

But the Work Shall not be Lost:

American Innovator: the life of Benjamin Franklin

A record of the items displayed as part of the British Library Front Hall exhibition to celebrate Benjamin Franklin's Tercentenary, April-July 2006

Introduction

Benjamin Franklin, founding father of the United States and signatory of the Declaration of Independence, made his international reputation as a pioneering scientist who explored the mysterious force of electricity. Born in Boston in 1706, he was a printer, inventor, author, statesman and bon vivant who also made London his home for almost 17 years. His London residence became a centre for discussion, invention and, as relations between Britain and the America colonies soured, political polemic.

Drawing on the wide collections of the British Library, *American Innovator: the life of Benjamin Franklin* explores the Founding Father's close association with London and Britain, his life-long devotion to printing and the written-word, his profound contribution to science and his ever-enquiring mind.

PRINTER	2
HIS MAJESTY OF CRAVEN STREET	6
DRAW THE LIGHTNING DOWN	10
THE RELUCTANT AMERICAN?	14
BUT THE WORK SHALL NOT BE LOST	17
LIST OF ITEMS DISPLAYED	21

CASE 1

Printer

'He that has a Trade has an Office of Profit and Honour'
Poor Richard's Almanack

Benjamin Franklin had an affinity with print and books throughout his life. Apprenticed as a child to his brother James, a printer, he mastered all aspects of the trade, from typesetting to engraving, learning the latest techniques during his first visit to London. An avid reader, Franklin saved money to buy books by temporarily turning vegetarian and, once settled in Philadelphia, founded the Library Company, the first subscription library in the colonies. As an elder statesman, he even bought type and kept a press during his stay in France.

After working as a printer's journeyman, he set up his own Philadelphian printing office in 1728. His success with the *Pennslyannia Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanack* helped to provide Franklin with the financial means to retire from business, retaining a stake in his print shop and founding others throughout the colonies. Print also gave him a public voice: Franklin preferred the printed word, rather than public rhetoric, influencing political and public opinion as a brilliant journalist and pamphleteer.

Silence Dogood and the *New-England Courant*

When James Franklin lost the contract to print the *Boston Gazette*, he determined to begin his own newspaper, launching the *New-England Courant* in 1721. Benjamin, who had been indentured secretly to James, helped to print the weekly paper. One night he slipped a composition under the door, beginning the series of 'Silence Dogood' letters, the purported epistles of a vocal widower, with strong opinions on drunks, clergymen, foolish fashions and Boston nightlife. Owing no little debt to the satire of the London *Spectator*, the letters represented a remarkable literary achievement for the 16-year old. The British Library's copy has been uniquely annotated in what appears to be Franklin's hand. The first 'Dogood' letter appears on the bottom right.

The New-England Courant, with MS notes [by Benjamin Franklin]. 26 March-2 April 1722 (Boston).
[Burney.214.b]

'The Main Design of the Weekly Paper will be to Entertain the Town'

Benjamin's brother, James, began the *New-England Courant* in the face of opposition from the Boston Establishment. He soon irritated them with his squibs and satires on the great and the good, attacking the influential clergyman Cotton Mather's pet project of small pox inoculation and the authorities' weak response to piracy. Twice arrested, James temporarily left the paper in Benjamin's hands, and then continued to publish it under Benjamin's name to escape a ban on publication. This issue is the first printed item to carry the imprint 'B. Franklin' (on the rear). Franklin announces his intention to 'Entertain the Town' on this page.

The New-England Courant, 4 Feb-11 Feb 1723 (Boston)
[Burney.214.b]

London

In his early career, Franklin relied in part on patronage and chance connections. In 1724 Sir William Keith, the able but cavalier governor of Pennsylvania, proposed to set Franklin up as a government printer and dispatched him to London, promising a letter of credit to acquire the latest printing equipment. On Franklin's arrival in London it became apparent that there was no letter and, having to support himself, he found work as a printer and helped to set in type an edition of Wollaston's *Religion of Nature*. This illuminated copy, which shows a print shop on the frontispiece, was probably owned by the consort of George II, Caroline of Ansbach, whose arms can be seen on the fore-edge.

William Wollaston, *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (London, 1726)
[13.b.6]

Vice and Virtue

Franklin disagreed with Wollaston's religious views and he found the time to write a response, arguing that since God had created a perfect world, 'Vice and Virtue were empty Distinctions'. The few anonymous copies printed won Franklin the approval and acquaintanceship of freethinkers, including Bernard Mandeville, author of the notorious *Fable of the Bees*. Franklin's employer, Samuel Palmer, found the contents of the pamphlet 'abominable', but appreciated good printing. It 'occasion'd my being more consider'd by Mr. Palmer as a young man of some ingenuity'. Franklin dedicated the pamphlet to J[ames] R[alph], with whom he shared lodgings and, with less success, a girlfriend.

[Benjamin Franklin] *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*
(London, 1725)
[C.57.e.36.(2)]

An American Masterpiece

Perhaps the finest example of printing in colonial America, *Cato Major* lost Franklin money but won him the esteem of Pennsylvania's Chief Justice and foremost man of letters, James Logan. Printed on high-quality paper, with harmonious typography and red and black ink, Franklin considered it to be his masterpiece of the printer's art. The first text by a classical author to be translated and printed in America, Franklin hoped that it would play its part in bringing a new enlightened and artistic age to Pennsylvania, declaring in the preface, that '*Philadelphia shall become the Seat of the American Muses.*'

M. T. Cicero's Cato Major, or his Discourse of Old-Age: with explanatory notes
(B. Franklin: Philadelphia, 1744)
[G.17543]

Remember that time is money... (Poor Richard, 1748)

Telling the time was big business in the eighteenth century, and most printers depended on an almanac as their annual bestseller. Franklin began writing and printing *Poor Richard's Almanack* in 1728 under the pseudonym of a seventeenth-century English astrologer, Richard Saunders. To the calendar and lists of astronomical events, Franklin added a series of homespun and often gamey aphorisms that he reworked into a pithy style. In 1758, he produced a bumper issue, which was soon reprinted as the *Way to Wealth*, offering advice on work, money, love and food, helping to distinguish his almanac from the many others printed in colonial America. Many of his sayings have entered everyday speech, from 'honesty is the best policy' to the apposite 'time is money'.

R. Saunders, *Poor Richard improved; being an almanack ... 1752* (Philadelphia, [1751])
[pp.2517.g]

A French Press

In short, America is the land of labour, and by no means what the English call Lubberland... (Franklin, *Avis*)

Franklin continued to keep an interest in printing during his later career as an international statesman. He kept a press at Passy to amuse and inform, printing bagatelles, government documents and dinner invitations during his stay in France as American Commissioner, 1783-1784. Very few examples of his printing from this period survive, but this text, Franklin's response to those who believed that America was a land of ease and plenty, received a broader circulation. Opportunities in the New World abounded, Franklin warned, but only to those who applied themselves.

Avis à ceux qui voudraient s'en aller en Amérique [A translation of "Information to those who would remove to America," by Benjamin Franklin] ([Passy, France], 1784)
[B.683.(5)]

Anti-Counterfeiting devices

I wrote and printed an anonymous Pamphlet on it, entitled The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency... My Friends [employed] me in printing the money; a very profitable Job and a great Help to me. This was another Advantage gain'd by my being able to write. (Franklin, Autobiography)

One of Franklin's early Philadelphian writings argued that the colonies, which were often in want of coined money, needed a form of paper currency. He convinced the Assembly, and also won the contract to print dollar bills. Faced with the problem of counterfeiting, Franklin proposed including mica flakes and an imprint taken from a leaf, since its unique shape would be difficult to reproduce. The idea was copied by other colonies and states, as in this later Maryland example.

1/9 dollar bill of exchange, Maryland, 1774, with mica flecks, signed by T. Harwood, Maryland.
[MSS Deposit 10050]

CASE 2

His Majesty of Craven Street

'We have four Rooms furnished, and Every thing about us pretty genteel, but Living here is in every respect very expensive',
Franklin, letter to his wife, 1758

Franklin made the most of London during his 17 years here. He swam in the Thames, published philosophical and political tracts, conducted experiments, visited the British Museum and enjoyed the newspapers, conversation and Madeira wine of the city's coffee-houses. Most importantly, his fame as a scientist and his abilities as a conversationalist ensured a wide circle of friends and associates, and he was a central figure at the Royal Society and the Royal Society for Arts.

Between 1757 and 1762 he came to London to plead for the rights of the Pennsylvania Assembly. He returned in 1764 as agent for the colony and soon began to campaign against the Stamp Act, which placed duties on all printed materials in the colonies. Attacked as 'the most mischievous man in England', he left London for the last time in 1775.

Throughout these ventures, Franklin found refuge at 36 Craven Street, where the landlady, Margaret, and her daughter, Polly, became for him something of a second family. Franklin even produced a whimsical 'gazette', reporting on the activities of 'Queen Margaret' and 'his Majesty'

Benjamin Franklin House is now open for visitors at 36 Craven Street, WC2N 5NG (tickets can be booked on 020 7930 6601)

An American Curiosity

I had brought over a few curiosities, among which the principal was a purse made of the asbestos, which purifies by fire. Sir Hans Sloane heard of it, came to see me, and invited me to his house in Bloomsbury Square, where he show'd me all his curiosities, and persuaded me to let him add that to the number, for which he paid me handsomely.
(Franklin, *Autobiography*)

In this letter, the young Franklin displays his precociousness by approaching Sir Hans Sloane, President of the Royal Society, the famed collector, scientist and President of the Royal Society. The curious purse can now be seen in the Natural History Museum, Kensington.

[Sloane MS 4047, f. 347]

Coffee Houses

'We have wine and punch upon the table. Some of us smoke a pipe, conversation goes on pretty formally, sometimes sensibly, and sometimes furiously. At nine there is a sideboard with Welsh rabbits, apple puffs, porter, and beer.' (James Boswell)

Boswell, who attended the Club of Honest Whigs with Franklin, records the flavour of social and intellectual life in London's coffee houses, several of which are depicted on this map, along with the alehouses, booksellers and printers around Cornhill. Franklin regularly used coffee houses such as the Pennsylvania Coffee House (later rebuilt) to collect post, meet friends and catch up on the latest news. He also purchased books from William Strahan, whose shop is shown here.

M. Payne, *A Plan of all the Houses Destroyed and Damaged by the Great Fire which begun in Exchange Alley, Cornhill, 25th of March, 1748.* (London: M. Payne at the White Hart in Paternoster Row, 1748)
[Maps CC.5.a.293]

Let Trade take its own Course

This letter to one of Franklin's longstanding British correspondents, the botanist Peter Collinson, outlines some of Franklin's views on trade. Britain and its colonies, Franklin believed, had a mutual interest in avoiding placing duties on their economic intercourse. Written in 1764, two years before the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Franklin wondered in this letter whether 'In time perhaps Mankind may be wise enough to let Trade take its own Course, find its own Channels, and regulate its own Proportions, &c. At present, most of the Edicts of Princes, Placaerts, Laws and Ordinances of Kingdoms and States, for that purpose, prove political Blunders.'

Franklin to Peter Collinson, 30 April 1764
[Add. 37021, ff. 27v]

Craven Street Connections

Lord Shelburne gingerly operated the levers of patronage during his brief tenure as Prime Minister, 1782-83. Taking advantage of Franklin's association with Shelburne, Polly Hewson, the daughter of Franklin's London landlady, sought a benefice for a relation, noting in this petition that the Dr. and she were good acquaintances.

In 1770, Polly married the anatomist, William Hewson, who opened a dissection theatre at the Craven Street house. He soon acquired a reputation as an original anatomist and made important contributions to the study of blood, but his career was cut short by an infection caught during a dissection in 1774. Franklin and Polly remained good friends, and she eventually moved with her family to Philadelphia.

Polly Hewson, née Stevenson, to Lord Shelburne, 1782
[Bowood 55, f. 85]

My project is to Make Mrs Hewson a visit...

Franklin's family life lacked the harmony he desired. He spent many years away from his wife and daughter, and the American Revolution drove him and his son, William, apart. In 1757, William had accompanied his father to train for the bar in London. Franklin soon hoped that he would marry Polly Stevenson, but William lived a more dissipated life. William became governor for New Jersey, loyal to the British crown. Franklin was reconciled with his grandson, William Temple, taking him to France. During their return to America via Southampton in 1785, William Temple took advantage of the chance to visit his father and Polly (now called Mrs Hewson), but the rift between William and Franklin remained.

Letter from William Temple (Franklin's grandson), [1785].
[Add. 36595, f. 116]

On his arrival in London in 1757 Franklin quickly set to work, publishing a series of anonymous articles calling for support for the colonies, earning a political as well as a scientific reputation. His political enemies accused him of seeking a governorship for himself and, later, inflaming relations between Britain and America. Many of Franklin's associates deserted him during the Hutchinson Letter affair. This article in the *London Magazine*, published at the height of the War of Independence, offered Franklin as a scapegoat for the enmity between Britain and America.

The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military, and Literary Journal
[pp.3557.v]

***B. Franklin, FRS, Craven Street, London* [check text]**

Franklin consistently sought society, whether formal or informal: his thoughts and innovations rarely took place in a vacuum, but depended on a flow of correspondence and discussion with others. In 1756 he received the Copley Medal of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and, in 1756, the Royal Society elected him as a fellow. This volume records his membership of the RSA, which he used,

His Majesty of Craven Street

like the Royal Society, almost as a private club, meeting his friends and acquaintances regularly.

His network was also broader than London thinkers, and he travelled widely in England, Scotland and Ireland, awarded honorary doctorates from Oxford, Edinburgh and St Andrews, as well as visiting France and Germany. His network of correspondents extended across Europe.

Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, *A List of the Society*
[Ac.4470/5]

CASE 3

Draw the Lightning Down

'What signifies philosophy that does not apply to some use?'

Franklin, letter to Polly Stevenson

Franklin once confessed to his fellow scientist, Sir Joseph Banks, that 'I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known 100 years hence'. The natural world offered endless fascination for him, as did the possibilities of improving 'the Power of Man over Matter'. A stream of inventions and innovations continued throughout his life, including swimming flippers, ventilated lamps, flexible catheters, bifocal lenses, stoves, the lightning conductor, daylight saving time and a musical instrument, the glass armonica.

Franklin was also interested in the basic nature of reality, and he speculated on the nature of heat and conductivity, of oil on water, light and air, making the most profound contribution through his electrical experiments. In 1752 he demonstrated that lightning is an electrical force and that electricity consists of one force, charged positively and negatively, rather than two distinct 'fluids'. His scientific work drew on a network of correspondents and introduced him to a world stage as the man who drew lightning to the ground.

The Gulf Stream

Franklin had heard rumours from sailors of a great ocean current. To investigate, he measured the temperature of the sea as he crossed the Atlantic, charting the flow of warmer water from the Caribbean. He presented a paper to the American Philosophical Society (which he helped to found), speculating on faster Atlantic crossings. This map shows the migration of herring in the top left corner, a topic also discussed at the Society. Franklin can be seen depicted to the right of Neptune.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
[(P)BX 80-E(58)]

An Electrical Storm

For many, Franklin is best known as the man who flew a kite in a thunderstorm, but he was not the first to conduct such an experiment. Excited by Franklin's writings on electrical lightning, Thomas-François Dalibard detected sparks of electricity from a kite flown at Marly-la-Ville, France on 10 May 1752, just as Franklin predicted. The chronology is uncertain, but Franklin probably performed a kite experiment in June, before he could have heard of Dalibard's success.

Draw the Lightning Down

Franklin discoveries were published and were then improved upon by others, such as Jaques de Romas (depicted here), who in 1753 used a copper wire to discharge a spark in front of 300 observers.

Jacques de Romas, *Mémoire sur les moyens de se garantir de la foudre dans les maisons* (Bordeaux: Bergeret; et se trouve à Paris: Pissot, 1776)
[1607/5262]

Lightning Rods

Engraving of the Philadelphia State House, showing one of the first lightning rods in the colonies.

The lightning rod provides one of the first, and the most striking, examples of the application of practical technology following scientific investigation. The *Gentleman's Magazine* printed regular brief accounts of homes being burnt to the ground or unfortunate persons struck by lightning. Nothing, not even the ringing of church bells, could defend buildings from lightning until Franklin invented the lightning conductor offering buildings and ships protection 'from that most sudden and terrible mischief'. The *Gentleman's Magazine* was the most prominent journal of the day, disseminating all forms of knowledge, including early reports of Franklin's experiments.

Gentleman's Magazine, 1752
[249.c.1-24]

A Game of Chess

We learn by Chess the habit of not being discouraged by present bad appearances in the state of our affairs; the habit of hoping for a favourable chance, and that of persevering in the search of resources. (Franklin, *Morals of Chess*)

Franklin had an addiction for the game of chess, sometimes playing through the night. He wrote his *Morals of Chess* 'with a view to correct (among a few young friends) some little improprieties in the practice of it'. It also provides an insight into his methods of diplomacy, since the game becomes 'the image of human life'. Franklin advises 'foresight', 'circumspection' and 'caution' in the great game.

Chess Made Easy... and the Morals of Chess, written by the ingenious and learned Dr. Franklin (H. D. Symonds; Champante & Whitrow: London, 1797)
[58.k.36]

Experimental Displays

Experimentation served a social purpose and demonstrations were popular entertainments. Franklin seemed to enjoy this aspect of natural science, and even proposed despatching turkeys at Christmas through electrical means.

George Adams wrote a number of popular scientific works, and was a member of a Fleet Street family of scientific instrument makers. Franklin acquired an air pump from his father, who was mathematical instrument maker to George III. Franklin's experiments inspired his friend Joseph Priestley in his work on the composition of air.

George Adams, *An Essay on Electricity* (1799)
[1651/1022(1-2)]

Scientific Fame

Franklin's electrical observations first appeared as a series of letters in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, whose editor then published them as pamphlets. A collection of these, *Experiments and Observations*, was translated into French, German and Italian, making Franklin the most famous natural philosopher since Isaac Newton. Kant labelled him 'the Prometheus of Modern times' (1756).

Electrical phenomena had been increasingly observed and discussed in the 1730s and 40s; Franklin's series of experiments determined many of the basic features of the electric force and gave us many terms still used today, including 'electrical battery', 'positive' and 'negative' charges.

Experiments and Observations on Electricity, made at Philadelphia, ... communicated in several letters to P. Collinson (London, 1751)
[T.66 (7)]

Sudoku?

The most magically magical of any magic square ever made by any magician...
Franklin to P. Collinson

James Logan once showed Franklin a French book containing a collection of 'magic squares'. 'Not willing to be outdone', Franklin spent an evening making a more complex magical square of his own in which the sum of each row, diagonal or 'bent row' made 2056. All numbers revealed by a four-square hole cut in another piece of paper would also make 2056.

Rarely remembered as a mathematician, Franklin made a number of 'magic squares' and a 'magic circle' and also included arithmetical problems and

Draw the Lightning Down

astrological data in his almanac, performed demographic calculations and determined the maximum number of words that could be composed from the alphabet. The squares, Franklin admitted, caused 'a good deal of puzzling' among London mathematicians.

Experiments and observations on electricity, made at Philadelphia in America ... To which are added, letters and papers on philosophical subjects (London, 1774)
[537.i.16]

Case 4

The Reluctant American?

'A great empire, like a great cake, is most easily diminished at the edges'
Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One

The American Revolution grew out of a mixture of republican ideology, economic disputes and British arrogance. Colonial anger against duties and lack of political representation was mishandled by the British authorities and American grievances grew into outright rebellion. In 1776, the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Britain.

Of all the founding fathers, Franklin was the most reluctant American. He long argued for the benefits of the British Empire, until final exasperation with the intransigent British attitude caused him to become a central figure in the independence movement. After returning to America in 1775 he helped to draft the Declaration of Independence, raised crucial war loans from France, forged peace with Britain and helped to draft the Constitution.

Often controversial, Franklin spent his final years arguing for his vision of an American constitution, darkly fearing that the young republic, like all governments, faced despotism if not '*well administered*'.

An Imperial Breach

1. Add. 34412, f.345

Draft of the final proclamation of George III for suppressing rebellion and sedition in the American colonies on the outbreak of the American war, issued on 23 August 1775

2. Edward Barnard, *The New, Comprehensive and Complete History of England from the earliest period of authentic information, to the middle of the year, MDCCLXXXIII, etc.* (Printed for the Author: London, [1783])
[RB.31.c.157]

This proclamation, drawn up by the Prime Minister Lord North, marked the official outbreak of the American War of Independence. The proclamation explains that the American colonists had been 'misled by dangerous and ill designing men'. Having disregarded their debt to the king, who had been their protector, the document declared the colonies to be in 'open and avowed rebellion' and ended the possibility of a peaceful settlement. The war would continue until 1783.

The engraving shows the shelling of Bunker Hill in June 1775, the first and bloodiest battle of the Revolutionary War, at which British troops dislodged

American soldiers from fortified positions above Boston at great cost to their own side.

A Bloody Massacre

Britons view this scene with conscious dread... (Massachusetts Calendar)

On 5 March 1775, frightened British troops fired on a mob in Boston, killing five men. Paul Revere's woodcut of the Boston Massacre, which he based on a drawing by Henry Pelham, provided a patriotic warning against British tyranny, turning a confused affair into a propaganda coup for the American patriots. Revere's stylised engraving, of which there are several versions, including this frontispiece to Isaiah Thomas's almanac, became one of the most famous of the Revolution, helping to galvanise American public opinion against Britain.

Thomas's New-England Almanack; or, the Massachusetts Calendar, for... 1775...
By Philomathes (Boston [1774])
[PP.2517.n]

News from Boston

Cooper, a clergyman, was at the heart of a group of influential Boston patriots. Franklin recognised Cooper's importance and made him his chief confidant in New England. Together they worked for American acceptance of French assistance in the war against Britain.

When the British surrounded Boston in 1775, Cooper escaped, depositing the correspondence with a friend, who misplaced them. Discovered by the friend's son, a loyalist, they were eventually presented as a 'literary, as well as a political curiosity' to George III.

Letters from Benjamin Franklin to Dr. Samuel Cooper, Boston.
[Kings 201]

Prisoners of War

1. John Paul Jones, the dashing but controversial naval officer was vilified by the British as a pirate but lauded by Americans as the 'Father of the US Navy'. After Jones's attacks on British shores, Franklin obtained for him an aged East Indiaman, the *Bonhomme Richard*, named after Franklin's almanac.

The American War of Independence was not fought between traditional combatants, but also saw hostilities against civilians and by irregular troops. Franklin instructed his friend Jones to treat British prisoners well and to avoid the killing of the women, children and the old, unlike the 'English [who] have

wantonly burnt many defenceless towns'. In these letters Franklin offers advice on the exchange of British and American prisoners.

Letters by Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones
[Add. 21506, ff. 163v, 161]

2. Dr. Franklin requests the honour of Capt. Jones's company...

The arrival of the famous Dr. Franklin in France caused a sensation in 1776. The man who 'snatched the lightning from the skies and the sceptre from the tyrant' (Turgot, the French Finance Minister) became a marvel at court, where he resembled the 'natural citizen', a sage whose lack of wig spoke of his virtuous simplicity. This invitation to Jones for dinner also speaks of Franklin's active social life at Passy.

Letter from Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones
[Add. 21506, f. 164]

Case 5

But the Work Shall not be Lost

'Tell me my Faults, and mend your own'
Poor Richard's Almanack

Franklin has lived a second life as an American icon, honoured by postage stamps and statues and whose story had been told to generations of American school-children. But he has also been gently mocked as a bon-vivant and philanderer and attacked as a symbol of thrifty materialism, a 'self-made man', whose aphorisms, in Mark Twain's words, were 'calculated to inflict suffering upon the rising generation of all subsequent ages'. Franklin's writings also exposed his personal life with an honesty unusual for his day and has obscured his deep affection and respect for women, while his wit and fondness for wine have left us a caricature of Franklin that hides his true seriousness, decency and wisdom.

His legacy as one of the architects of the United States, as a scientist and American writer remains unchallenged. Increasingly, Franklin is seen as the founding father most in tune with modern times, a man whose egalitarianism, capacity for friendship, humour and independence of mind retain an intense appeal.

Autobiography

It may be equally agreeable for you to know the Circumstances of my life... (Part One, 1771)

Unpublished in Franklin's lifetime, the *Autobiography* has become his most famous work. Recording his life before 1763 and purportedly written for his son, William, it has become a model for non-religious life-writing and a persistent bestseller. Controversial on publication, it also continues to divide readers. Some welcome his colloquial tone, irony and apparent honesty about the 'errata' of his life, while others find fault with his ideas on the measure of material success, religion, virtue or his sometimes boasting voice. This fine-press edition, with its generous margins and careful typography, pays tribute to Franklin's continuing influence and one of the classics of American literature.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. With an introduction and marginal glosses by Edward F. O'Day (Printed for the Limited Editions Club by John Henry Nash: San Francisco, 1931.)

[C.105.c.14]

D.H. Lawrence

Lawrence's interest in the New World stemmed from his fascination with the tribal and primitive, and he found psychological truth and instinctual power in then-neglected American writers, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herbert Melville and Walt Whitman, boldly ranking their texts as classics. He salutes Franklin's ego, but despises the image of Franklin as a utilitarian, materialistic 'self-made man.' Lawrence offers here his own, less restrained, maxims for life.

Many European, and some American, writers and thinkers have stereotyped the United States as a materialistic, philistine nation and through a one-sided reading of Franklin's *Autobiography* have sought to characterise him as the 'Father of all Yankees'.

David Herbert Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Thomas Seltzer: New York, 1923)
[Cup.403.f.6]

Postmaster General

Franklin served profitably as colonial postmaster general, travelling many of the routes, leaving marker stones, using an odometer of his own design, greatly improving the service for all and generating a useful income for himself. He also saw the importance of communication for the new nation and served as the first US postmaster general. Franklin and George Washington, the first US President, were honoured on the first American illustrated postal stamps in 1847. Franklin is also depicted in his tercentenary year by a special set of American stamps.

'Scott #1'; First US Illustrated Federal Government Adhesive Postal Stamps, 1847
[Philatelic Collections]

Between 1941 and 1962, the *Classics Illustrated* series sold some 200-million cartoon versions of classics and accounts of the lives of great men and women. Franklin's story has been retold many times, and the image of the young man arriving in Philadelphia looking for work and then rising to greatness was offered as inspirational model in many engravings and children's stories.

Classics Illustrated, Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*
[Private Collection]

When I was a child I had to boil soap... in the solemn hope that I would be a Franklin some day. And here I am. (Mark Twain, 1870)

Mark Twain is often quoted as a critic of Franklin's 'wearisome platitudes', but the full text of his article in *Galaxy* magazine is warmer and more humorous than the individual lines usually extracted from it. Twain, a fellow printer-turned writer, owed Franklin a debt for his informal, humorous and ironic style and was well-versed in Franklin's works. Indeed, Twain saw himself as a latter-day Franklin, a man who had also risen as, in the *Autobiography*, from 'Poverty and Obscurity' to 'some degree of Reputation'. The article also offers a subtle tribute to Twain's deceased older brother, who as a young man avidly tried to follow Franklin's advice.

The Galaxy. An illustrated magazine of entertaining reading (New York, 1870)
[PP.6360]

A Series of John DePol Keepsakes

Franklin has continued to inspire printers and engravers, particularly among the private press movement. John DePol (1913–) is one of America's leading engravers, whose woodcuts display a technical mastery and artistic inspiration. He has worked with many important American small presses, including the Pickering Press and Allen Press. Between 1953 and 1968 he produced over 400 small cuts for the Franklin Keepsake Library printed annually for New York Printing Week. Many of the charming cuts depict Franklin in London.

[RF.a.387; RF.a.403; RF.a.404]

Self-Help

Erin Barrett, co-author of *Dracula was a Lawyer*, and Jack Mingo, author of *The Couch Potato Guide to Life*, pay homage to Franklin's inescapable legacy as the father of the self-help advice book, in this California-published guide to life in the 21st century. Franklin advised 'Doest thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.' This is reworked in one chapter and given the rider: 'Perhaps you need to talk with a counsellor about some longstanding issues with your work, relationships, sense of helplessness and so on.'

Erin Barrett and Jack Mingo, *Franklin's Guide to Wealth: Being a 21st Century Treatise on What it Takes to Live a Thrifty Life* (Conari Press, 2004).
[YK.2005.a.12098]

Beer is living proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy

Franklin's birth has been commemorated on many occasions and in many ways. One leading printing journal chose to commemorate the bicentennial of Franklin's birth with a belated collection of plates and facsimiles from major American and Canadian printing firms on a Franklin theme. Here, Rous & Mann, Ltd, celebrate the caricature of Franklin as the 'fun founding father'. This issue, of course, was printed during prohibition in America.

Bi-Centennial Number of the *American Printer* (New York, 1926)
[PP.1622.bfe]

List of Items Displayed

- ✎ *The New-England Courant*, with MS notes [by Benjamin Franklin]. 26 March-2 April 1722 (Boston). [Burney.214.b]
- ✎ *The New-England Courant*, 4 Feb-11 Feb 1723 (Boston) [Burney.214.b]
- ✎ William Wollaston, *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (London, 1726) [13.b.6]
- ✎ [Benjamin Franklin] *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain* (London, 1725) [C.57.e.36.(2)]
- ✎ M. T. Cicero's *Cato Major, or his Discourse of Old-Age: with explanatory notes* (B. Franklin: Philadelphia, 1744) [G.17543]
- ✎ R. Saunders, *Poor Richard improved; being an almanack ... 1752* (Philadelphia, [1751]) [pp.2517.g]
- ✎ *Avis à ceux qui voudraient s'en aller en Amérique* [A translation of "Information to those who would remove to America," by Benjamin Franklin] ([Passy, France], 1784) [B.683.(5)]
- ✎ 1/9 dollar bill of exchange, Maryland, 1774, with mica flecks, signed by T. Harwood, Maryland. [MSS Deposit 10050]
- ✎ Letter to from Benjamin Franklin to Sir Hans Sloane [Sloane MS 4047, f. 347]
- ✎ M. Payne, *A Plan of all the Houses Destroyed and Damaged by the Great Fire which begun in Exchange Alley, Cornhill, 25th of March, 1748.* (London: M. Payne at the White Hart in Paternoster Row, 1748) [Maps CC.5.a.293]
- ✎ Franklin to Peter Collinson, 30 April 1764 [Add. MS 37021, ff. 27v]
- ✎ Polly Hewson, née Stevenson, to Lord Shelburne, 1782 [Bowood MS 55, f. 85]
- ✎ Letter from William Temple, [1785] [Add. MS 36595, f. 116]
- ✎ *The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military, and Literary Journal* [pp.3557.v]

But the Work Shall Not Be Lost

- ✎ Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, *A List of the Society* [Ac.4470/5]
- ✎ *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* [(P)BX 80-E(58)]
- ✎ Jacques de Romas, *Mémoire sur les moyens de se garantir de la foudre dans les maisons* (Bordeaux: Bergeret; et se trouve à Paris: Pissot, 1776) [1607/5262]
- ✎ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1752 [249.c.1-24]
- ✎ *Chess Made Easy... and the Morals of Chess, written by the ingenious and learned Dr. Franklin* (H. D. Symonds; Champante & Whitrow: London, 1797) [58.k.36]
- ✎ George Adams, *An Essay on Electricity* (1799) [1651/1022(1-2)]
- ✎ *Experiments and Observations on Electricity, made at Philadelphia, ... communicated in several letters to P. Collinson* (London, 1751) [T.66 (7)]
- ✎ *Experiments and observations on electricity, made at Philadelphia in America ... To which are added, letters and papers on philosophical subjects* (London, 1774) [537.i.16]
- ✎ Draft of the final proclamation of George III for suppressing rebellion and sedition in the American colonies [Add. MS 34412, f.345]
- ✎ Edward Barnard, *The New, Comprehensive and Complete History of England from the earliest period of authentic information, to the middle of the year, MDCCLXXXIII, etc.* (Printed for the Author: London, [1783]) [RB.31.c.157]
- ✎ *Thomas's New-England Almanack; or, the Massachusetts Calendar, for... 1775... By Philomathes* (Boston [1774]) [PP.2517.n]
- ✎ Letters from Benjamin Franklin to Dr. Samuel Cooper, Boston. [Kings MS 201]
- ✎ Letters by Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones [Add. MS 21506, ff. 163v, 161]

But the Work Shall Not Be Lost

- ✂ *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. With an introduction and marginal glosses by Edward F. O'Day* (Printed for the Limited Editions Club by John Henry Nash: San Francisco, 1931) [C.105.c.14]
- ✂ David Herbert Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Thomas Seltzer: New York, 1923) [Cup.403.f.6]
- ✂ 'Scott #1'; First US Illustrated Federal Government Adhesive Postal Stamps, 1847 [Philatelic Collections]
- ✂ Classics Illustrated, Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* [Private Collection]
- ✂ *The Galaxy. An illustrated magazine of entertaining reading* (New York, 1870) [PP.6360]
- ✂ A Series of John DePol Keepsakes [RF.a.387; RF.a.403; RF.a.404]
- ✂ Erin Barrett and Jack Mingo, *Franklin's Guide to Wealth: Being a 21st Century Treatise on What it Takes to Live a Thrifty Life* (Conari Press, 2004) [YK.2005.a.12098]
- ✂ Bi-Centennial Number of the *American Printer* (New York, 1926) [PP.1622.bfe]

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