



300

1706-2006

THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TERCENTENARY

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“I confess I am a little unreasonable as a Correspondent. I wish to hear from my Friends by every Pacquet, and presume they may excuse me if I write once a Year.”

(Franklin to Abbé Martin Lefebvre de la Roche, Philadelphia, April 22, 1787.)

The Tercentenary Relocates – and Redesigns



The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary greeted the beginning of a new year with several exciting developments. Most noticeably, we have moved our offices to a new location on Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia. This move coincided with our need to build up our logo into a more easily trade-marked design. The result (which can be seen on the top-left of the masthead) is the work of Bart Marable of Terra Incognita, the firm that has produced our new web design. We were particularly taken by the



Join or Die Snake Cartoon in Pennsylvania Gazette. Engraving. 1754. Library Company of Philadelphia

frame’s visual echo of Franklin’s famous “Join or Die” political cartoon – let us know what you think.

Terra Incognita, has meanwhile completed Phase 1 of our site, <http://www.benfranklin300.org>. Its design was inspired by Franklin’s *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and incorporates Poor Richard’s aphorisms with printer’s ornaments and a period color scheme. At the moment you can use the website to check the Tercentenary’s exhibition schedule, search for upcoming events, read about our consortium and board, and link to our institutional partners. Work on Phase 2 – which will include uploading the Frankliniana database as well as an interactive almanac of exhibition highlights – has already begun.

Fundraising Complete!

We have also come to the successful end of our major fundraising efforts. In the final quarter of 2004, we brought in over \$4.5 million, closing our fundraising gap and allowing us to concentrate on finalizing the

exhibition plans and to further develop public and educational programming.



Pennsylvania Gazette (Issue 855). Newspaper. 1745. Walter J. and Leonore Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. Photo by Peter Harholdt.

In total, generous support for the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary has come from: The Pew Charitable Trusts; The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, The Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation, and The Department of Community and Economic Development; The John Templeton Foundation; The Annenberg Foundation; The Department of the Interior, through Independence National Historical Park; The Florence Gould Foundation; The National Endowment for the Humanities, through the Save America’s Treasures Grant Program; The Barra Foundation, Inc.; The Lenfest Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. Po and Helen Chung; and The McLean Contributionship.

A commemorative program of this scope and scale needs extraordinary commitment from individuals and institutions alike. It also draws heavily on the generosity of contributors. We are enormously grateful to all of these donors for

believing in the importance of this anniversary celebration and for valuing Franklin as we do.

New Staff Hired



The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary has also hired two new staff members: an efficient and charming Office Manager, Brent Kissel; and Dana Devon, Director of Educational Programming. Dana comes to us from the National Constitution Center, where, as Director of Web Programs, she developed and edited current constitution-related news stories, as well as overseeing the development and implementation of online educational programming and interactive exhibits. These included the piloting of a digital web-based interactive Constitution and interactive Timeline. Before joining the NCC, Ms. Devon taught in the areas of employment law, ethics and criminal justice, and constitutional criminal procedure. Ms. Devon also worked at the University of Pennsylvania Law School Center on Professionalism, where she researched, developed and taught case studies in legal ethics and professional responsibility. A former attorney, Ms. Devon practiced employment and civil rights law. Ms. Devon received her B.A. in political science from Brandeis University and her law degree from Northeastern University School of Law.

French Honorary Committee Formed

To help bring the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary's exhibition and programming to France, and to celebrate Franklin's important legacy of Franco-American friendship and diplomacy, the Tercentenary has formed a French Honorary Committee. The Committee had its inaugural meeting in October, 2004, at a lunch generously hosted by American Ambassador Howard H. Leach.

The French Honorary Committee is under the high patronage of Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic. It consists of the following distinguished members, all of whom deserve our heartfelt thanks for their generous support and encouragement, which has been manifested in genuine expressions of personal and professional interest: Co-chairman Howard H. Leach, United States Ambassador to France; Co-chairman Jean-David Levitte, Ambassador of France to the United States; Monsieur Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel, Director, National Museum of Versailles; Monsieur François d'Aubert, Minister Delegate for Research; Professeur Etienne-Émile Baulieu, President, Academy of Sciences, Emeritus, Honorary Professor at the College de France; Monsieur Jean-René Bernard, President, France-Amériques Association; Monsieur Michel Besson, National President, France/US Associations; Madame Bertrand

Chatel de Brancion, Regent, Daughters of the American Revolution, Rochambeau Chapter; Monsieur Bertrand Delanoë, Mayor of Paris; Monsieur Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Minister for Culture and Communication; Monsieur Jacques Friedmann, Président du Conseil d'Orientation, Quai Branly; Monsieur Michel Garcin, President, France-America Foundation; Monsieur Paul Girod, Chairman, Senate France-USA Friendship Group; Monsieur Jean-Noël Jeanenney, Président, Bibliothèque nationale de France; Monsieur Jean-Marc Leri, Director, Musée Carnavalet; Madame Christine Malphettes, State Regent, Rochambeau Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution; Monsieur Maurice Marchand-Tonel, President, French-American Chamber of Commerce; Monsieur Thierry de Montbrial, Director, French Institute for International Relations (IFRI); Monsieur Hélié de Noailles, President, Sons of the American Revolution; Madame Laurence Paye-Jeanneney, General Director, Conservatoire Nationale des Arts et Métiers; Monsieur Axel Poniatowski, Chairman, National Assembly France-USA Friendship Group; Monsieur Pierre Rosenberg, Member of the French Academy; Monsieur Pierre Taittinger, Mayor of the 16th district in Paris (Passy); Monsieur Daniel Thoulouze, Director for Scientific and Technical Culture du CNAM, and Director du Musée des Arts et Métiers.

The Benjamin Franklin Memorial Coin Act Is Passed



It is also our great pleasure to announce that both houses of Congress have passed the Benjamin Franklin Memorial Coin Act. The Act was signed into law – as Public Law 108-464 – by President George W. Bush on December 21, 2004. Coin bills require two-thirds co-sponsorship, which is not easily achieved. A tremendous expression of appreciation and thanks is thus due to all who helped achieve that target: Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and his staff, particularly Catherine Graham, Legislative Assistant; Congressman Castle and his staff, particularly Emily Pfeiffer; Senator Specter and his staff, particularly Tom Dower; Senator Santorum and his staff, particularly Zack Moore and Ashley Horning; Governor Rendell's office; Peter Grollman of IKON; and numerous others, including many Friends of Franklin, who called their Senators on our behalf.

Public Law 108-464 authorizes the production of limited edition coins minted in to commemorate Benjamin Franklin. The US Mint is planning to produce 500,000 silver dollars, half of which will feature a young Franklin, and the other half an older Franklin. The Tercentenary will be closely involved the coin's design and production. This bill ensures that the 300th anniversary of Franklin's is appropriately marked,

as described in the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission's enabling legislation.

Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia

Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia is the name we've chosen to encompass the year-long commemoration of Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday in the Philadelphia region. The celebration will run from fall 2005 through 2006, and will focus on the Tercentenary's exhibition, *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*, at the National Constitution Center. However, it will also include an exciting array of complementary exhibitions, lectures, symposia, concerts and special events, in conjunction with offers at many of the region's historical and cultural organizations, restaurants and hotels. More details on which institutions are joining in the celebrations, as well as descriptions of their various programs, can be found at www.benfranklin300.org, on our searchable calendar.

Marketing and P.R. Plans

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is working closely with the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC), in an effort to ensure that our marketing and public relations campaign for Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia will be as effective and wide-ranging as possible. GPTMC is promoting the year-long Ben Franklin experience in the region. This productive and mutually beneficial rela-

tionship has been funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The GPTMC can be visited at <http://www.gophila.com/ben>.

Also assisting the Tercentenary in the goal of celebrating Benjamin Franklin throughout his birthyear, 2006, across the Philadelphia region, is the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau. They have already helped secure *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World's* placement as the top-rated attraction for bus groups in 2005 in ABA's *Destinations* magazine. More information about them can be found at their website, <http://www.pcvb.org/>.

All Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia events and materials will be unified with the graphic identity shown below, which features a one-line sketch of Franklin's profile created by Ben Wolf and owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia.



Exhibition Catalogue Nears Completion

The lavish companion book for *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* (Yale University Press) is now approaching completion. The complete contents of the book, including edited essays and final art, have entered the advanced

copyediting stage. The book will include over 250 color illustrations, many of them published here for the first time, and a series of original essays by today's preeminent Franklin scholars, written to be highly accessible. Initial scholarly reviews of the book have been very positive.

Because of the extraordinarily generous grant we've received from The John Templeton Foundation, a copy of this book will be sent to every public library system in the United States – a fitting tribute to the man who founded our nation's first public library. This book's rare combination of scholarly content with broad distribution will guarantee that insightful interpretations of Franklin's life, message, and historical impact will now be readily accessible around the country for generations to come.

Phase II Begins

The end of the Design Development phase of the exhibition came in December 2004, when Tercentenary staff met with Staples & Charles, the exhibit designers, and with a More Perfect Union, the media designers. The layout of the exhibit has been further refined, and the direction and aesthetic of the media and interactives have been largely established. Accordingly, we are now entering Phase II of the exhibition production.

Save These Dates



Columbus Day Weekend, 2005:
For a parade to welcome Franklin to Philadelphia

December 14 and 15, 2005:
For the exhibition's opening festivities

January 17, 2006: For the big birthday bash

More details about each of these events will be posted on our website, www.benfranklin300.org, in the upcoming months.

Frankliniana Database Update

Momentum is building in the Frankliniana Database project, as every object that we can authenticate for the database seems to bring another object with it. A visit to the University of Pennsylvania brought up the fact that the University has a portrait of Ben attributed to Thomas Gainsborough - about which we had no record. Examination of the University's file on the painting revealed that a local conservator had seen it some years ago. A call to the conservator resulted in her re-examination of the painting, and her consultation with an associate who has worked on Gainsborough's paintings. She has expressed interest in "chasing" the attribution. But, the painting

went from "not known" to "by Gainsborough" to "not by Gainsborough" to "definitely period canvas, and maybe by Gainsborough," and who knows where it will end.

For example, the study of two chairs that descended in the family of Polly Stevenson, Franklin's London "daughter," has confirmed that they are a true pair. X-ray examination of several joints has revealed significant construction details; and a third chair of the set has just been found. By research in the wills of Polly's descendents, we hope to determine how many were in the original set, and how the chairs passed from generation to generation.

Among the more colorful objects that have survived from Franklin's ownership are parts of a tea set that he purchased in France, from a pottery sponsored by the Duc d'Angouleme. They are now spread among several institutions. The database will be a means of gathering them together, at least visually, for the first time in more than a century. Database curator Connie Hershey is now working with our web designers, and you should be able to explore some of her wonderful discoveries for yourselves at www.benfranklin300.org by early summer.

