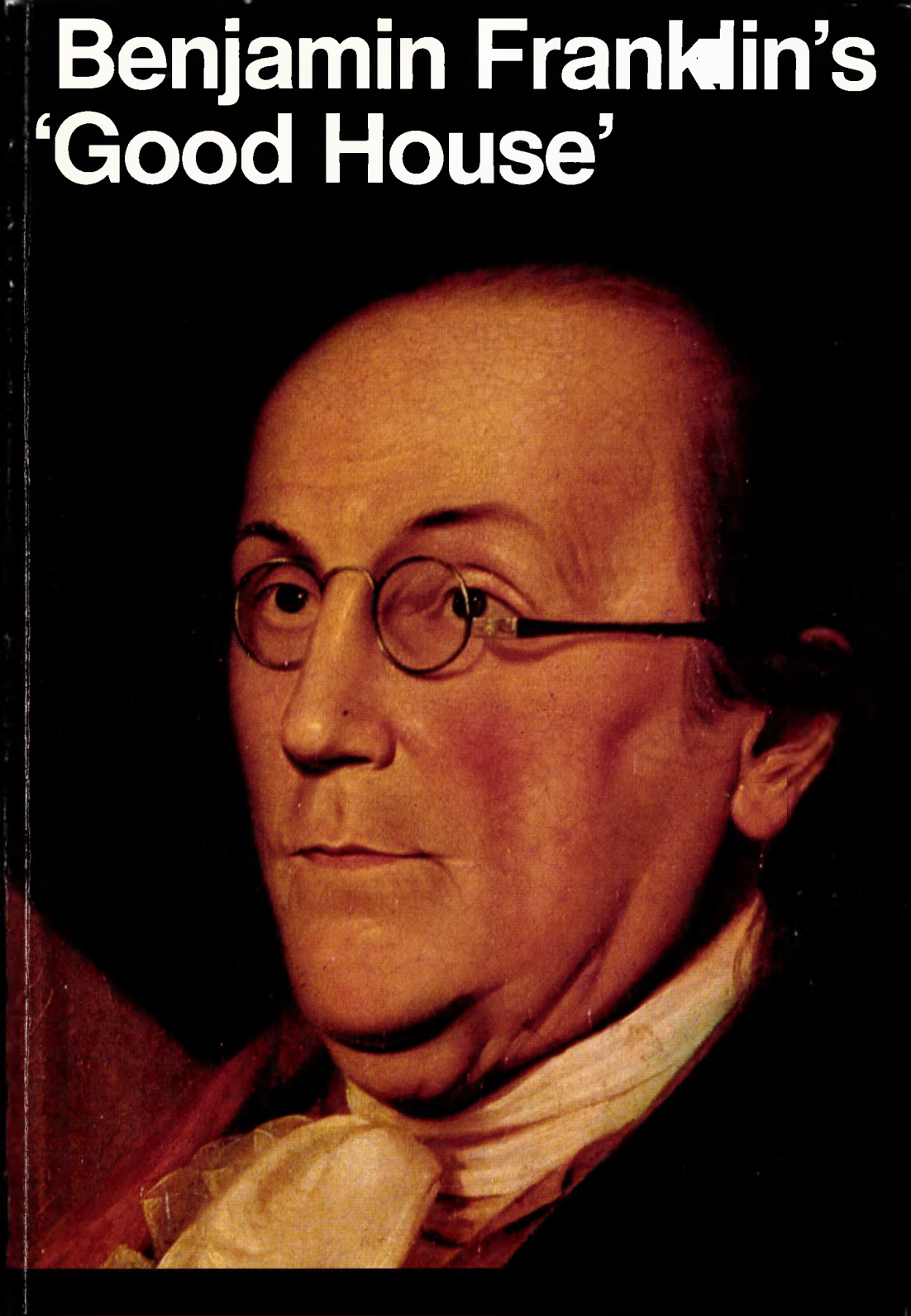
Benjamin Franklin's 'Good House'



Handbook 114

Benjamin Franklin's 'Good House'

The Story of Franklin Court

Independence National Historical Park
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Washington, D.C., 1981

Cover: Detail from Charles Willson Peale's portrait of Franklin late in life.

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About This Book

The only house that Benjamin Franklin ever owned stood in an airy courtyard off Market Street in Philadelphia. He once called it "a good House contrived to my Mind," but in reality it belonged as much to his family as it did to him, who spent so much time abroad. This volume is the brief story of the house and family that lived there. It is also the story of its sad destruction and of the fitting memorial raised on the original site. The author is Claude-Anne Lopez, a Franklin scholar and noted author of *Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris* (New Haven: 1966) and (with Eugenia W. Herbert) *The Private Franklin: The Man and His Family* (New York, 1975).

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PRINT SHOP
&
BINDERY
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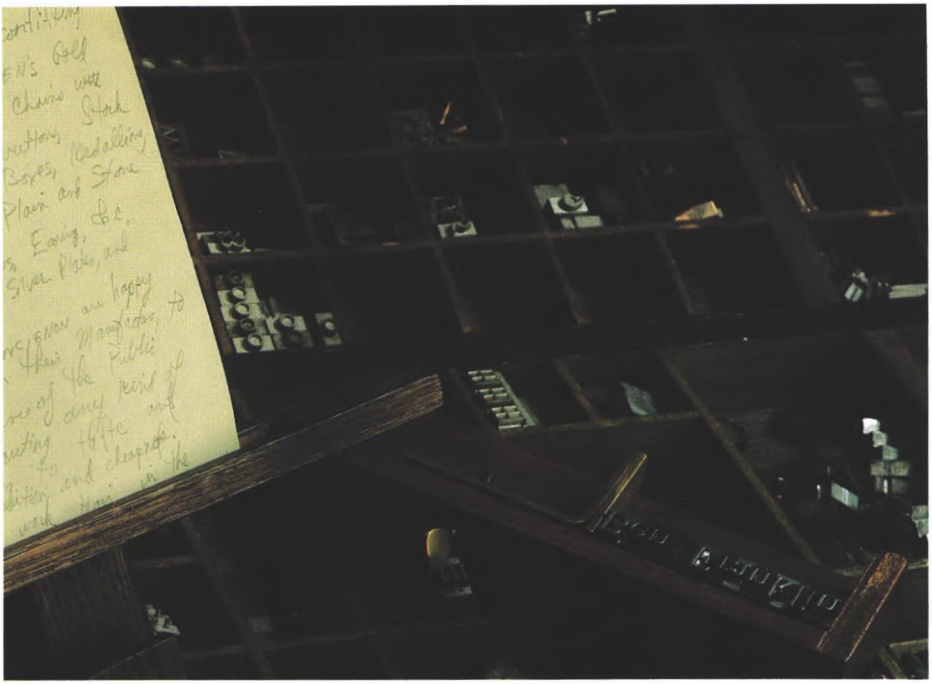
Franklin Court Today

Benjamin Franklin lived in the house for little more than seven years, but every part bore his imprint. It was constructed according to his plan. He supervised its furnishing from abroad. At 79, still a vigorous figure honored on two continents, he was busy adding rooms for his daughter's growing family and a library for his books and scientific instruments. It was, he once said, "a good House contrived to my Mind."

For nearly half a century the house stood in the middle of an interior court off Market Street—not far from the print shop that brought him wealth and fame, just a few blocks from the State House whose politics claimed so much of his time. While he lived, the warmth of family and friends filled the house—fires in the parlor, children romping in the hallway, music and laughter, old friends, good books, long visits in the evening. When he died, the house began a slow dissolution. In 1812, it followed its maker into the dust, demolished by relatives who valued the building less than the land on which it stood.

All that we have today are a few scraps of evidence and some brick and mortar that escaped the wreckers. Far too little to re-create the historic scene yet ample for a memory of Franklin to rise on this site. A steel frame now outlines the original house. Inscriptions on the paving and remnants of foundations mark the findings of archeologists and historians. Best of all, Claude-Anne Lopez's graceful narrative that follows pieces out in our imagination the domestic life of one of the most remarkable figures from the American past.

Franklin Court is today a mix of the old, the new, and the restored. The Market Street houses (shown on the two previous pages) are meticulous exterior restorations. Their interiors are adapted to a variety of interpretive uses: a working 18th-century print shop and book bindery, an exhibit of historical archeology and architecture, and a commemorative post office. On the opposite page, steel frames, rising eloquently in the original courtyard, outline Franklin's vanished house and the print shop he built in 1786 for his grandson. The arbor above is a free interpretation of Georgian garden furniture, built heavier for current use.



A visitor to Franklin Court can step, if only briefly and partially, into the world of the 18th-century printer. The scene approximated today at 320-322 Market is the printing office and bindery of Benjamin Franklin Bache, namesake and protegé of his illustrious grandfather. From 1790 to 1798, he published an influential and aggressively partisan newspaper near this site.

Bache's creed, which he stated in his first issue, has a modern ring: "The Freedom of the Press is the Bulwark of Liberty. An impartial Newspaper is the useful offspring of that Freedom. Its object is to inform . . . . The Publisher can safely promise that no consideration whatever shall induce him blindly to submit to the Influence of any man or set of men: His press shall be free."

Bache drew his political principles from his grandfather's and Jefferson's brand of republicanism. He was suspicious of executive authority, legislative secrecy, the intrusions of the church, and the intentions of the military. When he opposed war with France in 1797, public feeling ran so high against him that he had to carry a club when he walked down the street. But neither villification in the opposition press nor personal attack intimidated him. Even after he was arrested on a charge of libel for denouncing the foreign policy of the Adams administration, he returned to the attack when he was released on bail, persuaded that he was defending the rights of the people. At the height of these political passions, the yellow fever revisited the city. Bache did not flee to the country, as he usually did in summer, but stayed by his presses at Franklin Court and was struck down. While his enemies rejoiced, his widow published a fitting epitaph for this courageous but now little known newspaperman: "In these times, men who see, and think, and feel for their country and posterity can alone appreciate the loss: the loss of a man inflexible in virtue, unappalled by power or persecution, and, who, in dying knew no anxieties but what were excited by his apprehensions for his country—and for his young family."


BE IT REMEMBERED
LAUS DEO!


2

A Good House Contrived to my Mind'

Prologue

The town itself was only some 40 years old and so small that the little group rowing toward it on the Delaware, Saturday night October 5, 1723, feared they had already passed Philadelphia and put to shore to await the morning. The next day they rowed on. At the Market Street wharf, a 17-year-old apprentice printer who had run away from Boston got off the boat and started up the street, tired, ravenous, almost penniless, fearful of being spotted and sent home. He bought three puffy rolls at a bakery on Second Street and munched on one as he carried the other two under his arms. Thus he continued to Fourth Street, where a girl his own age, standing outside her father's house, observed him. She thought him an awkward sight, with his dishevelled hair, dirty clothes, and pockets bulging with stockings. Such was Benjamin Franklin's introduction to Philadelphia . . . and to his future wife.

By 1763 the town had more than doubled in size and the former runaway apprentice, now 57, was very well off. Already famous in the scientific world, he was becoming increasingly important in public affairs. He had spent the last 5 years in England on a political mission, and now that he was home—as he thought for good—he decided the time had come to build a house for himself and his wife Deborah, the very girl who had caught sight of him from her doorstep 40 years earlier. The house was to stand only steps away from the spot where they had first spied each other, on Market Street below Fourth.

Twelve years later, however, Franklin still had not yet seen his own home. Shortly after construction

Previous page: Many items belonging to Franklin are in the collection of the American Philosophical Society. The document is the honorary degree Harvard gave Franklin in 1753. Other objects: a miniature of Louis XVI, which the king personally gave Franklin when he departed France in 1785; a traveling chess set; and the family's expense book.

In the age of Franklin, Philadelphia was the political, intellectual, and cultural center of the colonies.

began, he had been sent off to London once more to represent Pennsylvania and could not supervise the final work. His family had to move in without him, and his wife died before they had ever shared their home. When he eventually came back, in May 1775, he hoped to live out his days at Franklin Court with his married daughter and her growing family. But he had come home to a revolution, and within 18 months he was off again on another long mission, this time to France to secure aid for his embattled country.

In September 1785, cannon announced Franklin's last landing at the Market Street wharf. The jubilant city gave him a hero's welcome. He was carried in triumph up Market Street, bells ringing the while, and into Franklin Court. He was now 79 and really home at last, with almost five years left to spend in his house.

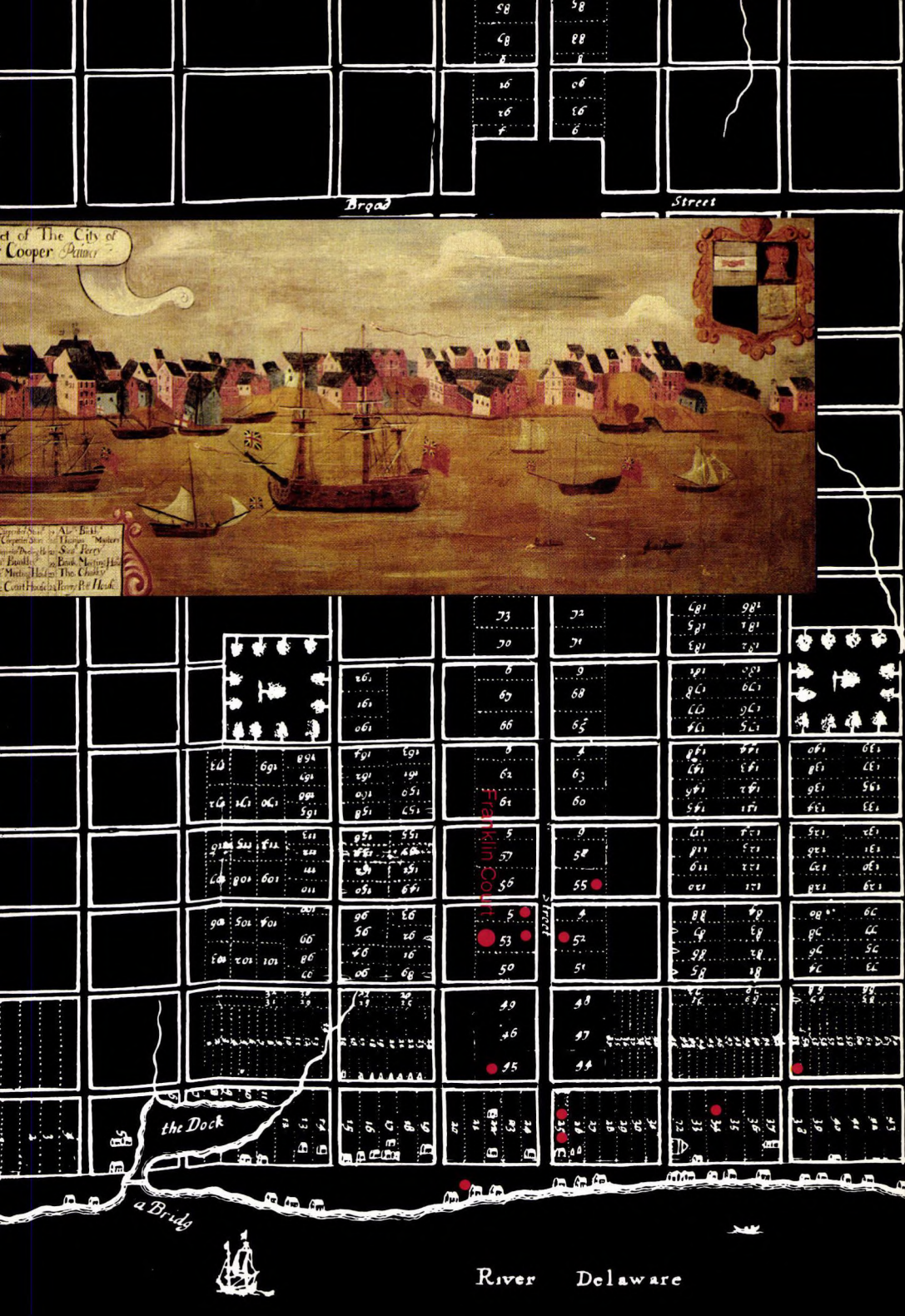
Philadelphia's Uncommon Citizen

The house was carefully planned, soberly elegant on the exterior, more elaborate within, and, like him, it never quite stopped growing while he lived. Up-to-date, innovative in some of its features, comfortable without ostentation, it bespoke the man who nourished, molded, and disciplined himself into one of the most extraordinary figures of all ages. By the time he started building the house, his various careers might have filled the lives of several men.

First there was the printing career, the very core of his professional being. "Benjamin Franklin, Printer," he proudly called himself in his will. His formal education—all two years of it—had stopped when he was 10, for there was hardly any money to spend on the 15th child of a humble

Philadelphia was a rising commercial town of 10,000 people when young Franklin stepped ashore at the Market Street wharf in 1723. This pleasant view from across the Delaware was painted by one Peter Cooper about that time.

On the map at right, William Penn's original survey (1683) for the new town he founded, are marked the several places Franklin lived and worked between his arrival as a youth and the construction of his own house in a court off Market Street 40 years later. He obviously found life in these few blocks satisfying.


Broad
Street
Franklin Court
Street
the Dock
a Bridg
River Delaware

Boston soapmaker. At 12 he was apprenticed to his brother James, just back from London with printing equipment, books, magazines, and a store of new ideas. Benjamin quickly learned to handle the tools, he devoured the books and absorbed the new ideas. In spite of conflict with his brother, he adopted James' irreverent views toward organized religion and overbearing authority. When Benjamin fled at 17, he was running away from the Boston establishment and its growing resentment of his outspoken ways just as much as from his brother's blows.

After seven years of false starts and frustrations, the runaway managed to open his own printing shop in Philadelphia. It flourished. In due course, he was entrusted with the printing of paper money and legal documents for Pennsylvania and neighboring colonies. He published and sold books, he entered the wholesale paper business, and he financed the establishment of other printers in New York, New Haven, Charleston, and Antigua.

Along with printing went a highly rewarding career in journalism. As an apprentice, he had helped his brother bring out *The New-England Courant*, whose satirical jibes had caused James to be jailed more than once. When he ran his own *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Franklin emphasized news rather than commentary. His financial breakthrough came with the publication in 1732 of *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which for 25 years spread the gospel of industry, frugality, and the homely virtues throughout Pennsylvania and beyond.

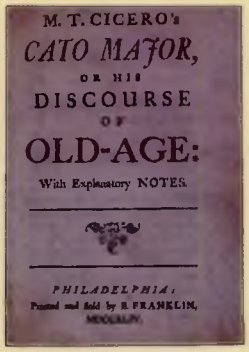
Entwined with printing and publishing, and equally reflecting his passion for communication, was his career in the postal system. Postmaster of Philadelphia for 16 years, Deputy Postmaster-General for all the colonies during the next 21, he improved the network of roads, revamped the organization, speeded up the mail by moving it by night as well as by day, and put the service for the first time on a sound financial basis.

Deborah Read, whom he took as his wife in 1730, was his partner and constant assistant. Almost as industrious as her husband and—by his own admission—even more frugal, Deborah ran a general store that offered all varieties of dry goods plus such items as ointments concocted by her mother "against the Itch" and the high-quality "crown soap" manufactured by Franklin's brother John from a secret recipe. Deborah was also raising their daughter Sally and William, a boy born to Franklin of an unknown woman some time around 1730. Their other child, Francis Folger, died of smallpox at age 4.

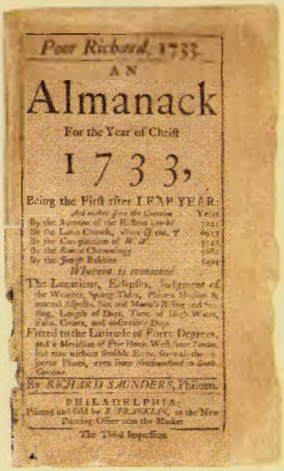
By their mid-40s, the hard-working and thrifty couple had saved enough to live comfortably on investments, and Franklin was free to withdraw from business and follow his own inclinations: scientific research and a more active involvement in civic affairs. Science, which he fondly called "philosophical amusement," gave him six of the most exciting years of his life—a chance to use his imagination, his powers of deduction, his manual skills, all this in the company of eager fellow-workers. Those years culminated in his daring—some even thought impious—assertion and proof that electricity was a force of nature and that lightning, far from being an awesome manifestation of God's arbitrary powers, could be tamed by man.

Printer and Journalist

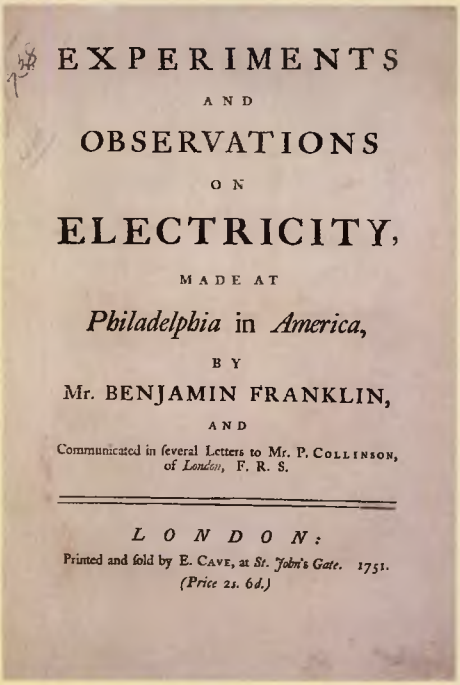
The printing press was Franklin's way to wealth and early fame. He learned the trade as a youth at his brother's side in Boston, blossomed as an anonymous writer of essays—the celebrated "Silence Dogood" papers—for his brother's paper, worked as a journeyman in Philadelphia and London, and by age 24 owned his own printing business and newspaper. He was the best writer of his day in America and one of the best read. From his press poured a steam of pamphlets, essays, magazines, aphorisms, and almanacs that entertained his countrymen and helped to shape the distinctive American folkways of his time.


M. T. CICERO's
CATO MAJOR,
OR HIS
DISCOURSE
OF
OLD-AGE:
With Explanatory NOTES.
PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and Sold by B. FRANKLIN,

Franklin's edition of Cicero's Old Age, *1744, is a work of elegant graphic design.*


Poor Richard, 1733.
AN
Almanack
For the Year of Christ
1733,
Being the First after LEAP YEAR:
By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.
PHILADELPHIA:

Franklin's almanac spread his ideas of industry and frugality among the common people.



EXPERIMENTS

AND

OBSERVATIONS

ON

ELECTRICITY,

MADE AT

Philadelphia in *America*,

BY

Mr. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,

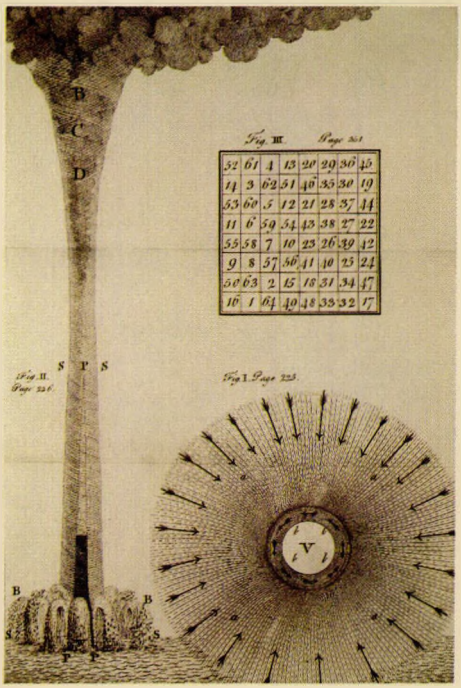
AND

Communicated in several Letters to Mr. P. COLLINSON, of *London*, F. R. S.

LONDON:

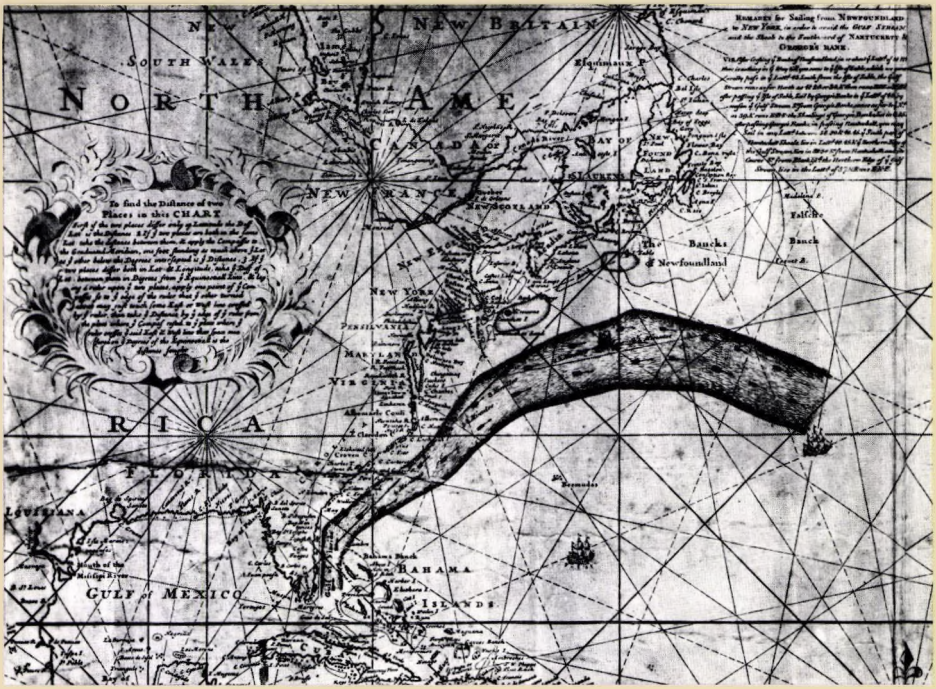
Printed and sold by E. CAVE, at *St. John's Gate*. 1751.

(Price 2s. 6d.)



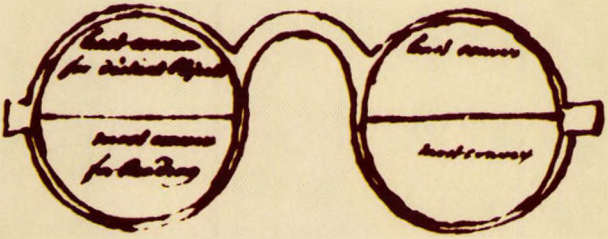
Franklin's searching mind was equally at home in both the theoretical and the practical. He made fundamental contributions to the understanding of electricity, charted the Gulf Stream, investigated the weather, and invented such useful everyday gadgets as the Franklin stove and bifocals.

This Leyden jar (a device for storing an electrical charge) belonged to Franklin. He apparently acquired it in France while serving as ambassador and brought it home with him when he returned in 1785. It is now part of the scientific collection of the American Philosophical Society.

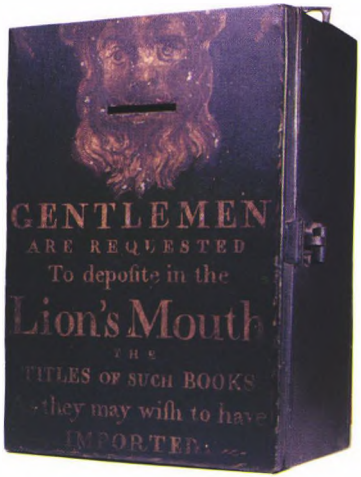


Franklin was probably the first scientist to study the Gulf Stream. He learned about it from Nantucket whalers, who used it going to and from the whaling grounds. In 1769, Franklin mapped the stream-in-the-ocean for ship captains carrying the mail between America and Europe. The chart above, recently discovered in the Bibliotheque Nationale, is one of the first descriptions of that stream.

On his last voyage across the Atlantic, in 1785 when he was 79, Franklin was still busy studying the ocean. He measured the temperature of the water at different fathoms and noted the currents and colors of the water and the gulf weed floating by. Out of this study came one of his most interesting works, his Marine Observations, *into which he poured a lifetime of thought about ships and the sea.*



Franklin invented bifocals in 1784 while living in France. Finding it troublesome to keep switching between two pairs of glasses, he "had the glasses cut and half of each kind associated in the circle."



The Library Company, which Franklin founded in 1731, was the first subscription library in North America.

The public enterprises he launched or helped organize and finance included Philadelphia's first lending library, its first hospital and fire insurance company, plans for paving and lighting the town streets and policing them at night, a local militia, the American Philosophical Society, and the Philadelphia Academy that later became the University of Pennsylvania. Beyond city and province, he initiated the Albany Plan of Union for the colonies and a project to explore the Arctic, to name only two of his far-reaching schemes.

So much participation in public life inevitably led into politics. In 1751, Franklin was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, which he had served the previous 15 years as clerk. He soon became one of its leaders and thus embroiled in the controversy between the Assembly and the Penn family, absentee proprietors of the colony, over taxation of their vast landholdings. This became a particularly sore point during the French and Indian War (1754–63), when the problem of raising money for the common defense turned acute. Though already in his 50s, Franklin played an active role in this war, especially in organizing defenses on the frontier.

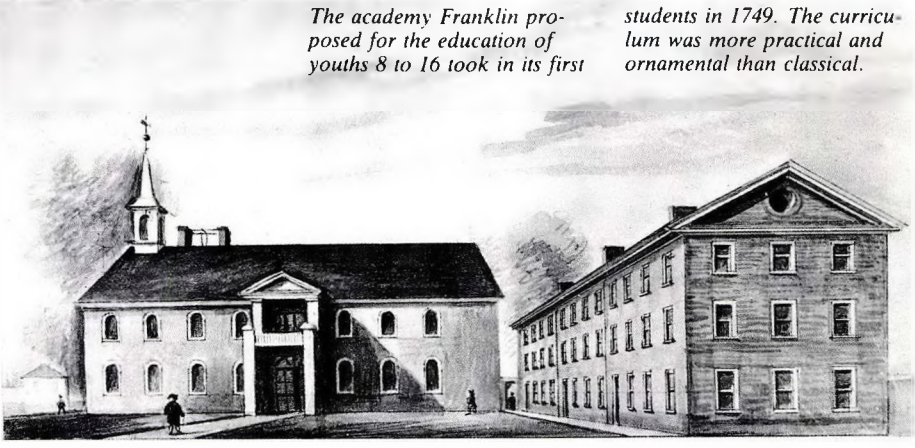
In 1757, the Pennsylvania Assembly entrusted him with the task of presenting its case about taxation to the Privy Council in London. Flanked by his inseparable companion, his son William, he sailed off to England. He eventually reached a satisfactory compromise with the Penns, but his mission, originally meant to last a year at the most, kept him abroad for five.

By the time he returned in 1762, he had received an honorary degree

Franklin had a hand in the founding of the Pennsylvania Hospital, the first in the colonies when it opened in 1752. When the campaign to raise money for the hospital was lagging, he threw his support behind it and brought in much public and private money. The view above shows the exterior plan circulated by the promoters.

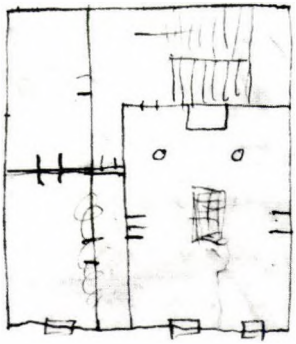
Fire was the scourge of colonial towns. To spread the risks, Franklin and others organized the first American fire insurance company in 1752, the Philadelphia Contributionship. A wooden plaque with a seal of interlocked hands (left) identified protected houses.

The academy Franklin proposed for the education of youths 8 to 16 took in its first students in 1749. The curriculum was more practical and ornamental than classical.



from St. Andrews University in Scotland and become known all over the world as Doctor Franklin. William had taken a law degree in London, married a refined young woman from Barbados, and was about to be installed as Royal Governor of New Jersey. The adolescent Sally had matured into a young lady of 19, musically accomplished and marriageable. Deborah must have been immensely relieved that her husband had decided not to remain abroad permanently, as rumors had it, nor had tried very hard to persuade her to cross the Atlantic. He had suggested once that she join him in England with Sally, for whom he had found an eligible young man, but Deborah refused and he did not insist. Her terror of the sea, he knew, was invincible.

Doctor Franklin Builds a House



This sketch of the house's first floor is in Franklin's own hand. It shows the stairway on the north, a hall off-center running through the house, and the large, ornate dining room with its fireplace.

Franklin now talked of settling down for good in Philadelphia. The Assembly, to demonstrate its satisfaction with the agreement he worked out with the Penns, voted him a salary retroactive for five years. With this sizable sum of cash, he started building his house. Franklin had been buying land in Philadelphia for more than 20 years. To Deborah's inheritance, he added adjoining strips purchased little by little from her brother and sister and two neighbors, until he owned a substantial piece of property, 75 feet wide and 300 feet deep, between Third Street and Fourth, extending from Market (or High Street as it was then called) halfway to Chestnut. Franklin was far too gregarious to consider moving out to the country, even for the summer. While expressing the highest regard—theoretically—for agriculture,

he was, unlike Washington, Jefferson, and most of the gentry of his day, a city boy through and through.

His choice of site did not symbolize a break with the past. The property was little more than a block from the State House and in the midst of the friends of his youth, the artisans, craftsmen, and shopkeepers, whom he called "leather apron men." His immediate neighbors were a tailor, a tanner, a saddletree maker, a joiner, an innkeeper, a wig maker, a printer. Yet by building in the airy space of an inner court—Deborah once exclaimed that at the height of summer their charming entryway was the pleasantest place in town—he did not conceal that he had gone up in the world.*

The man just returned from England in 1762 was infinitely more sophisticated than the creator of *Poor Richard* who had left home five years earlier. Under the tutelage of his London landlady, Mrs. Margaret Stevenson, he had developed a taste for elegant furniture, good china and silver, fine crystal. He had shipped so many crates of household goods over the ocean that he now needed a showcase to display his new possessions, a house that would combine the native ingenuity of its owner with the European refinements he had recently discovered.

"If you are going to build a house, build it modern," he once wrote. Functionally, his house would be avant-garde. It would be protected, of course, by the lightning rod of his own devising. It would be heated by his brainchild, the Pennsylvania fire-

Deborah and Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin Wilson's portraits show the pair in their early 50s.

* *This arrangement was not unusual in Philadelphia. Several other blocks near the center of town had been cut up into "courts" to use space more economically.*

place; thanks to the clever arrangement of its flues, the "Franklin stove" provided twice the heat of earlier fireplaces, distributed it more evenly, and used only one-fourth the amount of fuel. The kitchen, too, as he planned it, would benefit from his research in the physical properties of air; it would boast the most ingenious contrivances available for disposing of steam, smoke, and odors. "A good House," as he later put it, "contrived to my Mind."

Work on the new house started in the spring of 1763 with all the cheer and high hopes that generally accompany such undertakings. Except for a draftsman's plan of the second floor and a sketch by Franklin of the first floor, all traces of the building contract and the architectural plans have disappeared. Franklin obviously called upon the best people available and had them use the best material. To design and build the house, he turned to Robert Smith, one of the foremost carpenter-architects in the colonies. Smith had established his reputation as the builder of numerous houses, churches, and public buildings. Franklin's old friend Samuel Rhoads, a wealthy merchant and the designer of the Pennsylvania Hospital, agreed to act as overseer.

Excavation had hardly begun when Franklin left on an inspection tour of colonial post offices. By the time he returned home seven months later, the foundations, brick walls, floors, and roof were nearly done, and the interior was ready for finish work. For reasons that are unclear—perhaps because Philadelphia was enjoying a building boom and labor was in short supply—the pace slowed down after this brisk beginning. It took two years from the start of work until the family could move in, and almost two more after that for work to progress to the point that an insurance policy could be issued.

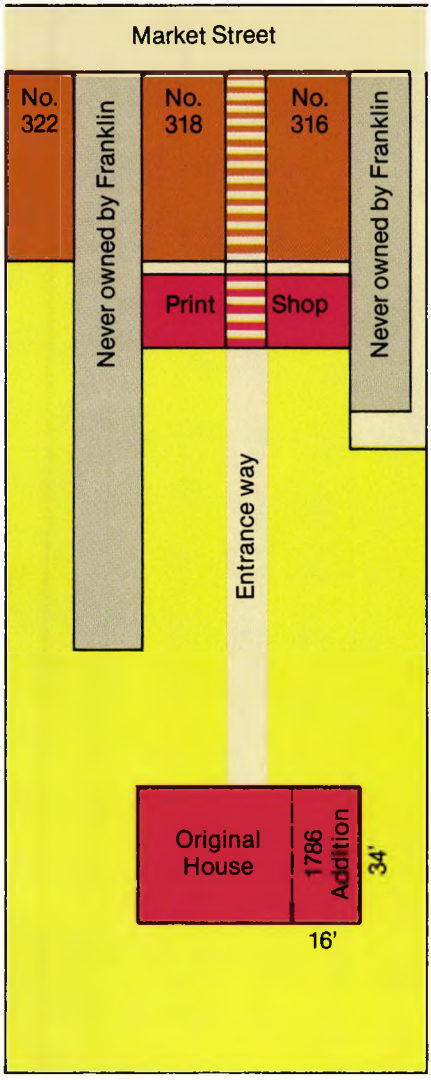
More ominous than the delays in construction, as far as Deborah Franklin was concerned, were the new political circumstances that threatened to turn her dream of quiet companionship into a long nightmare of separation and anguish. The year 1764 was a tumultuous one in Pennsylvania's history. It opened with a horrifying massacre of friendly Indians by the Paxton Boys, a group of frontier settlers who had been exasperated by the raids of hostile Indians. Franklin wrote an impassioned tract against such a blind form of backlash. Even though the surviving Indians were eventually offered protection in Philadelphia, the conviction grew in him that Governor John Penn, the proprietor's nephew, was in collusion with the settlers, who wanted to take the law into their own hands. Franklin saw this as an opportunity to rid the colony for good of proprietary government and place it under the direct control of the Crown. All would then be well, or so he thought. Under Franklin's prodding, the Assembly petitioned the King in May to take over the colony's government.

Discord was in the air through the summer. Franklin expected the worst—"The Proprietary Party . . . will . . . either demolish me or I them"—but nothing so dramatic happened. Work continued on the house. The plasterers finished their work in August, and Franklin himself paid the bill of £25. That fall, he ran for re-election to the Assembly. In the course of the campaign—one of the most scurrilous ever in the colo-

nies—a number of sordid pamphlets were circulated on both sides, one of which lingered cruelly on the mysterious circumstances of William's birth. In the election, Franklin's party won a majority, but he lost his seat. For a brief moment, his wife may have imagined a spell of domestic peace, but within days of his defeat, he was entrusted with another mission to England to press the cause of Pennsylvania against the Penns. After leaving £550 with the builders to carry on work, he departed for London in early November, his friends' good wishes, he said, filling his sails.

Distance seemed to rekindle his interest in the unfinished house. Through the spring of 1765, his letters home were full of eager inquiries and no end of advice. He gave detailed instructions on the way to hang the mohair curtains in the blue room; he wished he had given orders not to paint until he came back; he fretted over the installation of the new kitchen, not quite trusting his wife to understand the mechanical intricacy of the exhaust system, "as it is a mere Machine, and being new to you, I think you will scarce know how to work it." He asked for a sketch of the property, and Deborah got her brother to draw him one, which is still in existence. She bought a sizable lot next to their own, and he was glad she did, though he thought the £900 she paid for it too steep a price. The house looked so much better, she assured him, with an equal space on each side.

There it finally stood, all brick, 34-feet square, three stories high with three rooms to a floor, set in the center of an ample court facing Market Street some 175 feet away. In May the family moved in, even though the



Franklin Court was two decades and more in the building. This plan shows the property after Franklin's improvements in 1786: three new houses on Market Street, a printing office straddling the entrance way, and the additional to the original house. The location of the printing office is conjectural: the archeologists could find no trace of it.

house was far from ready. Deborah didn't complain about the piles of rubble, the disorder, the slow tempo of work. It was her husband, rather, who fumed from faraway London, wondering when the well would be dug and the fences put up, when she would start gardening, when and where the rubbish would go. He bombarded her with instructions: never be without tubs to catch the rainwater lest the foundations suffer . . . be careful with fire . . . don't oil the floors until my return . . . be sure and lock up my books and papers . . . send me the measurements of the windows, the chimney, the buffet. She told him that their friends had gathered for a housewarming in the new dining room. He obviously expected an avalanche of compliments and was peeved when she reported none: "You tell me only of a Fault they found with the House, that it was too little; and not a Word of any thing they lik'd in it: Nor how the Kitchin Chimneys perform; so I suppose you spare me some Mortification, which is kind." She had barely finished reassuring him when he struck a rare note of homesickness: "What Room have you chosen to sleep in? What Colours are they painted? I wish you would give me a particular Account of every Room, who & what is in it, 'twould make me seem a little at home."

Poor Deborah. She was no writer. But she always tried to oblige, and in her own rocky style she took her husband on a "guided tour" of their house.

She started off with his own room on the second floor, which contained his desk, a musical instrument of his own invention, the glass armonica, equipment for his experiments ("glases for musick and for the elicktresatecy," as she rendered it), his writings and pictures—the latter not yet hung because she dared not drive nails without his approval. Deborah's own bedroom, shared with her maid Susannah, was starkly simple: a bed without curtains, a chest of drawers, a table, a mirror, several black-walnut chairs, a few books, and some family pictures. Sally had a south room, furnished with a bed, a bureau, a table, a mirror, a trunk, and some books. On the first floor were a front room meant for guests, furnished with pieces Franklin had sent from England a few years earlier, and a little room on the south reserved for playing cards. The dining room could seat at least twelve persons. Deborah mentions the purchase of a dozen chairs she covered with horsehair that looked fully as elegant as heavy silk. A central hallway ran through the house.

The jewel of the house was the music room, called the blue room, on the third floor. Graced with gilt carvings, an ornamental fireplace, and decorative chairs and screens, it featured Sally's harpsichord and Franklin's beloved glass armonica. Of all his inventions, the armonica was the one that gave him the greatest personal joy. It was a cross between an existing German instrument, the *Glasspiel*, clumsy to perform on because it needed constant re-tuning, and his own mechanical inventiveness. As Franklin perfected it, the armonica consisted of 37 special glasses strung along a spindle which in turn was placed on a four-legged case and activated by a foot treadle. When touched by the moistened tips of the performer's fingers, these rotating glasses produced three octaves of

"Its tones are incomparably sweet," said Franklin of his armonica, and "once well tuned [it] never again wants tuning." This instrument, which once belonged to Franklin, is in the collection of the Franklin Institute.

tones with all the semi-tones and gave out warbles of ethereal sweetness well-suited to the Scottish songs Franklin loved so well.* Playing duets with Sally on the harpsicord was one of his greatest pleasures. Eventually, the music room would boast a welsh harp, a bell harp, tuned bells, and a viola da gamba, all much used by this musical family.

Deborah reported dejectedly that William did not like the "blew room" at all. With extraordinary self-confidence for a man 3,000 miles away who had not even seen the room, her husband told her just what to do: "I suppose the blue Room is too blue, the Wood being of the same Colour with the Paper, and so looks too dark. I would have you finish it as soon as you can, thus. Paint the Wainscot a dead white; paper the Walls blue; and tack the gilt Border round just above the Surbase and under the Cornish. If the Paper is not equal Coloured when pasted on, let it be brushed over again with the same Colour; and let the Papier Machee figures be tack'd to the middle of the Cieling; when this is done, I think it will look very well."

Overlooking all this, pictures of the King and Queen, of the Earl of Bute, of Franklin's brother John. Underfoot, some secondhand Scotch carpets, one of which did not meet with the approval of their friends. To all criticisms and suggestions, Deborah replied that everything would be put to rights as soon as her husband came back. The hanging of the curtains would await his return since he

**The armonica enjoyed quite a vogue in the late 18th century; both Mozart and Beethoven composed for it. Eventually it fell into disrepute because of a suspicion that its performers went mad from excessive stimulation in the tips of their fingers.*

knew exactly how he wanted it done. So would the placing of his clock. Indeed, Deborah's prime emotion about the house was not so much pride of ownership as it was longing for its faraway master: "O my Child, there is graite odds between a mans being at home and abroad as every bodey is a fraid thay shall doe wrong so everey thing is lefte undun."*

Mobs and Riots

THE
PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL;
AND
WEEKLY ADVERTISER.

EXPIRING: In Hopes of a Refurrection to Live again.

The Stamp Act especially drew the ire of newspaper editors. This issue of William Bradford's Pennsylvania Journal, *the last before the act took effect, is draped in mourning.*

If Deborah did not sound more enthusiastic about her new residence, it was probably because the political atmosphere around her was more ominous than Franklin suspected. The Stamp Act threw the colonies into an uproar in 1765. To the people of Pennsylvania, the idea of having to buy pre-stamped paper for all legal and official transactions, even for a newspaper or a pack of cards, overshadowed the conflict with the Penns. Franklin, from afar, misjudged the mood of his fellow-citizens. Having lobbied in vain against the proposed act, he felt there was no point in fighting the unavoidable any further. In a move he later regretted, he even suggested the names of some of his friends as potential agents to sell the abhorred stamps. This was interpreted by many in Philadelphia as a sign that he favored the tax and perhaps was even its original promoter, as some of his enemies maintained. As riots erupted all over the colonies (except in New Jersey where William Franklin held a tight rein), angry crowds attacked the houses of those who were suspected of complicity with the Stamp Act. Deborah found herself in real danger. Her friends and relatives urged

**Franklin and his wife frequently addressed each other as "dear child."*

her to move out of Franklin Court.

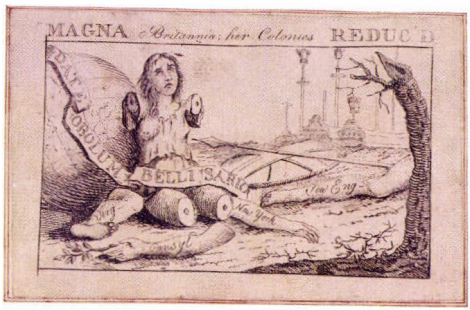
She who was afraid to venture onto the sea or to drive a nail in her husband's absence, lest it be wrong, now stood firm in the midst of the commotion. She sent Sally off to the governor's mansion in New Jersey and prepared to hold her ground. As mobs roamed the streets on the night of September 16, she asked a cousin to fetch a gun or two since they had none at home, called on her brother to be at her side, and with his help turned one room into a magazine. "I ordored sum sorte of defens up Stairs such as I cold manaig my selef." Her husband, she declared, had not done anything to hurt anybody, nor had she given offense to anyone, "but if aney one came to disturbe me I wold show a proper resentement and I shold be very much afrunted." Intimidated by such firmness and by the 800 citizens who took to the streets to see that the peace was kept, the would-be rioters had second thoughts about "afrunting" her and the night ended quietly.

When he read this wholly unpretentious account of his wife's finest hour, Franklin was moved to pay her tribute: "I honour much the Spirit and Courage you show'd and the prudent Preparations you made in that Time of Danger. The Woman deserves a good House that is determined to defend it."

While over the next several months he engaged in an intensive propaganda campaign to obtain the repeal of the Stamp Act, she returned to her domestic routine. She happily informed him that the new oven worked so well that she had baked the best buckwheat cakes of her entire life, causing their friends to exclaim that she had "ought dun my one ought doings" (outdone my own outdoings). Deborah willingly entertained a stream of visitors—the teapot seems never to have run dry—but she herself hardly ever went out. Her husband had asked her, for political reasons, to remain as unobtrusive as possible, and she was doing just that. "I keep my selef to my selef," she assured him. She would not even wear her good clothes in his absence.

Franklin, in contrast, was soon very much in the limelight. His great day came on February 13, 1766. Of the 40-odd merchants, colonial agents, and visiting Americans who appeared before the House of Commons to testify for repeal, he was the star performer. He reminded his audience of the docility of the colonies in earlier times ("They were led by a thread . . .") and, for the benefit of the already worried British merchants, he pointed out that there was not "a single article imported into the Northern Colonies but what they can either do without or make themselves." At that point his thoughts turned to Deborah. As he later told her, he felt strong and secure in the knowledge that, should trade between England and her colonies cease altogether, he would once again be clothed from head to foot "in Woollen and Linnen of my Wife's manufacture."

When repeal was carried nine days later, church bells rang in London, West India ships on the Thames broke out their colors, bonfires were lit in Philadelphia, and Deborah rejoiced in the thought that she would see her husband any day. But he postponed his return because he felt he had not accomplished the original purpose of his mission, the ousting of



Franklin's cartoon, drawn on the back of a calling card, laments the harm done to the British Empire by the Stamp Act.

the Penns. His wife, who celebrated his 60th birthday *in absentia* by serving punch to his friends, had to settle for more months of waiting. She supervised the building of a brick wall all around the property and planted the various seeds he sent her: some "curious" beans, broccoli, cauliflower. She in turn shipped him cranberries from his native New England, Newton Pippin apples, ham and bacon, and a live squirrel to present as a pet to an English friend.

Now that the embargo on British goods was lifted, Franklin started once again to send gifts home: damask tablecloths, curtains and a "Turkey carpet" for the house, pompadour satin and a new gown for his wife, fancy négligées and petticoats for his daughter, and two dozen pairs of gloves, none ever quite large enough in the forearm, moaned the plump Sally.

"A Proper Match" for Sally?

After Sally turned 23, her father began to worry about her social life. Was she enlarging the circle of her friends? Did she go out? Indeed she did, came her mother's reply. She went to teas, card games, and dances, where she mingled with the best families in town. She often crossed the Delaware—on a sled when it was frozen—to attend the grand receptions given by her half-brother William, the Governor of New Jersey.

Yet the man Sally fell in love with was a not-very-prosperous merchant by the name of Richard Bache who had recently emigrated from England. She met him under sad circumstances, at the death-bed of her best friend, whose fiancé he was.

When Franklin was informed in

the spring of 1767 that his daughter wished to marry (he had been away over two years by then), he deferred to Deborah's judgment in the matter. If she "thought the Match a proper one," he would rather not keep the young couple waiting, since he did not think he would be home by summer. His only recommendation was to fit out their daughter "handsomely in Cloaths and Furniture, not exceeding in the whole Five Hundred Pounds Value" and to keep the wedding expenses as low as possible. A few weeks later, however, he received an alarming message from William to the effect that Richard Bache had been involved in some unfortunate business transactions, had lost all his money, and was deep in debt. Furthermore, William, who had made inquiries about his prospective brother-in-law, had been told that Richard was "a mere fortune hunter." Worried that Sally might consider him disloyal, William ended his letter with the admonition (obviously disregarded) "Do burn this."

Franklin promptly tried to cancel the marriage plans and suggested to his wife that she send their daughter to join him in England, where she could have "some amusement," the standard remedy for lovesick maidens. His kindly worded but firm letter reached Philadelphia in September 1767. In late October, Sally and Richard were married.

A baffling absence of documents clouds the whole episode: not a line of explanation from Deborah, nothing from Sally herself, nothing from William. We do not even know whether he attended the ceremony. The only surviving piece of evidence is an announcement in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* for November 2: "Last Thursday Evening [October 29] Mr. Richard Bache, of this City, Merchant, was married to Miss Sally Franklin, the only Daughter of the celebrated Doctor Franklin, a young lady of distinguished Merit. The next Day all the Shipping in the Harbour displayed their Colours on the happy Occasion."

Franklin's initial reaction to this startling piece of news has not come down to us. But he was obviously displeased. When his sister Jane sent him her cautious congratulations in December, he answered icily that Sally had "pleased herself and her Mother . . . but I think they should have seen some better Prospect." His correspondence carefully avoided any mention of his son-in-law, whose several overtures went unanswered.

After a brief honeymoon in New York, the bridegroom went off to Jamaica in the hope of mending his affairs, while Sally, sad and lonely, stayed with her mother at Franklin Court, the only home she called her own for most of her life. Deborah was anxious, ready to quarrel with anyone who disapproved of her daughter's choice. She had liked Bache from the beginning and, anyway, Sally could do no wrong in her eyes. When William forwarded to England disturbing news about arguments within the family, Franklin felt the time had come to restore harmony. About a year after the marriage, he sent Bache a cool but conciliatory message explaining why he had not written sooner: "I did not choose to write what I thought, being unwilling to give Pain where I could not give Pleasure." He went on to say that "If you prove a good Husband and Son, you will find in me an Affectionate Father."

Deborah was immensely relieved: "I hope my heart will be more at rest than it has been for some time past." She was "all a-flutter," convinced that the summer of 1768 would bring her husband home. But Franklin decided to stay on in England, no longer because of the Penns, in whose fate everybody had lost interest, but because new rifts were appearing between Great Britain and her colonies in the wake of the highly unpopular Townshend Acts. The imposition of duties on tea, glass, paper, and other products reawakened the ill-feeling of the Stamp Act days. Now an agent for Georgia as well as Pennsylvania, Franklin was trying to present the colonial point of view to the British government.

A pattern was emerging in his life: more commitments, more agencies (New Jersey in 1769, Massachusetts in 1770), every spring the hope that he would sail home in the fall, every fall the decision to delay until the following spring. After the summer of 1768, his wife began to realize that the separation would go on and on. Deborah had been fighting off depression for a long time, faithful to her promise not to complain. She had nursed Franklin's sister-in-law through her final illness, given moral support to a number of young relatives, been a watchdog to the house. Rarely did she leave it, even for a day, to the care of the servants. In the winter of 1768–69, during Sally's first pregnancy, Deborah suffered a stroke. When Franklin received an alarming diagnosis from his friend the celebrated Dr. Thomas Bond, he immediately consulted the English medical luminary Sir John Pringle and forwarded his advice. While thanking him for his concern, Debo-

Sally and Richard Bache, by John Hoppner, 1792.

rah pointed out to her husband that her "disorder" was due to disappointment "att your staying so much longer that I loste all my reseylushon." Although able to attend her first grandson's christening, she never recovered full health, and her last five years were spent in a state of what she called "dissatisfied distress." Many of her friends had died, her memory often failed, and she despaired of ever seeing her husband again. Their letters, while remaining affectionate, became bland and repetitive; their lives had diverged too much for real communication.

The only common ground in those years was their grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, whom Deborah called "Kingbird." Franklin did not meet his little namesake until the child was almost six, but Deborah kept him informed of all his doings. His advent, of course, hastened the thaw with the Baches. An advocate of breast-feeding, Franklin was glad that Sally nursed the baby herself, unlike most of the upper-class women he met in England.

Deborah never missed a chance to tell him what a wonderful father Richard Bache was. As a businessman, alas, he was still floundering. In the fall of 1771, he traveled to England to visit his family, meet his father-in-law, and try for a government post through Franklin's influence. Much to his relief, Richard was greeted cordially and given £200 to buy merchandise. He was also told firmly to remain in business—selling for cash only—and to be his own man. His request for help had come at a time when Franklin, increasingly disillusioned with government service, would not hear of another relative tying himself to the Crown. As for Sally, she was advised to help her husband, if she was not "too proud," just as her mother had helped her father.

She was not too proud. By the time Richard came home, she had already fitted out a store on the ground floor of one of the tenants' houses the family owned on Market Street, "an excellent Stand for dry goods." In May 1772, the Baches were advertising *for cash only* a variety of textiles called by such exotic names as humhums, silk pullicats, and Ozenbrigs. But the business did not thrive. In less than a year Bache was calling it "a sorry concern" and was eager to try another line, wine and grocery, "which few have failed in. . . ."

Sally met with no better luck in domestic matters. She tried to take over many of the household duties as her mother grew weaker. Franklin applauded this initiative: "Remember, for your Encouragement in good oeconomy, that whatever a Child saves of its Parents' Money, *will be its own another Day*. Study Poor Richard a little and you may find some Benefit from his Instructions." Still, he knew his wife well enough to guess that she would not easily give up the reins. Sure enough, six months after her brave beginnings, Sally admitted defeat: "I am no longer house keeper; it gave my dear Mama so much uneasiness." Having once been scolded herself for the way she handled money, Deborah was now so afraid of displeasing her husband again that she allowed her daughter only driblets of money, not enough to buy economically.

The Patriarch of Craven Street

Franklin spent many happy years in this house on Craven Street in London.

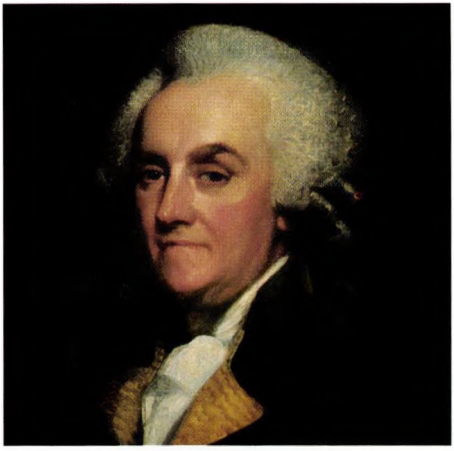
Compared to the problems besetting the inhabitants of Franklin Court, Franklin's life in England seemed glamorous indeed: extensive travel in the summer, enough invitations to dine out every evening if he pleased, the homelike atmosphere of Margaret Stevenson's house on Craven Street, and the substitute family the widow and her daughter Polly provided. Polly's first child was Franklin's godson, and he boasted about this little Billy almost as much as Deborah did about her Benny. The hospitality of his lodging was extended to a host of English and American relatives, for whom he filled the role of patriarch. Most cherished among these, a good-looking adolescent by the name of William Temple, described vaguely as a young American in need of paternal supervision. As they later revealed with a chuckle, Mrs. Stevenson and Polly had long guessed that this boy who studied in boarding school but spent all his vacations with them was in fact a Franklin, the illegitimate son born to William in 1760 when he was living in London with his father. As in William's own case, the mother's identity has remained unknown. Deborah, it seems, never knew of Temple's existence.

Still, there was a somber undercurrent to Franklin's outwardly pleasurable life: the growing awareness that American claims and British pretensions could never be reconciled, the fruitless lobbying, the rebuffs at the hands of incompetent public servants, the tension inherent in his double position as officer of the Crown (his postmastership) and as advocate of colonial interests. Above all, there was the recognition, faint at first but inescapable, that his son William was

drifting away from him.

William had been governing New Jersey quite skillfully for a number of years and relying heavily on his father's advice, even to the point of submitting for Franklin's approval drafts of letters to his superiors. But when the gap widened between the mother country and the colonies, the governor threw his weight on the side of the Crown, eventually causing his father to remark, "You are a thorough Courtier."

The year 1774—the most tragic in Franklin's life—saw the culmination of difficulties, public and private. It opened with his ordeal in the Cockpit, an adjunct of Whitehall Palace, where he was upbraided in public and humiliated in front of the Privy Council and a large assembly of lords and ladies of the realm. This painful scene was the outcome of a scandal Franklin had provoked by leaking back to Boston some letters incautiously written a few years earlier by Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson and some of his political associates to a minor British official. Hutchinson complained in these letters about the unruliness of the people of Massachusetts and went so far as to suggest "an abridgment of English liberties" in order to secure law and order. Their publication provoked an uproar in Massachusetts and a backlash in government circles in England. The day after the Cockpit encounter, Franklin was stripped of his position as Postmaster-General, another humiliation and a serious loss of income. In spite of his family's pleas to come home, he stayed on in England for another 14 months, embroiled in high-level but futile negotiations to salvage "that fine and noble China vase, the Brit-



William Franklin and his son William Temple Franklin.

Franklin's chess set.

ish Empire." In the course of that year, Deborah suffered another stroke and died at the age of 68.

His hopes shattered in early 1775, threatened with lawsuits and jail because of the Hutchinson affair, Franklin took his grandson Temple out of school and quietly slipped away with him on a packetboat to America. (William and his wife, who were childless, had now decided to give the boy their name and send him to college in America.) Franklin and his grandson were still on the high seas in April, busily studying the Gulf Stream, when Massachusetts militiamen and British regulars fired the first rounds at Lexington and Concord.

Home to a Revolution

Joseph Galloway

In England Franklin was in disgrace; at home he was a hero. On his return in May 1775, Philadelphians poured out to greet him. He had hardly regained his land legs before he was named a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, scheduled to sit in a few days. How little time there was, in the rush of events, to renew his acquaintance with his daughter, with whom he had spent less than two years out of the last 18, to meet her two boys, Benny, six, and the toddler Willy, to discover his house and find out if the blue room looked all right, after all! The house did show signs of wear; the dining room needed repapering. Who cared? A revolution was convulsing the country and the lives of the Franklins.

In Congress—where he was the oldest member, old enough to be the father of half the other delegates—Franklin's position was more radical than that of any of his colleagues except those from Massachusetts and

Virginia. He was greatly disappointed by the defection of his long-time political lieutenant Joseph Galloway and by the bold pro-British stand taken by his own son. Nothing could sway the two younger men, who had once been his political disciples. Not the battle of Bunker Hill, not the burning of Charlestown or the British blockade along the coast, not even a night-long debate over many bottles of wine, during which Franklin desperately used every argument he could muster to persuade them.

Franklin's contributions to the revolution were many and varied. He drew up plans for a new postal service, roughly the one still in existence today; he was appointed postmaster-general by the Continental Congress and turned over his salary to the relief of wounded soldiers; he busied himself with procuring lead and gunpowder for the army; he was elected president of the Pennsylvania Convention and was a source of many of the radical measures of that thoroughgoing democratic body; and he served on many local and congressional committees, the chief organizing instrument of this revolution. Entrusted with an issue of paper money, he drew on his knowledge of botany to suggest for each denomination an intricate leaf design that would be hard to counterfeit. Richard Bache, who had replaced William in the role of trusted associate, became comptroller of the postal service and one of three men chosen to supervise printing of the currency.

In October, 1775, Franklin was sent to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to confer with George Washington on the organization of the American army. On his way back, he stopped in Rhode Island to pick up his sister Jane Mecom—the only survivor of his many brothers and sisters—who had fled her home when the British occupied Boston. Aunt Jane settled in Franklin Court, a mixed blessing, for she was an intelligent woman, vivacious and witty at times, but domineering and quick to take offense.

The house now hummed with people. A baby girl was born to the Baches at Christmas, but died a few months later. The boys played at war. Temple, warmly received by the whole family, divided his time among the New Jersey Franklins, who were wooing him hard, his studies at the College of Philadelphia, and the Bache household, which he much enlivened by his comic talents. He fell in love with various Philadelphia young ladies, among them the beautiful Peggy Shippen, later the wife of Benedict Arnold. The family chuckled over dead letters in the post office and joined in songs—Aunt Jane reminisced about it all when she was very old. Franklin asked an English friend to send him half a dozen modern "catches"—jocose, sometimes bawdy rounds sung by unaccompanied voices—for his musical club. Whether or not his club met at Franklin Court, the drawing room was spruced up and new sconces ordered. He also put up two lightning rods and started building a two-story brick coachhouse and stable behind the tenant house at 316 Market Street.

We might say that it was in his bedroom-study—to which bookshelves had just been added—that the State Department was born. Appointed to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, Franklin used his many connections abroad to weave a network of goodwill toward his coun-

try. Foreign aid did not come spontaneously to the rebellious colonies, and Franklin's great pride made him unwilling to solicit. Yet the war was going badly, and there was no choice. He met with French agents, he corresponded with friends and officials in England and on the continent.

Perhaps the greatest sacrifice Franklin ever made for his country came a year after his return. He tore himself away from his comfortable house to face the rigors of a journey in late winter to Canada. He and his three companions were to sway French Canadians to the American side. The trip through ice and snow turned out to be harrowing and fruitless; he returned exhausted and tormented with boils.

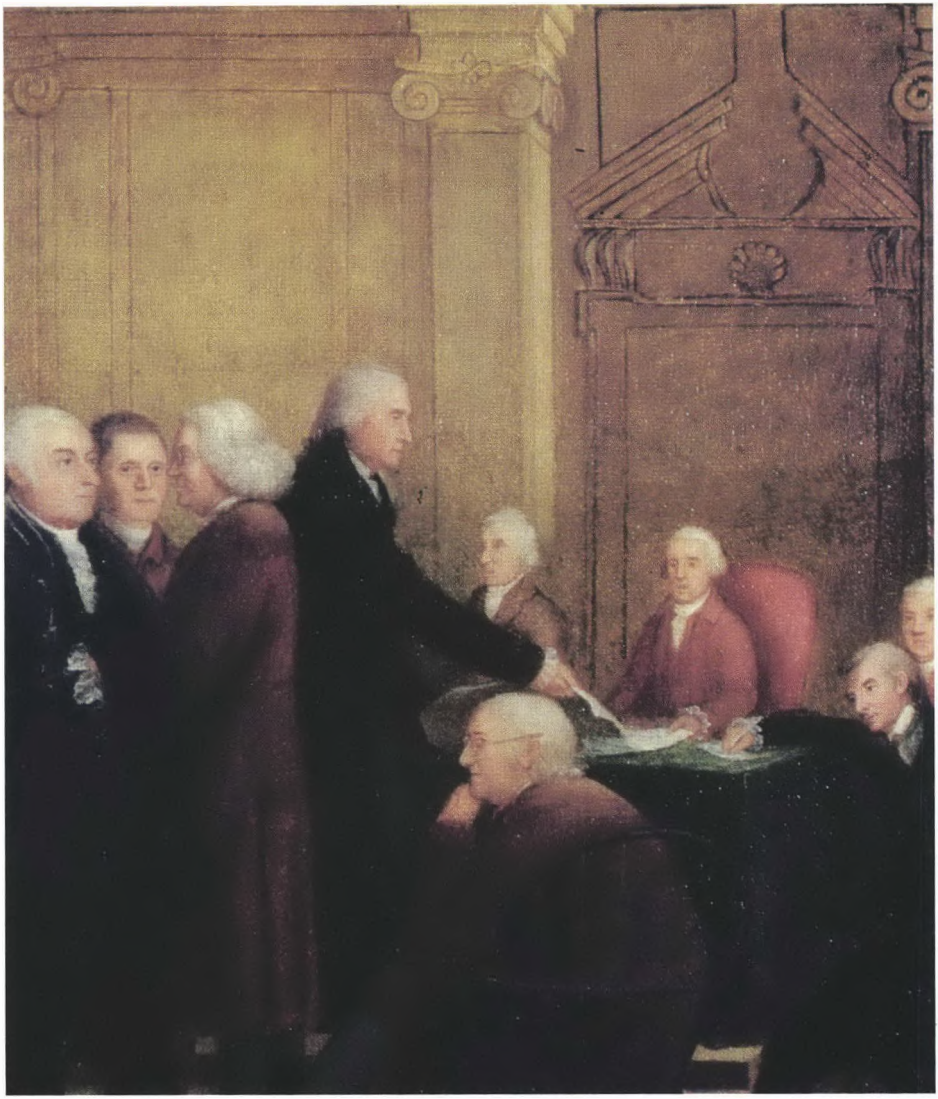
Direct communication with William had ended some months previously; now they were maintained only through Temple's shuttling back and forth, often forgetting half his wardrobe wherever he visited last: "You are very unlucky in Clothes," mused his grandfather. William himself had been under house arrest since the beginning of 1776, or rather he was confined to Perth Amboy where he lived in a state of rage and frustration. In June, after he had made it clear that he was still taking his orders from London, the New Jersey provincial congress declared him in contempt, adding that the governor was "an enemy of the liberties of this country." The order went out to arrest him and halt his salary. Led to Burlington on June 21 for a hearing, he behaved arrogantly, causing President John Witherspoon of the College of New Jersey to exclaim: "The Governor has made a speech every way worthy [of] his exalted birth."

That very day, Franklin—back only three weeks from Canada—wrote to Washington that he was "recovering from a severe fit of the Gout which has kept me from Congress and Company . . . so that I know little of what has pass'd here." Not a word about his son. Three days later, William was sent under guard to Connecticut, where Governor John Trumbull (the only patriot among the colonial governors) was instructed to take the prisoner's word that he would not try to escape.

Temple flew to the side of his stepmother, whose health, shaky at best, had been seriously impaired by the recent shocks.* His presence in Tory circles not far from the British front lines and his obvious attachment to his father were a constant source of anguish to Franklin.

It is against this backdrop of ill health and heartbreak that the aging Benjamin Franklin spent the historic days leading up to the Declaration of Independence. His role in the writing of that document is uncertain. He was appointed to the committee to prepare the declaration, but the work is entirely Jefferson's. Possibly Jefferson brought his draft to Franklin for consultation. Franklin had a few minor suggestions, and he may have been the one who changed the words "sacred and undeniable" ("We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable . . .") to "self-evident." It would have been characteristic. He was fond of his young colleague, born the same year as his Sally. When Jefferson went through the

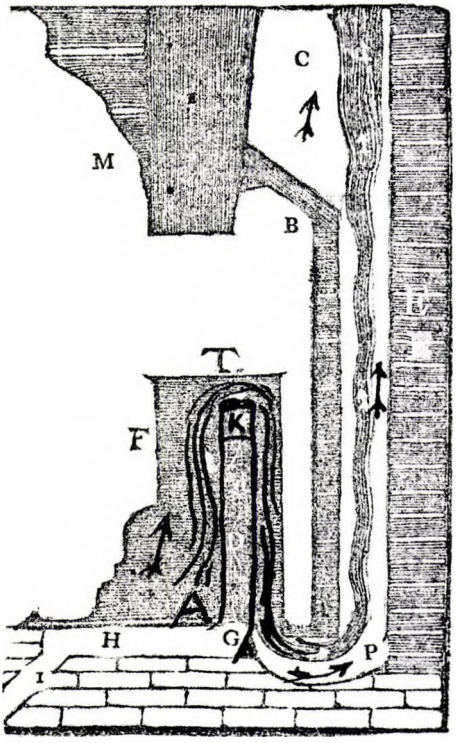
** She was a pathetic figure who died the following year in New York, where she had fled for safety with the retreating British army. William was never allowed to visit her.*



In this painting of Congress voting independence, Franklin sits in the center foreground. The canvas is by Edward Savage, whose work is based in part on an earlier painting by Edward Pine.

misery of seeing his beautiful text edited by Congress, Franklin tried to comfort him in his usual way—by telling an amusing story.*

Franklin Court during the Revolution



Franklin's fireplace, which he invented about 1740, virtually revolutionized home heating. His cast-iron insert was far more efficient than the prevalent English-style open-hearth fireplace, and it warmed the room more evenly.

When Franklin kissed Sally goodbye in late October 1776 and departed for France as one of three commissioners he had good reason to fear he might never see his daughter again. If the British captured his vessel on the way to France, he could be hanged for treason. If the British won the war, he would never be able to set foot in America again. If the war lasted long . . . he was past 70, prey to many infirmities. Still, he sailed off, taking along seven-year-old Benny Bache for a European education and Temple, wrenched away from his now-imprisoned father and embattled stepmother.

This odd trio fared remarkably well during their nine years abroad. Benny learned to speak fluent French during his years of schooling in Geneva and grew into a sturdy adolescent, well-versed in the printer's craft. Temple became a sophisticated young man of 25 with first-hand experience in diplomacy.

Franklin himself experienced both pain and triumph in that long interval. The pain of the final break with his son, who, as soon as he was released and exchanged, threw in completely with the Tories and became one of the leaders of counter-revolu-

* *Franklin's story was about an apprentice who decided to open his own shop. He planned a sign inscribed "John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money." Various friends read the proposed text, and the young man was chagrined to hear each one delete a word or two as unnecessary until the sign read simply "John Thompson," with a picture of a hat below.*

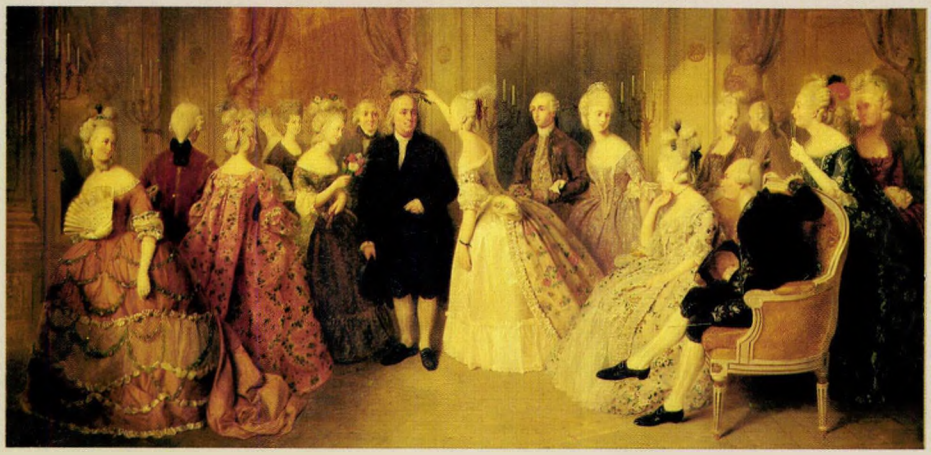
tionary activities in America. The triumphs of the treaties of alliance and commerce with France in 1778, the decision of the French to enter the war, the peace treaty with England in 1783, the commercial treaties with European countries—all diplomatic milestones for his Nation. And for himself, the adoration of the French, who saw in the old Doctor the embodiment of all their ideals: backwoods philosopher, urbane wit, apostle of freedom, everybody's beloved *papa*.

Glorious days for him, somber days for Franklin Court. First it suffered a material—but patriotic—setback when its lead gutters, along with those of every house in town, were taken down and turned into bullets. Then came the humiliation of British occupation. Right after the battle of the Brandywine, September 11, 1777, Sally—who had given birth to Betsy only five days before—had to flee from Philadelphia with her family, barely escaping in time. The Baches wandered from place to place and finally settled in Manheim, near Lancaster, where they spent a year in straitened circumstances. Franklin Court in the meantime was taken over by British General Sir Charles Grey and his aide, that dashing Captain John André, who later as Major André would be hanged for his part in Benedict Arnold's attempted betrayal of West Point.

This etching, based on a drawing by the great artist Jean Honoré Fragonard, epitomizes the French view of Franklin in 1778. The allegory illustrates Turgot's famous epigram: "He snatched lightning from the heavens and the scepter from the hands of tyrants."

When Richard Bache returned to the city on the heels of the retreating Redcoats in July 1778, he found that André had carried away many of Franklin's books, his account ledgers, his electrical apparatus, and all his musical instruments except the armonica. Gone, too, was his portrait by Benjamin Wilson, which had hung

Ambassador to France



Franklin's courtship of the French people and their government was wildly successful. He was adored by all levels of society—"They love me and I love them," he wrote late in his ministry—and this sentiment he turned to his country's advantage.

The paintings here show Franklin in two moments of triumph: his reception at the royal court after France allied itself with America (above), and seated with his fellow commissioners who negotiated the peace treaty with Britain in 1783. Benjamin West's painting was never finished because the British delegates refused to sit for him.

At right is a sketch of Franklin's house in Passy, a suburb of Paris. He chose this house because he loved the country and fresh air.

in the dining room alongside Deborah's.*

The house itself came through the occupation in fairly good shape. Richard Bache told Sally, still in the country, that he paid $6 to have the floors scrubbed, and to Franklin he wrote: "I found your house and furniture upon my return to town in much better order than I had any reason to expect from the hands of such a rapacious crew. . . ." Bache did not mention some of the losses Franklin later discovered: two trunks of books "impossible to be replac'd" and a printing press and matrices, among other valuables. Franklin took the news of the British presence with characteristic detachment: "I know not whether," he remarked in a letter, "even if Philadelphia is recovered you have a House to entertain in."

There *was* a house and it soon made up in human richness what it had lost on the material side. In spite of inflation, the Baches managed to entertain a stream of visitors from France. Lafayette called whenever he was in the vicinity and carried news back and forth between Richard and Sally and their faraway Benny. Monsieur Conrad-Alexandre Gérard, France's first envoy to the United States, became such a good friend that Sally almost decided to study French again, the better to converse with him. The only unwelcome visitor was a cow that somehow wandered into the courtyard and gored Richard.

Richard and Sally often regretted that their financial situation made it impossible to be more hospitable. Richard was postmaster-general, but Congress tended to be lax in paying his salary, which was so small anyway that it would hardly pay, he said, for the salt on his porridge.

The Baches had a growing family to support. After Benny, Willy, and Betsy, Sally gave birth to Louis—named for the King of France—and then to Debbie and Richard. A doting mother, she kept grandfather supplied with charming vignettes of the children's doings and sayings. The last of her children, Sarah, was born after Franklin's return.

Sally was a joyous, active woman, full of warmth. She celebrated her father's birthday every year by giving the children a party; as many as 60 youngsters once danced and prattled on that occasion. She knew that Franklin and William were no longer on speaking terms, but did not take advantage of the situation to ingratiate herself with her father. On the contrary, she refused to break with her brother, and took some risks in keeping him and Temple informed of each other's welfare.

An ardent patriot herself, she raised money for the troops and organized a band of determined Philadelphia women who made more than 2,000 shirts for Washington's men. Knitting and spinning were carried on industriously under her roof, but it was almost impossible to find anybody to weave. Her frantic pursuit of cloth fills many pages of Sally's letters to her father. Quite reluctant to send her anything frivolous in wartime—Franklin once upbraided her for asking for lace and feathers to wear to a ball—he shipped his daughter some sensible items from France and tried to foster European connec-

* *This painting was returned in 1906 by Earl Grey, Governor of Canada and a descendent of General Grey; it now hangs in the White House.*

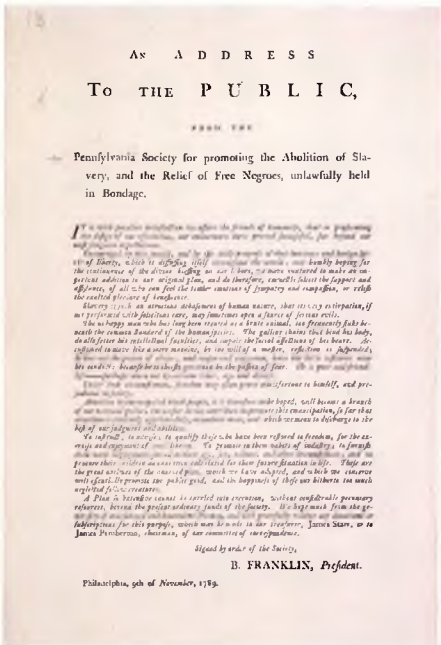
tions for the newly created importing firm of Bache and Shee.

No gift ever thrilled Sally as much as a bust of her father: "I am in hourly expectation of seeing it and long as anxiously for its coming as if I could converse with it. . . ." He too longed to chat with her, but not until two years after the peace treaty was signed with Great Britian did Congress finally allow him to come home.

The Last Homecoming

On September 14, 1785, Sally stood on the doorstep of Franklin's house, surrounded by her children. In Benny's words—the words that close his diary—"The joy that I received . . . in seeing father, mother, brothers and sisters can be felt, not described." Tears ran down the cheeks of the worldly Temple. Philadelphia roared its enthusiasm for the reunion.

Renewed contact with his home gave Franklin a fresh burst of energy. This ailing man, almost 80, who had been speaking of "going to bed" in the evening of life, within six weeks let himself be chosen Chief Executive of Pennsylvania, a post to which he was re-elected for three consecutive one-year terms. He continued as head of the American Philosophical Society. When the Society for Political Enquiries was founded in 1787 to apply to government the rigorous study accorded the natural sciences, he was named president. That same year, the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia to frame a new national charter. Franklin was a member—the oldest—and he rarely missed a session, often managing to defuse his colleagues' tempers during debate with some telling anecdote.



AN ADDRESS

TO THE PUBLIC,

FROM THE

Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes, unlawfully held in Bondage.

This abolitionist broadside issued by Franklin in 1789 appeals for money to help emancipated blacks become self-supporting.

All those public commitments did not prevent him from giving attention to the house. So grand when he had planned it with Deborah, it was now overflowing with family. He designed an addition for the east side that ran the length of the house and increased its size by half. The new dining room on the first floor, regularly used for meetings of the American Philosophical Society, could easily seat 24 persons. Large windows, north and south, cooled it in the summer, a chimney "made handsome with marble slabs" kept it warm in winter.

One floor above, an equally spacious and airy library provided the new focal point of his life. "I hardly know how to justify building a Library at an Age that will so soon oblige me to quit it," he confessed to his sister, "but we are apt to forget that we are grown old, and building is an Amusement." This was probably the largest private library in America, lined from floor to ceiling with more than 4,000 volumes. Here he could work in peace, away from the children's turmoil. He had a chance to use the arm-extender he had devised to reach books on the upper shelves and to enjoy the ingenious rocker-armchair he invented, which was cooled by an overhead fan operated by a foot pedal. Here he could employ another clever invention of his, the rolling press that made copies in less than two minutes. Or he could demonstrate the circulation of the blood in one of his glass machines. If he felt more like dreaming and reminiscing, he could contemplate on his mantlepiece "a prodigious number of medals, busts, and casts in wax or plaster of Paris, the effigies of the most noted characters in Europe."

Over the library there were two "good Bedchambers" and over them "a fine Garret." All doors were lined or edged with green baize to muffle noise and several had springs to close them automatically; a clever system of traps and flues kept the fireplaces operating at peak efficiency.

In a move toward beauty, Franklin did away with his vegetable garden—there was an open market just outside his court—and surrounded his mansion with grass plots, gravel walks, trees, and flowering shrubs. In good weather, he entertained friends under a large mulberry tree. "I felt as if I was going to be introduced to the presence of an European Monarch," wrote one visitor.

"But how my ideas changed, when I saw a short, fat, trunched old man, in a plain Quaker dress, bald pate, and short white locks, sitting without his hat under the tree . . . his voice was low, but his countenance open, frank, and pleasing . . . The tea-table was spread under the tree, and Mrs. Bache, a very gross and rather homely lady, who is the only daughter of the Doctor and lives with him, served it out to the company. She had three of her children about her, over whom she seemed to have no kind of command, but who appeared to be excessively fond of their Grandpapa . . . Every thing about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness."

Those were the golden days of Franklin Court. "I enjoy here everything that a reasonable Mind can desire." An unending parade of callers made the pilgrimage. They ranged from politician to scientist, from George Washington to David Rittenhouse and Tom Paine, who set up a model of his iron bridge on the

Josiah Wedgwood, an ardent English abolitionist, presented this anti-slavery medallion to Franklin in 1787.

premises. Jefferson, off in Paris, longed to be part of the philosophical gatherings: "They would be more valued by me than the whole week in Paris." He did pay a visit as soon as his ambassadorship was over and brought news of their Parisian circle.

One aspect of life at Franklin Court still bothered its owner: the presence of Richard Bache's slave Bob. In his will, Franklin cancelled Bache's debt toward his estate on condition that he emancipate Bob. Franklin's views on slavery, narrowly pragmatic at first, had become increasingly humanitarian over the years. In 1787, he accepted the presidency of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes. In addition to lending this cause the prestige of his name, he summoned his final energies for an ultimate salvo in favor of freedom for all. As he had so often done through life, he made his point by way of a literary hoax: the purported speech of the Divan of Algiers defending the time-hallowed custom of enslaving Christians captured by Barbary pirates.

"The Advantage is for Posterity"

Franklin built more than an addition to his house in 1786. He also tore down the three tenant houses he owned on the Market Street edge of his land and replaced them with two new ones, at 316 and 318. Those old houses were fraught with memories. In the small brick one, which had belonged to Deborah's parents, he had spent the first few months of his Philadelphia life as a lodger and won Deborah's heart. In the small frame one next door, he had held his first job with the printer Keimer, that "odd fish" he had so much enjoyed

teasing. But even in old age, Franklin looked to the future rather than to the past. The future meant providing for his grandchildren, since the honest and diligent Richard Bache was never successful in business. The public markets were expanding in his direction, and modern shops built along Market Street would fetch handsome rentals.

These new houses, which combined shop and residence, were as fireproof as Franklin's ingenuity could make them. He would have liked to build the French way: tiles or marble for the floors, stone for the staircase, slate for the roof. But this was far too expensive in Philadelphia, and he settled for another system. None of the woodwork in one room connected with that of any other, except at doorways. Coats of plaster lined walls and ceilings, floors and stairs. Inside partitions were brick from cellar to roof, dividing the building into stacks of rooms. A trap door gave easy access to the roof so that its shingles could be wet down in case of fire in the neighborhood. Franklin closely supervised every stage of this novel type of construction; the insurance company was sufficiently impressed to reduce his premiums.

Between these two new houses he built a high arched passageway, wide enough for a carriage, to give access to his own house farther back. This passageway freed the lot at number 322, the former entrance to Franklin Court, for building. On it Franklin now put up another house. Like the other two, it was three stories high, with a kitchen in the cellar and a skylight over the stairwell. This house became famous, after Franklin's death, as the seat of Benny Bache's controversial newspaper, the *Aurora*.

Benny was not forgotten in the building spree. Behind the new structures Franklin erected still another one to house the vast quantities of printing equipment brought back from France for his grandson. A foundry and bindery were installed on the first floor and a printing press on the second.

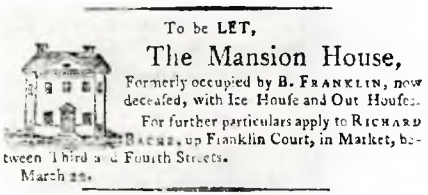
Franklin was eager that Benny should have a trade, in view of the ways into which his beloved Temple had fallen. He had helped Temple buy a farm in New Jersey, not far from Philadelphia, a property that belonged to William before his self-exile to England. Franklin hoped that Temple would make an "honorable living" on the farm while waiting for the diplomatic post to which they felt his services in Paris entitled him. But the diplomatic assignment never materialized, and Temple, soon bored with farming, frittered away his time in the social whirl in Philadelphia, refusing to marry, settle down, work, or fulfill any of his grandfather's aspirations.

Hence Benny was kept on a tight leash. As soon as he had completed his studies at the University of Pennsylvania, he was put to work as Franklin's secretary, taking down dictation of the last part of the *Autobiography* and making fair copies of the rest. Benny had learned typecasting in France as an apprentice to the celebrated printer François-Ambroise Didot. Now he took his first steps in business under his grandfather's tutelage: he tried to sell type but found the market glutted, he printed children's primers and Latin and Greek grammars. Benny sometimes chafed under Franklin's well-meaning domination, confiding to his diary how

melancholy he felt. But his admiration remained as unalloyed as the day he had exclaimed, as a child, that his grandfather could do anything, even write beautifully with a scratchy pen!

Now a young man of 20, Benny was there, loyal as ever, when the last hour came. Reduced to "a skeleton covered with skin" by the laudanum he took to dull the pain from his kidney stones, Franklin died on April 17, 1790, after two years of agony borne stoically, almost cheerfully. "His Resolution unshaken," wrote the grief-stricken Benny, "his principles fixed even in Death."

The Legacy


To be LET,

The Mansion House,

Formerly occupied by B. FRANKLIN, now deceased, with Ice Houſe and Out Houſes.

For further particulars apply to RICHARD BACHE, up Franklin Court, in Market, between Third and Fourth Streets.

March 28.

This ad offering Franklin's house for rent ran in a local paper in 1792.

William was disinherited in his father's will. Most of the Doctor's estate went to the Baches, who soon rented out Franklin Court and left on an extended trip to England. Upon their return, they purchased an estate on the banks of the Delaware and named it "Settle" after Richard's birthplace in Yorkshire.

Temple received surprisingly little—and even that with many strings attached: the farm in New Jersey, provided he married, something he did not do until he was on his deathbed in 1823; 3,000 acres in Georgia, which turned out to be illusory since the grant to Franklin was never validated; most of his grandfather's library and all of his manuscripts with the option of publishing them or not, as he thought fit, a task he finally accomplished after 27 years.

To Benny went some books, some cash, and the printing tools but not the shop itself. Within a year, Benny-the-pliant, Benny-the-obedient became Benny-the-bold. He married

Margaret Hartman Markoe, daughter of a planter on the island of St. Croix, and settled in the house at 322 Market Street. Against all advice, he launched his own newspaper, first called the *General Advertiser*, later the *Aurora*. Like his grandfather, he saw the press as "the Bulwark of Liberty" and the means of enlightening the people. After a staid beginning, Benny's paper was caught up in the frenzied politics of the 1790s. Philadelphia was an anti-Federalist stronghold and generally favored the "Democratic-Republican" views of Thomas Jefferson, which were fairly close to Franklin's. Benny forcefully articulated the ideas of this faction, although he received no more than verbal support from Jefferson for his paper.

Displaying a crusader's zeal, Benny adopted the vituperative style of journalism then prevailing. By 1797, the *Aurora* had a circulation of more than 1700 copies and was the most widely read paper in the country. The editor's partisanship provoked a hostile response, and violence mounted around 322 Market. Here, a few steps from the spot where Deborah Franklin had stood her ground against the Stamp Act rioters in 1765, Benny's windows were smashed three times within a few months. By the summer of 1798, he was so embroiled in controversy—threatened even with a jail sentence on the charge of libeling President Washington and inciting sedition—that he felt he should stay in town, to prepare his defense, in spite of an epidemic of yellow fever. He caught the fever and died at 29, exactly a week after the birth of his fourth son. "The memory of this scoundrel cannot be too highly execrated," gloated the Federalist press. Posterity passed a fairer judgment: Benjamin Franklin Bache was a shrill but committed advocate of freedom. The *Aurora* offered Philadelphians the first full editorial page and was, in some ways, a forerunner of modern journalism.

His widow Margaret was a tiny woman of immense determination. Right after his death, she announced that the *Aurora* would soon reappear under her direction, and it did. She teamed up with her husband's right-hand man, a talented Irishman by the name of William Duane. Together they kept the paper going until Jefferson came to power and created a more favorable political climate. In 1800, Margaret married Duane, whose first wife had died the same summer as Benny, and the two continued to publish the paper at Franklin Court. In 1808, ten years ahead of Temple, they brought out the first of a six-volume selection of Franklin's papers.

This attention to Franklin's legacy did not extend to his house. A new generation was rising, with new goals and wishes. However well planned it was, the house gradually went downhill after the death of the founder. From 1794 to 1799, it was leased by the Portuguese minister to the United States. Then it served successively as a boarding house, the home of a female academy, a coffee house and hotel. Sally Bache returned to Franklin Court to die in 1808, and Richard shared the house with the African Free School until his death in 1812.

By then the land had increased enormously in value while the house was only a relic from another age. Thus, less than 50 years after it was built, it was demolished to make way

for new construction. The printing office, too, was razed. Two rows of houses facing the court were built, the street was opened up, and later in the century the Market Street houses were "modernized" in the current fashion.

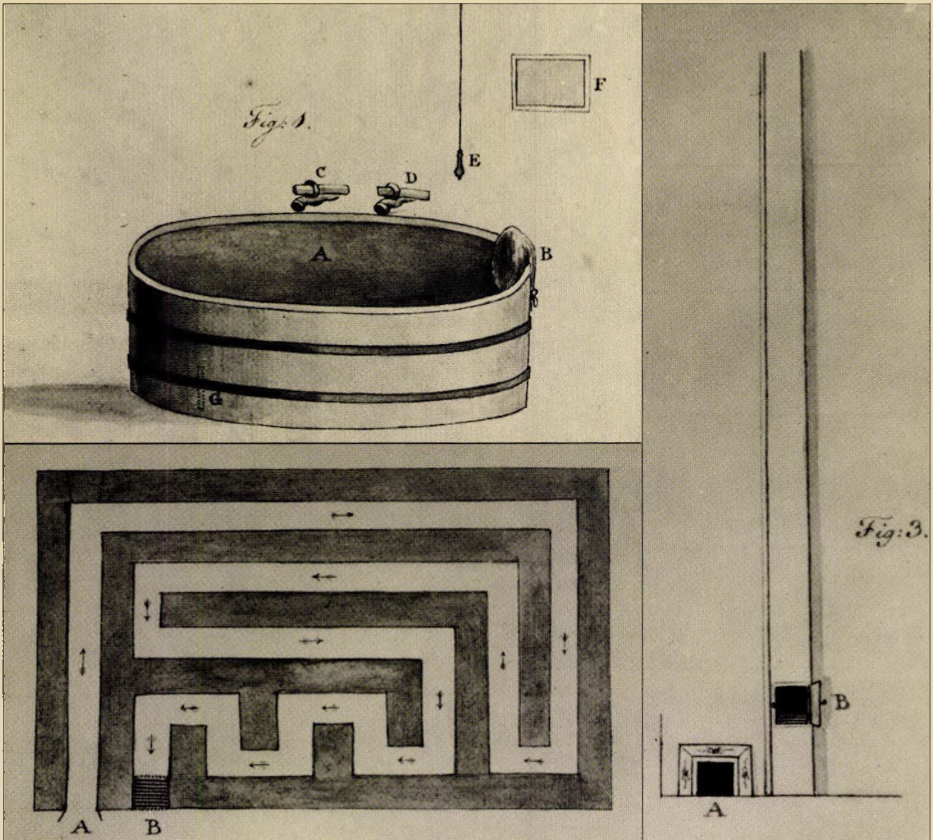
In 1954, the Federal Government acquired the site as part of Independence National Historical Park, and the Park Service soon began extensive historical and archeological investigations. From this has come the present stunning interpretive development of the site: the steel outlines of the house and printing office, the reconstructed Market Street houses, many interesting artifacts associated with the court, a colorful array of exhibits, and part of the original foundations of Franklin's "good house."

"I am got into my *niche*, after being kept out of it 24 years by foreign employments. 'Tis a very good house that I built so long ago to retire into, without being able till now to enjoy it. I am again surrounded by my friends, with a fine family of grandchildren about my knees, and an affectionate good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. And after fifty years of public service, I have the pleasure to find the esteem of my country with regard to me undiminished. . . ." November 24, 1786.

Franklin's "Tepid Bath"

When Franklin extended his house in 1786, he installed this elaborate heated bath. It worked on principles developed long ago in China. A white cedar tub—about 6 feet long, 2½ feet wide, and 2 feet deep—sat on wide paving stones over a maze through which heated air circulated. The heated air was started in motion by building two small fires at A and B (figures 2 and 3). When the fire at B was extinguished, the heat from A continued to rush through the maze toward the exit at B, warming the stones and the tub which sat on them.

This heated bath, said Benjamin Rush, "smoothed the descent of Dr. Franklin down the hill of life and helped prolong it beyond 84 years."

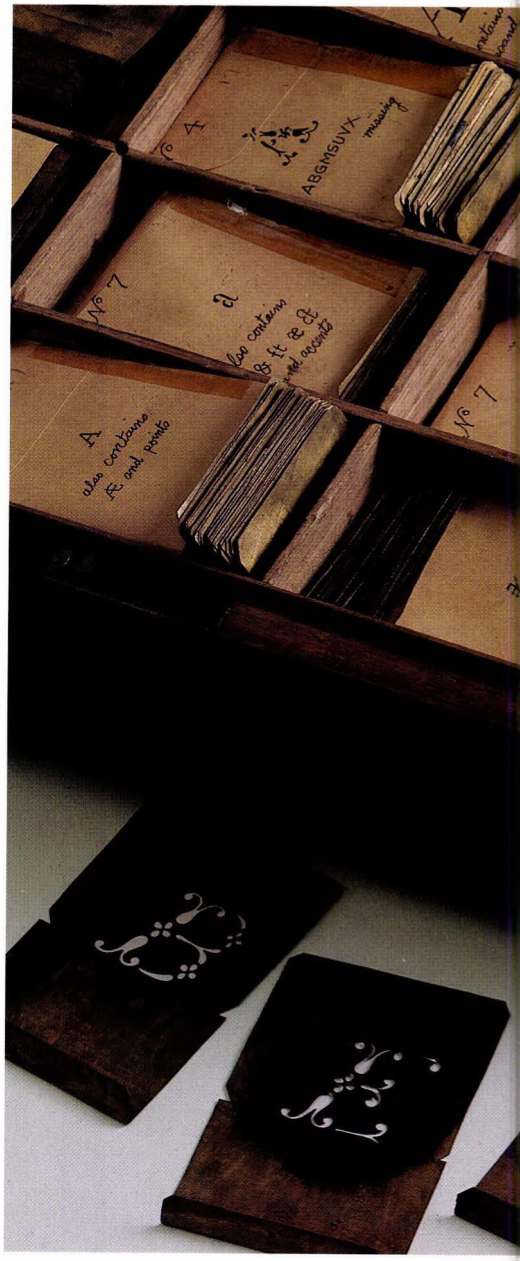


Description of the tepid Bath made use of by his Excellency Benjamin Franklin, Governor of Pennsylvania, L.L.D. F.R.S. &c. — Dec. 1787.

Fig: 1. — A represents the Bath, which is made of white Cedar ab[illegible] Inch thick: It is bound with Iron Hoops; is 5 F[illegible] long, 2 F 3 [illegible] wide, and 2 [illegible] deep. — —
B is a large Sponge, suspended over the Edge in a Towel to rest the Head on. —— C. is a Cock for hot Water, D for cold Water. — E a Bell — F a Slider, through which the Servants on the outside receive their orders. — G a Board [illegible] the Bath to rest the Feet against. —— The Water is drawn off by a Syphon. —
Fig. 2 represents the ground Plan of the Bath Room, which is kept uniformly warm in the Chinese manner. — The Floor is laid with Flags, or broad flat Stones. — Fire is made at A, and the [illegible] and rarified air pass in the angular Channel finding vent at B. —
Fig. 3. the Elevation of the Fire Place and Chimney [illegible] the Room — Fire is made at A, but the Smoke does not pass into the proper [illegible], till a small Fire be made on the Grate at B, which, when the Door at B is shut, rarifies the Air above, and must be succeeded by a current [illegible] from the passage, in the Direction [illegible] explained in Fig. 2, — through the Grate at B. — The Fire at B is then taken out, and the Fire at A continues to burn. —

"I am too old to follow printing again myself," wrote Franklin to a friend a year before his death, "but, loving the business, I have brought up my grandson Benjamin to it, and have built and furnished a printing house." Among the equipment Franklin brought from France for Benny's use was this set of stencils made by the venerable Paris firm of Bery. The set is now in the collection of the American Philosophical Society.

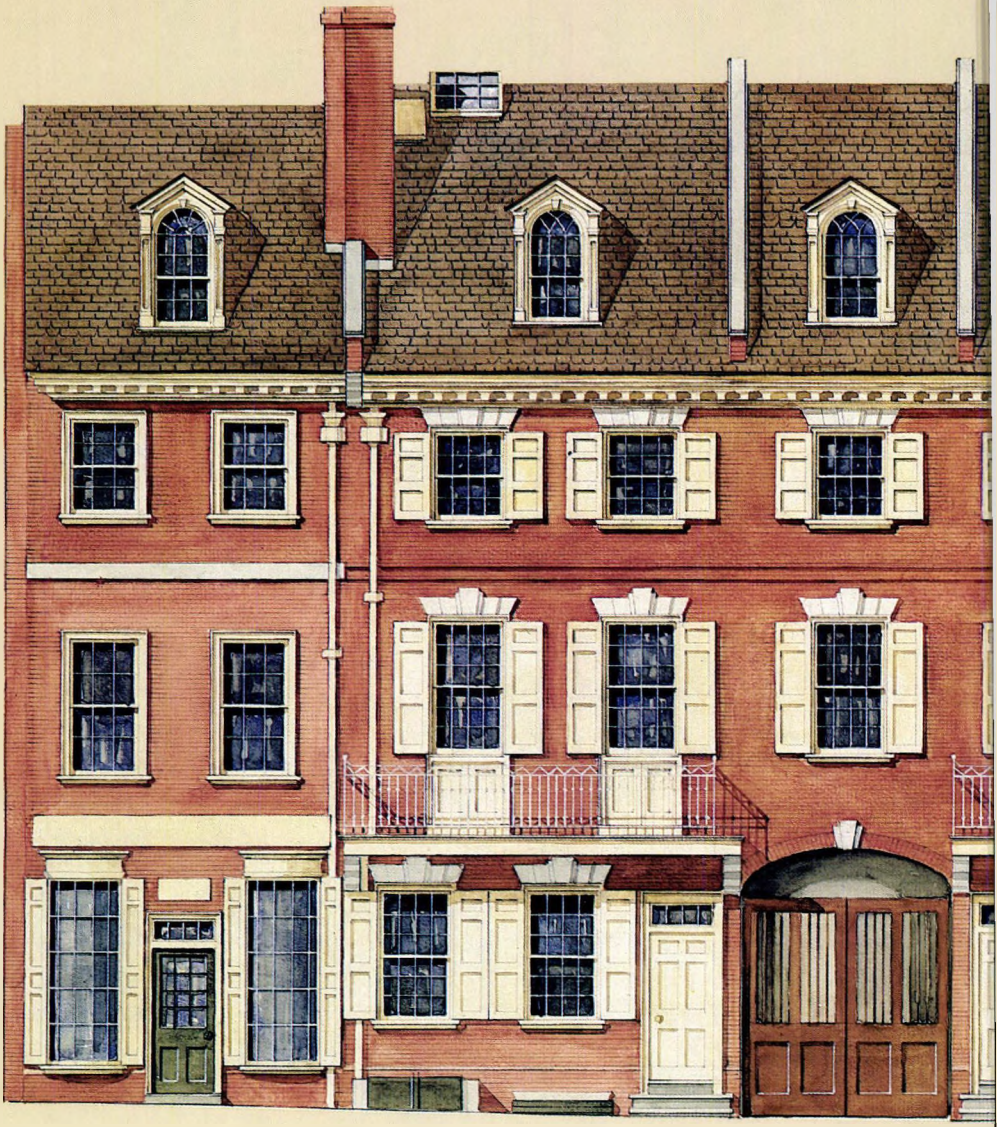
Benny sketched this profile of his grandfather a few months before his death.




BERY
Lompe
ARTS
ES Caracter
Eglife
Eglife
Eglife
Eglife

The Market Street Houses

The Market Street houses, now restored on the exterior, are our only architectural legacy from Franklin. He started building nos. 316 and 318 (the two buildings flanking the arched passageway) in 1786. When they were finished a year later, he put up 322 (far right) on the site of the old carriageway into the court. Aside from their associations with Franklin, buildings 316 and 322 are notable as the seat of that precursor of modern journalism, the General Advertiser *later styled* Aurora, *which flourished between 1790 and 1809. Under the combative editorship of Benjamin F. Bache and his successor William Duane, the paper took a leading part in the political controversies of the day. Duane began the practice of printing unsigned commentary on the editorial page.*

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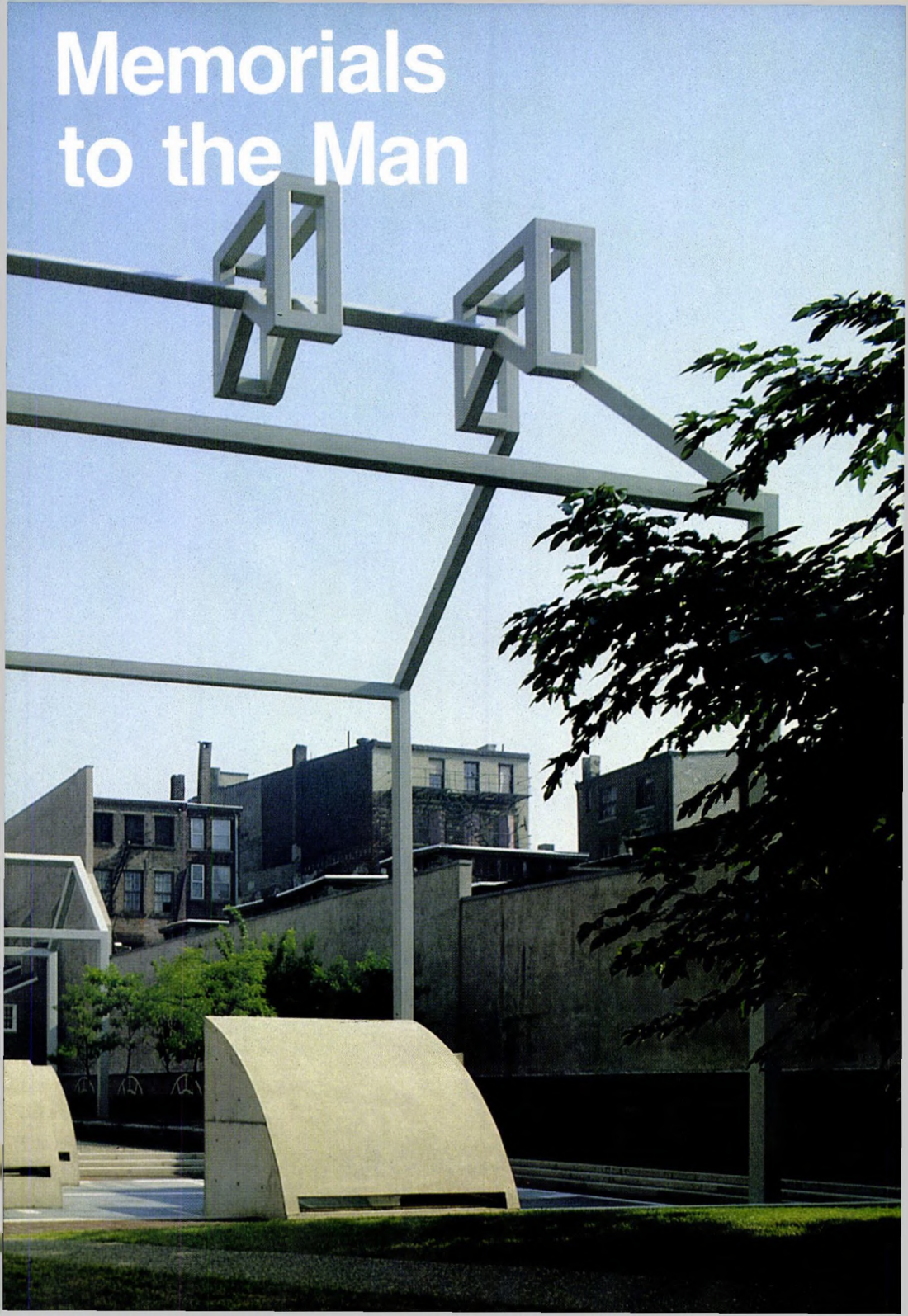
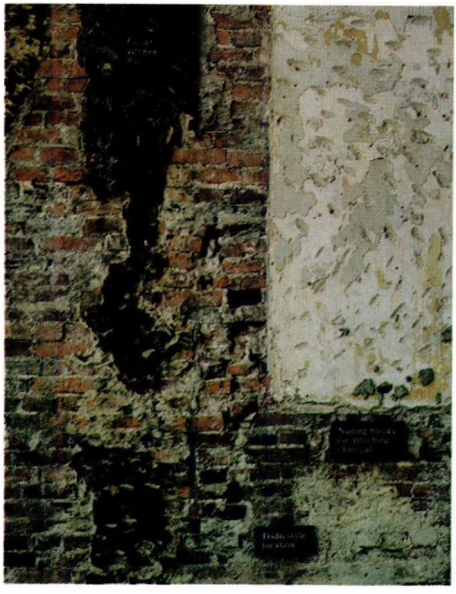
Memorials to the Man



The Search for Franklin's House

Before the site was cleared, this street cut through the middle of Franklin's old property.



The original party walls at 322 Market were left exposed as an exhibit-in-place.

The restless city constantly renews itself at the expense of our historical inheritance. If Franklin had built in the country, as Washington and Jefferson did, his house would have had a better chance of surviving. But unhappily for his posterity, he built in the heart of the city, and two decades after his death developers razed the entire court.

When the search for Franklin's house began in the 1950s, no trace remained above ground and there was no assurance of anything below. The property had been intensively built over during the last century. Even the houses along Market Street, though still standing, had been so thoroughly altered that only the original foundations and party walls remained.

The first archeological samplings in 1953, taken from basements and vacant lots, turned up bits of old masonry and 18th-century ceramics. Plans were thereupon laid for a more ambitious dig. When the court was cleared in 1958, excavations began in earnest. It was then that the original foundations of Franklin's house plus thousands of household artifacts were found, greatly stimulating interest in the site.

Excavations in 1970 and 1973 turned up the rest of the house foundations, the footings of the garden wall, and many more 18th-century artifacts. Some of the most interesting objects came from privy pits and wells, which served as trash dumps.

While none of the ceramics shown here can be specifically associated with Franklin or his family, they do illustrate the type of everyday ware used by the families living in the court.

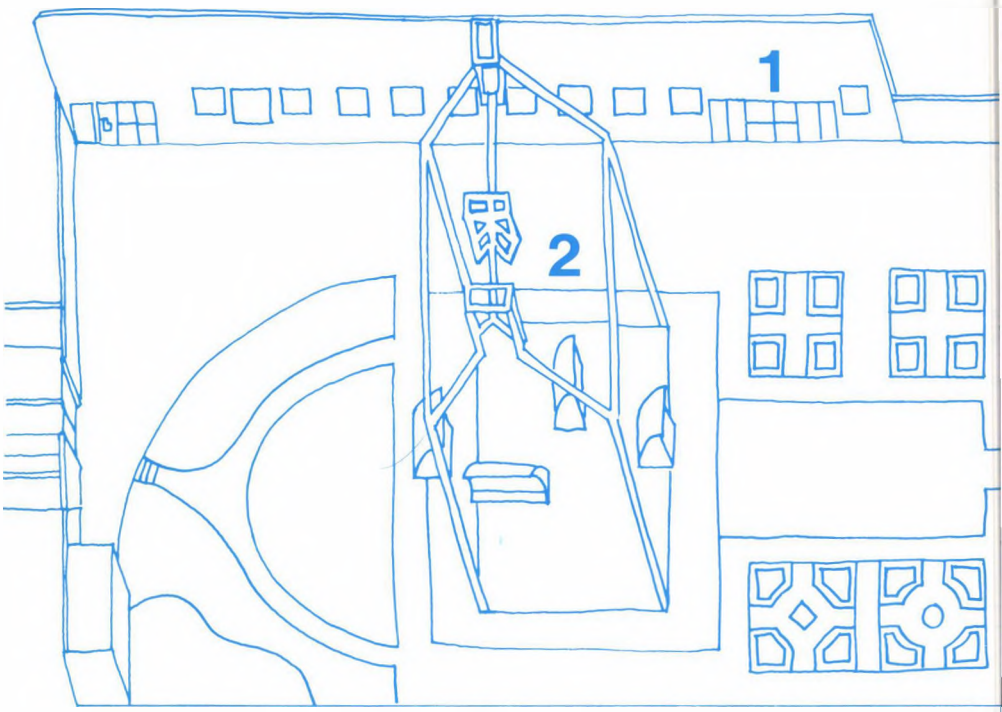
This punch bowl, found in a privy pit at 316 Market, came from Bristol, England, 1730-40. The two ceramics above, an Oriental porcelain saucer and a Staffordshire teapot, were retrieved from a well at 314 Market. They date from the mid-18th century.

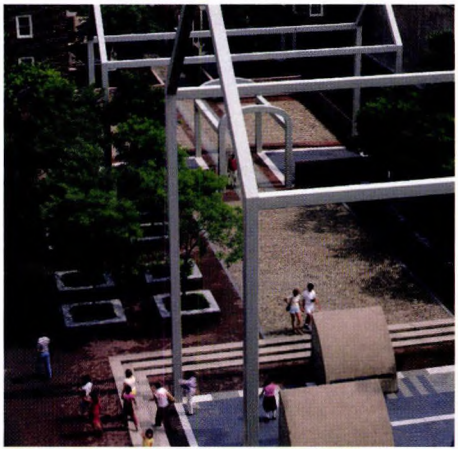
A Tribute in Steel

Because so little was known about the original house, Franklin Court was developed as a memorial rather than as a reconstruction. The architect chosen was Robert Venturi, a Philadelphian with a gift for vernacular expression. Working closely with the Park Service, he and his colleagues devised a simple but appealing plan.

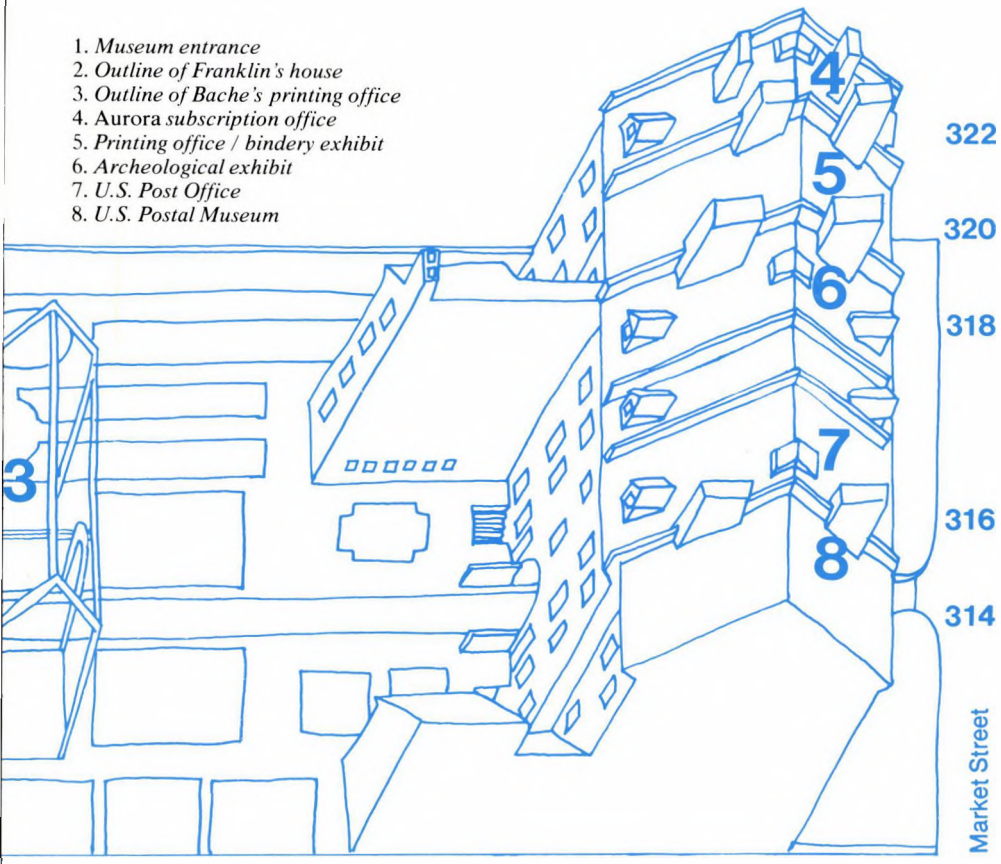
The Market Street houses, about which much was known, were restored on the exterior while inside they were adapted to a variety of services for visitors. A museum was placed underground, freeing the court to become again the airy garden it was in Franklin's day. Then, in a masterly stroke, the architects suggested, through ghost structures of steel frames, the house and printing office—minimal sculptures of a sort in a setting rich with historical allusion.

In the tradition of great monuments, the memorial combines extremes of scale. The towering building outlines contrast with quotations by the Franklins cut into the paving. The symbolism of steel frames contrasts with the literal information in the exhibits below ground.



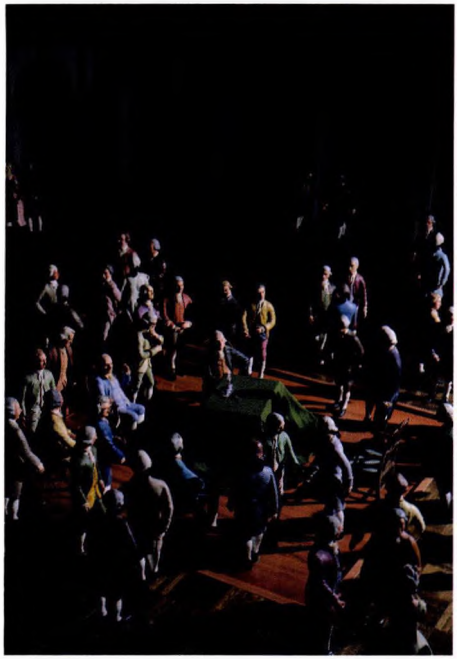


1. *Museum entrance*
2. *Outline of Franklin's house*
3. *Outline of Bache's printing office*
4. Aurora *subscription office*
5. *Printing office / bindery exhibit*
6. *Archeological exhibit*
7. *U.S. Post Office*
8. *U.S. Postal Museum*



The Underground Museum

The museum beneath the house site is in vivid contrast with the quiet, metaphorical scene above. Exhibits combine the traditional with the unconventional to build a portrait of the many-sided master of Franklin Court. Noteworthy are several pieces of furniture—including the original desk in the house—belonging to Franklin, several scientific instruments, a show that dramatizes through miniature tableaus (right) famous episodes in Franklin's life, and a film in which viewers meet Franklin as a family man rather than as the stiff figure of historical legend.



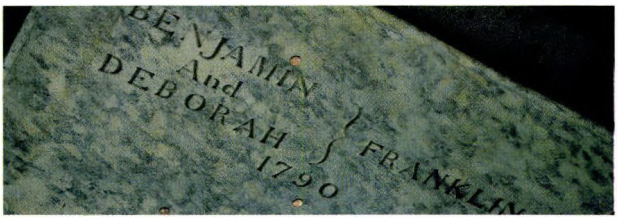
The Printing Office

The daily demonstrations in this shop draw attention to the trade followed by both Franklin and his grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache. Through broadsides and other products of the press, visitors learn about the role of printers in the 18th century and their influence on things social and political. Although the shop is located in a building never owned by Franklin (320 Market), it is just a few steps from the site of the print shop he built in 1786 for young Benny. The building immediately west, 322 Market, once housed the office of Bache's *Aurora*. That office has now been restored and a book bindery added to serve the print shop.

Related Sites in Philadelphia

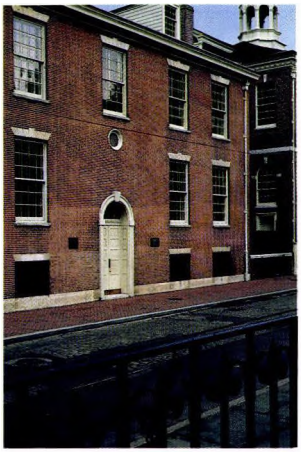
Independence Hall *is indelibly associated with Franklin. The political roles he enacted here include colonial legislator, delegate to the 2d Continental Congress and the Federal Convention, and President of Pennsylvania.*

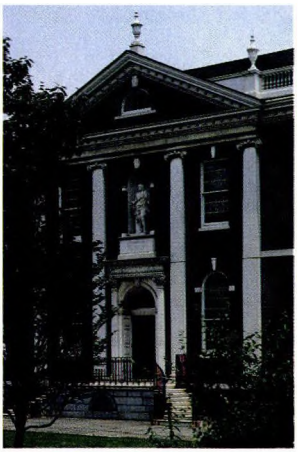
Christ Church Cemetery, *Fifth and Arch Streets, is the burial place of Deborah and Benjamin Franklin. An unpretentious stone slab, simply inscribed, marks the grave.*



Philosophical Hall *(left), home of the American Philosophical Society, traces its origin to Franklin. The oldest learned society in America, it is today a center for the study of 18th-century scientific thought.*

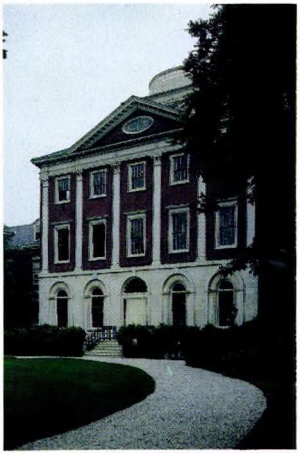
Library Hall, *in its west facade, is a reconstruction of the original building of the Library Company, founded by Franklin in 1731. This building houses the study collections of the American Philosophical Society.*

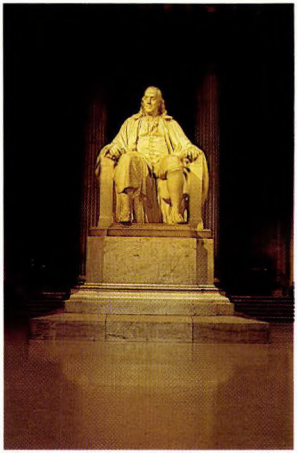




Pennsylvania Hospital, *the first hospital in the colonies, was another significant social institution in whose origins Franklin had a hand. The original building (now the east wing) is still in use.*

Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, *a part of Franklin Institute, is both a shrine to Franklin and an exhibit of original artifacts associated with his life and work.*





National Park Service

The National Park Service expresses its appreciation to all those who made the preparation and production of this handbook possible.

Illustrations

Cover: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. 4-5: George Fistrovitch. 6: Robert Lautman. 7 to 11: George Fistrovitch. 13: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. 14-15: Library Company of Philadelphia (painting); Historical Society of Pennsylvania (map). 18-19: American Philosophical Society (Leyden jar); Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (map). 20: Library Company. 21: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hospital); Philadelphia Contributionship (plaque); Library Company of Philadelphia. 22: APS. 23: APS (Deborah Franklin); White House Collection. 28, 30: Library Company. 32: Metropolitan Museum of Art (both). 34: New York Public Library. 35: National Geographic Society (William Franklin); Yale University Art Gallery. 36: APS (chess set); Library of Congress. 39: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. 40: Library Company. 41: Philadelphia Museum of Art. 42: Philadelphia Museum of Art (*Benjamin Franklin being Crowned by Ladies of the Court* by Baron Andre E. Jolly); New York Public Library (the house at Passy by Victor Hugo); The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. 44: Library Company. 46: APS. 48, 51: Library Company. 52, 53: APS (Bache sketch); George Fistrovitch. 54-55: Lynn T. Gallagher. 56-57: Robert Lautman. 58: George Fistrovitch (bottom). 59, 61, 62: George Fistrovitch. 63: Lynn T. Gallagher (Independence Hall); George Fistrovitch (all except Benjamin Franklin Memorial).

U.S. Department of the Interior

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This responsibility includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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Benjamin Franklin's 'Good House'