

For Release:
Publication Date: November 15, 2005
yalebooks.com

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: IN SEARCH OF A BETTER WORLD
EDITED BY PAGE TALBOTT

INTRODUCTION BY WALTER ISAACSON
AFTERWORD BY EDMUND S. MORGAN

***On 300th Anniversary of Franklin's Birth, Lavishly Illustrated New Book
Explores the Many Facets of Our Most Extraordinary Founding Father***

January 17, 2006, marks the tercentenary of Franklin's birth, a cause for celebration and fresh consideration of his amazing legacy. Both ends are beautifully accomplished in ***Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*** (Yale University Press; publication date November 15, 2005; \$40), edited by Page Talbott. The book combines new scholarship with more than 265 color images, many of which have never been seen before: portraits, manuscripts, drawings, maps, paintings, engravings, and a trove of Franklin's possessions, from teacups to printing equipment. The first extensively illustrated book documenting Franklin's life and work, it will enchant and inform anyone interested in one of the more remarkable men of his time—and ours.

You may already know that Franklin founded Pennsylvania's first college and America's first fire insurance company, first hospital, first subscription library, and first learned society. You may also know that Franklin invented bifocals, the lightning rod, the catheter, and the Franklin stove.

But did you also know that . . .

- Franklin started out his career doing everything second: he was the second bookseller in Philadelphia, the second postmaster, the second government printer. The man who did all these things first was Andrew Bradford.

- Franklin was an avid swimmer at a time when that was quite unusual. He experimented with hand-held paddles and special sandals to help him swim faster; once he tried pulling himself across a pond with a kite.
- While doodling during his last voyage back from France as ambassador, he drew the design that would become the Great Seal of the United States.
- He became the head of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and even sent a petition to the first U.S. Congress asking them to abolish slavery. Yet he himself was a slaveowner for most of his adult life.
- He had a taste for the latest fashions in ceramics and furniture. While in London on diplomatic missions for the American colonies, he bought furnishings for his new house in Philadelphia and shipped them back to his wife, Deborah, with instructions about where to put each piece.
- Franklin was the first international celebrity. During his lifetime and afterward his picture appeared on snuffboxes, buttons, curtain tiebacks, jewelry, and whisky bottles. There is even a tree named after him: the *Franklinia alatamaha*.

Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World examines the many facets of America's most extraordinary founding father. Politician, diplomat, scientist, printer, and civic improver, Franklin influenced every aspect of American life, from his own time to the present. The book includes essays by ten prominent scholars that offer an overview of Franklin's life and cover the full range of his interests and achievements. In addition to an essay by editor **Page Talbott**, a foreword by **Walter Isaacson**, and an afterword by **Edmund S. Morgan**, the contributors include: **Ellen R. Cohn, James N. Green, E. Philip Krider, Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner, J. A. Leo Lemay, Robert Middlekauff, and Billy G. Smith.**

This book accompanies the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary exhibition that opens in Philadelphia and travels to a number of American cities and to Paris:

- **National Constitution Center, Philadelphia**
December 2005 - April 2006
- **Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis**
June – September 2006
- **Houston Museum of Natural Science**
October 2006 – January 2007

- **Denver Museum of Nature and Science**
March – May 2007
- **Atlanta History Center**
July – October 2007
- **Musée des Arts et Métiers, Paris**
December 2007- March 2008

For more information on the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, visit www.benfranklin300.com.

About the Editor . . .

PAGE TALBOTT is associate director of the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and chief curator of the exhibition *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*.

Page Talbott and other contributors to *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* will be giving a number of talks and participating in panel discussions. For a current schedule or to set up an interview, contact Brenda King at 203/432-0917 or brenda.king@yale.edu.

- November 30, 2005, Panel discussion on *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*, with Ellen Cohn, Emma Lapsansky-Werner, Leo Lemay, Billy G. Smith, and Page Talbott; Jim Srodes, moderator. **The Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA**
- February 6 and February 27, 2006, "Benjamin Franklin at Home," **Colonial Williamsburg Antiques Forum, Williamsburg, VA**
- February 13, 2006, 8:00 p.m., "Benjamin Franklin at Home," **The Alexandria Association, Alexandria, VA**
- February 26, 2006, 7:00 p.m., Panel discussion with H. W. Brands, Page Talbott, James N. Green; Rosalind Remer, moderator. **National Archives, Washington, D.C.**
- March 2006, Saturday seminar, short talks and panel discussion with Page Talbott and other contributors, **Smithsonian Associates, Washington, D.C.**

Benjamin Franklin, In Search of a Better World, edited by Page Talbott
 INTRODUCTION BY WALTER ISAACSON * AFTERWORD BY EDMUND S. MORGAN
 ISBN: 0-300-10799-4 Cloth
 396 Pages
 10 b/w + 268 color illus.
 Publication Date: November 15, 2005
 \$40.00

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