of Franklin little noticed. Y'all come on over and join in the fun. [LET]

UPDATE ON THE YALE PAPERS

Volume 29 of The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, covering March through June, 1779, of Franklin's life, rolled off the presses in August. The volume covers the first four full months of Franklin's tenure as sole minister plenipotentiary to the Court of France. Its 848 pages are chock-full of new information and insights into Franklin's French mission. Contact the Yale University Press for additional information at 203-432-1814.

WHY NOT SPONSOR A SCHOOL?
JOIN THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL PROJECT

Devoted Friend of Franklin, Roy Goodman, reference librarian at the American Philosophical Society, has come up with yet another good idea--and a CHALLENGE for other Friends of Franklin. To get the Friends activities and the Gazette into the hands of school children, Roy has purchased two subscription memberships in the Friends for his favorite Franklin schools: Franklin High School in Philadelphia and Franklin High School in Franklin, Massachusetts. He has invited other Friends of Franklin to follow his example by contributing subscriptions for their Franklin schools in their community or elsewhere in the world. Why not meet Roy's challenge? William Carr has provided a list of Franklin schools which is available at the National Memorial office. If you would like to participate please write or call the National Memorial office or send us \$20 per subscription and the name of your selected school. [LET]

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND HIS ENEMIES
STEARNS AUDITORIUM, JANUARY 16, 1993, THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

Sponsored by The Benjamin Franklin National Memorial of The Franklin Institute and The Friends of Franklin, Inc.

Over the past couple of hundred years, Franklin has taken on a larger than life stature both here and abroad. And while his contributions as a renowned scientist, successful printer and publisher, shrewd diplomat, community leader, creative inventor and humanitarian genius are considerable, he drew both rivals and outright enemies. Some spared no efforts to characterize him as dark, selfish, hateful and self-indulgent.

"Franklin and His Enemies" will feature noted historian Robert Middlekauff, who is presently completing a book on this topic, and several other researchers to look at the ideas and activities of Franklin's most outspoken critics.

9:30 a.m.

Opening Remarks:

Larry E. Tise, Ph.D., Executive Director, The Benjamin Franklin National Memorial

Keynote Address

Benjamin Franklin: His Friends and Enemies

Robert Middlekauff, Ph.D., Preston Hotchkis Professor of American History, University of California at Berkeley

10:20 a.m.

Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans

John B. Frantz, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History, The Pennsylvania State University

11:00 a.m.

Break

11:15 a.m.

Franklin's Scientist Enemies: Real and Imagined

I. Bernard Cohen, Ph.D., Victor S. Thomas Professor of History, Emeritus, Harvard University

Noon

Lunch

Presiding:

Larry E. Tise, Ph.D.

Luncheon Address

William Franklin: The Most Intimate Enemy

Sheila Skemp, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History, University of Mississippi

1:30 p.m.

The College of Philadelphia and the Politics of Revolution

Mark Frazier Lloyd, Director, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania

2:10 p.m.

Franklin and the Dancing School of Blockheads of Philadelphia

Keith Arbour, Department of History, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor

2:45 p.m.

Mark Twain and D. H. Lawrence: The Literatures Against Franklin

J. A. Leo Lemay, Ph.D., Professor of English, University of Delaware

3:20 p.m.

Discussion and Conclusions

4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

REGISTRATION FORM

Please circle one:

Check, Visa, Mastercard, or American Express.

Send check to: The Franklin Institute
20th and The Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1194

Member \$25 Other \$35
(Cost includes symposium and lunch)

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THE WEDDING OF JONATHAN WILLIAMS, JR.

by Ellen R. Cohn

On April 8, 1779, Franklin wrote some fatherly advice to his great-nephew Jonathan Williams, Jr., whose life was in turmoil. Williams, who had enthusiastically assumed the position of American agent at Nantes in 1777 when Franklin had arrived in France, now found himself accused by Franklin's enemies of having abused his post. Should he simply give up and return to America? Franklin suggested that Williams learn "moral algebra" to help in making his decision: He should list the pros and cons in two columns, assigning them different values according to their importance, and then calculate their totals. "By the way," Franklin added, "if you do not learn it, I apprehend you will never be married."

This, as Franklin knew, was a sore subject, and Williams was in no mood for his great-uncle's famous rationality. "Before a Man is married he must fall in love and this seems to be as involuntary an act as falling into a Well -- which requires something more than algebra to get out of," he lamented. But he did admit to having "scrambled out" of that well, in the past, and resolved, in the future, to make himself content in it.

Williams would soon find himself happily at the bottom of that well. His nearly doomed romance with the Scottish-born Mariamne Alexander, thwarted by her disapproving father and the circumstances of the war, finally triumphed on Sept. 12, 1779, when the couple were married at the Alexander estate, not far from Passy.

Tracing the history of Williams' romance and the circumstances of the wedding was one of the challenges facing the Franklin Papers editors when they began Volume 30, which covers July through September, 1779. There was only one oblique mention of the celebration in Franklin's correspondence. This sent us into a frenzy of detective work -- and by the time we had exhausted our ingenuity, we had not only pieced together the story of the wedding but had also located Franklin's wedding gift.

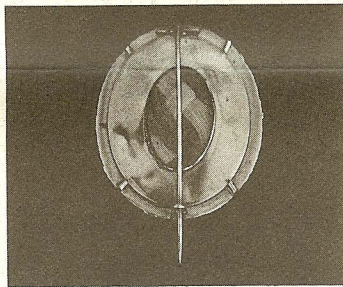
The Search Begins

Our point of departure was a letter from the bride's father, William Alexander, a Scottish merchant who was one of Franklin's old friends from his London years. The Alexanders had moved to France after war had broken out, and by now they were established in the village of St.-Germain-en-Laye, on the outskirts of Paris. On Wednesday, Sept. 8, 1779, Alexander wrote:

"We have agreed to dine wt you on Sunday after our Ceremony -- I think I mentioned to Mr Williams That we would Expect you here to spend Monday wt us as the distance is great we can manage quarters for you & your Son that night when you will be at hand to proceed to Versailles Tuesday -- but whether this Suits or not we shall Relye on your Company Monday to dinner -- That you may see whether our young Couple are as well pleased after as They Seem before They are united -- all here join in assuring you of their warmest attachment & I am ever Yours, W Alexander."

The bridegroom, son of Franklin's niece Grace Harris Williams, had first met Mariamne Alexander while in London in 1774. He was twenty-four years old at the time and had come to England to cultivate business connections. She was

sixteen, and by all accounts a charming and beautiful girl. Jonathan quickly fell in love with her and harbored secret hopes of a union that would not only soothe his soul but also increase his fortunes. Secret, that is, to all but his affectionate great-uncle, who encouraged him to propose marriage. Even after Franklin returned to America, he continued his paternalistic interest. Was Jonathan "married to that sweet Girl" yet, the Doctor wanted to know on March 29, 1776. The dejected answer came on Sept. 3: "You ask me if I am married. I am sorry to say I am not, nor am I likely to be. There are some Requisites which I can't at present command that I fear will prove an insurmountable Bar. Mr. A. says when I am master of 2000 pounds and in Business, he will give me 3000 pounds more, but it will be a long Time before I shall be in that situation, and in the mean Time some other man may be more successfull."



Franklin's wedding gift to Mariamne Alexander. On the back of the brooch are intertwining locks of the bride's and groom's hair.

Williams left England for France in January, 1777. Shortly after he had settled into his new post, his great-uncle offered advice about business and personal matters, regarding a wealthy Nantes merchant named Jean-Daniel Schweighauser: "I think a Connection with Mr. S. might be advantageous to you both, in the way of Business. Besides he is rich, and has handsome Daughters: I know not whether you can get one of them, I only know you may deserve her." Williams answered that he had long given up hope of ever marrying Mariamne, because of the war between their two countries, and that a courtship with "Miss S" was therefore not out of the question.

Miss Schweighauser's first name is not known, but she was the second to eldest of the many Schweighauser sisters. The new romance progressed rapidly. Within a matter of months she not only returned his affections, but also expected a proposal. Encouraged by Franklin, Williams finally approached her father. Schweighauser's reaction was cool: while he didn't refuse, he suggested that Williams ask again when his financial situation had improved.

Williams' situation, however, would get worse before it got better. Former American commissioner Arthur Lee would soon accuse him of illegal business practices and insist that his accounts be audited. Williams was immediately fired as American agent and replaced by none other than Schweighauser, his would-be father-in-law. With great difficulty, he assembled a committee of American merchants living near Nantes who were willing to serve as auditors. Williams knew that Franklin, already vulnerable to charges of nepotism because of his grandson Temple's position as the commission's secretary, was in no position to help him.

Worried and discouraged, he began to consider returning to America.

Despite his troubles, Jonathan's relationship with Miss Schweighauser seemed to have flourished, at least through April, 1779, when he wrote a confidential letter to John Paul Jones -- in code -- mentioning their romance. But between that reference and the wedding on Sept. 12, there seemed to be a black hole. Nothing in Franklin's correspondence assembled at Yale shed any light on how, in a matter of four or five months, Jonathan Williams, Jr., had broken off a potential engagement with one woman, and married another one with whom, as far as we knew, he had had no contact for years. His letterbook (which we have in our office) was of no help: the entries stop in the middle of August, and don't resume until mid-October. All we knew was that Franklin had told him to use "moral algebra."

The Missing Puzzle Piece

Luckily, a missing piece of the puzzle was closer to home than we realized. Across the street from our offices, in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, are housed the miscellaneous eighteenth-century manuscripts that William Smith Mason amassed as part of his vast Franklin Collection. There we discovered a letter dated Nov. 4, 1779, from Jonathan to his parents. It turned out to be exactly what we'd hoped for; or, at least, as close as we were going to get.

Williams explained how he and Mariamne had met, through Franklin's connections with the Alexander family, in 1774; how their "Interviews were frequent and [his] affections soon became engaged"; how he had written to his parents for permission to marry, but the letter must have miscarried, since he had never received an answer. Since Franklin had approved, however, Williams had proposed, but he was told to first "obtain some settlement in Life." Since then, the couple's history had been "on both Sides full of Changes," but their affections remained constant throughout the years.

Jonathan's letter makes it clear that by the time his accounts were settled, in August, 1779, he had decided to marry Mariamne. (Schweighauser had refused to sit on Williams' auditing committee, final proof that relations between the two men had become irreparably soured.) He set out from Nantes for St.-Germain, stopping along the way to write his parents of his intentions. That letter, he explained, missed the last ship, and was never mailed. For whatever reason, William Alexander now considered Williams to be an acceptable match for his daughter -- whatever Williams lacked financially must have been compensated for by the depth of his ardor.

"Doctor Franklin," wrote Jonathan to his parents, "gave us his Blessing, and at the Marriage Ceremony supplied the place of my Father, which left the possibility of but one addition to our happiness, and when we receive your Blessing it will be compleat."

So much for his description of the wedding! The only other eyewitness account of the event was written by a young Bostonian who, having just arrived in Paris with dispatches for Franklin, was invited. The young man, Elkanah Watson, accompanied the groom on horse-

IV. His Writing Ability

B. Franklin, Experimenter, would have been hard put to get attention had it not been for B. Franklin, Writer. Curiosity and writing skill are a combination more powerful than many scientists and scholars realize.

Franklin's reports to Peter Collinson on the electrical experiments were not mere personal letters. There is abundant evidence that Franklin expected them to be published, and Collinson, the English enthusiast over things scientific and things American, did his part. The reports were quoted at meetings of the Royal Society. Some were printed or summarized in Edward Cave's Gentleman's Magazine, the best magazine in existence. Collinson gave them to Cave to issue as a collection, which first appeared in April 1751 under the title Experiments and Observations on Electricity, Made at Philadelphia in America, by Mr. Benjamin Franklin.

I. Bernard Cohen, in his great edition of Franklin's book, published by Harvard University Press in 1941, told how the publication evolved. Supplements were published in 1753 and 1754, as Franklin sent more letters. Four new English editions came out in 1754, 1760, 1769, and 1774, growing larger. The last two were supervised by Franklin himself, who was then in London as agent for colonial legislatures. Three French editions were published, beginning in 1752, and the work was also translated into Italian and German. Experiments and Observations became one of the most influential books of the Age of Enlightenment.

Franklin wrote these pieces in his customary lucid and informal style. His learned readers welcomed the clarity, simplicity, and humor of the descriptions that Franklin provided. As Professor Cohen wrote, "Surely there can be no question but that the immense popularity of Franklin's book was in some measure due to that literary style of which he was a master before he undertook a single electrical experiment." Long after

Franklin was gone, Sir Humphry Davy, the English chemist, pointed out that he wrote "equally for the uninitiated and for the philosopher." Davy continued: "Science appears in his language in a dress wonderfully decorous, the best adapted to display her native loveliness. He has in no instance exhibited that false dignity, by which philosophy [science] is kept aloof from common applications."

Franklin's ability to communicate was no miracle from on high. All readers of his autobiography have been treated to his account of how he gave himself a writing course based on Addison and Steele's Spectator. Not so well known is the training he got during his decades of Philadelphia journalism, when he learned literary tactics and self-control and boldly exercised his imagination by creating fictional characters and making them speak as though they were alive. This aspect of Franklin's art is well told in a book by James A. Sappenfield entitled A Sweet Instruction: Franklin's Journalism as a Literary Apprenticeship. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., and others have forcefully pointed out the significance of writing skill in Franklin's career. Franklin himself never had the smallest doubt of it. In his autobiography he said with simple truth, "Prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement." In a remarkable essay on literary style, written for his Pennsylvania Gazette in August 1733, when he was only 27, he argued that there was scarcely any accomplishment more necessary than that of writing well in one's mother tongue. He said this was true whether a person expected to write for publication or to manage "private affairs, both of business and friendship." He recommended that the performance be "smooth, clear and short" and said that "with all true judges, the simplest style is the most beautiful." He commended a certain gentleman "who would use no word in his works that

was not well understood by his cook-maid."

As we look about us in the 1990s, what is the relevance of Franklin's great gifts of curiosity and writing skill? Malaise exists in our educational system from bottom to top. All too many of our students lack enthusiastic curiosity about any subject and are shockingly inept at "smooth, clear" communication with other people. Granted, we can't expect to see Franklins in our classrooms, but the example of Franklin says something about the emphasis that our schools ought to be placing on the qualities that made Franklin extraordinary. Are the schools paying enough attention to curiosity and writing? Too many of them are not.

Can curiosity be taught? Perhaps no teacher can create it out of nothing, but if some of it is hiding behind a student's exterior, perhaps it can be brought into the open by contagious example. The best teachers do that. If this is too much to expect of most teachers, at least the system needs to take more care not to discourage curiosity.

Can writing be taught? Of course it can. Franklins cannot be mass-produced, but all people, at whatever level of the educational system and whatever level of their present skill, can improve their writing. Improvement requires a sound mental approach (empathy for the reader), a lot of practice, and a lot of friendly criticism. The basic need is the recognition by every component of the system, from grade school through graduate school, that Benjamin Franklin was correct in his evaluation of writing well in one's mother tongue.

This ends the fourth and last part of the article. Max Hall, a free-lance writer of 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.

WEDDING, CONTINUED

back as they rode through the gorgeous countryside from Passy to St.-Germain on the morning of September 12; Franklin made the journey in a carriage. Watson was so awed by the company and the beauty of the Alexander estate that he neglected to describe the party, except to say that a number of important officials were present, including the mayor of Nantes.

The ceremony at the Alexander estate was a civil service. Thanks to the sleuthing of Claude-Anne Lopez, we discovered that the religious ceremony had been held the previous Sunday, at the only Protestant chapel in Paris -- the Dutch Chapel, located in the same hôtel where Beaumarchais had written The Marriage of Figaro in 1778.

We found one final, wonderful detail about the occasion in Charles Coleman Sellers' Franklin in Portraiture. Franklin's wedding gift to the bride, at her request, was a delicate miniature portrait, painted in opaque water color on ivory, after Duplessis. In a glass com-

partment attached to the back, the bride and groom affixed intertwining locks of their hair. According to Sellers, the miniature, set in a gold brooch, belonged to Lydia Spencer Moncure Robinson of Paoli, Pennsylvania.

Tracking Down the Miniature

Could we locate the miniature and get a photograph to use as an illustration in Volume 30? Our expertise is in tracking down people who have been dead for centuries, not in locating people who were alive thirty years ago. We called upon the resourceful Roy Goodman, who did not disappoint us. Paoli is in Chester County, he advised, and he supplied us with the phone numbers of the Chester County Historical Society and the department of Archives and Records. Laurie Rofini, at the County Archives, determined that we would be dealing with Ms. Robinson's heirs, and referred us to the Register of Wills at the Chester County Courthouse. There, a certain Valerie became so intrigued with the nature of our inquiry that she volunteered

to read through the voluminous Robinson will for references to the miniature. Twenty-four hours later, Valerie produced the name and address of the heir, Mrs. Alice Biddle Beebe of Portland, Oregon.

The Beebe family was understandably amazed when, out the blue, they received a letter from the Franklin Papers inquiring about one of their heirlooms. They responded quickly and enthusiastically, and have been exceptionally gracious in arranging for their miniature to be photographed. We now have top-quality illustrations of an absolutely charming and valuable piece of Franklin's history, rarely seen and never exhibited.

Collectors Take Note!

The Beebe family is willing to consider the possibility of "deaccessioning" this exquisite piece mentioned in the article. All inquiries should be made in writing to the Alice Biddle Beebe Family, 2625 SW Patton Road, Portland, OR 97201.

A SPECIAL SMATTERING: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TOUR OF EUROPE, 1990

by Larry E. Tise

17/18 February, 1990

(Saturday/Sunday):

After months of thinking about it, some on-again and off-again seasons of research and planning, and numerous fitful efforts to make contacts in various cities, I left from Philadelphia for London via New York City, arriving at Heathrow at a surreal 6:50 a.m.

By 9:30 a.m. I was on the streets looking for the tube.

My first stop was St. Martin-in-the-Fields, which was attended by Benjamin Franklin during his long stays in England. St. Martin's is right on Trafalgar Square in the heart of London and at the very center of the British Empire--hardly a field around.

I arrived during the course of a communion service with some of the most beautiful choral music heard on this side of heaven. No sooner had I entered the church than I was immediately adopted! I landed in a pew next to Barbara Morris, who is in charge of greeting people at St. Martin's and immediately homed in on me as clearly a visitor. When I told her I was planning to bring a group of people sometime to visit various places where Benjamin Franklin trod, she went wild with ideas and contacts and willingness to help out.

Stocked with publications on St. Martin's and with promises of a helping hand, I went forth in search of 36 Craven Street, where Benjamin Franklin lived for all except a few months of his almost eighteen years in England prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. It is within three blocks of St. Martin's, but

well hidden and in the middle of a major rehabilitation project.

Then I got a little off the Franklin trail (or at least I thought I was). Seeing that Wesley's Chapel was not too far out of my pathway, I headed to that little mecca of Methodism where John Wesley lived and worked during the last fifteen years or so of his life. I could not believe all of the wonderful items in Wesley's library, his clothes, his furniture, and to top all of it--there was Wesley's electrical machine! Acquired in 1746 (the same year Benjamin Franklin himself became acquainted with electricity), the device was used by Wesley for medical therapy. I also found that Wesley formed a group of people who gave loans to young men needing funds to get started in business! How Franklinesque can you get? On top of everything else, I was reminded that Wesley's last writing for publication before his death in 1788 was an attack on slavery. So was Franklin's last writing on that same subject. A comparative article is clearly in order.

19 February, 1990 (Monday):

My first visit was with the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts at 8 John Adams Street. What a wonderful place. Christopher Lucas showed me around their fabulous old building--the same one Benjamin Franklin frequented when he became a member. Franklin is quite prominent in the place. They have a Franklin Hall, a Franklin bust, and they give a Franklin medal! Franklin, it seems, had a powerful influence on the Society prior to 1773, when he loudly protested the society's practice of essentially stealing inventions

from individuals throughout the British colonies.

Lucas outlined the cooperative venture that once existed between the RSA, as it is known, and The Franklin Institute. In 1980 or so a joint lecture was cooperatively sponsored on both sides of the Atlantic. As I outlined the nature and purpose of the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial program, it seemed that there is now a basis on which to relaunch the cooperative venture, perhaps by having our science medalist go to London and repeat the lecture he or she will give at our annual Bower Awards Convocation.

From the Royal Society I went in search of the Medical Society of London, another Franklin organization at 11 Chandos Street, near Oxford Circus. I was met by the officers of the Medical Society--all active physicians--who were baffled to learn that Franklin had been a member of their Society. Since their membership had always been restricted to physicians, we began to speculate on Franklin's involvement. Soon we were as a group poring over their earliest record books until we found the entries relating to Franklin's membership. No precise reason was given in the entries relating to his nomination, election, and admission. But the date was of interest--1785. Franklin chaired a French national commission in 1784 to determine the claims of Dr. Mesmer about animal magnetism or Mesmerism. Franklin, to the delight of most medical doctors, found Mesmer's claims fraudulent. Membership in the Medical Society of London was clearly a reward.

(To be continued in the next Gazette)

FRANKLIN IN ARCHITECTURE

by Thomas Hines

Franklin effigies are hardly a recent phenomenon. Franklin stares out of the east portal of City Hall. He sits, much larger than life, in white marble, at The Franklin Institute. He's made out of pennies near his grave in Olde City. He pronounces a proverb on the hour at the Franklin Mills Mall.

On the campus at the University of Pennsylvania, which claims him as a founder, he can be seen seated and mature in front of College Hall, and walking in a hurry on 33rd Street between Walnut and Spruce. The latter, Young Franklin by R. Tait McKenzie, is notable for escaping the twinkle-eyed foxy grandpa image found in so many representations.

If you count medallions, murals, sculptures that are inside of buildings and minor works, you could probably spend a week or two finding well over 100 Franklins around the city. And if you count commercial uses in signs and advertising, you'll probably never finish.

Is this honor? Or is it merely clutter? Is the face of Franklin so inescapable that any meaning he once had is lost?

I think it's time to find out, and I have a proposal--or perhaps a piece of conceptual art--to find out. Let's call it the Missing Franklin Project.

The first phase is a moratorium on images of Benjamin Franklin. For a period of at least five years, there would be no new statues, monuments or other

physical tributes to that great printer-lobbyist-aphorist-diplomat-inventor-post master and all-around operator. He would not appear in advertisements or on the covers of guidebooks.

The second phase would be a project to cover statues and pictures of Franklin. Colossal objects, such as the bridge, lightning bolt and ghost house, would be unaffected, but most other works would be wrapped in shrouds. Institutions that claim to have been started by Franklin would temporarily cover his name. Except on \$100 bills, which most people never see anyway, Franklin would disappear from Philadelphia.

The point of this exercise would not be to induce people to forget Benjamin Franklin, but to focus on what he really means. But obliterating his image, we would remove the cute familiarity of his face and make his importance more visible. The inspiration for this idea is the Lenten practice in Catholic churches of covering statues and other images. This reminds believers of the emptiness of a world without Jesus and the saints.

Obviously, Franklin was no saint, but rather a complex and ambiguous character. If he were around nowadays, he would surely be susceptible to attacks on the family values front, and muckrakers would not have to look very hard to find evidence of ethical lapses and sharp business practices.

Still, Franklin, along with the other so-called Founding Fathers, does occupy a place in our cultural and political mythology that might otherwise be filled by gods or monarchs. While it is unfair to expect mere mortals to live up to such an exalted role, this is a persistent cultural phenomenon, so we should look for qualities in the man that are useful to celebrate.

Once the face is removed, perhaps the best-known thing about Franklin is the Poor Richard proverbs with their boring advice to save pennies, maintain horse-shoe nails and work together to achieve large goals. For the lives of most Americans, thrift has been a close to disloyal act, and Ben has been enlisted as a salesman to promote prosperity through consumption. But the real Franklin understood that capital formation depends on private decisions to save, and he sought to make private virtue and public virtue coincide.

Franklin was the only city-dweller among the founders, and was at home in London and Paris as much as in Philadelphia. While Thomas Jefferson, who built a mansion in the wilderness, a retreat still further into the wilderness, symbolizes the persistent and paradoxical American dream of civilization in isolation, Franklin was an urban realist. He knew that cities provide opportunities for

FUTURE FRIENDS EVENTS

January 7-11, 1993

"Favia 200"

(First Air Voyage in America)

On January 9, 1793, aeronaut Jean Pierre Blanchard lifted off at 10:09 a.m. from the Old Walnut Street Prison yard in Philadelphia. A Bicentennial Celebration in honor of the first manned balloon flight in the United States will be held in Philadelphia.

On Saturday, January 9, at 10:00 a.m. a reenactment of the first air voyage in America will take place from Independence Mall utilizing a custom-built gas balloon replica. Other highlights of this celebration will be a 200-balloon "lamplighter"

tether on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, competitive balloon races, a Balloon Federation of America trade show, and programs on the history of ballooning.

The Friends of Franklin have been invited to attend this memorable event and participate in the various activities being held throughout the celebration. The tie-in with Benjamin Franklin is most appropriate since he was present for the first balloon ascension in Paris. If you would like to be part of a delegation representing the Friends of Franklin at this celebration, please call Kathleen Fau at (215) 448-1329 for a complete schedule of events.

January 15, 1993

Friends of Franklin Board Meeting

7:00 p.m. The Franklin Institute's Board Room.

January 16, 1993

Franklin Enemies Symposium

(see page 2 for details)

April 2-3, 1993 date changed to

June 10-12

Annual Friends of Franklin Tour

Mystic SeaPort, CT

ARCHITECTURE CONTINUED

people, and that the hard part is making cities work.

Franklin is associated with founding many of the institutions necessary for the survival of people in large groups, such as hospitals, fire brigades, a postal system, roads, insurance co-operatives and newspapers. He is also associated with the creation of organizations that help people achieve larger aspirations, and can be supported only by large communities. These include libraries, learned societies and universities.

Franklin shared with Jefferson and some other of his contemporaries a wide-

ranging scientific curiosity, and he was better than most of the others in moving from the speculative to the immediately useful. He refused to patent the Franklin stove, because he saw it not as a money-making venture but as a contribution to the public good. The close links between individual curiosity, technology and social improvement are often overlooked nowadays, and as a result, people are losing confidence in their ability to improve things.

I suspect that the disappearance of Franklin's face would reveal that what he stood for has been ignored. A society

without his enthusiasm for public institutions, education, investment in health and safety, and popular participation in technology and politics is exactly what we have.

Having made that realization, we could then decide whether to uncover the images--or to leave them hidden until the day they mean something again.

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