

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “1976/04/26 - Presentation of "Stone Plate" at Franklin Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

For immediate release
Monday, April 26, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

TEXT OF MRS. FORD'S REMARKS AT UNVEILING OF THE "STONE PLATE"
ENGRAVING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN PHILADELPHIA
April 26, 1976

It's really a treat for me to be here today, because I have always been interested in the Declaration of Independence and the 56 signers---who pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor."

Several years ago, this interest prompted my collecting a proof set of coins of all the signers. Just last month, I received the last coin. It's really been fascinating, because I've learned so much more about these brave men. I really admire those Philadelphians who wanted to have the original document back here for the Bicentennial, because I share your pride in Philadelphia's important role in the making of our Revolution.

Although the original is too fragile to move, I'm so happy to be here for these ceremonies bringing two special copies back to the Declaration's home town.

As I visited this excellent restoration of Benjamin Franklin's home and shop, I was thinking what marvelous stories Franklin could tell about those signers---who came to Philadelphia as colonials and left as Americans.

I imagine Franklin and all the signers would be interested in this ceremony. As a printer, Franklin would be fascinated with the copper plate, struck from the original Declaration in 1823, and with the copy made from that plate earlier this month especially for Philadelphia. But as a writer and philosopher, Franklin, and the other signers would most like to know what happened to the ideas of the Declaration.

We could tell them: "The Declaration lives in the hearts of free men everywhere and America derives its just powers from the consent of the governed---just as they envisioned so long ago in Philadelphia."

#



NEWS

from U.S. Senator HUGH SCOTT, Pennsylvania

Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-6324



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4/19/76

U.S. Senator Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) today announced that "through the collaborative effort of the Federal Government and the people of Philadelphia" a priceless 150 year old copper plate engraving of the Declaration of Independence will be sent from Washington to Philadelphia for the Bicentennial.

Scott said the plate, which is the first exact and official reproduction of the complete engrossed Declaration, was prepared by William J. Stone between 1820 and 1823 by order of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Stone produced the copper plate by direct impression from the original document.

The plate, along with a print made from it, will be exhibited in Philadelphia First National Bank building through the end of the year.

Scott, who joined some 700,000 Philadelphians in asking that the original Declaration be brought to Philadelphia for the Bicentennial, said "the Stone plate will significantly enhance the Philadelphia celebration while guaranteeing that the original document not be endangered by transport to Philadelphia." The National Archives, which maintains and houses the original document, determined after extensive study, that the document could not be safely moved from its current air tight vault in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The Stone plate is held in permanent custody by the General Services Administration's National Archives and Records Service who will loan the plate to the Interior Department's National Park Service for display in Philadelphia.

Scott said that it is believed that this will be the first use of the plate since 1895 when six prints of the Declaration were believed made. Stone facsimilies are now extremely rare.

The print which will accompany the plate was made at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on April 13, Thomas Jefferson's birthday. Before the print could be made the plate was stripped of its protective wax and paper coating apparently applied in 1895 to curb oxidation. When the surface was found to be in excellent condition, master printer Angelo Lo Vecchi used an old hand crank press to make the new print for Philadelphia. The plate measures 30 3/4 inches by 25 11/16 inches allowing the facsimile to be the exact size of the original document.

#

CONTACT: Patricia Agnew
(202) 224-7753 (7754)
(301) 657-1978

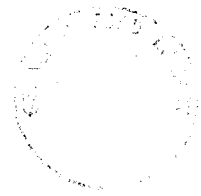
Franklin Square seems exactly the right place for this ceremony. Just think how many American heroes walked these streets during the fateful spring of 1776.

This marvelous restoration of the home and shop of Benjamin Franklin--the Grand Old Man of our Revolution--should remind us all of those exciting times. Franklin, who was an inventor, author, printer, diplomat, scientist and humorist, was at home in Philadelphia during the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

How pleased he would be to see this very special plate, made from the original Declaration, and a copy struck from that plate for Philadelphia in this birthday year.

But I believe Franklin, Jefferson, and the other drafters would be even more pleased to know the Declaration of Independence lives in the hearts of free people everywhere...and that two hundred years later America derives its just powers from the consent of the governed.

(Unveil the plate) *



Changes per Nancy BF via Nancy 7/24

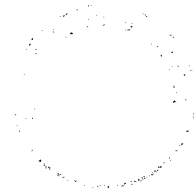
SUGGESTED REMARKS, PRESENTATION OF "STONE" PLATE, PHILADELPHIA,
April 26, 1976

It's terrific to be here and I can't help but think what interesting stories Benjamin Franklin could tell us of those exciting days in 1776! The delegates, who came to Philadelphia as colonials and left as Americans, stopped by his home and shop. That's why I think ~~this~~ ^{the} restoration of these places is such a terrific Bicentennial project, ~~because~~ ^{It} takes us back to the beginning of the American story ^{project.}

As a printer, Franklin would be fascinated with the copper plate, struck from the original ^{Declaration of Independence} in ~~the 1820s~~ ¹⁸²³, and the copy made especially for Philadelphia earlier this month. As a scientist, he would be curious to know how carefully the original Declaration is preserved and why it is too fragile to travel. But as a writer and philosopher, he would most like to know what happened to the ideas in the Declaration he helped draft.

We could tell him: "The Declaration lives in the hearts of free men everywhere and America derives its just powers from the consent of the governed---just as he and Jefferson and others envisioned so long ago in Philadelphia."

#



Revised Remarks, Presentation of "Stone" Plate, Philadelphia,
April 26, 1976

It's terrific to be here to participate in these very special Bicentennial ceremonies. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~
~~xx~~ I have an extra interest in the Declaration of Independence and the 56 signers--who ~~xxxxxx~~ pledged their "lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Several years ago, I began collecting a proof set ~~of~~ struck by the Franklin ~~Mint~~ Mint of all the signers of the Declaration. Just ~~x~~ last month, I received the last coin. It's really been fascinating, because I've learned so much about some of the not so well known ~~mm~~ signers.

This special interest helps me understand the ~~devotion~~ ~~and~~ keen eagerness of Philadelphians in wanting ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ to have the original Declaration back for this Bicentennial. Your ~~x~~ desire is very understandable, and although the original could not be moved, I'm so pleased to participate in these ceremonies today.

I was thinking as I visited this marvelous restoration what interesting stories Benjamin Franklin could tell about ~~xx~~ the others signers and those exciting days in 1776.

That's why I think the ~~x~~ restoration and these special copies of the Declaration of Independence will add so much

Suggested Remarks, Presentation of "Stone" Plate,
Philadelphia, April 26, 1976

~~Benjamin Franklin~~ that Grand Old Man of the
If there
~~Revolution~~ is ~~the~~ one person who brings to mind
Philadelphia in that ~~xxxxxx~~ fateful spring of 1776

What an ~~appropriate~~ *terrific* Bicentennial project---the
~~xxxxxx~~ restoration of his home and shop! *I'm certain* Visitors
for many years ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ will remember
those who walked these *very* streets in 1776, and ~~1787~~ during
the ~~Constitutional xxxxxx~~ *Benjamin Franklin*

~~Franklin~~---inventor, author, diplomat, scientist
and ~~philosopher~~ ~~xxx~~ philosopher---~~was born~~ *that*
~~Philadelphia during both those exciting times~~

original
Although the Declaration of Independence, signed
by Franklin, Jefferson and the other drafters, was too
fragile to travel, *But* this special plate, made from the ~~at~~
~~xxx~~ original, and a copy ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ struck this year
especially ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for Philadelphia, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ remind us of ~~those xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ those
days when the course of history was altered.

How proud those signers would be to know the
Declaration lives today in the hearts of free ~~men~~ people
everywhere...and that two ~~yx~~ hundred years later America
derives "its just powers from the consent of the governed"---
~~just~~ as they envisioned that summer in Philadelphia.

Presentation of the Stone Plate, Philadelphia, April 26, 1976

Franklin Square seems exactly the right place for this ceremony. Imagine those who walked these streets in that fateful spring of 1776 and over a decade later in 1787 during the Constitutional Convention.

This marvelous restoration of the home and shop of Benjamin Franklin---that Grand Old Man of our Revolution--should remind us all of those exciting times. Franklin, who chose Philadelphia as his home, was an inventor, an author, a diplomat and a lively and witty man to remember.

Don't you think he would be pleased to see this
in the 1820's
"Stone" plate, a copper engraving struck from the ~~xxxx~~
original Declaration of Independence and ~~this copy~~ the
copy struck from that plate a few days ago on April 13th,
~~Jefferson's~~ Jefferson's birthday!

Although the original document itself is too fragile to travel, the ideas of the Declaration are alive and strong and ~~can~~ continue to give courage to free men everywhere.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
I'd like to close ~~xx~~ with a salute to Philadelphia---
the birthplace of our two most precious documents and
a city to remind us always of liberty.

How pleased he would be at this ceremony...

as I am to bring these in cooperation.

but I believe that Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and those other creators in Philadelphia would be that the document while fragile===the strength of the ideals survive---strong, viable and an inspiration to free men every where.

How ~~appropriate~~ appropriate to bring back this Stone Plate of the ~~Declaration~~ Declaration of Independent to this marvelous restoration of the home and shop of that Grand Old Man of the Revolution---Benjamin Franklin. Franklin's ~~made~~ made his place in our history in so many ways---diplomat, scientist, politician, author---like his much younger frined jefferson. he truly casts a large shadwo.

i'm so ~~delighted~~ dlighted to participate in these ceremonies to unveil this copy of the ~~Declaration~~ Declaration of ~~Independence~~ Indepence and a copy. ~~XXXXXX~~ i know that many Philadelphians hoped to have the original Declaration back for the Bicentennial. The document is too fragile to travel, but the ideals of that Declaration are alive and strong. ~~XXXXXX~~ But I am glad this historic stone plate has been returned for this year...along with a permanent copy for

I hope that many visitors will be pleased by this

✶

and printing shop
How fitting to restore the home of Benjamin Franklin
as part of the Bicentennial celebration. Here in Franklin
Square in that famous spring of 1776---~~Ben~~ what comings and
goings. Franklin was one of the five drafters of the Declaration
and he would be back in Philadelphia after distinguished
years representing American interests in France to preside
attend the constitutional convention.

On the unveiling of a copy of this document

I think it appropriate to recall the words of Franklin
* in a letter to a friend:

we ~~not promote~~ incl.
helping others help themselves

Presentation of "Stone" Plate, Philadelphia, April 26, 1976

If there is one person that brings to mind Philadelphia in that fateful ~~xxx~~ spring of 1776, it is Benjamin Franklin--- the Grand Old Man of the American Revolution.

The restoration of his home and shop should remind visitors for years to come of those important times in Philadelphia. Those who walked the streets of Market Square in 1776 and in 1787 during the ~~xxx~~ Constitutional Convention truly altered the course of history.

[Franklin---inventor, author, diplomat, scientist and philosopher---would ~~xxxxxxx~~ be proud of what Philadelphia and the Nation have become.] How pleased he would be to see this special plate, made from the original Declaration of Independence, and a ^{copy} ~~copy~~ struck this ^{year} ~~month~~ from that plate, especially for Philadelphia.]

But I believe Franklin, Jefferson and the other drafters would be even ^{most} ~~more~~ proud to know the Declaration lives in the hearts of free people ~~in~~ everywhere ~~in~~...and that two ~~in~~ hundred years later America derives "its just ~~pro~~ powers from the consent of the governed"---just as they envisioned. ~~xxxxxx~~

~~xxxxxxx~~

(Unveiling of the plate)

Presentation of "Stone" ~~Plate~~ Plate in Franklin Square,

~~Philadelphia~~ Philadelphia, April 26, 1976

1787

How marvelous it would have been to be in Franklin Square in April of 1776. With the move for independence growing every day, ~~the~~ Benjamin Franklin's home must have been the scene of many important visitors. How grand *(one of the 5 drafts))* that for this Bicentennial---the home of the Grand Old Man of the ~~Revolution~~ Revolution and his shop ~~are~~ have been preserved. All over America, many wonderful ~~moments~~ moments in our past are ~~being~~ being preserved for ~~the~~ the future. ~~I~~ I think it's truly ~~an~~ a welcome way to celebrate this anniversary by looking to restore and preserve important scenes in our past. I think it is ~~an~~ especially important to see ~~how~~ how and where people live to put ~~our~~ our foots into their shoes.

Through the cooperation of the National Park Service, ~~the~~ National ~~Archives~~ Archives and the ~~Bureau~~ Bureau of Engraving and Printing, ~~this~~ the "Stone" plate ~~an exact copy of the original~~ a copper plate made by direct immpression from the original in the 1820s by order of Sec. of State John Quincy Adams---and ~~an exact copy~~ a copy made especially for Philadelphia on Jefferson's birthday April 13th.

I know that ~~at~~ 700,000 Philadelphians asked for the orginial document---which is too fragile to be moved.

But although the ~~form~~ original document is too fragile to be moved, the glorious words of the Declaration of Independence ~~remain~~ are strong...a continued ~~inspiration~~ inspiration and challenge to us all.

It is with great pleasure that I join the unveiling of this very special and historic copy of that first precious document of our freedom.

bank is the place, but the national park service====need
to check out location Ben Ruhe

three govt. agencies---National Park Service, National
Archives and ~~BUREAU~~ Bureau of Engraving and Printing...

how is it being transported...

are their other plates...James Gear * (523--3047)

frankling ~~SWAN~~ square is on market st...the national
park service working with local people...excated...
put in original condition...house and print shop...
national memorial...after may 1st will be in national
bank...

out ~~xxxx~~ of doors in beautiful setting....spent six million
dollars...

this wonderful restoration...~~it~~ opened to the public april
20, loaning plate...giving copy...

people working...~~it~~ to get something accomplished...

~~he~~ ~~x~~ hillel levinson, ~~a~~ managing director of phil.---

trying to recall rizzo..

30 million dollars in phil.. ~~it~~ by national park service...

most of money for bicentennial...

~~Ben~~ Ben Franklin was an old man in a young man's time---
during the Revolution~~00x~~ ---yet he served his country well.

His printing skills---his wit---scientific experiments~~0x~~---
his inventiveness---creativity---all combined with an incredible
zest of living. Franklin truly one of the interesting men
in our interest. I think it is so appropriate that the National
Park Service has made an enormous effort to ~~xxxxxxx~~
rehabilitate his home and print shop.

We really can't know how~~xxxxxxx~~ our revolutionary
leaders would like to be remembered. I should think they would
be thrilled just to know we had survive this long...but
given ~~the~~ their own interest in history---i'll bet they
would be pleased to have the bicentennial celebrated by
the preservation of something permanent for the future.
they looked to the future with great expectations



Benjamin Franklin

FRANKLIN, Benjamin (1706–1790), American printer, author, philosopher, diplomat, scientist, and inventor. In each of his many careers, Franklin provided the prototype for special qualities that in his own day and ever since have been regarded as characteristically American. Born in a poor family, he became the leading editor and publisher in North America. He developed a written style less elegant but more vigorous than the literary fashion in Europe, and used it in *Poor Richard's Almanack* to spread a homespun American morality. As the first entirely urban-centered public figure in the colonies, he used his energies to "improve" Philadelphia. As a scientist, he fashioned the chaotic notions about electricity into a unified theory, and invented the lightning rod, which has saved countless buildings from destruction.

Turning to public life when he was about 40, he bypassed the rigidities of Pennsylvania politics and worked in practical ways to stimulate further the remarkable growth of that colony. He next lived in England for 15 years as spokesman for all the colonies. There his intense loyalty to the English crown changed gradually to utter disgust for the corruption and arrogance of British government. He had discovered he was an American, not an Englishman. After declaring this independence in 1776, Franklin lived for nearly a decade in France where he combined skillful diplomacy with astute public relations to become the symbol of a new nation and of a new, enlightened life-style for mankind. Home again for the last five years of his life, Franklin used his skill for conciliation and his zeal for accomplishment to keep the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in session.

Family and Early Life. Franklin's ancestors, who had been Protestants since the 16th century, had come to New England about 1682 to avoid the narrow Anglicanism of the Restoration era. His father, Josiah, was a candlemaker and skillful

mechanic. His mother, the former Abiah Folger of the island of Nantucket, was, her son said, "a discreet and virtuous Woman."

Benjamin Franklin, their 10th and youngest child, was born in Boston on Jan. 17, 1706, into a pious Puritan household sure of the serious purpose of life and proud of its frugal self-reliance and its personal and social values.

Franklin soon rejected his father's Calvinist theology, as he learned the physics and cosmology of Isaac Newton and the social theory of John Locke. Franklin avidly read the works of the 3d Earl of Shaftesbury and other deists, thus strengthening his lifelong belief in a rational and practical religion, rather than formal doctrine.

In absorbing his new learning through books and periodicals, he virtually memorized the *English Spectator*, with the satires of Addison and Steele, and otherwise accepted the values and philosophy of the English age of Enlightenment. Like Joseph Addison, his favorite author, Franklin blended the good sense, tolerance, and urbanity of the neoclassic age with an inbred Puritan seriousness.

Denied a formal education by his family's poverty, and unsuited for the ministry, Franklin turned eagerly to the world of words he discovered in 1718 as an apprentice to his brother James, printer of an early Boston newspaper, the *New England Courant*. While learning the skills of the trade, Franklin read every word that came into the shop and was soon writing clever pieces, signed "Silence Dogood," satirizing the Boston "Establishment." When the authorities imprisoned James for similar criticisms, Benjamin managed the paper himself. James nonetheless was overbearing, and in 1723 the 17-year-old Franklin, refusing to suffer his brother's petty tyrannies further, ran away to Philadelphia.

Businessman and Civil Leader. Although he had neither money nor friends, Franklin soon found a job through his enterprise and skill as a printer. Then, in 1724, he went to England, where for a year and a half he worked as a master printer, consorted with "low women," and enjoyed the company of the aspiring writers of London. Returning to Philadelphia in 1726, he worked hard and skillfully, and soon owned his own press. He published a newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, began writing *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1732), and did most of the public printing of the province. He also became clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly and postmaster of Philadelphia, operated a bookshop, and established partnerships with printers from Nova Scotia to Antigua. By 1748, at the age of 42, Franklin was able to retire and live comfortably for 20 years off the income from his printing business, managed by a partner.

Exemplifying the Puritan ethic, Franklin not only earned a living but philosophized about it. The adages and precepts of "Poor Richard" and the scheme for moral virtue that Franklin later explained in his famous *Autobiography* summarized his view that by hard work, thrift, and honesty a poor man might release himself from the prison of poverty. Although sayings like "Early to bed and early to rise make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," and "When you run in Debt, you give another power over your Liberty" do not offer a full view of life, as Franklin well knew, they did suggest a useful approach for men anxious to improve themselves. *Poor Richard's Almanack* became a "best-seller" in

North America. The *Way* dozen laid aphorisms, habits in savings, apostles of ing assa Mark Tw castigated whole m

In Philadelphia club of met each Junto in a fire socia academy, Pennsylv and a cit plans fo streets, a night wa forming militia to warships.

Scientific vania fire an ingen "twice as of the w

Respect electricity other ing shrewd a way to form of France famous k to the g was inde that lab akin to a conceptio a great s force of ous ways to man t

Light peared o tion to I the Fren knowledge scientist. tion, mea said migh ship desi invention were but

Frank scientific a ophy of of the ex ning to noticed resemble color, su threness, to sharp nmg also sharp p lightning

North America, and in a brief version known as *The Way to Wealth* it was translated into a dozen languages with countless reprints. These aphorisms and the scheme for developing good habits in his *Autobiography* were distorted by savings banks, miserly businessmen, and other apostles of thrift and hard work, provoking scathing assaults on Franklin by Herman Melville, Mark Twain, D. H. Lawrence, and others. They castigated a caricature of Franklin, not the whole man revealed in his life and writings.

In 1727, intent on civic improvement in Philadelphia, Franklin organized the Junto, a club of aspiring tradesmen like himself who met each week for discussion. Franklin led the Junto in establishing a circulating library (1731), a fire company (1736), the American Philosophical Society (1743), a college chartered as an academy, later to become the University of Pennsylvania (1749), and an insurance company and a city hospital (1751). He offered practical plans for paving, cleaning, and lighting the streets, and for organizing an economical, sober night watch. He overcame Quaker pacifism by forming and equipping in 1747 a voluntary militia to defend the city against marauding warships.

Scientist. Franklin also undertook important scientific experiments. He invented the Pennsylvania fireplace (later called the Franklin stove), an ingenious device that made his living room "twice as warm as it used to be with a quarter of the wood I formerly consumed...."

Responding to the excitement in Europe over electricity, Franklin acquired a Leyden jar and other ingenious equipment and began a series of shrewd experiments. In 1750-1751 he proposed a way to test whether lightning was in fact a form of electricity. (This was first tried in France in 1752.) Later that year he made his famous kite experiment, drawing lightning down to the ground and thereby establishing that it was indeed a form of electricity. He also showed that laboratory-produced static electricity was akin to a great universal force. As with Newton's conception of gravitational force, Franklin offered a great synthesizing idea, explaining a primordial force of nature—electricity—and offering numerous ways to further understand and make useful to man the world in which he lived.

Lightning rods invented by Franklin soon appeared on buildings all over the world. His election to England's Royal Society in 1756 and to the French Academy of Sciences in 1772 acknowledged his fame as a leading 18th century scientist. Formulation of theories of heat absorption, measurement of the Gulf Stream, which he said might be studied and understood like a river, ship design, the tracking of storm paths, and the invention of bifocal lenses and the armonica were but a few of his scientific achievements.

Franklin also espoused and symbolized a scientific attitude that became part of his philosophy of life. When asked how he first thought of the experiment for "drawing down the Lightning to a sharp point," he replied that he had noticed various ways in which lightning flashes resembled discharges of static electricity—their color, swift crooked motion, noise, and destructiveness. Because static discharges were attracted to sharp points, it seemed reasonable that lightning also might be. So he proposed that a high, sharp point of metal be raised to attract lightning.

Franklin the scientist personified enlightened belief in the capacity of men to understand themselves and the world in which they live. Sir Humphry Davy noted that "by very small means [Franklin] established very great truths.... He rendered his [experiments] amusing as well as perspicuous, elegant as well as simple.... [and] he has sought rather to make [science] a useful inmate and servant in the common habitations of man, than to preserve her merely as an object of admiration in temples and palaces."

American Politics. At the height of his fame as a scientist, Franklin turned more fully to a career in politics. His election in 1751 to the Pennsylvania Assembly began a career of nearly 40 years as a public official. At first his intention was merely to enlist political support for the various enterprises that for two decades had made him a civic leader in Philadelphia. But partisan politics soon engulfed him, as he became a leader of the long-dominant Quaker party, opposing the Proprietary party that sought to perpetuate the influence of the Penn family in the affairs of the province. As a legislative strategist and draftsman for the Assembly, Franklin defended the powers of the elected representatives of the people.

Franklin at first did not consider separation from Britain. To him, as to most enlightened men, Britain seemed the freest, most dynamic government in the world and thus an ideal sponsor for fast-growing colonies. Franklin pictured the British Empire as "a big family where a wise and good Mother" nourished the children, who in turn heightened the prosperity of the homeland. He acted with energetic patriotism to help equip Gen. Edward Braddock's ill-fated expedition to recapture Fort Duquesne. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Franklin persuaded the Quaker-dominated Assembly to pass the first militia law in Pennsylvania's history, allocate money for defense, and appoint commissioners, including himself, to conduct full-scale war. Franklin led a military expedition to the Lehigh Valley, where in the wild country beyond Allentown and Bethlehem he established forts to protect the terror-stricken frontiersmen from French and Indian raiders.

But the seeds of Franklin's disaffection took root as he watched the British Empire fight to maintain its domain. The Albany Plan of Union in 1754, dividing power between the king and the colonial assemblies, which Franklin thought gave too much power to London ministries, was disapproved by the crown because it contained "too much weight in the democratic part of the Constitution." Another kind of coolness emerged when Franklin perceived that the British commander, Lord Loudoun, assumed that Franklin was profiteering and trying to advance himself in ways the British government considered a matter of course. Franklin's respect for British rule waned noticeably. He declared in the *Pennsylvania Journal* in 1756 that his highest admiration was for "the people of this province... chiefly industrious farmers, artificers, or men in trade [who] enjoy and are fond of freedom." So when he went to England in 1757 as agent for the Assembly, he was alarmed to hear Lord Granville, president of the privy council, declare, "you Americans have wrong ideas of the nature of Your constitution; you contend the King's instructions to his governors are not laws, and think yourselves at liberty to disregard them...."

But those instructions ... are so far as relates to you, the *Law of the Land*: for the King is the Legislator of the Colonies." Although Franklin would continue to work for 20 years within the empire, it was apparent that he would subordinate British loyalty to his clear view of the needs of colonial self-respect.

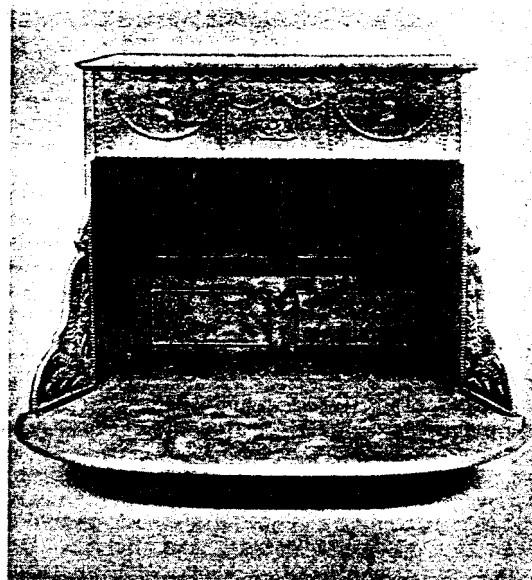
Agent in England. At his diplomatic post in England from 1757 to 1762, Franklin sought to persuade British officials to limit proprietary power in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, he reveled in English social and intellectual life. He attended meetings of the Royal Society, was entertained in the country homes of David Hume and Lord Kames, heard great orchestras play the works of Handel, traveled extensively on the Continent, and was awarded honorary doctor's degrees by the University of St. Andrews (1759) and Oxford University (1762).

At home, from 1762 to 1764, Franklin traveled through the colonies from southern Virginia to eastern New England, bringing further efficiency to the American postal system, of which he had been deputy postmaster general since 1753. He continued to aid the large and poverty-stricken family of his sister Jane Mecom and various other poor relations. He had also to provide for his own family: the former Deborah Read, whom he had married in 1730, their daughter Sally, who had married Richard Bache and had a large family of her own, and William, his illegitimate son and frequent close companion. William, who in 1762 was appointed governor of New Jersey, became a prominent Loyalist during the American Revolution. Franklin considered Deborah, who died in 1774, "a good and faithful helpmate" and observed that "we thrive together and ... mutually endeavored to make each other happy."

Franklin attended mostly to public affairs during the busy months in Philadelphia. He opposed the bloody retaliation that frontiersmen visited on innocent Indians in the wake of Pontiac's Conspiracy (1763), and then helped to defend Philadelphia when the angry pioneers violently protested Quaker "coddling" of the Indians. He lost his seat in the Assembly in 1764, after 13 election victories. His party retained enough power, however, to return him to England that year as agent, to petition that Pennsylvania be taken over as a royal colony.

In England, Franklin soon set aside this goal as the perils of royal government loomed larger and larger. As the great crises that led to the final separation of 1776 began, he opposed the Stamp Act, though he still advised obedience to it. Learning of the often violent protest against the act in America, he stiffened his own opposition, notably in a dramatic appearance before the House of Commons in 1766 when he outlined, plainly and bluntly, American insistence on substantial self-government. Encouraged by repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, Franklin, despite some doubts, spoke again of his faith in the grand prospect for a united empire. But at the same time he warned that "the seeds of liberty are universally found [in America] and nothing can eradicate them."

Franklin mounted a forceful propaganda assault on the Townshend Acts, which established duties on some staple articles imported into the colonies. He declared privately that such "acts of oppression" would "sour American tempers" and perhaps even "hasten their final revolt." He



BROWN BROTHERS

THE FRANKLIN STOVE was one of Benjamin Franklin's most practical and enduring inventions.

saw increasingly that despite countless official, personal, and sentimental ties to Britain, he was more committed to the life-style he had known in America, and which he began to record nostalgically at about this time in his *Autobiography*. The critical transformation in Franklin's loyalty came in his slow realization that, at least under the policies of George III and Lord North, this life-style could not flourish within the empire. His appointment as agent for Georgia (1768), New Jersey (1769), and Massachusetts (1770) made him the leading American spokesman in Britain for the crucial years 1765 to 1775. He knew more about America than anyone else living in England, and more about England than any other American.

Franklin brought his skill as a political essayist to near perfection in satirizing the British Tea Act of 1773, which discriminated against colonial merchants. In *Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One*, he also laid down barbed reminders of how British policy was driving the colonies to revolt.

Franklin's tenure as agent in England came to an unhappy end more than a year before the Declaration of Independence. His friends in Massachusetts, against his instructions, published certain controversial letters of Gov. Thomas Hutchinson that Franklin had obtained in confidence. Seemingly exposed as a dishonest schemer, Franklin was upbraided and insulted for an hour before the English privy council in January 1774. The King's solicitor general implored the council "to mark and brand this man [who] ... has forfeited all the respect of societies and of men." At the same time Franklin lost his position as postmaster general. Disgraced and in danger of being imprisoned as a traitor, Franklin continued to work with William Pitt and others for conciliation. But the Boston Tea Party, followed by the Coercive Acts against the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the buildup of British troops in America, soon overwhelmed such efforts. In March 1775, when Franklin left England for home, he was sure "the extream corruption ... in this old rotten State" would ensure "more

FRANKLIN
ladder.

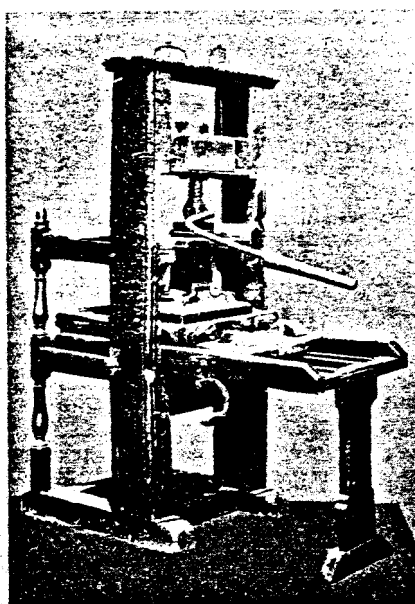
Mischief
between

From
took place
his comp
tinenta
mittee of
and sub
United
tution for
ous winter
ada to join
the Decla
those who
he had la

Ministe
ing to th
aid in th
military
as one of
others be
embarked
vessel on
all of the
considered

Safely
amazing
of diplom
communit
living in
philosoph
ously fru
and dres
Bonhom
by his p
sailles.
Franklin
Turgot
a famous
Heaven
enjoyed
added to

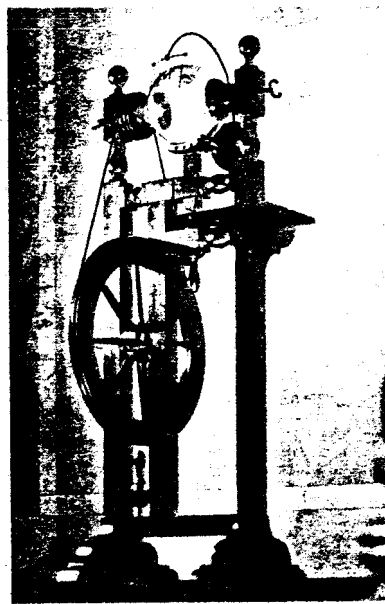
At th
covered
gland, F
American



THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



BROWN BROTHERS



THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

FRANKLIN ALSO INVENTED a printing press (left) and a chair (center) that could be transformed into a step-ladder. His electrostatic generator (right) is popularly known as "Franklin's Electrical Machine."

Mischief than Benefit from a closer Union" between England and its colonies.

From April 1775 to October 1776, Franklin took pleasure in the "glorious public virtue" of his compatriots. He served in the Second Continental Congress and on the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, was elected postmaster general, and submitted articles of confederation for the United colonies. He helped draft a new constitution for Pennsylvania and undertook a hazardous winter journey to Montreal to persuade Canada to join the new union. He also helped draft the Declaration of Independence and was among those who promptly signed it. At the age of 70 he had become revolutionist.

Minister to France. In October 1776, responding to the critical need of the new nation for aid in its struggle against the world's foremost military power, Franklin accepted appointment as one of three commissioners to France, the others being Silas Deane and Arthur Lee. He embarked with his two grandchildren in a leaky vessel on seas infested with British warships, all of them eager to capture one who was now considered to be an archtraitor.

Safely ashore, he began in France the most amazing personal success story in the chronicles of diplomacy. In Paris the literary and scientific community greeted him as a new luminary, a living embodiment of all the virtues that the *philosophes* extolled, but that were so conspicuously frustrated by French despotism. Wigless and dressed in plain brown clothes, he was *le Bonhomme Richard* in person, somehow exalted by his plainness amid the gaudy pomp of Versailles. At a meeting of the French Academy, Franklin and the also aged Voltaire embraced. Turgot expressed the idolization of Franklin in a famous epigram, "He seized the lightning from Heaven and the scepter from tyrants." Franklin enjoyed the salon of Madame Helvétius and added to his legend among the ladies of Paris.

At the foreign ministry, Franklin soon discovered that despite French desire to strike England, France was too vulnerable to help the American rebels unless chances for eventual



BROWN BROTHERS

FRANKLIN DESIGNED a type of chair, one arm of which was extended to provide a writing surface.

success seemed promising. Franklin thus was forced to work behind the scenes sending war supplies across the Atlantic, thwarting British diplomacy, and making friends with influential French officials. To complicate things, Deane and Lee proved to be jealous and contentious colleagues. When Lee accused Deane of profiteering on a large scale, Franklin suppressed his own doubts about Deane to support Deane's unorthodox and possibly dishonest dealings, which had at least channeled war materials to American armies. In February 1778, following news of the American victory at Saratoga, the three commissioners signed the vital, critically effective

French alliance. Shortly afterward, Lee and Deane returned to America.

Franklin, now the first American minister to the court of Versailles, acted for seven years throughout Europe as a diplomat, purchasing agent, recruiting officer, loan negotiator, admiralty court, and intelligence chief. Although John Adams, a peace commissioner in 1778-1779, thought him indolent and careless, Franklin, now in his 70's, carried out his immense and varied responsibilities effectively. His courtliness and deference, which Adams thought mere servility, earned French goodwill and cooperation, whereas the more rigid Adams, declared persona non grata by French officials, soon had to retreat to Holland. With serene efficiency Franklin arranged for French armies and navies to go to North America; supplied American armies with French munitions; outfitted John Paul Jones and the famous ship *Bonhomme Richard*, which Jones had named in Franklin's honor; and, almost miraculously, secured loan after loan from the nearly bankrupt French treasury. Virtually all the outside aid for the American rebels came with Franklin's help.

After defeat at Yorktown forced Britain to recognize that it could not win the war, Franklin made the first secret contacts with peace negotiators sent from London. During the summer of 1782, as the other American peace commissioners, John Adams and John Jay, made their way to Paris, Franklin outlined treaty provisions that were close to the articles finally agreed upon: complete independence, American access to the Newfoundland fishing areas, evacuation of all British forces from all occupied areas, and a western boundary on the Mississippi River. When Franklin insisted on working closely with French negotiators as the American instructions required, Adams and Jay objected that this might jeopardize American interests. Actually, Franklin never subordinated America to French interests, as his critics have claimed. He merely had more confidence in his ability to hold his own in the presence of French negotiators, and a keener sense of how continuing French friendship, far from threatening the new United States, was actually important to its survival. In fact, the subtle Franklin, together with the intrepid Adams and the resourceful Jay, made an ideal team, signing for the United States in 1783 a peace treaty that guaranteed national independence.

As to foundations for American foreign policy after the peace, Franklin sought to be both principled and realistic. "Our firm connection with France," he noted, "gives us weight with England, and respect throughout Europe. If we were to break our faith with [France,] on *what-ever pretence*, England would again trample us, and every other nation despise us." With the pretensions of the great nations thus neutralized, "a few years of peace, will improve, will restore and increase our strength; but our future safety will depend on our union and our virtue.... Let us [though] beware of being lulled into a dangerous security; of being both enervated and impoverished by luxury; of being weakened by internal contentions and decisions; [and of] neglecting military exercises and discipline, ... for all these are circumstances that give confidence to enemies, and diffidence to friends; and the expenses required to prevent a war are much lighter than those that will, if not prevented, be absolutely necessary to maintain it."

Franklin stated many times that "there was no such thing as a good war or a bad peace," and he had a firm belief in the benefits of free trade. Neither isolationism nor aggression, Franklin thought, served the self-interest of the United States. Rather, its security and welfare depended on reducing tensions and removing causes of conflict all over the world. To do this the United States had to be ready to defend itself, but otherwise to cooperate honorably with other nations to achieve prosperous growth.

American Sage. Franklin returned home in 1785 adored by the nation he left and cheered gratefully by his compatriots in America. Though in his 80th year, he accepted election for three more years as president of Pennsylvania, worked to try to abolish slavery, and pursued other civic interests. Painful bladder stones increasingly restricted his activities, but he still maintained a large correspondence, wrote essays, and finished the latter half of his *Autobiography*.

In one period of exceptionally good health for his age and physical condition, he was even able to attend daily the sessions of the Constitutional Convention during the summer of 1787. Too weak to stand in debate and no match for Madison, James Wilson, and other young members in creating new institutions, Franklin helped importantly to give the convention much needed confidence in itself and, through good humor and a gift for compromise, to prevent its acrimonious disruption. Repeatedly he calmed angry tempers and frayed nerves. On the final working day of the convention, in a speech that has become a revered part of the American political tradition, he urged each member to "doubt a little of his own infallibility" and, despite reservations, to sign the Constitution and thus give maximum force to its submission to the people. Indeed, Franklin himself disagreed with many of the provisions of the Constitution, but in accepting it and in asking others to do the same he bespoke an essential quality of government by consent. Recognition of this principle had become the distinguishing feature of his own political career: in assemblies of free men there are bound to be conflicting views that must be accommodated by compromise, if not by persuasion. Nonetheless, he held that certain indispensable principles were fundamental to the union of free states.

His last public service was to urge ratification of the Constitution and to approve the inauguration of the new government under his admired colleague of many years, George Washington. Worn by the debilities of old age, Franklin died peacefully in Philadelphia on April 17, 1790.

RALPH KETCHAM, *Syracuse University*

Bibliography

- Editions of Franklin's works include *Autobiography*, ed. by Leonard W. Labaree and others (New Haven 1964); *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. by Leonard W. Labaree and others, 13 vols. (New Haven 1959-1970); *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. by Albert H. Smyth, 10 vols. (New York 1905-1907).
 Bridenbaugh, Carl, and Bridenbaugh, Jessica, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York 1942).
 Cohen, I. Bernard, *Franklin and Newton* (Philadelphia 1956).
 Crane, Verner W., *Benjamin Franklin and a Rising People* (Boston 1954).
 Ketcham, Ralph, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York 1965).
 Lopez, Claude-Anne, *Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris* (New Haven 1966).
 Van Doren, Carl, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York 1938).

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY TO MRS. FORD

Mrs. Ford will go to Philadelphia Monday, April 26 to attend:

--presentation ceremony of the "Stone Engraving" of the Declaration of Independence. This plate was made in 1823 and will be displayed at the First National Bank of the United States in Philadelphia for the Bicentennial year. The ceremony will take place in Franklin Square.

--attend the Golden Slipper Club dinner. Mrs. Ford is being honored with the "Spirit of Independence" award. The Golden Slipper Club is a fraternal and philanthropic organization involved in many charitable works, such as; scholarships, emergency welfare to victims of tragedy and senior citizen programs. They are also noted for the Golden Slipper Camp for underprivileged boys and girls in the Pocono Mountains each summer.

Mrs. Ford will return to D.C. Monday evening.

#

Credential Contact: Ms. Sara Richmond, 215-KI6-1563

DEADLINE for Credentialing will be Friday, April 23 at 5:00 PM

For further details contact Mrs. Ford's Press Office, 456-2164