

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

“Franklin in France”

Directions: Use the article to answer the following questions in complete sentences

1. Why did Benjamin Franklin travel to France?
2. Why did many of the French like Franklin's and America's ideas?
3. What kinds of things was Ben Franklin famous for?

4. What kinds of trouble did Franklin have to deal with while he was in France?

5. What positive things did Franklin accomplish while he was in France?

A crossword puzzle grid with 14 numbered starting points. The grid is composed of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The numbers are: 1 (top right), 2 (top right), 3 (top left), 4 (top left), 5 (top right), 6 (middle left), 7 (middle left), 8 (middle left), 9 (middle left), 10 (middle right), 11 (middle left), 12 (middle left), 13 (middle right), 14 (bottom left).

Across

1. The _____ Fire Company was organized as a volunteer Fire Department
3. a name for Philadelphia's police force
5. Another name for the Philadelphia Apron Club
7. Franklin helped raise support for what is now the oldest _____ in the United States
8. city where Benjamin Franklin was born
10. one of the members of Franklin's Society (last name)
12. In 1791, the academy started by Franklin became the _____ of Pennsylvania
13. Franklin wrote a pamphlet called Proposals Relating to the _____ of Youth in Pennsylvania
14. City that Benjamin Franklin called home

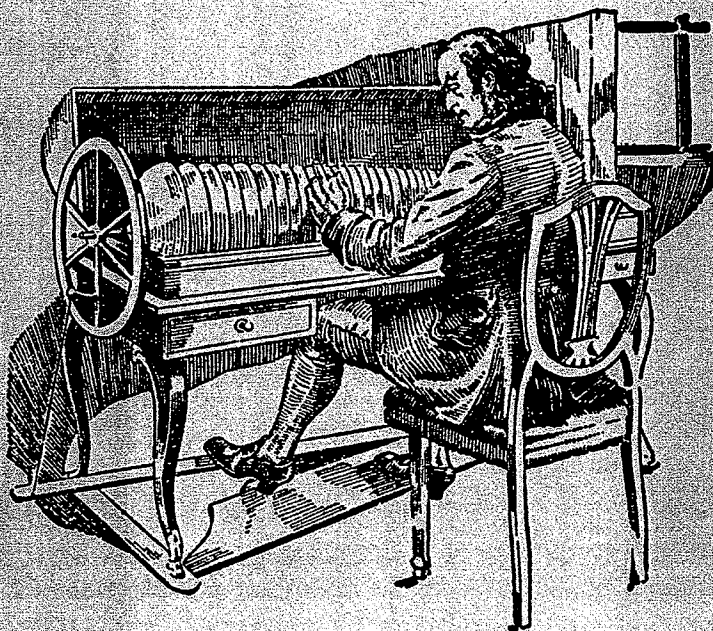
Down

2. a company that insures clients against losses of home and property due to fire
4. Franklin allowed people to borrow books from the Library _____ for a membership fee and an annual subscription
6. Franklin was appointed _____ General of North American
9. Franklin formed the American _____ Society for thinkers to get together and discuss ideas
11. The _____ Gazette was the name of Franklin's newspaper

A Musical Invention

In 1762, Benjamin Franklin saw a demonstration of music being played by rubbing wet fingers over the rims of a series of glasses. Expanding on this idea, he invented the armonica, an instrument consisting of thirty-seven glass bowls ground to produce particular musical notes. The bowls, mounted horizontally on a rod, turned when the armonica player pumped a foot pedal. The instrument produced rich, haunting tones when the player touched his or her fingers to the edges of the spinning bowls. The armonica, though no longer popular today because of its fragility and difficulty, was well known in the eighteenth century, and Mozart and Beethoven both composed music for it.

D.P.R.



by
Bruce Watson

From his first days in Paris, the cry "*C'est Monsieur Franklin!*" ("It's Mr. Franklin") greeted Benjamin Franklin wherever he went. With his simple style, the American diplomat set out to conquer France.



Franklin in France

Franklin arrived in Paris in December 1776. His country was at war with England, and he had come to get the support of England's archenemy, France. Many diplomats of his time were afraid to become too involved in a foreign country, but Franklin saw countries as friends to be charmed with style and wit. He had already served the Colonies in England and had been to France twice, but he was not prepared for his reception among the French people.

In the 1770s, Paris was the height of society. The wealthy

danced and dined in the court of King Louis XVI, while poor people crowded the city's muddy streets. Everywhere people were talking about new ideas of equality. Perhaps kings were not so divine, some people said. Maybe commoners had rights, too. A new country, America, was fighting for those rights. "America is the hope of the human race," one philosopher had written. To the Parisians, Franklin embodied that hope.

Everyone in Paris knew that Franklin had been born a commoner but had risen to fame

through hard work. Quotations from Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* had been published in Paris, and his experiments with electricity and lightning were widely known. But Franklin also was famous for his manner. Within a year, his portrait—with fur cap, powdered gray hair, glasses, and simple coat—was hung in shops throughout Paris. Medallions, rings, watches, and bracelets bore his image, and endless streams of Parisians visited his home in Passy, half a mile from Paris.

Although Franklin turned seventy-one just after arriving in France, he followed an exhausting schedule. He rose late, had breakfast, went about his daily business, and then became a regular in the salons where high society met. The French women, with their brightly rouged cheeks and hair piled a foot above their heads, adored him.

"Somebody gave it out that I lov'd Ladies," Franklin wrote to his stepniece, Elizabeth Hubbard Partridge, "and then everybody presented me their Ladies (or the Ladies presented themselves) to be embrac'd, that is to have their Necks kissed." Eventually, Franklin proposed marriage to a widow, Madame Helvétius, but although they spent hours together talking, walking, and playing chess, she turned him down.

Franklin also had work to do.

by Dorothea E.
Cloughley

Franklin

Benjamin Franklin loved a good game, and chess was one of his favorite pastimes. He once wrote, "Life is a kind of Chess, in which we often have Points to gain and Competitors or Adversaries to contend with and in which there is a vast variety of good and ill Events, that are in some degree the Effects of Prudence or the want of it."

While in France, Franklin

America was losing the war against England, and without help from abroad, the Colonies would collapse. Franklin's job was to earn the support of the French government. While courting French society by night, he courted the royal court by day.

Unfortunately, the government was not as friendly as the French people. When England protested Franklin's mission, the French government refused to talk to him. Franklin also had to deal with anger from his countrymen in Paris. One member of the American group was future president John Adams, who disliked



Chess, and the French

became a folk hero among the French people and personified what they believed to be the unsophisticated nobility of the New World. The French were quite taken with the famous American revolutionary and confidently pitted their chess skills against his.


Surprised when he proved to be their equal at the game, they were even more astonished at Franklin's customary final move. When it came

time to "check" the king, Franklin would reach over and calmly pocket the chess piece. The French thought that, being an American and uncivilized, Franklin simply did not know the correct rules of the game—the king is never removed from the board. His opponents would gently correct him by saying, "We do not take kings here." Franklin would smile and reply, "But we Americans do!"

Franklin. Adams resented Franklin's taste for the finer things in Paris, but he could not deny Franklin's popularity. "His name was familiar ... to such a degree that there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen ... who was not familiar with it and who did not consider him a friend to human kind."

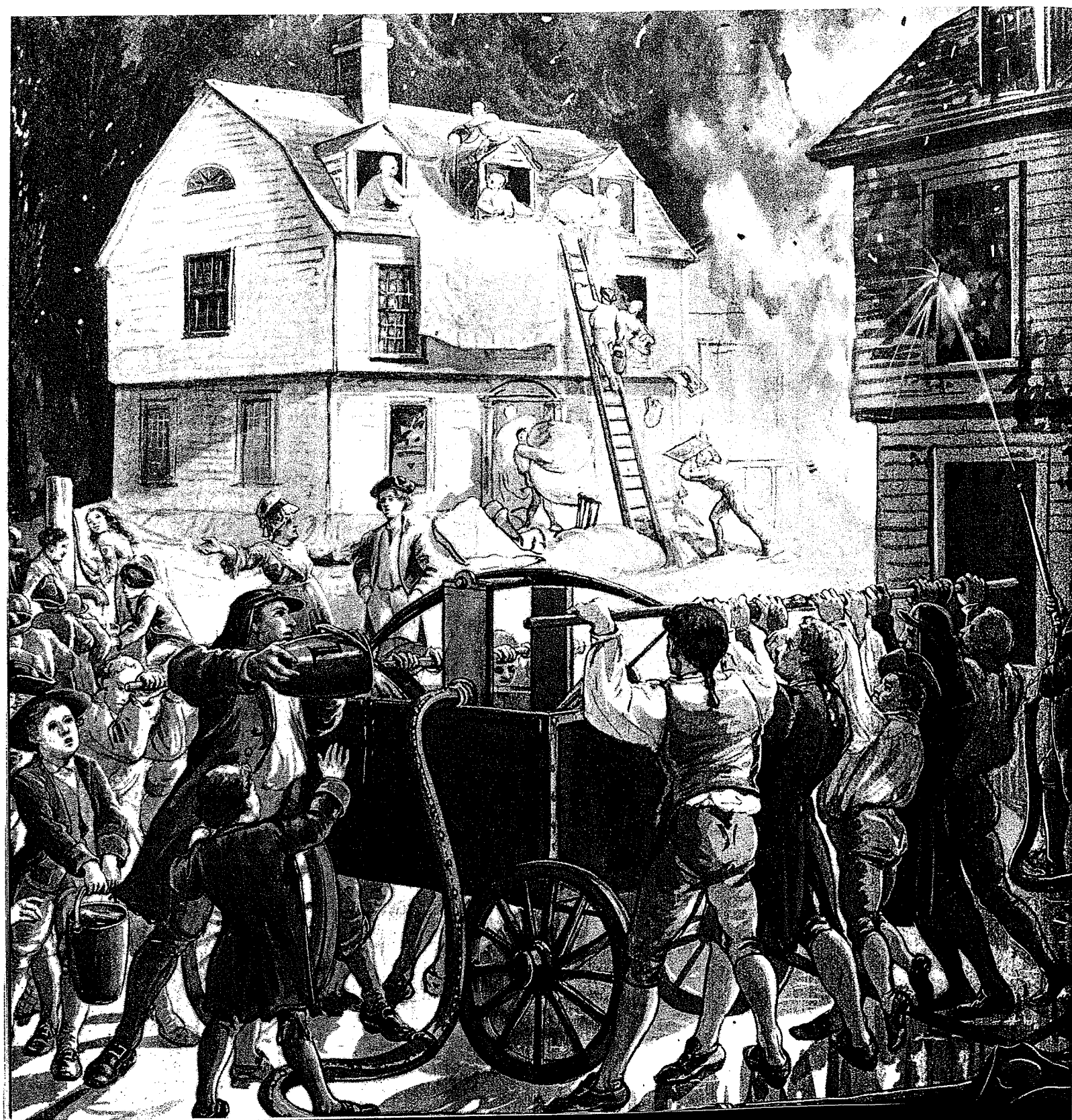
Franklin worked something of a wonder during his nine years in Paris. In 1778, he forged an alliance with France that brought weapons and nearly eighty million dollars to the Colonies. When America won the

war, Franklin helped negotiate the peace. He worked on the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the Revolution, then helped form treaties of friendship between America and other European countries.

When Thomas Jefferson arrived to replace Franklin in 1785, he found "more respect and veneration attached to the character of Dr. Franklin in France than that of any other person, foreign or native." Having won the friendship of all of France, the simple "backwoods philosopher" returned to his home in the new United States. 

by
Shari Lyn Zuber


For the P



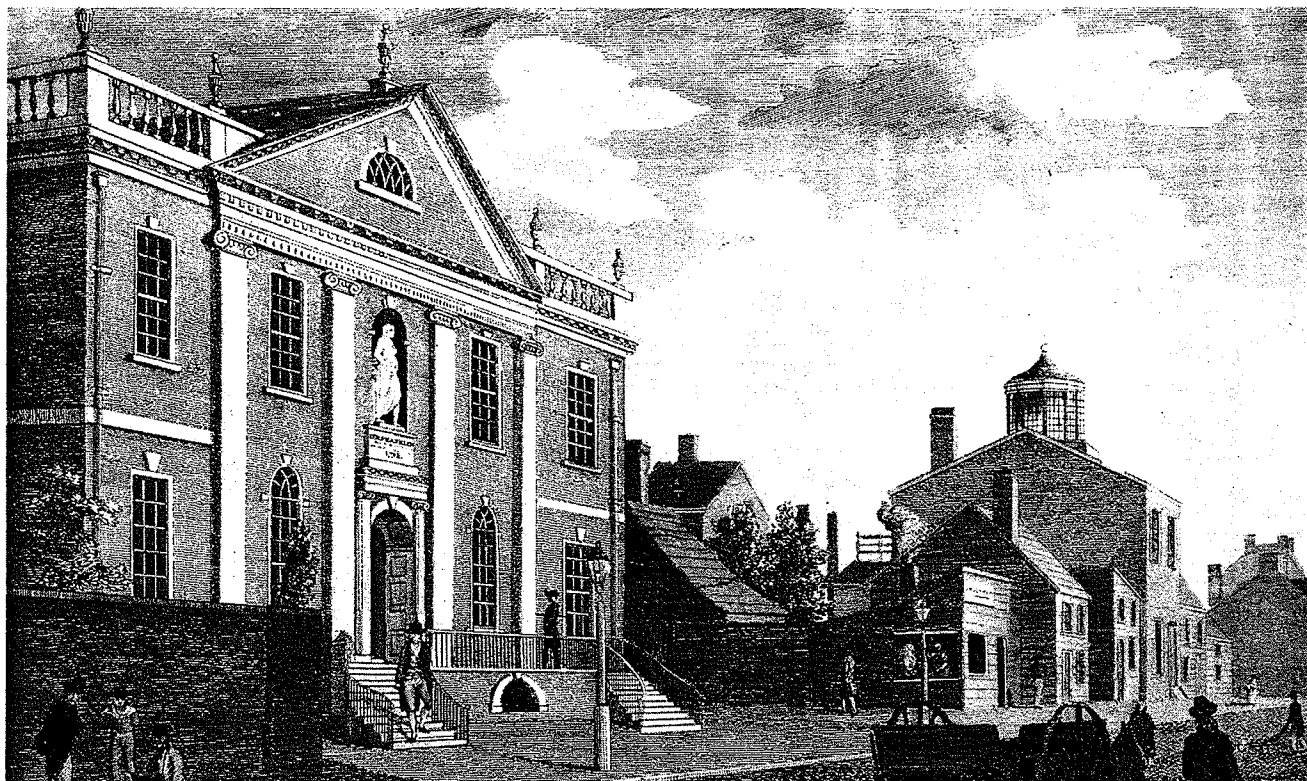
ublic Good

Although he was born in Boston and eventually became a citizen of the world, Benjamin Franklin considered himself a son of Philadelphia. He believed that "a person's highest duty in life is to serve others," and he best fulfilled this creed by elevating the standard of living in his adopted hometown to the highest among Colonial cities. By upgrading life in Philadelphia, he also enhanced people's lives throughout Colonial America.

After establishing his career in printing, Franklin organized a group of Philadelphia artisans into the Leather Apron Club, which later became known as the Junto. Beginning in 1727, the twelve members met once a week to better themselves academically and to discuss how they could improve their city. Franklin derived many of his civic improvement ideas from these meetings, including the first Colonial street-cleaning and garbage-collecting program, the paving of Philadelphia's streets, and the establishment of the City Watch, a competent police force that replaced the corrupt, elected constables. By logically presenting his plans to the citizenry, either in specially written pamphlets or in his newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Franklin was able to accomplish monumental changes.



Colonial Philadelphia suffered frequent fires. On Franklin's suggestion, Philadelphians organized their first firefighting force in 1736.



The Library Company

The members of the Junto individually had small book collections that they used as references for their group discussions. Franklin believed that it would be more efficient if they collected all their literary holdings together in one library, thereby enabling club members to borrow reading material at will. After a year, this proved unsuccessful “for want of due Care of the books.” In 1731, Franklin proposed a more ambitious plan—the founding of a subscription library, which became known as the Library Company. Anyone willing to pay a membership fee and an annual subscription,

which were used to purchase books, would be entitled to borrow books.

As the library grew, the books were moved into their own building, and nonsubscribers were allowed to take out reading material for a small lender’s fee. The library also became a museum, with the addition of fossils, Indian chiefs’ garments, telescopes, globes, and other historic memorabilia. Franklin had begun the first circulating library in America. The library is now housed in a modern facility that contains the largest rare book collection of pre-Civil War history in Philadelphia.

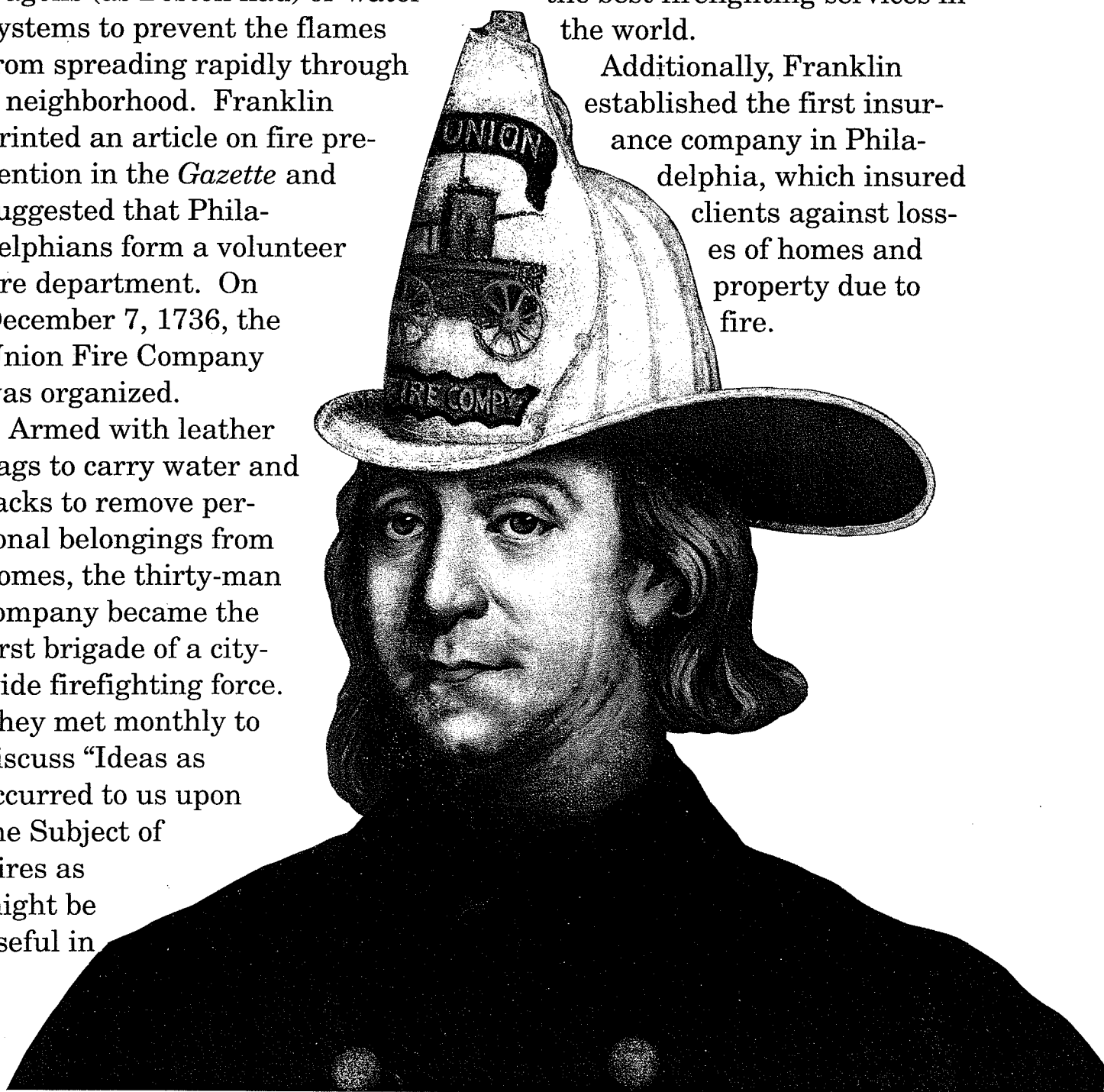
The Union Fire Company

Living conditions in Colonial Philadelphia were hazardous. Buildings were close together and generally made of wood. When a fire broke out, there were no hook-and-ladder wagons (as Boston had) or water systems to prevent the flames from spreading rapidly through a neighborhood. Franklin printed an article on fire prevention in the *Gazette* and suggested that Philadelphians form a volunteer fire department. On December 7, 1736, the Union Fire Company was organized.

Armed with leather bags to carry water and sacks to remove personal belongings from homes, the thirty-man company became the first brigade of a city-wide firefighting force. They met monthly to discuss "Ideas as occurred to us upon the Subject of Fires as might be useful in

our Conduct on such Occasions." Volunteers who missed meetings were fined, and the money was used to purchase hook-and-ladder wagons. In time, Franklin proudly claimed that Philadelphia had the best firefighting services in the world.

Additionally, Franklin established the first insurance company in Philadelphia, which insured clients against losses of homes and property due to fire.



Postmaster General

Mail service throughout Colonial America was extremely poor. Letters could take up to three months to be delivered, if they ever reached their destination at all. Franklin was determined to change this. In 1737, he was appointed postmaster of Philadelphia. A corner of his printing shop was set aside to receive mail from other colonies, Europe, and the West Indies. Franklin began listing the names of people who had mail at the post office. For a penny fee, he began special delivery service of mail to Philadelphia residences. If

mail was not picked up after several months, it was put in storage, which was the forerunner of today's dead-letter office.

Franklin's modernization of Philadelphia's postal system was so impressive that in 1753 he was selected as deputy postmaster general of the northern colonies (down to Virginia). Franklin traveled the three-thousand-mile postal route, inspecting the problems of each colony under his supervision. By 1756, he had turned the debt-ridden Colonial postal system into an efficient, profitable business. His improve-



Postmaster Franklin stops for a drink of water during his 3,000-mile tour of the postal route through the northern colonies.

ment of the postal service also drew the disunited Colonies together.

In 1775, he was appointed postmaster general of North America by the Continental Congress. Do-

nating his one-thousand-dollar-per-year salary for the relief of wounded soldiers, he reorganized the postal system to keep the fledgling United States connected during the Revolutionary War.

The American Philosophical Society

The success of Franklin's Junto inspired him to form an association of America's most learned men. Founded in 1743, the American Philosophical Society (APS) provided a means by which the Colonies' greatest thinkers could discuss their common interests and keep abreast of the latest scientific developments. Franklin proposed correspondence on "all new-discovered plants, herbs, trees, ...improvements of vegetable juices, as ciders, wines, etc.; new methods of curing or preventing diseases; all new-discovered fossils, ...new [discoveries in] mathematics ...[and] chemistry, ...new mechanical inventions for saving labour, ...surveys, maps, and charts of particular parts of the sea coasts or inland countries, ...new methods of improving the breed of useful animals, ...and all philosophi-

cal experiments that let light into the nature of things, tend to increase the power of man over matter and multiply the convenience or pleasures of life."

"What signifies knowing the names if you know not the nature of things?"

Of the original members, ten were from Philadelphia, and five of those belonged to the Junto. The Philadelphia members

met at least once a month to conduct the society's business and make updated reports for members in other colonies. Franklin served as the society's first secretary, and from 1769 to 1790, he was the organization's president.

Included among the society's membership were James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, who served as the club's president during his years as U.S. president. The APS is still functioning today, with a membership of more than seven hundred persons worldwide.

The Philadelphia Academy

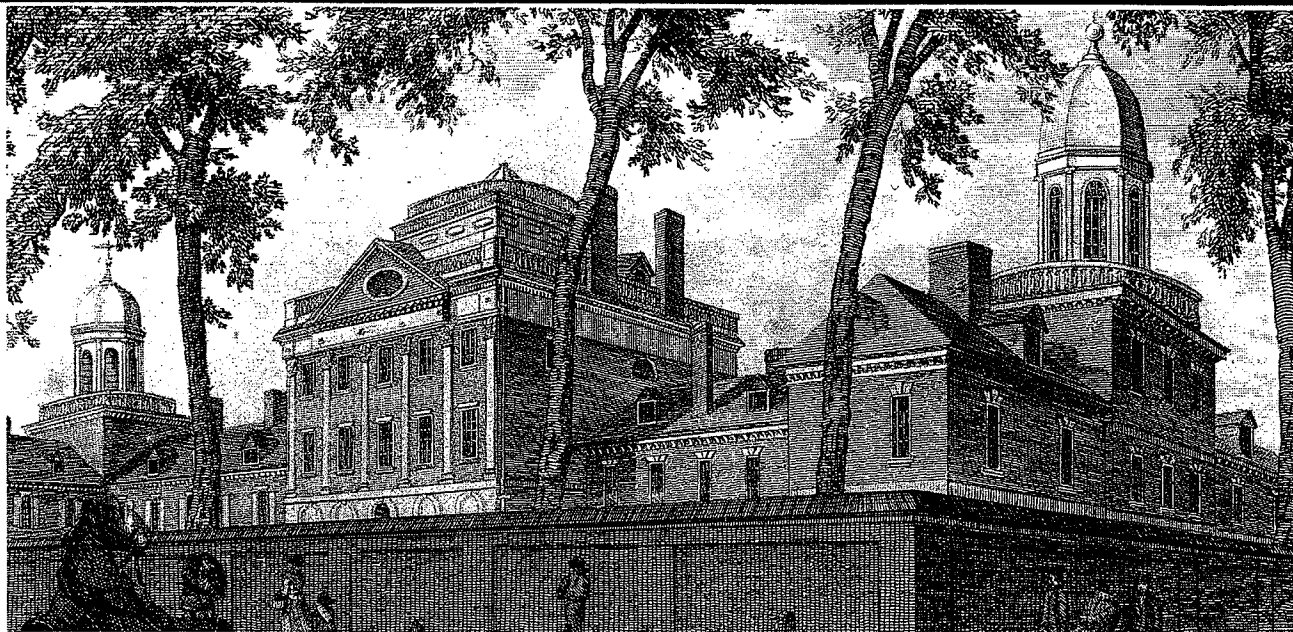
Because he had had only two years of schooling, Franklin realized how important a formal education was, not only for the wealthy but also for ordinary citizens, including women and African Americans. In 1749, he began seeking the assistance of prominent Philadelphians to finance a city academy by publishing a pamphlet titled *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*.

Whereas other universities in the Colonies were connected with religious groups and emphasized teaching Latin and Greek, Franklin wanted the academy to

be free of religious control and to instruct students primarily in the English language so that they could become useful citizens. The Philadelphia Academy opened on January 7, 1751.

In 1755, its name became the College, Academy, and Charitable School of Philadelphia, and the school was officially empowered to grant college degrees to the graduates among its three hundred students. The education offered by the academy was considered one of the best in the Colonies. In 1791, the school became the University of Pennsylvania.





Pennsylvania's First Hospital

Franklin's success in civic projects became legendary throughout the Colonies. When Dr. Thomas Bond of Philadelphia was unable to raise the funds needed to establish a hospital for the sick and the mentally ill, he went to Franklin for help. Immediately, articles began appearing in the *Gazette*, impressing upon readers the need for the hospital. Franklin also

convinced the Pennsylvania Assembly to match the funds raised from the private sector. The hospital, which is the oldest in the United States, was founded in 1751 and moved to its new facility in 1755. Franklin became the first president of the hospital's board of trustees and made certain that no patient was turned away regardless of his or her ability to pay.

Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery

Although Franklin owned several slaves during his lifetime and ran advertisements for slave auctions in his newspaper, he gradually became an advocate of the abolition of slavery. In 1787, he became president of the first American abolition society, The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the

Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. In 1789, he wrote the first petition sent to Congress, calling for an end to slavery. He also advocated that abolitionists provide an education and employment for freed slaves so that they would be able to take their place in American society. ❁