

The Furnishings of Franklin Court 1765-1790

A Preliminary Study

Charles G. Dorman, Museum Curator INHP, July 1969

The Case for reconstructing
"Franklin Court"

When one takes into consideration that this is a PRELIMINARY study of the furnishings of Franklin Court, one can only eagerly anticipate what a full-scale study would produce. It is my own opinion that 30% of the contents of Franklin's house have survived with their appropriate identity; and that most of that 30% is owned by Philadelphia area descendants and public institutions. Another 30% of the contents can be identified in the correspondence of Franklin and his family, and these objects may be supplied in antique counterparts. The rest can be supplied by conjecture using the corpus of study material assembled by the INHP museum curators and historians.

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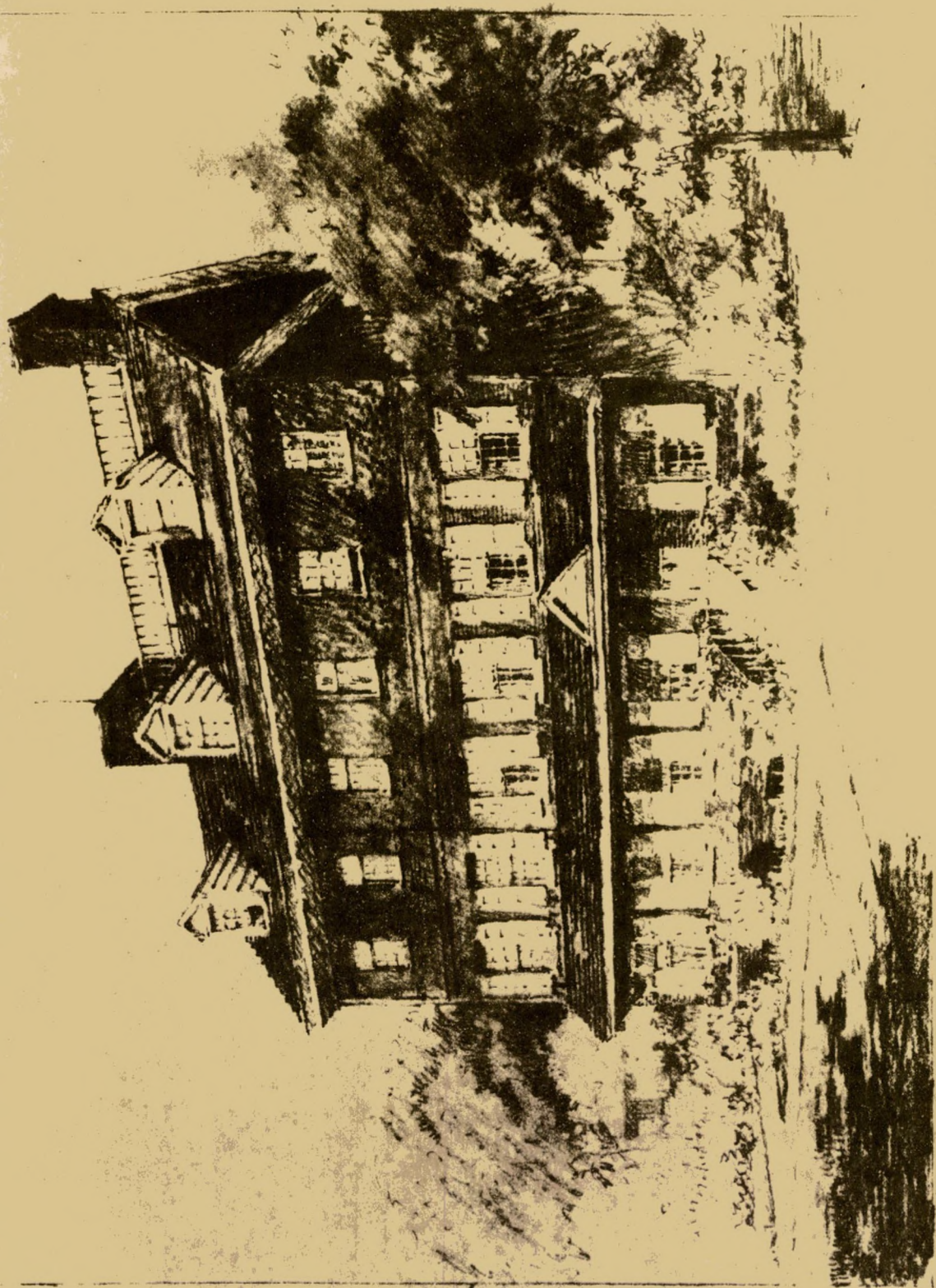
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#1 Franklin Court from the north, perspective by
William M. Campbell, 1961

The Furnishings of Franklin Court - 1765 to 1790
A preliminary study

When, in 1785, Benjamin Franklin returned to Philadelphia after eight years of service to his country abroad, he found that the three and one half story house upon which he had begun construction ^{over} twenty years previously was no longer adequate for either his possessions, or his growing family. Reporting domestic conditions to his sister "Jenny" in Boston, he said: "I have begun to build two good Houses next the Street instead of three old Ones, which I pulled down. But my Neighbors disputing my Bounds, I have been obliged to postpone till that Dispute is settled by Law. In the meantime, the Workmen & Materials being ready, I have ordered an Addition to the House I live in, it being too small for our growing Family. There are a good many hands employ'd, and I hope to see it cover'd in before Winter. I propose to have in it a long Room for my Library and Instruments, with two good Bedchambers and two Garrets. The Library is to be even with the Floor of my old best Chamber: & the Story under it will for the present be employ'd only to hold Wood, but may be made into Rooms hereafter. This Addition is on the Side next the River. -- I hardly know how to justify building a Library at an Age that will so soon oblige me to quit it; but we are apt to forget that we are grown old, and Building is an Amusement."¹ This latest embellishment to "Franklin Court" he was able to plan and execute in detail, and in person; a pleasure denied him with the original section of the house.

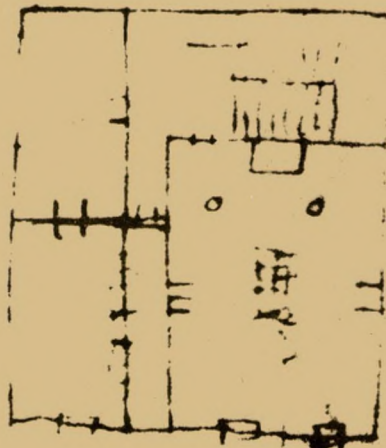
¹. "Letter, Benjamin Franklin to Jane Mecom, September 21, 1786," Franklin-Mecom Correspondence, (A.P.S. Memoirs, Vol. 27) pp. 282-3.

It is a curious coincidence that the homes-under-construction of two prominent Philadelphians, Benjamin Franklin and Bishop White, should have been carried to completion by others when they were required to go abroad after construction had begun. It is also interesting that the homes of these two men are now such vital parts of our Park interpretative program; one, the Bishop White house - almost completely restored, and Franklin Court; a great hope for the immediate future.

The fact that Franklin had to follow the progress of Franklin Court, as initially built, by a steady correspondence from London with his wife Deborah, at home in Philadelphia, has provided an invaluable record of objects and events relating to the house.

The original house, upon which construction was begun in 1763, was set back from Market Street, on the south side between Third and Fourth, in a court formed by income producing properties on the street line. This penny-wise plan provided quiet and privacy in the bustling center of the colonial metropolis. Access was by means of a carriage way, which passed beside one of the Market Street buildings. Once inside the Court, there were trees, lawns and gardens to surprise and please the visitor. The original house conveyed an impression of stability rather than grandeur, but Franklin, in his planning had not stinted on interior embellishments, either structurally, or in furnishings. After years of living in a succession of rented properties, he felt that his own home should reflect his hard-won position in the community, and most importantly, incorporate all those individual touches which his broad interests and natural ingenuity called for.

Rec'd and a



#2 First floor plan for original house

1st floor plan 7506 Vol. 44, 1911
Architect's office
1911

The survival of Franklin memorabilia

A good adage culled from my own experience could be: "To have interesting heirlooms one must first have had interesting ancestors"; and what more interesting ancestor could there be but Dr. Franklin, America's first universal man? One is awed by Washington, but immediately relates to Franklin; this is as true to us today as it was to their contemporaries. The great pitfall of an interest in historical memorabilia, particularly as it applies to personages is that the "sacred relics" frequently become multiplied beyond all reason or credulity. Thus, in the contents of Mount Vernon and the Mayflower we find an unexpected parallel. Fortunately for our purposes this has not been true of the "relics" of Franklin. If anything, his descendants have preferred to underplay both the person and his possessions. Perhaps being victims of a wave of a Victorian morality, they were ashamed of the great man's human failings, repeated, as they would have known, in two succeeding generations. Whatever the reasons, there is not presently more Franklin memorabilia than could possibly be contained in a reconstructed Franklin Court. In fact, a completely literal refurnishing of the house would restore the crowded condition Franklin and his family had to contend with when he arrived home from Paris with the contents of his house in Passy. It is no wonder that he immediately pushed the construction of the addition to his house. The well furnished house at this time contained items from the early married life of the Franklins; the furnishings he had brought back from his apartment in Craven Street, the Strand, London; the furniture and accessories Deborah Franklin had added to the house between 1765 and her death in 1774; and the furnishings added to this already ample

store by their daughter Sarah Franklin Bache and her merchant - and according to Governor William Franklin - "fortune hunter"² husband Richard Bache, when they made Franklin Court their home after their marriage in 1767.

A museum curator, seeking to reconstitute the furnishings of an historic house may consider himself particularly fortunate if a household inventory has survived as part of the estate papers of the famous occupant. This is true of Franklin Court [see Appendix I] and the inventory taken April 26, 1790 - ten days after Franklin's death - would serve as a basic working tool in a restoration of the interior of the house. For the most part the furniture remained in place after Franklin's death, both the house and much it contained having been willed to his daughter Sarah Bache and her husband for their lifetimes, in trust for their children. The considerate gesture of an affectionate father and grandfather to a daughter who had brought her husband to live in her home; whose children were born there; and who, after Deborah Franklin's death, had been the mistress of the house.

² Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin, p. 359.

Entrance Hall

Illustration #3 shows the "L" shaped entrance hall of Franklin Court, looking east to the staircase. Though the artist has left it unfurnished, we know that it was not in reality quite so spartan. On the landing of the stair was Benjamin Franklin's tall case clock [see illus.4] made for him by his friend Edward Duffield.^A Duffield had been a life-long friend, and was one of the few members of the old Junto still living when Franklin made out his last will.^B He had his clockmaker friend one of his executors. Conjecturally, we may expect to find a few other objects in this area; certainly some Philadelphia Windsor chairs,^C of which Franklin had many, ready at hand to be moved into the garden and under the mulberry trees for the outdoor teas which were a summer's day ritual at Franklin Court. One of these Windsors may have been Franklin's writing arm Windsor chair,^D which could also have been supplied with his lap or traveling desk.^E Another object which could have been here would have been the "Chinease Gong"^F valued at £3 in Franklin's estate inventory. We know it was somewhere on the first floor; and would have been most appropriately placed at the bottom of the stairwell, so that the Baches on the third floor, especially the children, could be notified of mealtimes.

A. Collection of American Philosophical Society

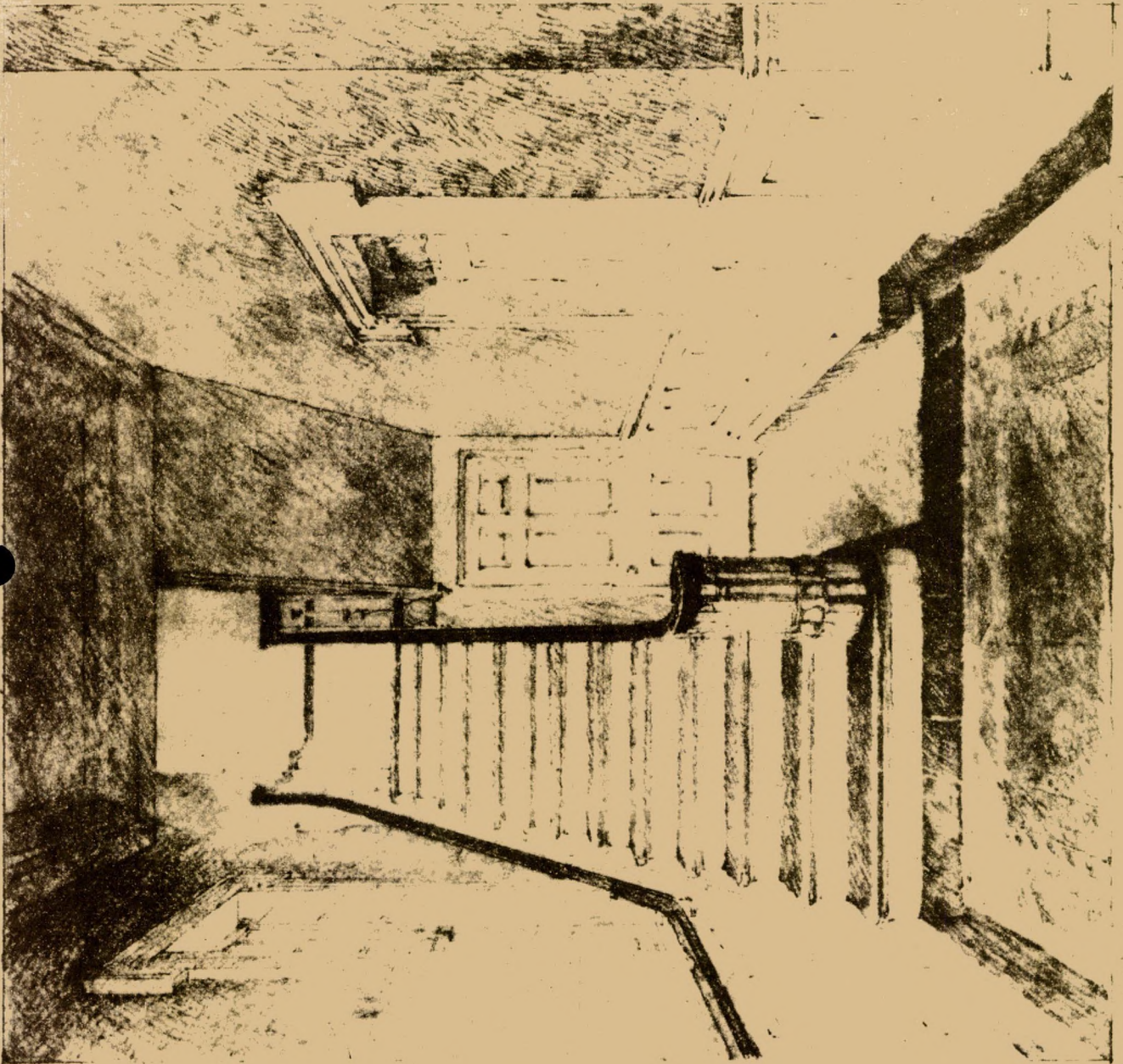
B. Franklin Will and Inventory, April 26, 1790. Register of Willa, Phila.^S

C. Franklin Estate Inventory "24 White Windsor Chairs... 4..16..-

D. Owned by the Univ. of Pennsylvania.

E. Owned by the Franklin Institute.

F. Franklin Estate Inventory



#3 The Entrance Hall, Perspective by
William M. Campbell, 1961



#4 Franklin tall case clock, Collection
American Philosophical Society

Perhaps the most curious object in the hall could have been the Sedan chair^G Franklin had brought back from France in 1785. With his advanced age and its attendant infirmities it became impossible for him to ride in a carriage. In fact, Franklin had been transported from his residence at Passy, France,^{to} the port of Le Havre in an enclosed litter,^H lent to him by the Queen, Marie Antoinette. The Sedan chair was to provide the same ease of travel on this side of the water. He put this chair to good use when he returned home and must have kept^{it} ready-at-hand in his front entrance hall.

G. ... "a Sedan-chair, in which I have often seen him carried by two men, to and from the State House, when he was President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. This Sedan-chair was sent to the Pennsylvania Hospital, where it remained a great many years, in the garret; but on enquiry about it, lately, I ascertained that it had been broken up and burned." Col. Robt. Carr, "Personal Recollections of Benjamin Franklin," The Historical Magazine, IV, second series (Aug. 1868), 59-60.

H. ... "I found that the motion of the litter, lent me by the Duke of Coigny, did not much incommode me. It was one of the queen's, carried by two very large mules, the muleteer riding another..." Carl Van Doren Benjamin Franklin, p. 724.

The Old Parlor

In a famous letter Deborah Franklin wrote to her husband describing the furnishings of Franklin Court she mentions the Parlor, which was behind the study: "... the little southroom I had papered as the wales was much soyled[,] in that is a pritey Card tabel and our Chairs that used to stand in the Parlor[,] and orney mental Chaney over the fier plase[,] on the flower a Carpit I bought cheep for the goodness[,] it is not quite new[,]..."^A Obviously some, or all of the parts of previous Franklin Parlors had been incorporated here with a few additions by bargain-conscious Debby. Beyond her small circle of family and friends Mrs. Franklin did not enter into the social life of Philadelphia. Surely she must have proudly entertained at tea or coffee in this room, despite her specific reference to an elegant tea kettle and stand having been placed in the Blue Room or Music Room.^B As to the reference to ornamental china on the mantelpiece, these could have been Chelsea or Bow figurines incorporating candleholders, but they were more likely the Mandarin images,^C the heads of which nodded at a touch. In the 1760's the Duffield tall case clock stood in a corner of this room, and since visitors to the house had assured her that there was a more appropriate spot for it to stand, she told her husband, that its

A. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Philadelphia], Fall of 1765 [?], Bache Collection, Oversize, 1758-1790, American Philosophical Society.

B. Ibid

C. "... The Derby China was so well pack'd that not even the thinnest part of the Foliage was Damag'd. It is much admired here..." Benjamin Franklin to John Whitehurst, June 27, 1763, photostat - Box "B. Franklin Ltrs., etc. 1723-1798," MSS [NYPL]

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ultimate disposition would be entirely up to him. When he did return years later, he placed the clock on the stair landing, where it appears in his Estate Inventory. A large looking glass occupied one wall and a picture of the Earl of Bute, another.^D

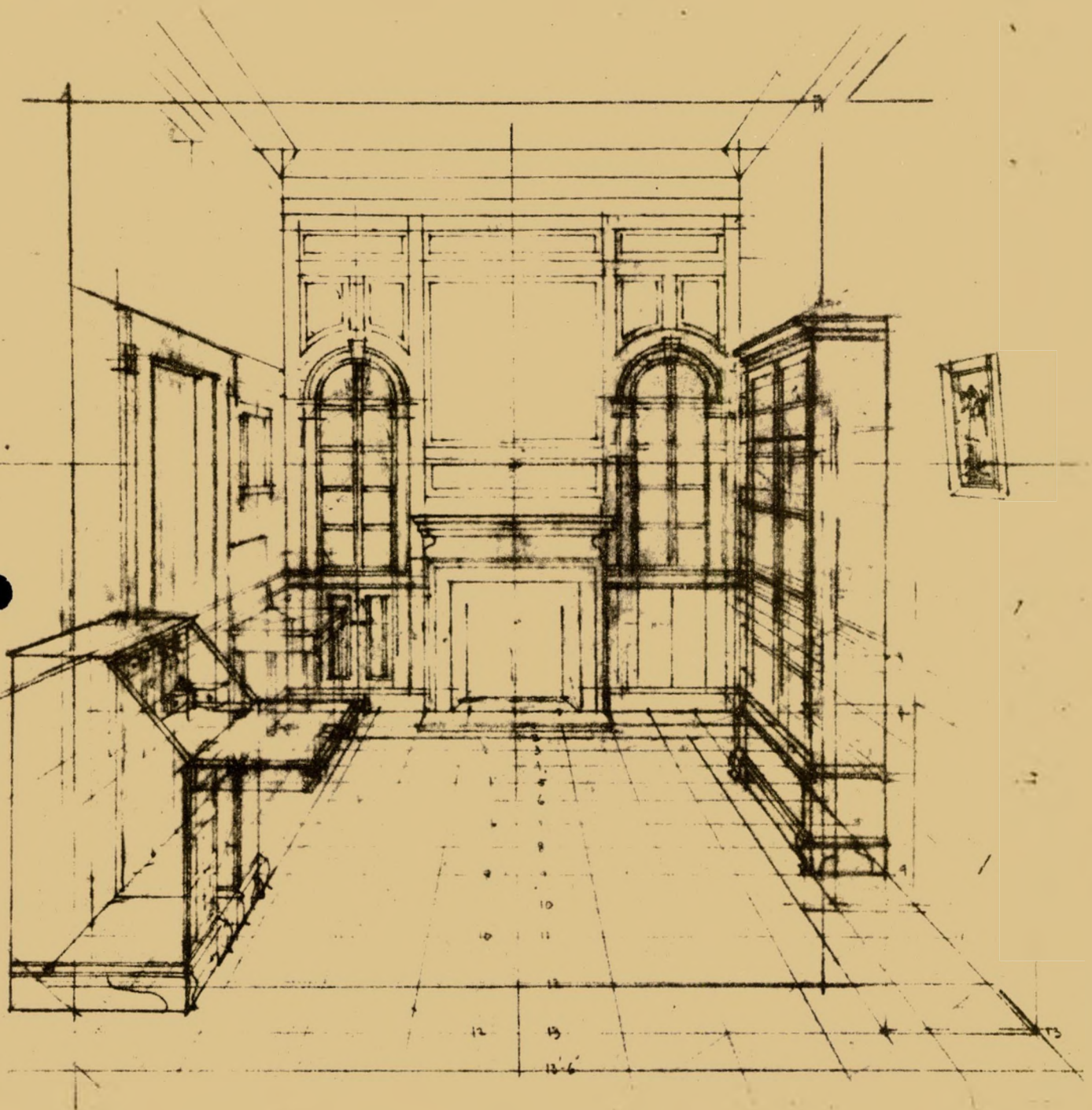
^D.Op. cit. Footnote A.

The Study

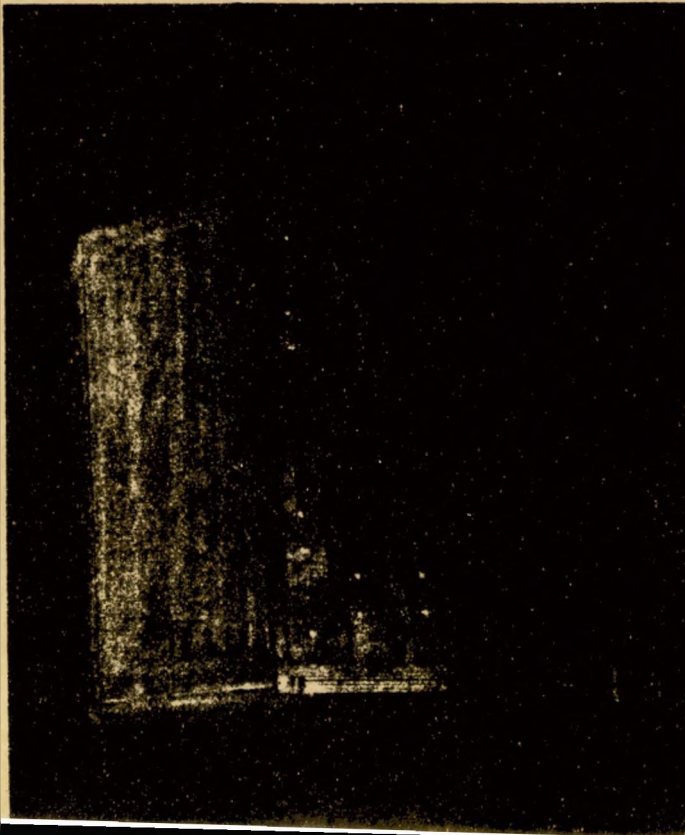
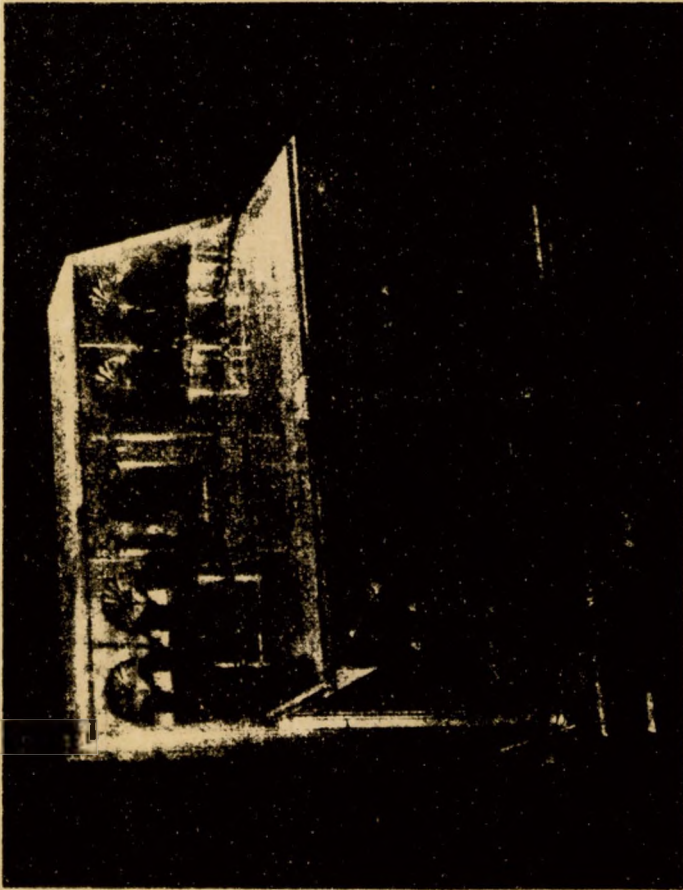
This room, immediately to the right as one entered the front door, served over the years as sitting room, study and office. In Franklin's extended absences Debby used it as an informal parlor or sitting room thus:

"... in the Northroom we sett as it is not quite finished yit as the dores air not up[;] we have a tabel and chairs and the butch Bookcase[,] Brother Johns Pickter[,] and the King and Queens pickter and a small Scotch Carpet on the flower[;] I desier you to remember drincking glasses and a Large tabel clothe or two when you cume[,] but I shante wante them tell then: if you shold meet with a pair of Silver Canisters[,] I should like it[,] but as you plees[,] everey thing I have menshoned when I say dores it is the befet dores..."^A

A. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Philadelphia], Fall of 1765 [?], Bache Collection, Oversize, 1758-1790, American Philosophical Society.



#6 The Study
Preliminary study by William M. Campbell, 1961



#7 8083 A&B
Franklin Desk. Photo: Mills, 12/27/62.

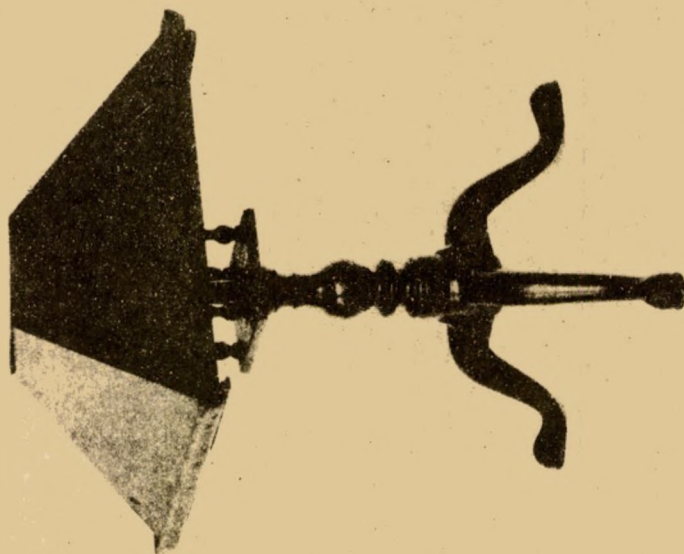
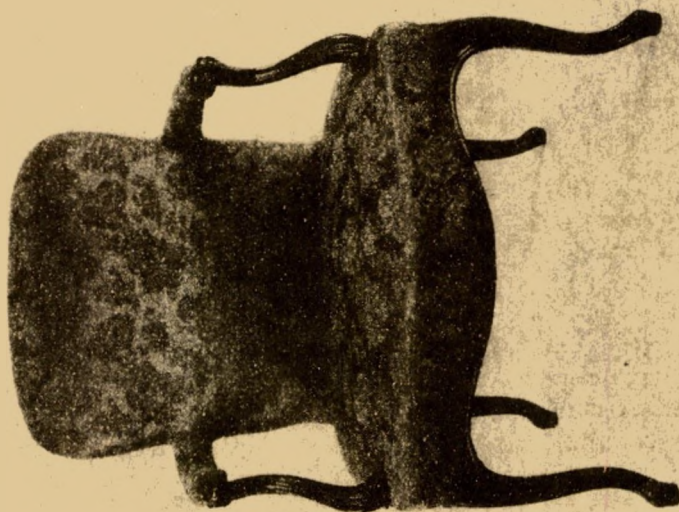


#8 Franklin portrait by Martin.

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#9 Pair of sconces, counterpart of "pair of branches" in Franklin Court parlor



[XXV68X298X20X]

#10 Late 18th century French Parlor chair,
from Franklin Court. Collection of
Franklin Institute.

The Dining Room

In a crude but accurate sketch of the first floor plan^A of his new house, he made about 1764, Franklin shows the location of the Dining Room and some of its furniture [see illus. 2]. Against the north wall "in the room down stairs is the sid bord that you be spoke which is verrey hansom and plain, with two tabels made to sute it and a Doz of Chairs[;] all so I sold to mr Foxcrofte the tabels we had[,] as they did not sute the room by aney meens[;] the potturns of the Chairs air a plain Horshair and look as well as a Pad doseway[,] everey bodey ad miers them.."^B

Deciphering and then translating Deborah's phonetic spelling, lack of punctuation, and extreme stream of consciousness, is no mean feat; but what she was telling her husband -- of necessity, the expert at translating her letters -- was that the side table^C used for mixing and serving foods, which he had ordered ("bespoke") before leaving for London, had been completed and had been installed in the Dining Room together with a pair of drop leaf dining tables^D made to match it. Also there were twelve matching Dining Room chairs;^E one of which, at least, would have been an arm chair. The color of the papered walls is presently unknown, but the border which had been selected for it was gold;^F while the window curtains and their

^A. Franklin Papers, APS.

^B. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, Fall of 1765 (?). Franklin Papers, APS.

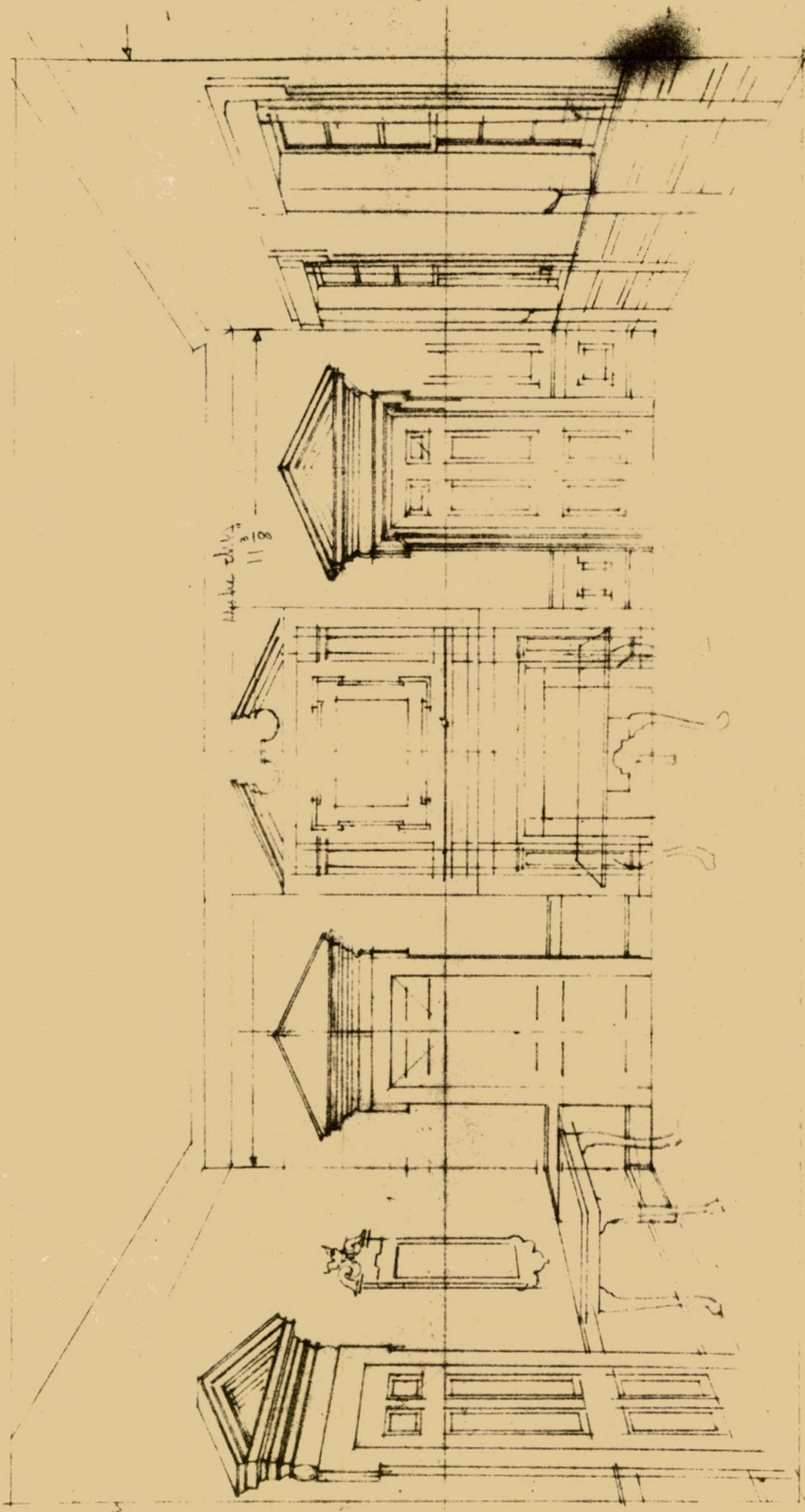
^C. Ibid

^D. Ibid

^E. Ibid

^F. "...the dinning room wants new Paper. the Border which is^a gold one never was put up... "Letter, Sarah Bache to Benjamin Franklin, Oct. 30, 1773," Franklin Papers, Vol. 3, f. 173, MSS [APS].

#12 The Old Dining Room #2
Preliminary drawing by William M. Campbell, 1963



lining were of crimson moreen,^G fitted with tasseled tie backs of the same color. On the floor was a "Turkey" carpet^H Deborah had hoped "Pappy" would be able to obtain for her, and which had cost him 10 Guineas.^I All about this elegant room were expensive and useful presents Franklin had sent to Philadelphia during his absences, as much to please his good wife, as to embellish his home. One striking instance of this attention is as follows: "I send you by Capt. Budden a large Case, mark'd D. F. No. 1 and a small box DF No. 2. In the large case is another small Box, containing some English China; viz. Melons and Leaves for a Desert of Fruit and Cream, or the like; a Bowl remarkable for the Neatness of the Figures, made at Bow, near this City; some Coffee Cups of the same; a Worcester Bowl, ordinary. To show the Difference of Workmanship, there is something from all the China Works in England; and one old true China Bason mended, of an odd Colour. The same Box contains 4 Silver Salt Ladles, newest, but ugliest, Fashion; a little Instrument to core Apples; another to make little Turnips out of great ones; six coarse ciaper Breakfast Cloths; they are to spread on the Tea Table, for nobody breakfasts here on the naked Table, but on the Cloth set a large Tea Board with the Cups ... I also forgot, among the China, to mention a large fine Jugg for Beer, to stand in the Cooler. I fell in Love with it at first Sight; for I thought it look's like a fat jolly Dame, clean and tidy, with

G. ... a Piece of Crimson Morir for Curtains with Tassels, Line and Binding... Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, April 6, 1766. APS Library - Franklin Papers, vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 42. (Smyth, IV, 449-50).

H. ... A large true Turkey Carpet cost 10 Guineas, for the Dining Parlour... Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, April 6, 1766. APS Library - Franklin Papers, vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 42. (Smyth, IV, 449-50).

I. Ibid

~~J. Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, Feb. 19, 1758. Smyth, Writings of Franklin, III, 430-435.~~

a neat blue and white Calico Gown on, good natur'd and lovely, and put me in mind of ---Somebody. It has the Coffee Cups in its Belly, pack'd in best Chrystal Salt, of a peculiar nice Flavour, for the Table, not to be powder'd. N^o 2. contains cut Table Glass of several Sorts I am about buying a compleat Set of Table China, 2 Cases of silver handled knives and Forks, and 2 pair Silver Candlesticks; but these shall keep to use here till my Return, as I am obliged sometimes to entertain polite Company..... Look at the Figures on the China Bowl and Coffee Cups, with your Spectacles on; they will bear Examining."^J

Usually, in a well-appointed house, the family standing silver was placed on display on the side-table or sideboard; and perhaps this is where the Franklin family silver was to be found. From the earliest piece of silver Deborah had purchased for her husband -- a porringer;^K through the gamit of a dish cross,^L a tankard,^M a bowl,^N salt spoons,^O knives and forks,^P a coffee pot,^Q and a tea pot^R, and undoubtably many other things,

^J. Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, Feb. 19, 1758. Smyth, Writings of Franklin, III, 430-435.

^K. Franklin Autobiography.

^L. "Paid Nind his Acc^t for Dish Cross & Tea Kitchen," May 7, 1759. Acct. of Expenses of My [Ben. Franklin] Voyage to England (1757) MSS (APS).

^M. See Illus. 18. Collection of Franklin Institute. Willed by Franklin to Polly Stevenson Hewson, given by descendant to Franklin Institute.

^N. See Illus. 19. Owned by descendant, Mrs. James Masterson Castle, Wilmington, Del.

^O. Op. cit. Footnote J.

^P. Ibid

^Q. Ibid

^R. Ibid

AMERICAN ARTISRY IN WOOD



*Two of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence
Were the Original Owners of This Tea Set and Pair of Chairs*

The Meissen tea and hip set, an original mahogany originally belonged to John Adams, and the silver spoons bear monogram.

A signed affidavit of complete line of descent in the Adams family until the present time accompanies it.

The pair of "crook" foot chairs, owned by Benjamin Franklin in all probability, those mentioned in Solomon Fussell's bill of dated 1748, and are illustrated in Horner's *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture*, plate 316.

A signed affidavit of complete line of descent also accompanies this pair of chairs.

JOHN S. WALTON INC.

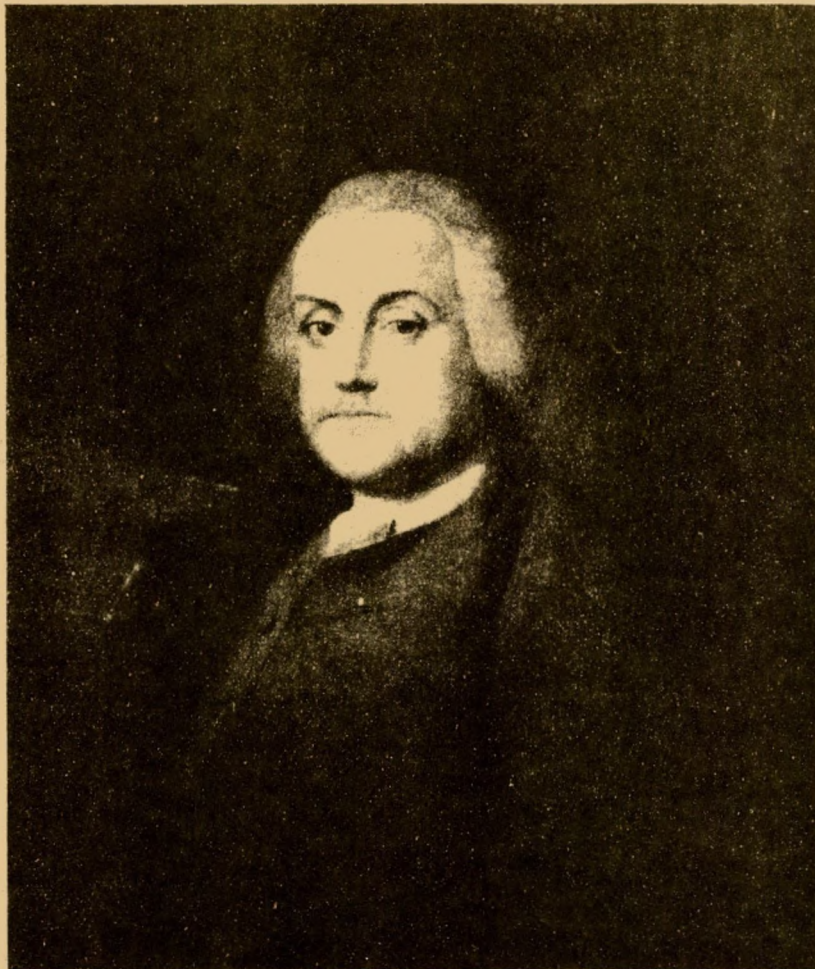
23 West 55th Street, New York 19, N. Y.



#14 Franklin China, brought from France
in 1785.

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the Franklin side table must have impressed the Franklin dinner guests with not only their utility but their beauty, quantity and value. Somewhere in the room on a window wall was a pier glass for which Deborah had sent the measurements to London. Also, complementing each other, were the companion portraits of Benjamin and Deborah, by Franklin's London friend Benjamin Wilson, artist and fellow electric enthusiast. The portrait of Benjamin had been taken by Major Andre when he left Franklin Court, which had been his residence during the British occupation of the city 1777-1778. Andre gave the portrait to his superior officer, whose family in the early twentieth century presented it to the White House.



#15 Portrait of Franklin by Benjamin Wilson.
Collection of the White House.

[~~XX~~2X]



#16 Portrait of Deborah Franklin by Benjamin Wilson.
Collection of American Philosophical Society.

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The New Parlor and Dining Room

In the 1786 addition to his overcrowded house, Franklin wished most of all to adequately house his impressive collection of books. Early in this project he had off-handedly assigned the large room on the first floor to storage,^A but he soon elaborated this into a new dining room which could seat twenty four guests at dinner, or contain a meeting of Franklin's favored American Philosophical Society.^B For informal family dinners the family must still have used and preferred the old dining room; but when there were enough guests to fill the new room, six of the old dining room chairs were used to make up a full complement.^C At present we do not know the exact style of the eighteen new mahogany chairs used in this room, nor the number of sections the dining table contained. That the furniture was Philadelphia in origin and Hepplewhite in style seems most likely. It is entirely possible that there were serving tables or sideboards also. But, for the time being the exact appearance of this 16' x 30 1/2' room is unknown.

A. "... The Library is to be even with the Floor of my best old Chamber: & the Story under it will for the present be employ'd only to hold Wood...." Benjamin Franklin to Jane Mecom, Sept. 21, 1786. Franklin-Mecom Correspondence, (A.P.S. Memoirs, Vol. 27) pp. 282-3.

B. "... a Drawing-Room or Dining-Room on the same Level with our old Dining-Room, in which new Room can dine a Company of 24 Persons, it being 16 feet wide and 30 1/2 long..." Benjamin Franklin to Mrs. Jane Mecom, May 30, 1787. (Library of Congress), Smyth, Writings, IX, 589-90.

C. In the Franklin Estate Inventory only eighteen "New Mahogany Chairs" at £1 .5 - per chair are listed. To make up the full complement of 24 it was necessary to borrow six chairs from the Old Dining Room.

Mrs. Franklin's Room, or South Chamber

While her husband was abroad in the service of his country Deborah Franklin occupied the southwest chamber on the second floor of her house. She speaks of this room as "the southeroome I sleep in with my Susanah[,] a bead with out Curtins[,] a Cheste of Drawers[,] a Tabel, a Glase[,] and old black wolnot chairs[,] sum books in my Closet[,] and sume of our family pickters..."^A One family picture in particular in this room was that of four-year-old "Franky,"^B Francis Folger Franklin, a victim of small pox at that age. His death was a great blow to Benjamin and Deborah and to ease the pain Franklin had called in a local artist to do a posthumous portrait of their second son. It is interesting to see that, though Mrs. Franklin's letters must be "translated" because of the phonetic spelling, she was not a semi-literate "sit-by-the-fire" sort of a person. Her formal education was limited, but she more than compensated for this with her native intelligence, and was in every way a worthy companion for her "Pappy"; the backwoods sophisticate. It is not surprising then to find that she used one of the closets in her bedroom as shelving for her personal "library."

A. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Philadelphia], Fall of 1765 [?], Bache Collection, oversize, 1758-1790. American Philosophical Society.

B. "Billey [William Temple Franklin] has been [here] and is att this time[,] he is very fond of the Child [Benjamin Franklin Bache] and thinkes he is like Frankey Folger[,] I thoute so too and had the pickter broute down to look[,] and every body thinkes as much as thow it had been drawn for him..." Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, June 13, 1770, (copy) "Folder 'F', Letters to & from the Franklins, etc." George S. Eddy Collection of Frankliniana, MSS (Princeton).



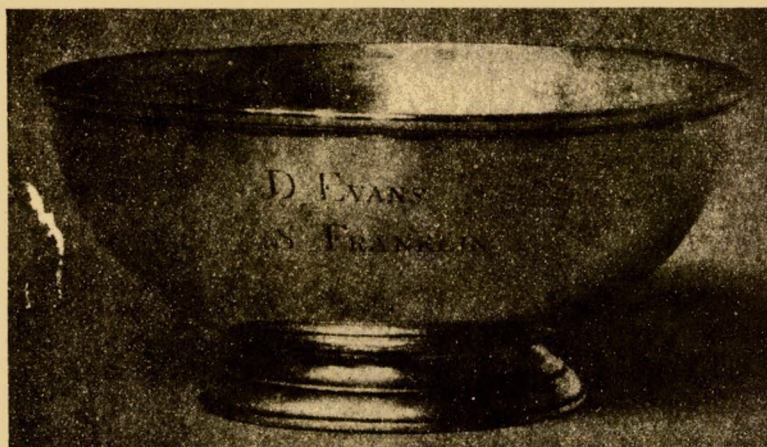
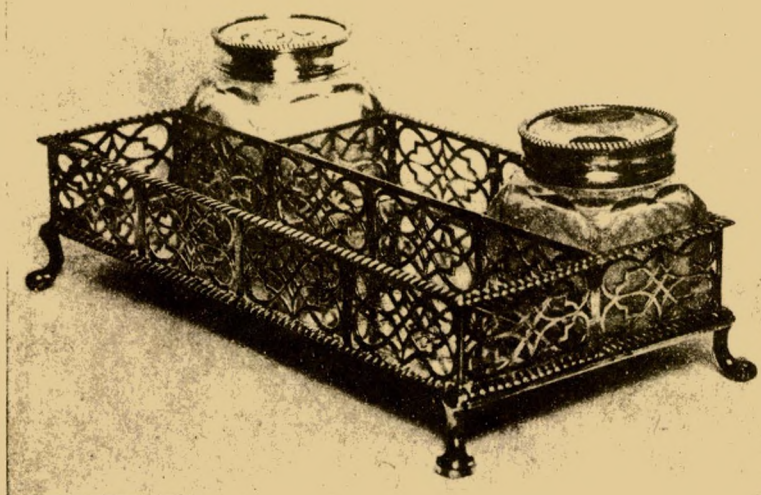
#17 Portrait of Sara Bache by Hoppner.

[XIX. 1851]



| Nos. 312, 309 |

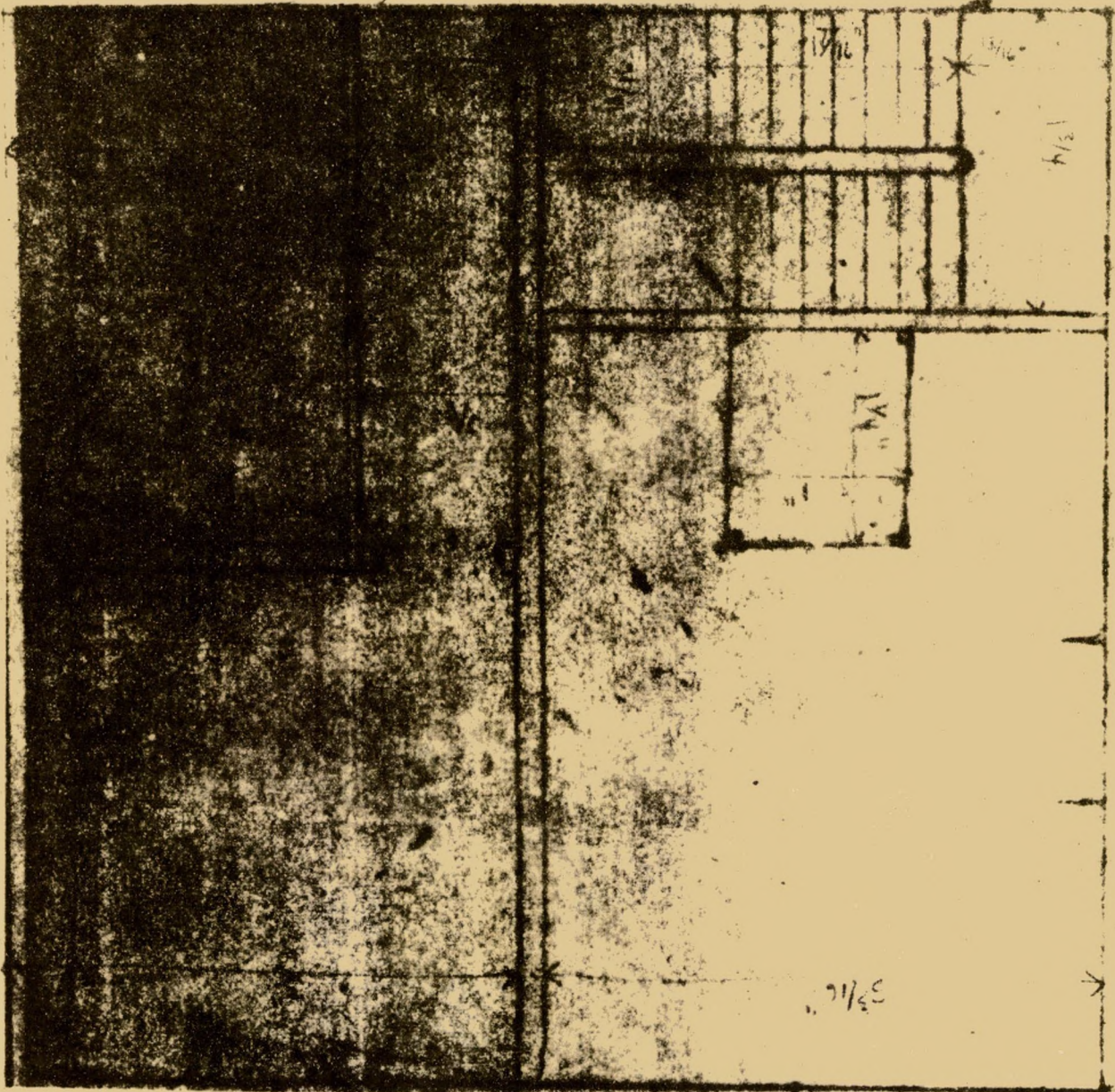
#18 Franklin Silver #1



~~[X Nos. 311, 310 X]~~

#19 Franklin Silver #2

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19a Franklin's House, 2nd floor plan on the back of a receipt in Franklin's handwriting, dated May 17 1764. In the Franklin Papers, Vol. 66, p. 124; courtesy of the American Philosophical Society Library. An interesting feature of this sketch is the size and placement of the bed in the large chamber to the right

Franklin's Bedroom

This is not a treatise on family compatability; so I do not know why Mrs. Franklin chose to have a small bedroom in the southwest corner of the second floor of her house during her husband's absences abroad. However, the largest and best bed chamber in the house was reserved for "Pappy," as she affectionately called him. In a rough, but accurate sketch Franklin made of the floor plan of his second floor, he included in the master bedroom a layout of the bed, which, to scale, was approximately six and a half feet long and five feet in width [see Illus 19a]. With ever-current ingenuity he had provided a locking mechanism^A to the door into the hallway, so that he could lock or release it by a pull chain at the head of the bed. The bed itself was worthy of its distinguished owner, for it was a four post mahogany bed in the Chippendale style which Franklin had had made by a London cabinetmaker.^B Ordinarily anyone as fervently pro-American as Franklin would have purchased his fine standing furniture at home in Philadelphia. We know that for the most part he did. In regard to Franklin, however, circumstances dictated some of the purchases. During Franklin's extended stays in London at Mrs. Stevenson's house in Craven Street, The Strand, it was necessary for him to fit up a four room apartment for his own convenience. He systematically purchased furniture and accessories for use

A. "The Doctor's bed-chamber was the Southwest room on the second floor. There were two cords, like bell-pulls, at the head of his bed; one was a bell-pull and the other, when pulled, raised an iron bolt, almost an inch square, and nine or ten inches long, which dropped through staples at the top of the door, when shut; and until this bolt was raised the door could not be opened..." Col. Robt. Carr, "Personal Recollections of Benjamin Franklin," The Historical Magazine, IV, second series (Aug. 1868), 59-60.

B. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Phila.] Fall of 1765 [?]. Bache Collection, APS.

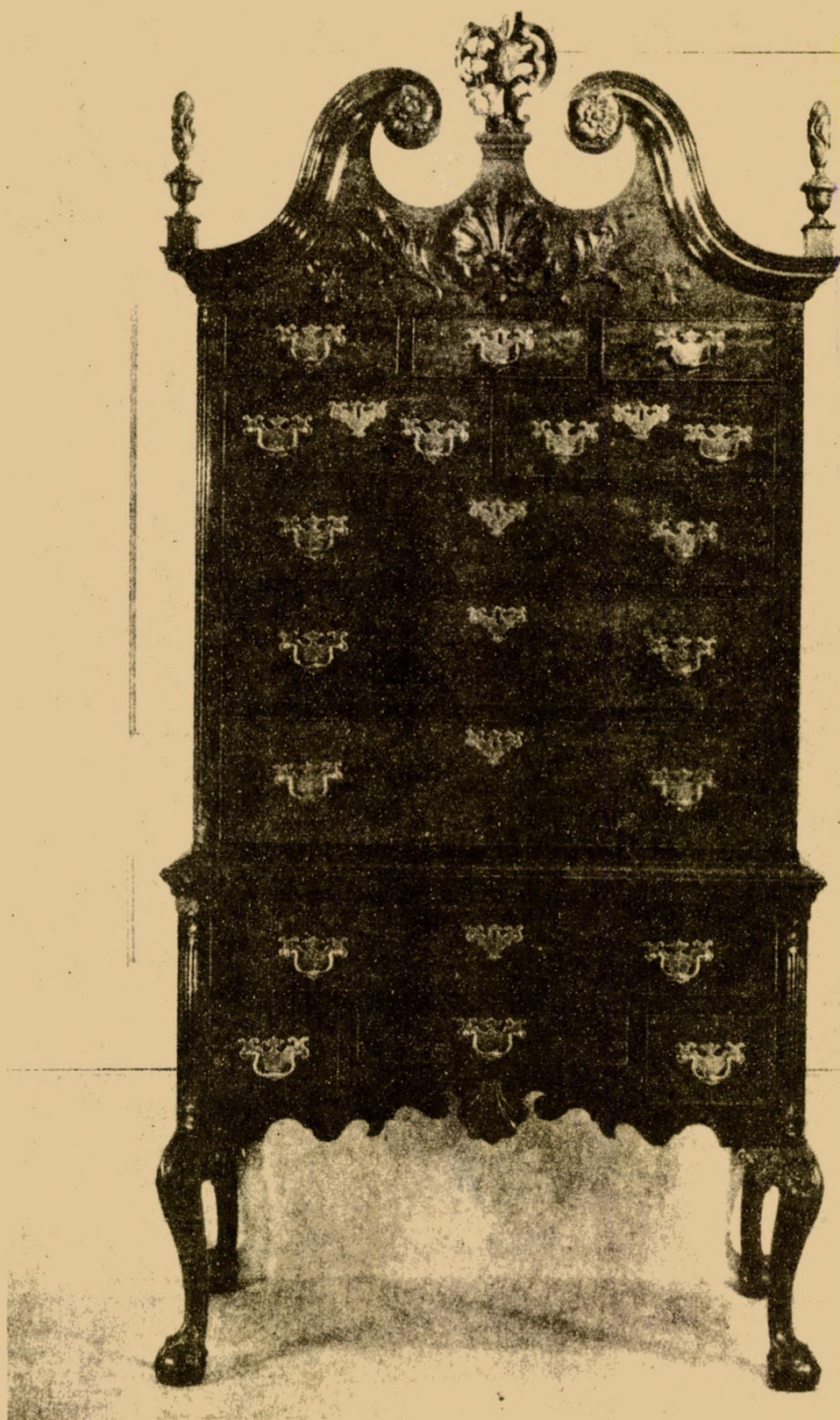
in London which would later serve for Franklin Court. In fact many things he ordered in London were for Franklin Court and arrived there during his absence. Also in this room with "the bead which you sente from England"^C were "a Chamber mahogany tabel and stand."^D In a household of the pretensions of Franklin Court a "Chamber mahogany tabel" or dressing table, was usually accompanied by a matching high chest of drawers. Conjecturally, it is quite possible that the Philadelphia Chippendale mahogany highboy^E shown in illustrations 20 and 21, was the matching "great chest" which had cost £20 - - and which, in Franklin's absence in London was used to store "stationery" and letters he wished to keep for reference. This great highboy descended in the Bache family, but considering the chronic money problems of the Baches, even under the parental roof, it is more likely that it began its life as the Franklin highboy, and was inherited by his daughter Sarah Franklin Bache.

^C Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Phila.] Fall of 1765 [?]. Bach Collection, APS.

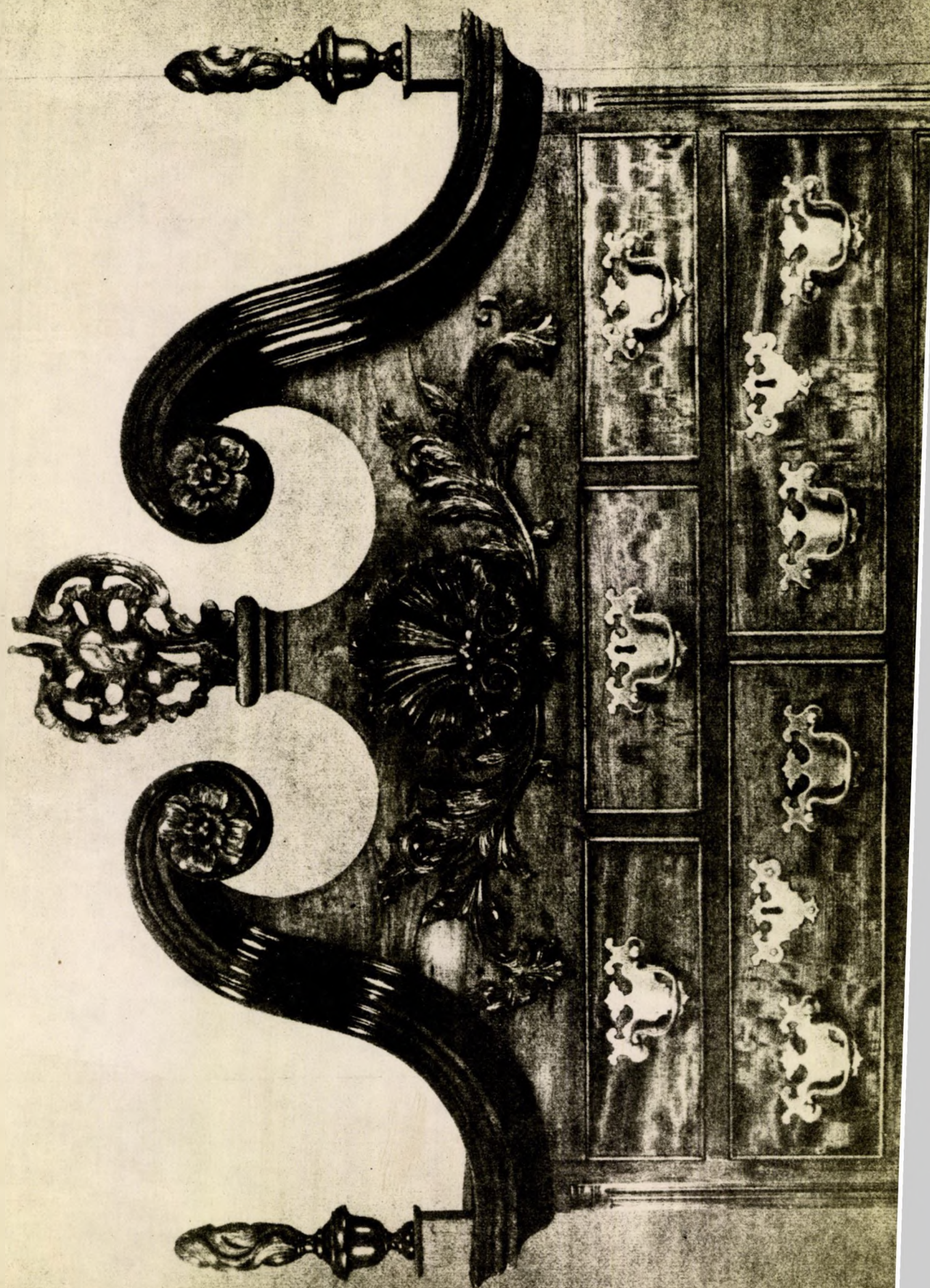
D. Ibid

E. Property of Ginsburg & Levy, New York. See Illus. 20 and 21.

F.



#20 Bache Highboy.
Collection Ginsburg & Levy, New York.



#21 Bache Highboy (detail)
Collection of Ginsburg & Levy, New York

Mrs. Bache received a dowry of £500^F from her father and the offer of a home at Franklin Court; both of which gestures the Baches' accepted. In a burst of enthusiasm Mrs. Bache could indeed have used twenty Pounds or so to purchase such a fine piece of furniture, and so its family identity may be correct; but whether it was inherited by the Baches or purchased by them, it was, most of all, in Franklin's house from perhaps as early as 1761 until 1812.

On at least one of the walls of the room Franklin installed built-in bookshelves^G to help ease a permanent problem of the household. When, twenty three years after he completed the house, he decided to add to it, and placed a large library room next to his bedroom, these bookshelves must still have remained in use to catch the overflow from the library of such an avid bibliophile.

F. ...In the circumstances they could not, Franklin thought, do more than fit their daughter 'handsomely out in clothes and furniture, not exceeding in the whole fine hundred pounds of value,' on her marriage with Richard Bache." Carl Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin, p. 359.

G. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Phila.], Fall of 1765 [?]. Bache Collection, APS.



#22 Franklin suit.
Collection Massachusetts Historical Society

[No. 319]

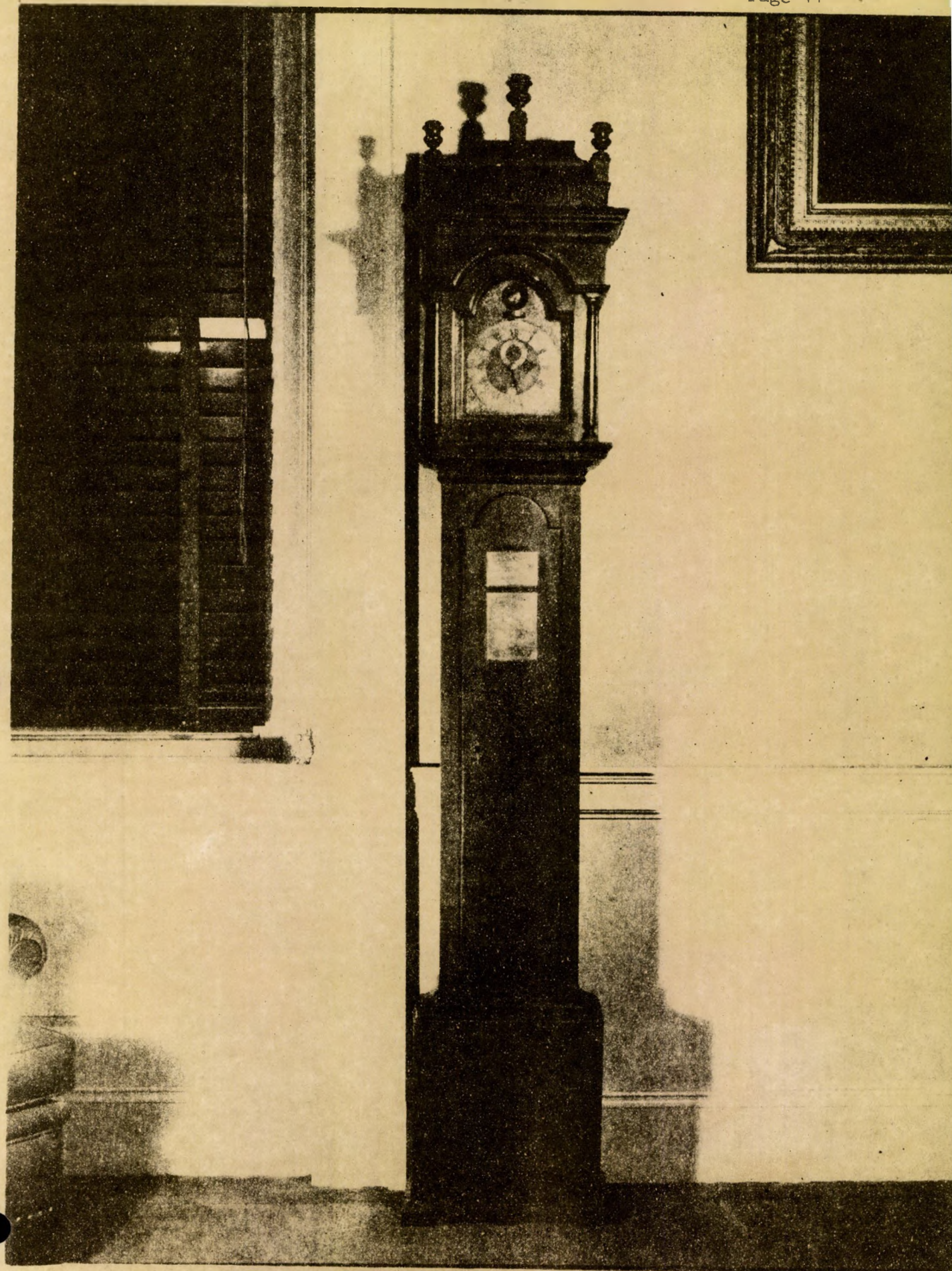
Library

The glory of any house lived in by Benjamin Franklin would be its Library. And thus it was with his house in Passy, the room used at Franklin Court upon his return from France, and the large library room he built in the addition to Franklin Court. Manasseh Cutler has given us a brief description of the room as he saw it on July 13, 1787: "After it was dark we went into the house, and the Doctor invited me to his library, which is likewise his study. It is a very large chamber, and high studded. The walls are covered with bookshelves filled with books; besides there are four large alcoves, extending two-thirds of the length of the chamber, filled in the same manner. I presume this is the largest and by far the best library in America.^A It was approximately 14 feet wide, and thirty one feet long^B and was on the second floor of the new addition which he had completed by the summer of 1787.^C It had two

A. Quoted in "The Reconstruction of Benjamin Franklin's Library: An Unorthodox Jigsaw Puzzle," by Edwin Wolf, 2nd. The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America. Vol. 56, p. 1. 1st Quarter, 1962.

B. Franklin to Mrs. Jane Mecom. (Lib. of Cong.), Smyth, Writings, IX, 589-90.

C. Benjamin Franklin to M. Le Veillard Smyth, Writings, IX, 558-562.



#22-a Franklin Court Library clock.
Collection American Philosophical Society

Library

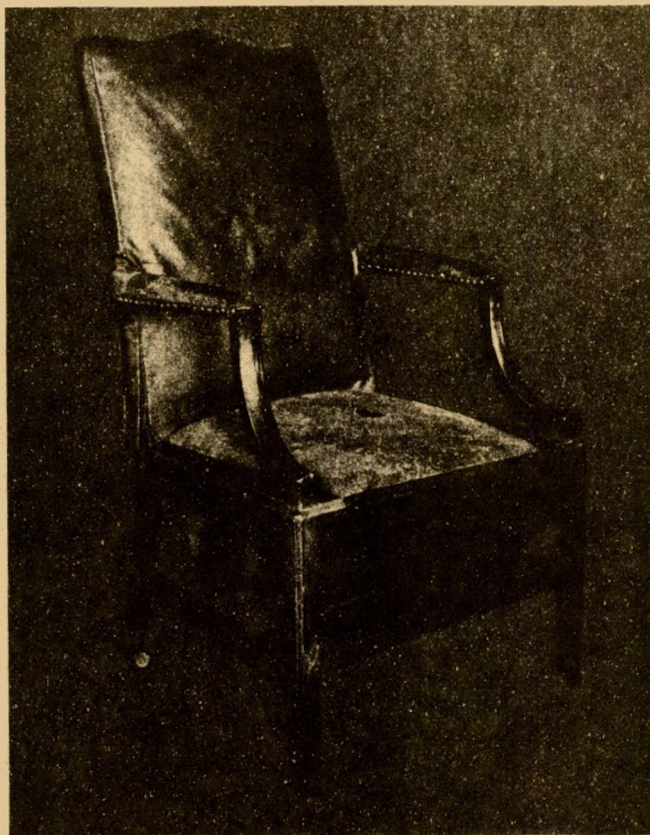
"Windows at each End, and lin'd with Books to the Cieling... Into the Library I go thro' one of the Closets of the old Drawing-Room or Bed-Chamber."^D Franklin's was a lifetime of reading, printing, selling, and collecting books; so that by the time of his death he had a library consisting of 4,276 volumes.^E Over the years as the problem of properly housing his books grew with their numbers, he had evolved a particular way of assembling book shelves and numbering the volumes. The volumes that Franklin brought from England and France were all packed in carefully and uniformly constructed rectangular boxes, of equal length but varied widths, which upon reaching Philadelphia were stacked, minus the lid, to form shelving; the larger boxes first for the folios and the smaller boxes for quartos and octavos. Thomas Jefferson employed this same idea when housing his library at Monticello, and one wonders if he may not perhaps have borrowed the idea from his older colleague and fellow bibliophile. One observer called it... "The Doctor's museum & Library,"^F and thus it must have seemed when Franklin had added his "scientific and philosophical instruments" in what space remained after the books were in place.

The four windows, two at each end of the library, faced north and south respectively; while the center of the east wall contained a fireplace with marble hearth. Upon the mantel shelf, which must have been made large for the purpose, were some of the "bustos" the Doctor

^D. B. Franklin to Mrs. Jane Macom, (Lib. of Cong.), Smyth, Writings, IX, 589-90.

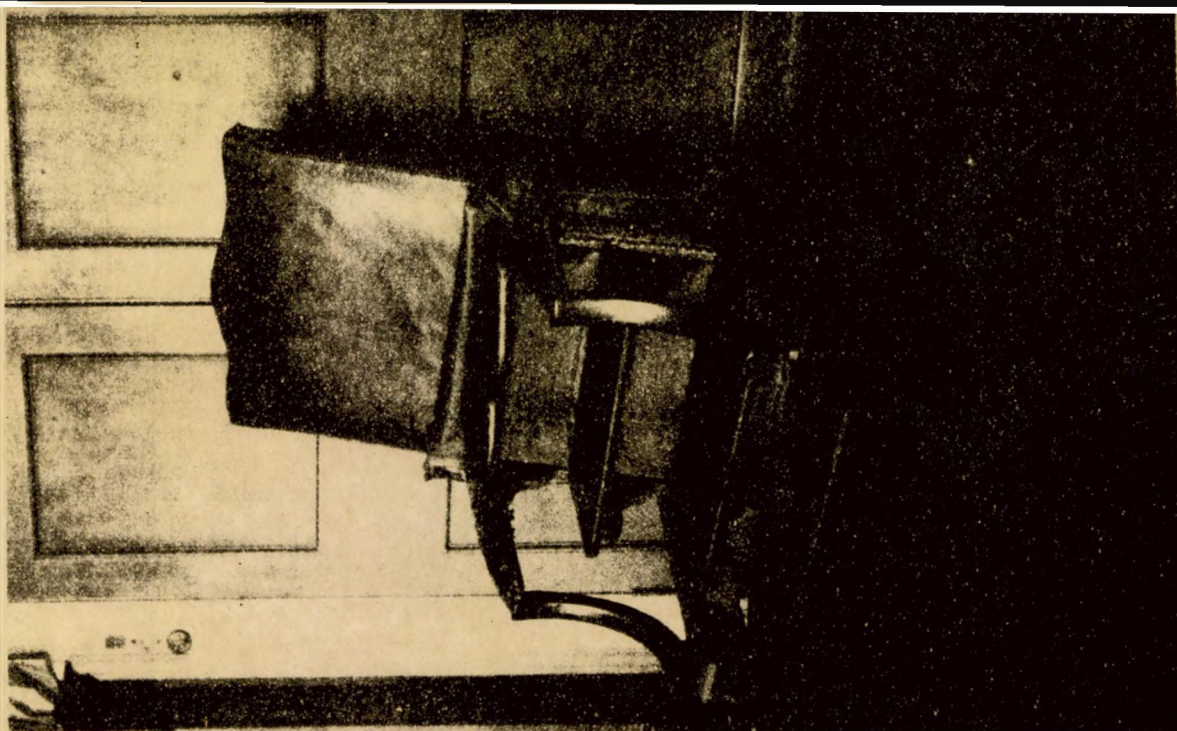
^E. State Inventory, see Appendix I.

^F. James Gibson's Journals or Leander & Lorenzo's Journals 1786-1787, Mss (HSP)

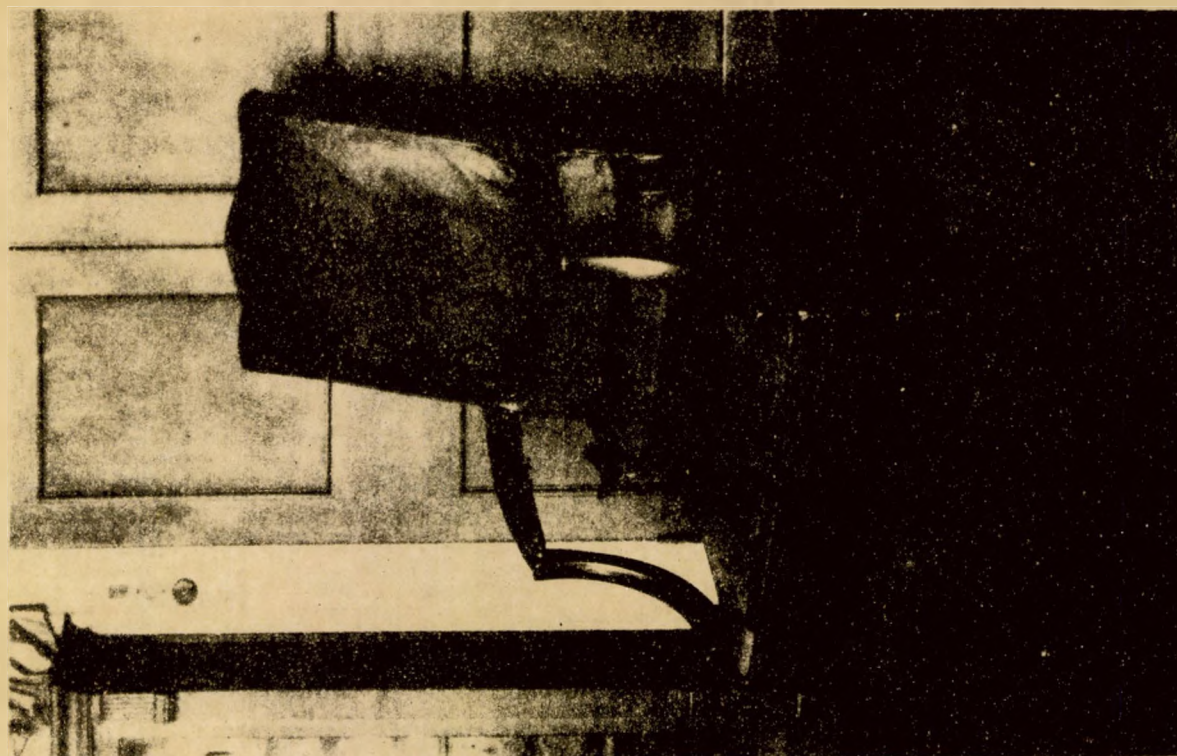


#30-a Franklin reading chair and steps.
Collection American Philosophical Society

[No. 305]



Page 47



#30-b Franklin reading chair and steps.
Collection American Philosophical Society

Library

had collected. There were busts of John Paul Jones^G and of himself by Houdon,^H and earlier works by other hands, of English acquaintances.^I Also in this area were the small plaques and reliefs of Franklin and his international acquaintance by Wedgwood, Nini and Flaxman.^J

To better accommodate such a large number of books, Franklin in an economy of space and a utility of light from the windows, had placed book cases, back to back, beginning with the end walls between the windows and continuing toward the center of the room.^K Each range of center shelves was one-third the length of the room; leaving a third of the area open before the fireplace to contain a large flat top desk. This "Writing Table"^L he had purchased for £ 10.0 in 1772 from John Mayhew,^M prominent London cabinetmaker and furniture designer. This type desk is called in design books of the period, "a writing table," to distinguish it

^G. Franklin and his Circle, A Catalogue of an Exhibition. Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., p. 82.

^H, "Mrs Bache tells me you have sent a Bust of yourself by M^r Luzerne. She has promised to send for me when it is to be unpack'd. I hope she wont forget her promise. She has been so good as to give me one of the Profiles in Clay you sent over." Francis Hopkinson to Benjamin Franklin, Sept. 5, 1779. Geo. E. Hastings, The Life & Works of Francis Hopkinson (INHP Library), 279-280.

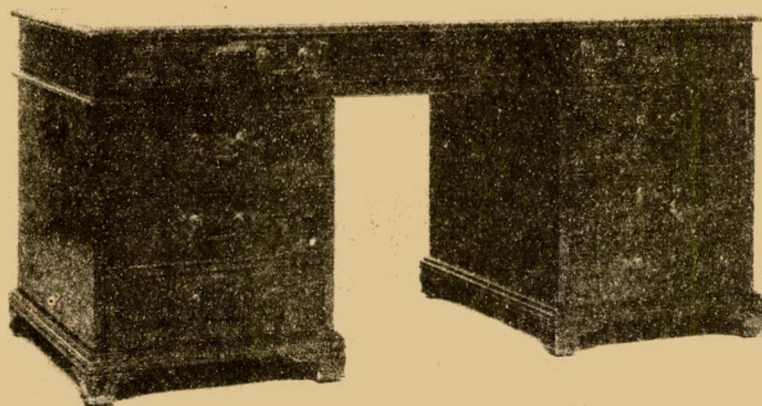
^I. Franklin and his Circle, A Catalogue of an Exhibition. Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., pp. 84-122

^J. Ibid

^K. See Footnote, A.

^L. "in Fav^r of Mayhew for a Writing Table £ 10.0," June 1772. Franklin's Journal in London. (1764-1776) MSS (APS)

^M. Ambrose Heal, London Furniture Makers, Batsford, London, 1947, pp. 276, Illus. p. 114.



[XXXXXZXX000]

#22-b Franklin Court Library "Writing table."



#23 Houdon bust of Franklin.
Originally in Franklin Court
Library. Metropolitan Museum
of Art

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Library

from the fall front and bookcase variety which were made to stand against a wall.

The advantage of a writing table to Franklin was that he could use it to peruse his large folios on natural history, which contained large hand-colored plates he found pleasure in showing to visitors.^N

There were comfortable chairs in the alcoves for daytime reading, and chairs near the desk in front of the fireplace. Presumably there were also in this area reading lights for night time. One of the chairs near the fireplace became library steps.^O When the seat was reversed, but Franklin, ever resourceful, had another solution to the problem of being able to readily obtain an out-of-the-way volume from his high shelves, which he divulged in a letter to his cousin Johnathan Williams: "Old men find it inconvenient to mount a ladder or steps for that purpose, their heads being sometimes subject to giddiness, and their activity with the steadiness of their joints, being abated by age; besides the trouble of removing the steps every time a book is wanted from a different part of their library. For a remedy, I have lately made the following simple machine, which I call the Long Arm."^P

N. "...the Doctor wished principally to show to me was a huge volume on Botany, and which, indeed, afforded me the greatest pleasure of any one thing in his library. It was a single volume, but so large that it was with great difficulty that the Doctor was able to raise it from a low shelf and lift it on to the table..." William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, Life, Journals and Correspondence of the Reverend Manasseh Cutler, LL.D. (Cincinnati, 1888), I, 267-270., P. 268.

O. Property of American Philosophical Society, Phila., Pa.

P. Benjamin Franklin to Jonathan Williams, Jan, 26, 1786. Benjamin Franklin's Autobiographical Writings, Selected and Edited by Carl Van Doren. Viking Press, New York, 1945, 810pp, illus. Pp. 665-666.



#24 Houdon bust of John Paul Jones.
Collection Metropolitan Museum of Art

X[N6X158X]

Library

Somehow, with all this there still remained space for his "gimcrackery" electrical machines.^Q Was it perhaps only a coincidence that the tall case clock^R in the library was constructed at half scale. Or was this necessary in order to make space for the Orrery.^S

Q. "I am glad the enemy have left something of my Gimcrackery that is capable of affording you pleasure. You are therefore very welcome to the use of the Electrical and Pneumatic Machines as long as you think proper." Francis Hopkinson letter to Benjamin Franklin, Oct. 22, 1778. George E. Hastings, Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson (Chicago, 1926), pp. 277-78.

R. See Inventory Appendix, I.

S. "...After the Doctor's death, in April, 1790, there were a great many articles that had belonged to him stored in the loft over the office; amongst others, a beautiful and valuable Orrery..." Personal Recollections of Benjamin Franklin, by Col. Robert Carr of Philadelphia. Contributed by Frederick D. Stow, Esq. of Philadelphia. Historical Magazine, Vol. IV 2d Series. Aug. 1868, 59-60.

The Blue Room or Music Room

Presently there seems to be agreement that the Blue Room mentioned in Deborah and Benjamin's correspondence was the large room on the third floor of Franklin Court. It seems odd, however, to have such an important room on the third floor.

Perhaps the fact that paper mache' decorations^A with musical motifs had been placed on the ceiling of the room when it was first set up in 1765, typed the room for all the existence of the house. The blue color came from the wallpaper^B which Franklin had sent from London along with blue mohair curtains -- one to a window -- in the latest fashion.^C

Surely this room was the finest music room in all America; for its specific purpose it contained Franklin's harmonica,^D a glassychord,^E or

A. "I suppose the blue Room is too blue, the Wood being of the same Colour with the Paper, and so looks too dark. I would have you finish it as soon as you can, thus. Paint the Wainscot a dead white; Paper the Walls blue, & tack the Gilt Border round just above the Surbase and under the Cornish. If the Paper is not equal Coloured when pasted on, let it be brush'd over again with the same colour; and let the Papier machee musical Figures be tack'd to the middle of the Cieling; when this is done, I think it will look very well." Benj. Franklin to Deborah Franklin. A.P.S. Lib. - Franklin Papers, Vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 53. London, June 22, 1767.

B. Ibid.

C. "...The blue Mohair Stuff is for the Curtains of the Blue Chamber. The Fashion is to make One Curtain only for each Window. Hooks are sent to fix the Rails by at Top, so that they may be taken down on Occasion. I almost Wish I had left Directions not to paint the House till my Return. But I suppose tis done before this time. B. Franklin to Deborah Franklin, A.P.S. Lib. Franklin Papers, Vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 32. Feb. 14, 1765, London.

D. Sept. 25, 1765. Profit & Loss Dr to Brown & Collinson. Franklin's Journal in London (1764-1776) MSS (APS)

E. Franklin Estate Inventory "Glassichord," £8 .15 --.



#25

7071 A-B

Musical Instruments - Glass Harmonica commissioned by Benjamin Franklin and completed in 1762. Negatives reproduced through the courtesy of Mrs. L. Arnold Nicholson, 241 Pine Street, Phila.

predecessor of the Harmonica Franklin had developed, a box of tuned bells -- perhaps the traditional English hand bells in two or three octaves -- in their case,^F a viol da gamba,^G and a Harpsichord.^H Impressive as this is, it is interesting to note that before the British occupation of Philadelphia, there were also a Welsh harp,^I and a ball harp^J. These, with "the set of tuned bells which were in a box, Viola de Gamba, all the spare Armonica Glasses and one or two of the spare Cases."^K were carried off by the enemy. Apparently only the viol da gamba^L was retrieved, for Franklin brought from France in 1785, replacements for the tuned bells,^M but does not seem to have replaced the harps.

Crowding the musical instruments were a card table,^N a set of tea china,^O chairs with needlework seats, and a matching pole screen^P with needlework panel for in front of the fireplace; "a very hansom mahogany stand for the tee kittel to stand on",^Q English porcelain ornamental figures^R on the mantel, and a large blue carpet on the floor.^S Some of the illumination at night was provided by a gilt sconce^T but obviously there were also individual

^F Richard Bache to Benjamin Franklin, July 14, 1778. HSP Franklin Papers, Vol. 5 "Misc, 1750-1780."

G. Ibid

H. Ibid

I. Ibid

J. Ibid

K. Ibid

L. Franklin Estate Inventory "Glassichord," £8 .15 .-

^M Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin (Phila.), Fall of 1765 [?]. Bache Collection. Oversize, 1758-1790. American Philosophical Society.

N. Ibid

O. Ibid

P. Ibid

Q. Ibid

R. Ibid

S. Ibid

T. Ibid

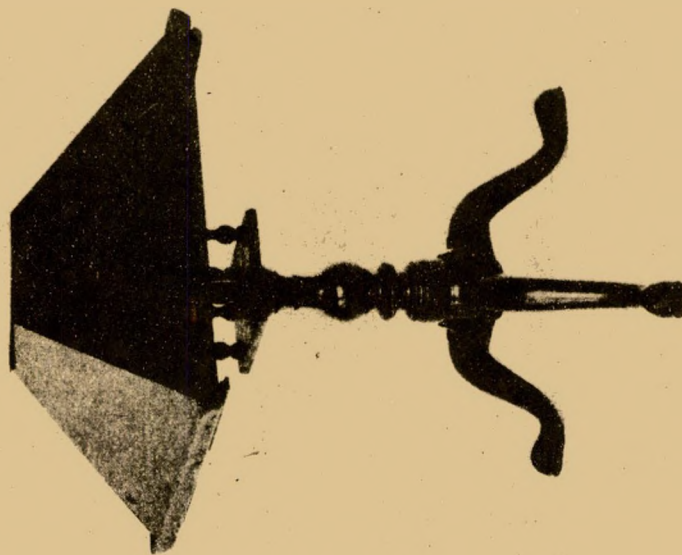
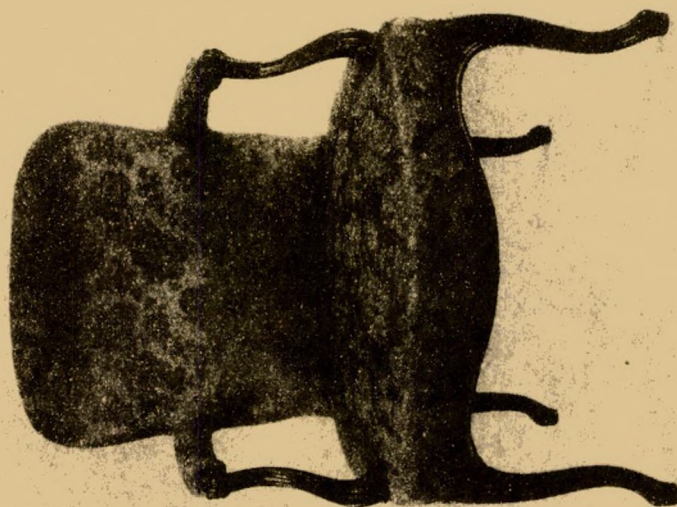
candlesticks as well. For the members of the Franklin household, or their guests, who performed upon the viol da gamba and other stringed instruments, or upon the flute or recorder, there was a large four-sided music stand^U made especially for Franklin. It was, withal, a most impressive room.

Thus far, we know of two major items from this room which have survived the years with their parts and their identities both intact; the Harmonica, owned by a Franklin descendant^V in Landsdowne, Pennsylvania, and the music stand,^W now in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

U. Collection of the Historical Society of Pa. See Illus. #26.

V. Owned by Mrs. Malcolm MacClaren, Landsdowne, Pa. See Illus. #25.

W. See Footnote U.



[XN55X298,303X]

#26 Franklin's music stand.
Collection Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The Third floor Chambers

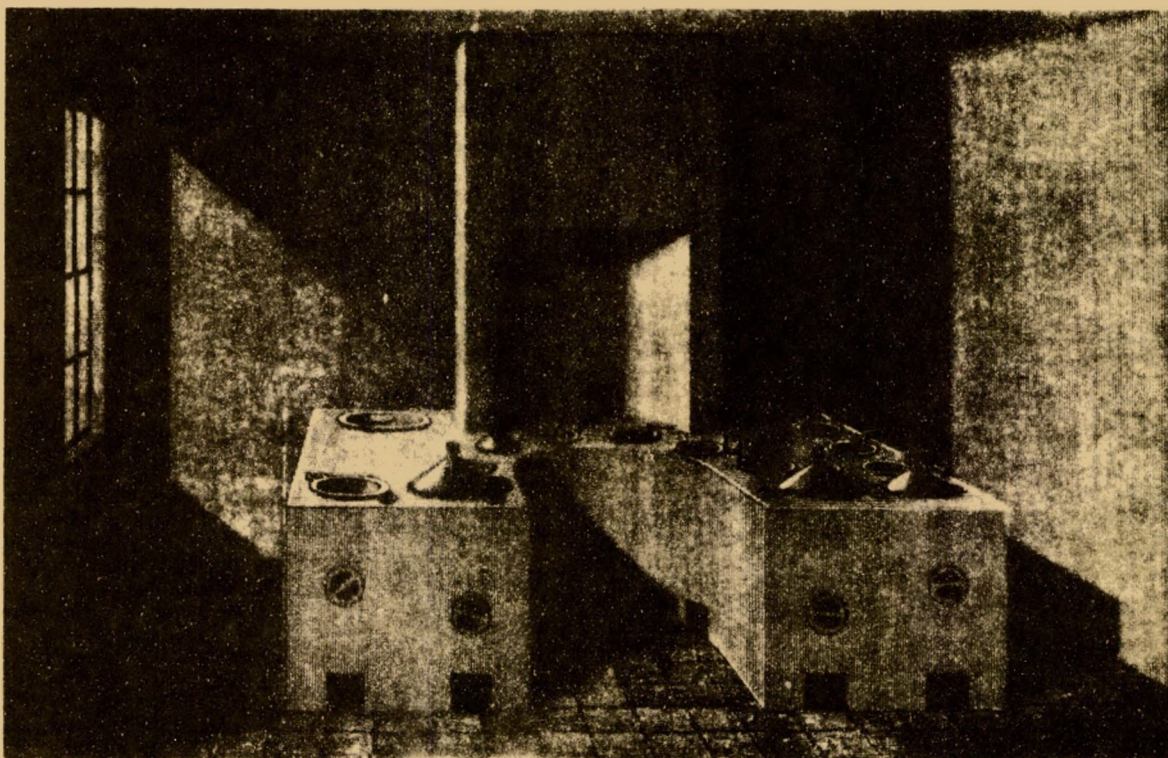
When the Franklins first occupied their new home Sally their daughter took the third floor rear bedroom for her room. Deborah describes the third floor as follows: "... Salley has the southroom two pairs of Stairs[;] in it is a beed[,] a burow[,] a tabel[,] a glase[,] and the pickter she youst to have in her room[,] a trunke and books[;] but these you Cante have aney noshun of..."^A Sally also had a tambour frame for needlework and a candle screen to protect her eyes while reading, but, other than the perishables, clothing and other fabrics. At the outset of the Revolution she may have had the spinning wheel which was purchased from William Cox for £1 .2 .^B Presently this is all we have concerning her room.

^A. Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Philadelphia], Fall of 1765 [?], Bache Collection, Oversize, 1758-1790, American Philosophical Society.

^B. "F & P Expences Dr To Cash p^d W^m Cox for a Spinning Wheel 1.2 -" Richard Bache's Day Book, May 6, 1777, (1761-1792), MSS (Franklin Institute).

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



#27-A

Count Rumford's design of a kitchen fireplace in the home of a Bavarian nobleman. From Essay X, Of Kitchen Fireplaces, first published in London, 1799. The Complete Works of Count Rumford. Published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. II, Boston, no date. This essay and the illustrations were used by Alexander Hamilton in planning the kitchen of "Grange."

The Kitchen

The slow whirl of the clock jack^A fly wheel and the clank of the chain on the spit wheel, part of "an elegant jack, with pullies &c compleat..."^B provided an extra fascination in addition to the fire in the open fireplace in the Franklin Court kitchen. The novelty as well as the usefulness of the contraption must have held the interest of the master of the house as well as the wide-eyed children. It is just the sort of thing that Franklin would have either invented or improved upon, but we do not know presently what embellishments Franklin may have made to his open spit fireplace.^C

A second enclosed fireplace contained more cooking equipment which he had sent from London.^D This equipment was of such complexity that it was to be installed by a mechanic using the instructions Franklin had sent with

A. [Auction, Oct. 21, of Mr. T. Franklin's household & kitchen furnishings, at his lodgings] at Mr. Bache's, Market, between Third and Fourth-Streets. Pa. Packet, Oct. 18, 1790, p. 2, col. 1.

B. Ibid

C. "...You tell me only of a Fault they found with the House, that it was too little, and not a Word of any thing they lik'd in it: Nor how the Kitchen Chimneys perform; so I suppose you spare me some Mortification, which is kind..." [The presence of two chimneys is significant here in our interpretation]. The Writings of Benjamin Franklin. Smyth, Vol. 4, p. 391, Letter 402. B.F. to D.F. London, July 13, 1765.

D. Franklin Papers, 1766, Jan. 12.13. Film 54-58-Frame 196. Letter from Deborah Franklin to B.F.

Also: "...I am sending you per Budden (or Robin[son?]) a Copper to be set in your Kitchen, with some other Things." "I forget the exact Dimensions of the Kitchen Chimney, or I should send Sliders for them." Benj. Franklin to Deborah Franklin. A.P.S. Lib., Franklin Papers, vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 92. [Feb. 1768?].

the "machine."^E "Mr. Roberts"^F the mechanic, was not available, however, and Debby struggled with the stove problem, using what help she had at hand.

Franklin's long-time interest in fuel utilization and heat conservation could easily turn as well to improvements in cooking devices; particularly when they pertained to his own kitchen. Further research may disclose the exact nature of the Franklin Court "stoves," but in lieu of this we have the late 18th century devices invented by Count Rumford^G as example. [Illus. 29-A].

On occasion Franklin sent utensils from London for this kitchen, but its importance in the everyday operation of the house dictated that most of the kitchen material come from the shops of local craftsmen.

Traditionally, the large dining table in the kitchen was one which had originally been used in the dining room of Franklin's parents' house on Milk Street in Boston.^H It is possible that this same table,

E. "...I could have wished to have been present at the Finishing of the Kitchen, as it is a mere Machine, and being new to you, I think you will scarce know how to work it. The several Contrivances to carry off Steam & Smell and Smoke not being fully explain's to you. The Oven I suppose was put up by the written Directions in my former Letter. You mention nothing of the Furnace. If that Iron One is not set, let it alone till my Return, when I shall bring a more convenient copper one. B. Franklin to Deborah Franklin. A.P.S. Lib. - Franklin Papers. vol. 46, pt. 2, fol. 35. June 4, 1765 London.

F. op. cit. footnote C.

G. Essay X, Of Kitchen Fireplaces, first published in London in 1799. The Complete Works of Count Rumford. Pub. by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. III, Boston, no date.

H. Antiques Magazine, July 1923, p. 12.

then out-of-date and little value, is the one Deborah had purchased^I at the estate sale of "sister Franklin," the widow of Benjamin's brother William, when she attended the sale in order to buy family items which could be put to use in Franklin Court [Illus. 27]. At the same sale she bought a coffee mill for her kitchen.^J

The kitchen occupied the central part of the cellar, and by design was directly below the old Dining Room. Though access could be had by both an indoor and an outdoor stair, the natural ingenuity of the owner, and convenience called for a dumb waiter arrangement from the cellar kitchen to the dining room directly above; though currently such an idea remains conjectural. To this kitchen were added also pantries and other requirements of a well-planned domestic establishment. The extensive correspondence between Franklin and his wife, and the accounts kept by Deborah of her purchases at the local farmer's market, give us a clear picture of the uses to which the Franklin Court kitchen was put in its forty seven years of existence.

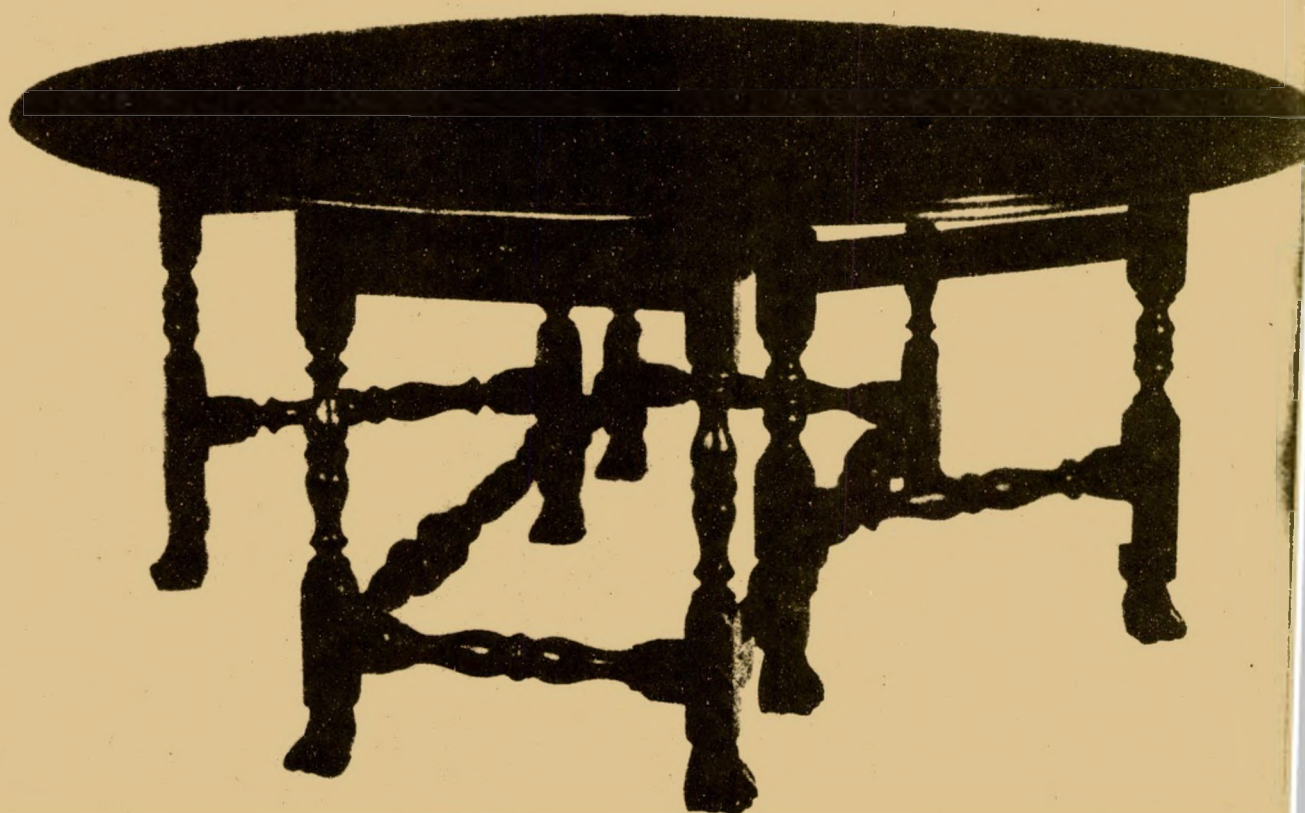
I. Sept. 15th Mrs Franklin Dr to Goods Bought at Mrs. Mary Franklins Vendue 1766

To 2 Spits	£0. 3. 0
To a Brass Kettle Scimmer Shovel & Tongs	1.13. 0
To a <u>Coffee Mill</u> & p ^r Flatirons	0. 6. 0
To a Dish & 6 Plates	0.11. 6
To a Large Lookinglass	4. 7. 0
To a Bed Quilt	1. 7. 0
To a Marble Table	1. 2. 0
To a <u>Walnut Table</u>	0. 7. 6
To 2 Chairs at 2/6 p ^r	0. 5. 0
	£10. 2. 0

Franklin Papers, Vol. 66, folio, 145a MSS [APS].

J. Ibid.

An American Classic



Spanish foot gateleg dining table. Massachusetts, circa 1700-1720. Walnut top, cherry base, 2 drawers, finest state of preservation

Under table top is inscription "Mrs. E. B. Arnold this table was the property of Benjamin Franklin." This history is supported by letters from Mrs. Arnold in 1923 attesting table purchased by her husband's grandfather, Judge Mark Langdon Hill (1772-1844) "when the Franklin things were sold"

Exhibited in the Art Institute of Chicago 1945

Height 28"

Width (open) 5' 9"

Length 5'

A complimentary copy of our seventh illustrated brochure



#28-a Franklin's bath, from drawing in John Dickinson Collection

Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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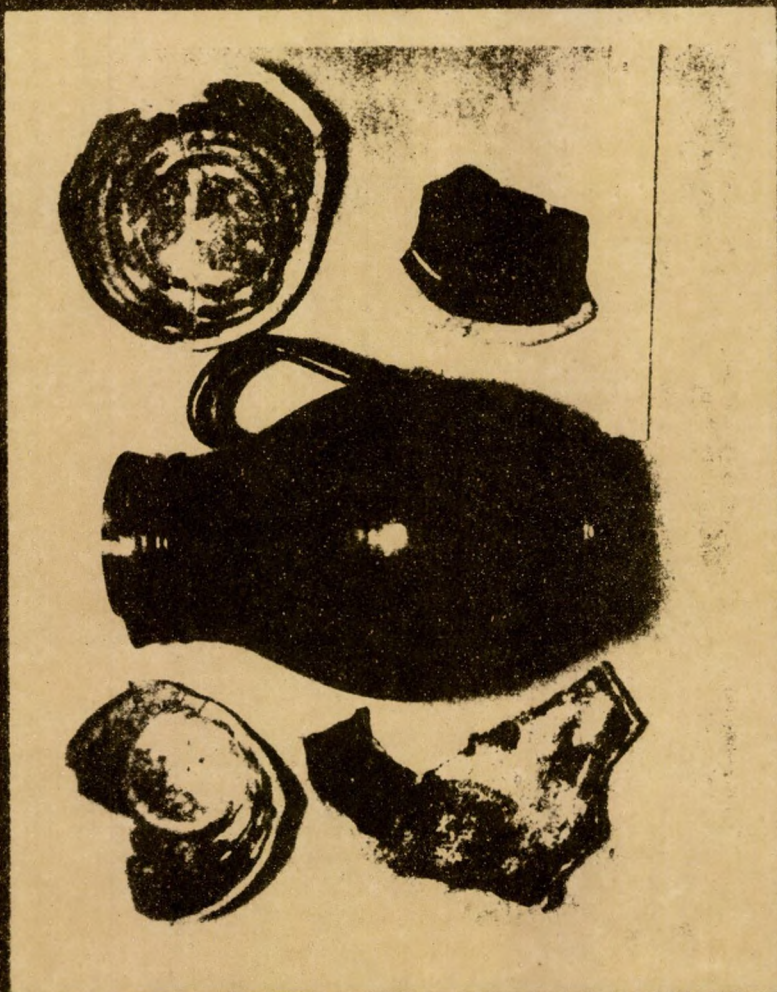
Sketch of bath tub accompanying "Description of the tepid bath made use of by His Excellency, Benj. Franklin, Governor of Penna." - in Dickinson Papers, Library Co. dated Dec., 1787. (see under subject title "Franklin Court" in Park Master File)

Photo by: P. G. S. 11/60



17





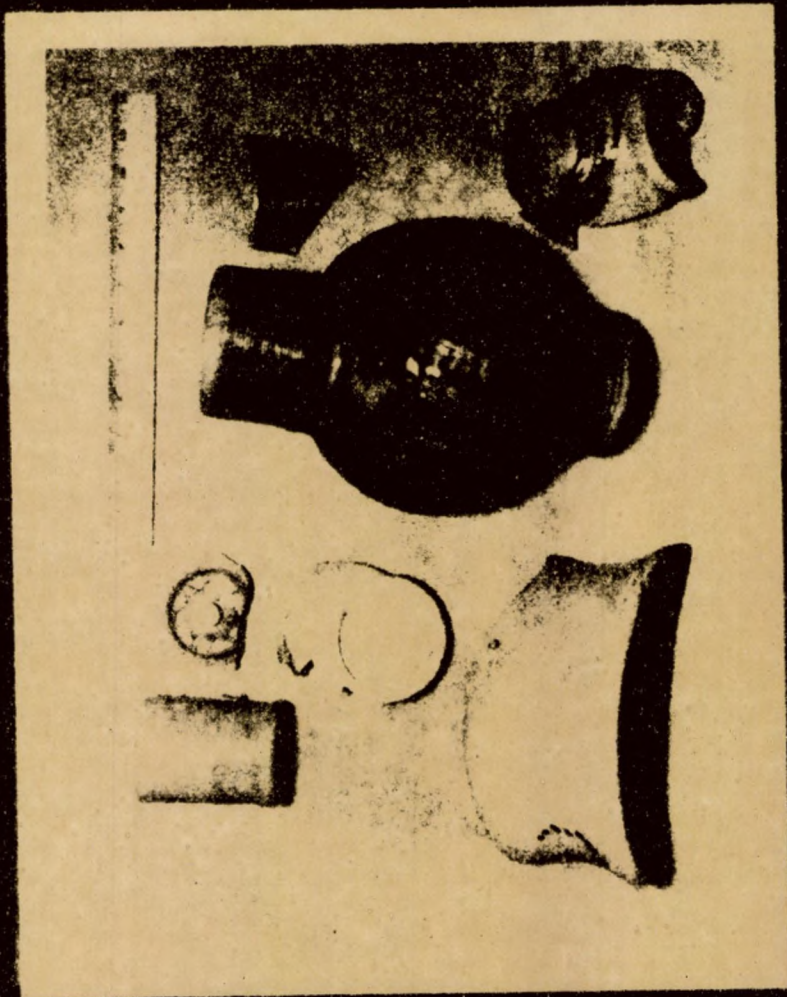
#29-a

Franklin Court

Earthen wares excavated from site.

(by) Paul J.F. Schumacher, 946
August 4, 1953

Page 63

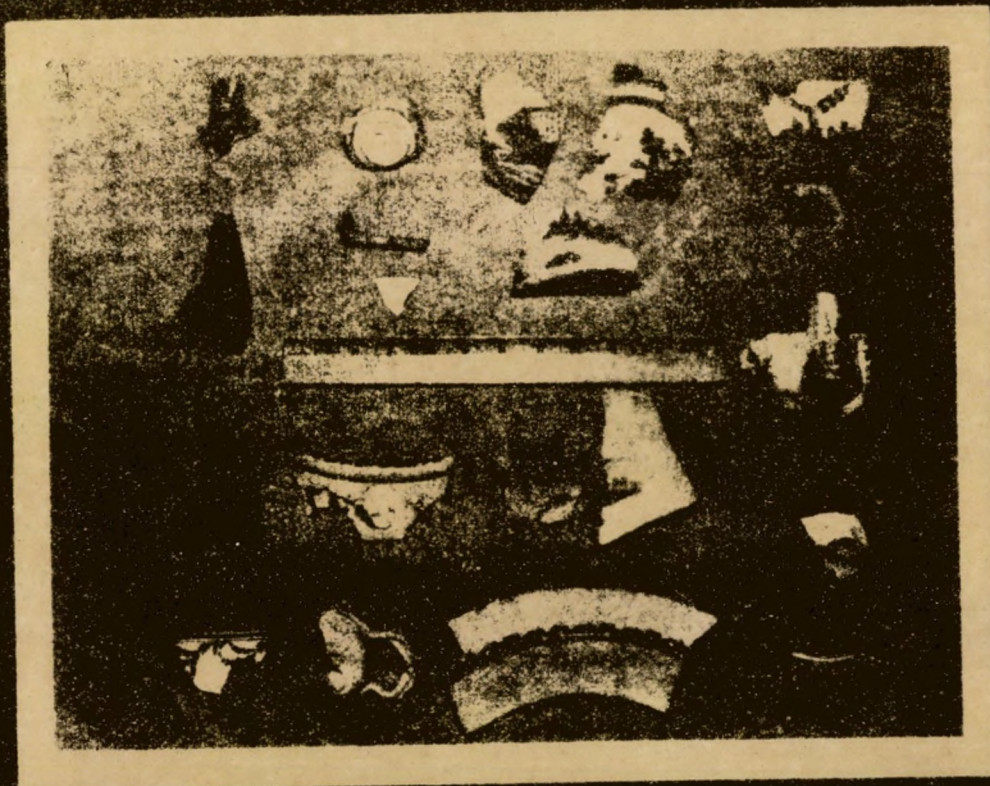


#29-b

Franklin Court

Page 64
Earthen wares excavated from site.

(By) Paul J.F. Schumacher,
August 4, 1953



#29-c

Franklin Court

Earthen wares excavated from site.

(By) Paul J.F. Schumacher,
August 4, 1953

942



#29-d

Franklin Court

Earthen wares excavated from site.

(By) Paul J.F. Schumacher,
August 4, 1953

944

An Inventory & Appraisement of the Goods & Chattels of the Estate of Benjamin Franklin Esq^r lately deceased - taken this 26th day of April 1790. ---

Plate ---

398 1/2 gr	- - at - - - - 8/6 - - - -	168..0..3
Cash in the House	- - 7 dol ^{rs}	2..17..2
d ^o in Bank	- - 365 - 22/90	136..19..3
Bank Stock - 12 Shares - 4800	- - - -	1800.. -..-

Bonds & Notes ----

State Paper - £500		
A Bond---for 3500 Sterling		
d ^o Wetherby's - for		22.. -..-
d ^o		2172.. 5..11
d ^o --£100- & 157=..2 total		266..18..2
d ^o		500..- -..-
d ^o ---& mortgage		500..- -..-
d ^o		6900..- -..-
d ^o		477..17..6
d ^o Goddards		60..- -..-
d ^o Childs		62.. 8..8

Promissary Notes

2 - for 180 dol.		67..10..-
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Loan Office Certificates

One for £3037.10		
d ^o	14. 5.7	

Orders on State Treasury

One for £2250 Paper Money		
Silas Dean's Note for 6200 liv. Tournor's		
Cash in H ^r Grand's hands in France amo ^t unk		
d ^o in Bankers -- d ^o --in England-- d ^o --		
11 Silver Medals 4/	-----	2.. 4..-
31 Copper d ^o -----		5.. -..-
2 Gold - d ^o -----		12.. -..-
King France's Picture 1000 Guineas	---1750..	-..-

Parlour Furniture

18 New Mahogany Chairs --- £1.5.- ---	22..10..-
2 Portraits	52..10..-
Prints &c Glazed	6..15..-
Mahogany Tables	6..10..-
Economist	2.. -..-
Glass Curtains	6.. -..-
Carpet	5..-..-
Andirons Shovel &c	3..10..-
24 White Windsor Chairs	4..16..-
Mahoy Table	4.. -..-
-d ^o Stand Counterpane & Urn	5..-..-

Dining Room	
2 looking Glasses	12..-.-
Mahoe Table	3..15..-
2 d ^o Card d ^o	6..-.-
andirons &c	3..15..-
Busts	8..-.-
Naire's Electrical Machine . . .	17..10..-
Clock - (on the Stairs)	20..-.-
Blue Room	
Paintings Prints & Busts	90..-.-
10 Old Mahoe Chairs	7..10..-
Andirons &c	1..15..-
Looking Glass Curtains & Shades .	9..-.-
Musical Instru ^{ts} ---	
Harmonia	15..-.-
Spinett	5..-.-
Harpsichord	25..-.-
Glassichord	8..15..-
Viol de Gambo & bells	8..15..-
Time Piece, in Library	7..10..-
Copying Press & Desk	15..-.-
Philos - apparatus Thermometer &c .	22..17..6
Library Chair	1..-.-
Philos - appar ^t at M ^r Hopkinsons . .	15..-.-
Cantons, Telescope	43..15..-
Lockhous --d ^o	17..10..-
Chamber	
Dressing Glass	2..-.-
Chest drawers	1.. 5..-
Mahoe Bedstead	2..10..-
Paintings &c	5..-.-
Chair & Table	3..-.-
Waring apparell	
Gold Watch & Chain & gold headed Cane .	80..-.-
Chamber ---	
2 Mahoe Card Tables	4..-.-
Pier Glass - in M ^r Franklin's room .	2..-.-
Two Pictures &c &)	
Mahoe Round Tea Table)	1..17..6
6 Old Chairs	3..-.-
Prints, Looking Glass	3..-.-
Stove	2..-.-
Beds & bedsteads	5..-.-
8 Old Chairs	3.. 4..-
Beds & bedsteads	5..-.-
Bedsted Bedding & Bercous	8..10..-
Bed & Cloths Press	6..-.-
China Glass & Mandarin Fige ^s . . .	10..10..-
Jack & Kitchen Furniture	7..10..-
Chinease Cong.	3..-.-
French [?]	5..-.-

69
 Furniture in the Bath room 15.. -.-
 Sedan Chair 20.. -.-
 Printing Office & Letter Foundary . 1000.. -.-

Average Estimate of the Library

351 Folios a 2/	£35..2/..-	
150 Topographical Pamphlets a 2 ^d . .	1.. 5..-	
767 Quartos 1/2 . .	44.14..10	
1548 Octavo's 10 ^d . .	69.. 6..-	
1260 Duodecimo 6 ^d . .	31..10..-	
200 d ^o .Stitch'd. . . 3 ^d . .	2..10..-	
N ^o Vol ^s 4276		184..7..10

The foregoing Goods were apraised by
 us the day & year first above written

Dav^d Rittenhouse
 Rob^t Aitken
 Jn^o Patton

189/90
 Inventory of the
 Estate of Dr.
 Benjamin Franklin

W111 189
 1790

DEBORAH FRANKLIN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FURNISHINGS
IN THE HOUSE (1765)

When you wente from home Billey desired to take some more of your Books then what you laid ought so I got him a trunk to take them up in and as the shelveses look pritty entey I took down the reste and dusted them and had the shelves taken down and put up in the South Garrotes in the new house and Miss Elter and my self put them up. I took all the dead letters and papers that was in the Garrot and put them into boxes barrels and bages as I did not know in what maner you wold have shelves in your room now this I did for several reseons one as it did imploy my mind and keepe me verrey busey and as the wather was pritty good and I shold make room if Mrs. Franklin shold Come to town to stay aney time I was ready to reseve her now for the room we Cole yours thair is in it your Deske the armokey maid like a Deske a large Cheste with all the writeings that was in your room downstairs the boxes of glases for musick and for the Elicktressey and all your close and the pickters as I donte drive nailes lest it shold not be write Salley has the south-room two pair of stairs in it is a bead a burow a tabel a glase and the pickter shee youst to have in her room a trunk and books but thees you Cante have any noshon of the Northeroom Nancey took for her one and I cante tell much a bought it only it has a bead and Curtin and it is keep locked I never saw it but ones I thinke excepts when shee was ill the Blewroom has the Armoeyca and the HarpseyCord in it the Gilte sconsse a Cardie tabel a seet of tee Chinee I bought sens you wente from home the worked Chairs and screen a verrey hansom mohoganey stand for the tee kittel to stand on and the orneymental Chaney but the room is not as yit finished for I think the paper has loste much of the blume by paisteing of it up thairefore I thought best to leve it tell you Come home the Curtins is not maid nor did I pres for them as we had a verrey graitte number of fleys, as it is observed thay air verrey ford of new painte the southeroome I sleep in with my Susanah a bead with ought Curtins a Cheste of Drowers a Tabel a Glase and old black wolnot chairs sum books in my Closet and some of our famely pickters in the fronte room which I had desired for geste I had the bead which you sente from England a Chamber mahogney tabel and stand in the room down stairs is the sid bord that you be spoke which is verrey hansom and plain with two tabels made to sute it and a Doz of Chairs all so I sold to mr Foxcrofte the tabels we had as they did not sute the room by aney meens the potturns of the Chairs air a plain Horshair and lock as well as a Pad dosway [?] everey bodey ad miers them the little south-room I had papered as the wales was much soyled in that is a pritey Card tabel and our Chairs that yoused to stand in the Parler and orney mental Chaney over the fier glase on the flower a Carpit I bought cheep for the geolnes it is not quite new the large Carpit is in the blew room the fier [?] not made yit in the room for our friends the Pickter of the Ercl of

71
Bute is hung up and a Glase this is but a verrey imperfeckte a counte
in the parlor thair is a Scotch Carpet which was found much Folte with
and your time pees stands in one Corner which is all wrong I am told
so then I tell them we shall have all th[ese] as they shold be when you
Cume home as to Curtins I leve it to you to due as you like your selef
[as]--[or] if as we tolked be fore you went if you Cold meet with a tur-
key Carpet I shold like it but if not I shall [be] verrey esey [or] all
thees things air be cume quite indifrent to me att this time but sense
you due so kindly inquier what things I want I shall tell you that when
Mis Franklin Come to town and wente to the Ashembly [?] Salley had nothin
fitt to wair sute a be [suitable?] to waite on her and as I never schold
a puton in your absens aney thing good I gave Salley my new robe as it
wanted but very little oltering I shold be glad if you wold bring me a
plain dorke sattin for a gound and if our Cusin wold make me a littel
Lase of a proper weed the [width?] for a Cape or two I shold like it as
it was thair makeing and a lighte cloke such as you sente for Salley but
it muste be bigger than hers I shold a hat? that but it was two small for
me, in the Northroom we sett as it is not quite finished yit as the dores
air not up we have a tabel and chairs and the burch Bookcase Brother Johns
Pickter and the King and Quens pickter and a small Scotch Carpet on the
flower I desier you to remember drincking glases and a Large tabel clothe
or two when you cume but I shante wante them tell then if you shold meet
with a pair of Silver Canisters I shold like it but as you plees everey
thing I have menshoned when I say dores it is the beset [?] dores thay air
Glaised but it was on know to me thay air in your room I shall Counte the
paines and send to you the Crain was put up this week and not before the
nailles not dun as yit but promised soon to be dun O my Child [thair] is
graitte odes be twen a mans being at home and a broad as everey bodey is
a fraid they shold due [wrong] and everey thing is lefte unden Salley is
still att Burlington I wrote her that Capt Friend wold Saile this week
I hope shee writes to you Capt oney took with him her white Sattin to have
maid fitt to wair a gin I donte know wather shee wrote a bought it or know
have you ever seen Capt oney [orrey] sens he a rived my Complayments to
our good mrs and miss Stephenson and all friends as those menshoned I have
counted the paines in the dores thair is 8 in each dore be ? ? att
tipe the largest size I will get mr Rhodes to take mashuer of the fier-
plases and the [pew] for a Glase all the Chimneys that I have yoused is
verrey good I have baked in the oven and it is good the same man live in
house that did when I bought it but I donte know his name he paid 26 pounds
a year but now the Lott is taken or he [never spoke to?] ? [he] is a duchman
I have not spook to him only to male [?] a [wriser]tube for [the aney] the
pente houses is not dun nor the steptes as the loot is not setteld I fiar
you have not reseved all my letters [mutilated] mr Rhodes thought it beste
not to dig a volte but I shall see him this evening if I Can but I donte
go ought aney whair if I can helpe it

Deborah Franklin to Benjamin Franklin [Phila-
delphia], Fall of 1765 [?], Bache Collection,
Oversize, 1758-1790, American Philosophical
Society.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S LITERARY AND STUDY
AS DESCRIBED BY MANASSEH CUTLER

Dr. Franklin lives in Market Street, between Second and Third Streets, but his house stands up a court-yard at some distance from the street. We found him in his Garden, sitting upon a grass plat under a very large Mulberry, with several other gentlemen and two or three ladies. There was no curiosity in Philadelphia which I felt so anxious to see as this great man, who has been the wonder of Europe as well as the glory of America. But a man who stood first in the literary world, and had spent so many years in the Courts of Kings, particularly in the refined Court of France, I conceived would not be of very easy access, and must certainly have much of the air of grandeur and majesty about him. Common folks must expect only to gaze at him at a distance, and answer such questions as he might please to ask. In short, when I entered his house, I felt as if I was going to be introduced to the presence of an European Monarch. But how were my ideas changed, when I saw a short, fat, trunched old man, in a plain Quaker dress, bald pate, and short white locks, sitting without his hat under the tree, and, as Mr. Gerry introduced me, rose from his chair, took me by the hand, expressed his joy to see me, welcomed me to the city, and begged me to seat myself close to him. His voice was low, but his countenance open, frank, and pleasing. He instantly reminded me of old Captain Cummings, for he is nearly of his pitch, and no more of the air of superiority about him. I delivered him my letters. After he had read them, he took me again by the hand, and, with the usual compliments, introduced me to the other gentlemen of the company, who were most of them members of the Convention. Here we entered into a free conversation, and spent our time most agreeably until it was dark. The tea-table was spread under the tree, and Mrs. Bache, a very gross and rather homely lady, who is the only daughter of the Doctor and lives with him, served it out to the company. She had three of her children about her, over whom she seemed to have no kind of command, but who appeared to be excessively fond of their Grandpapa. The Doctor showed me a curiosity he had just received, and with which he was much pleased. It was a snake with two heads, preserved in a large vial. It was taken near the confluence of the Skuylkill with the Delaware, about four miles from this city. It was about ten inches long, well proportioned, the heads perfect, and united to the body about one-fourth of an inch below the extremities of the jaws. The snake was of a dark brown, approaching to black, and the back beautifully speckled (if beauty can be applied to a snake) with white; the belly was rather checkered with a reddish color and white. The Doctor supposed it to be full grown, which I think appears probable, and thinks it must be a sui generis of that class of animals. He grounds his opinion of its not being an extraordinary production, but a distinct genus, on the perfect form of the snake, the probability of its being of some age, and there having been found a snake entirely similar (of which the Doctor

has a drawing, which he showed us) near Lake Champlain, in the time of the late war. The Doctor mentioned the situation of this snake, if it was traveling among bushes, and one head should choose to go on one side of the stem of a bush and the other head should prefer the other side, and that neither of the heads would consent to come back or give way to the other. He was then going to mention a humorous matter that had that day taken place in Convention, in consequence of his comparing the snake to America, for he seemed to forget that every thing in Convention was to be kept a profound secret; but the secrecy of Convention matters was suggested to him, which stopped him, and deprived me of the story he was going to tell. After it was dark, we went into the house, and the Doctor invited me into his library, which is likewise his study. It is a very large chamber, and high studded. The walls were covered with book-shelves filled with books; besides, there are four large alcoves, extending two-thirds of the length of the Chamber, filled in the same manner. I presume this is the largest, and by far the best, private library in America. He showed us a glass machine for exhibiting the circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins of the human body. The circulation is exhibited by the passing of a red fluid from a reservoir into numerous capillary tubes of glass, ramified in every direction, and then returning in similar tubes to the reservoir, which was done with great velocity, without any power to act visibly on the fluid, and had the appearance of perpetual motion. Another great curiosity was a rolling press, for taking the copies of letters or any other writing. A sheet of paper is completely copied in less than two minutes, the copy as fair as the original, and without effacing it in the smallest degree. It is an invention of his own, and extremely useful in many situations in life. He also showed us his long artificial arm and hand, for taking down and putting books up on high shelves which are out of reach; and his great armed chair, with rocker and a large fan placed over it, with which he fans himself, keeps off flies etc., while he sits reading, with only a small motion of his foot; and many other curiosities and inventions, all his own, but of lesser note. Over his mantel-tree, he has a prodigious number of medals, busts, and casts in wax or plaster of Paris, which are the effigies of the most noted characters in Europe. But what the Doctor wished principally to show to me was a huge volume on Botany, and which, indeed, afforded me the greatest pleasure of any one thing in his library. It was a single volume, but so large that it was with great difficulty that the Doctor was able to raise it from a low shelf and lift it on to the table; but with that senile ambition common to old people, he insisted on doing it himself, and would permit no person to assist him, merely to show us how much strength he had remaining. It contained the whole of Linnaeus Septima Vegetabilia with large cuts of every plant, and colored from nature. It was a feast to me, and the Doctor seemed to enjoy it as well as myself. We spent a couple of hours in examining the volume, while the other gentlemen amused themselves with other matters. The Doctor is not a Botanist, but lamented that he did not in early life attend

to this science. He delights in natural history, and expressed an earnest wish that I would pursue the plan I had begun, and hoped this science, so much neglected in America, would be pursued with as much ardor here as it is now in every part of Europe. I wanted for three months at least to have ~~devoted myself entirely~~ to this one volume. But fearing I should be tedious to the Doctor, I shut up the volume, though he urged me to examine it longer. The Doctor seemed extremely fond, through the course of the visit, of dwelling on Philosophical subjects, and particularly that of natural History, while the other Gentlemen were swallowed up with politics. This was a favorable circumstance to me, for almost the whole of his conversation was addressed to me; and I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties. Not with standing his age (eighty-four), his manners are perfectly easy, and every thing about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humor, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his breathing. He urged me to call on him again, but my short tarry would not admit. We took our leave at ten, and I retired to my lodgings.

William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins
Cutler, Life, Journals and Correspondence
of the Reverend Manasseh Cutler, LL.D.
(Cincinnati, 1885), I, 267-270.