Introduction

FRANKLIN THE PRINTER

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, the eighth child of Josiah Franklin and Abiah Folger, and their youngest son, was born in Boston in 1706. "From a child," Franklin wrote in his *Autobiography*, "I was fond of Reading.... This Bookish Inclination at length determin'd my Father to make me a Printer, tho' he had already one Son, (James) of that Profession."[1] The decision made, Benjamin left off helping his father, became apprenticed to James, his older brother. James, just turned twenty-one, having learned his craft in London, had returned home with press and type the year before to set up his printing shop in Queen Street.

Matters ran smoothly at first with the young apprentice. He worked hard, learned quickly, and, as he observed years later, became "a useful Hand" to his brother (p. 59). Meanwhile Benjamin continued his voracious reading, composed an occasional ballad which his brother encouraged him to hawk around town, and practiced developing a prose style in imitation of the popular London essayists Addison and Steele.

The tempo of activity rose sharply in 1721 when James decided against the advice of friends, to establish a third gazette in Boston, *The New-England Courant*. Benjamin's new role was to set the type, help run off the sheets, and then carry copies of the *Courant* through the streets to the subscribers. After a while he was prompted to compose some witty essays under the pseudonym of Mistress Silence Dogood which he slipped under the door of his brother's shop at night. Later Benjamin enjoyed "the exquisite Pleasure" of finding them approved by James and his friends (p. 68), and saw them printed issue after issue on the front page.

1. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, Conn., 1964), p. 58. Since much of this introduction is based perforce on the *Autobiography*, only direct quotations—all taken from this edition—have been located by page number inserted in the text after the passage quoted.

Disputes between the brothers, heretofore arbitrated by their father, broke out afresh when Benjamin revealed himself as the author of the Dogood essays and openly received commendation from James's literary advisers. James felt that his apprentice's success was making him vain. Benjamin, in turn, resented the repeated beatings his brother gave him, thought a nine-year apprenticeship intolerably lengthy, and longed to be rid of the agreement.

His opportunity came unexpectedly. James, who had been jailed for a supposed insult to the magisterial Council in June, 1722, published in January, 1723, an essay against hypocrites depicting the unnamed but recognizable Cotton Mather as its model.[2] The attack provoked the Massachusetts Assembly to forbid James from continuing to publish the *Courant* under his own name. In order to stay in the newspaper business, James hit upon the "very flimsy Scheme" of discharging Benjamin from his apprenticeship (p. 70) and putting his name in the imprint where it appeared from February 11 to September 30, 1723.[3] Of course, Benjamin was obliged to sign privately another set of indentures, but now he knew he had his brother on the hip. When the next quarrel arose, Benjamin informed his brother that he was going to leave. James countered by having Benjamin blacklisted in all the printing houses in Boston, and advertised in the *Courant* for September 30, 1723, for "a likely lad for an Apprentice." The seventeen-year-old Benjamin sold some books to gain passage money, and, without taking leave of his family, sailed for New York. There he learned from William Bradford, Sr., that Andrew Bradford, his son in Philadelphia, had recently lost his most dependable workman, a talented young man named Aquila Rose, and might need a new journeyman. Forthwith Franklin set out for the Province of Pennsylvania.

Early on a Sunday morning in October, 1723, Franklin arrived in Philadelphia, and sought out Andrew Bradford the next day at his shop beside the Quaker Meeting House on Second Street.[4] He was hospitably received, and there learned that though Bradford could not use his services, Franklin might find work with Samuel Keimer, a printer lately arrived from London. Franklin found Keimer, stick in hand, composing an elegy to the late Aquila Rose. Benjamin put Keimer's shattered old press into working order, and returned some days later to run off the finished verses. Thereafter he worked as a journeyman for Keimer at his shop up High Street two blocks from the market, and lodged next door at John Read's.[5]

2. Perry Miller, intro., *The New-England Courant* (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1956), p. 7.

3. Perry Miller, *Courant*, nos. 80–112.

4. Hannah Benner Roach, "Benjamin Franklin Slept Here," *PMHB*, LXXXIV (1960), 129–130.

5. H. B. Roach, pp. 129, 131.

Franklin was not impressed with the qualifications of either of the Philadelphia printers. Bradford had been bred a stationer, not a printer, and had grown easy through enjoying for more than a decade a virtual monopoly in the printing trade. Keimer, after the English practice of the period, was a trained compositor but knew very little about running a press.

The new land which was to become Franklin's adopted home had developed rapidly during the forty-odd years since William Penn sailed for America in 1682 in company with an early band of Quaker settlers. There were perhaps 7,000 inhabitants already settled in Philadelphia, a community influenced largely by English Quakers but including also a considerable number of Swedes, French, Welsh, Scotch-Irish, Dutch, and Germans. The site Penn selected in the young province for his principal city with its carefully planned network of broad streets fell between the Schuylkill River to the west and the larger Delaware on the east where ships sailing down through the Bay had easy access to the Atlantic. In an age when the newcomers to the Colonies were wholly dependent on the slow-moving and often unreliable trans-Atlantic shipping for their news from abroad and necessary goods and wares, it boded well for Franklin's future as a printer-publisher and journalist that he decided to reside near one of the great natural harbors on the East Coast. Vessels leaving Philadelphia could sail the Atlantic directly to the British Isles or ply the coastal waters to the other important colonial ports of Boston, Newport, New York, and Charleston, or run further south to the West Indies. Almost as necessary for local trade and communication, since overland travel was difficult, time-consuming, and hazardous, were the "small working sailboats, called shallops." They ran in and out the inland waterways, up and down Delaware Bay, and transported cargo of all sorts by way of Christiana Creek in the Lower County of New-Castle for overland transport to the head of the Chesapeake.[6]

It was but a matter of time before a brother-in-law of Franklin's, Captain Robert Holmes, master of a sloop sailing between Boston and Delaware, learned of the young printer's whereabouts. In a letter expressing the concern of his friends at home and assuring him that the difficulties that prompted him to leave Boston would be resolved, Holmes urged Franklin to return to New England. Franklin's reply setting forth his reasons for leaving his brother reached Captain Holmes while he was in the company of Sir William Keith, Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties. When Holmes handed Keith the letter to read,

6. John F. Walzer, "Colonial Philadelphia and Its Backcountry," *Winterthur Portfolio* 7 (1972), 163, 168.

the latter was impressed sufficiently with Franklin's abilities to call on him at Keimer's shop. Over Madeira wine at a nearby tavern Keith encouraged the eighteen-year-old printer-journeyman to set up his own house, promised the public business, and persuaded him to seek financial help from his father. So in April, 1724, seven months after his arrival in Philadelphia, Franklin boarded a vessel for Boston with the governor's highly commendatory letter in hand.

Since Captain Holmes had not in the interval returned home with news of finding Benjamin, Franklin's family were surprised at his reappearance and, except for brother James, were pleased to see him. Franklin's visit to his old place of employment, dressed in new clothes, with a watch and some five pounds in silver coins in his pockets, talking enthusiastically of his affairs in Philadelphia, was an embarrassment to James before his workmen for which he told his mother later he could not forgive his younger brother. Benjamin's father thought the governor's letter flattering to his son, but could not understand a person of his position wanting to entrust a mere youth with so responsible and costly a business. Josiah sent Benjamin back to the governor with a polite but firm denial, promising his son that if he worked hard and by age twenty-one had earned most of the money needed to set up shop, his father would find the rest.

Keith thought Josiah Franklin overly cautious and told Benjamin that "since [your father] will not set you up, I will do it myself" (p. 86). He asked Franklin to draw up an inventory of materials needed from abroad. When Benjamin later presented the list, Keith suggested that he might better sail to London with Captain Annis in the fall to pick out exactly what he wanted and make the necessary arrangements with wholesalers and correspondents. The governor promised to send along letters of introduction to friends and letters of credit so that Franklin could make his purchases. Benjamin fell in with Keith's plans, waited on him repeatedly but vainly for the letters, and sailed November 5, 1724, on the *London Hope*, understanding that the governor's dispatches had come aboard at New-Castle just before the vessel left port. He landed in London on the day before Christmas, 1724, still not sure that Keith had sent the necessary letters, and learned for certain the emptiness of the governor's promises once he began delivering letters thought to have been written on his behalf to several booksellers. When he revealed his predicament to Thomas Denham, a Quaker merchant who had befriended him on the voyage over, Franklin learned that Keith had no credit himself. "He wish'd to please every body; and having little to give, he gave Expectations" (p. 95). Denham advised Franklin to seek work in his craft in London, improve himself, and thus set up to greater advantage when he returned home.

Benjamin's stay in London lasted almost eighteen months. He "immediately got into work at [Samuel] Palmer's, then a famous printing-house in Bartholomew Close," and stayed there "near a Year" (p. 96). During this period Franklin lodged in Little Britain, Aldergate, next door to the bookseller Wilcox, from whom he arranged to rent the books he wanted to read. Once the excitement of the big city began to pall and Franklin undertook seriously to save money for his passage to America, he left Palmer's for the promise of more lucrative work with John Watts, in Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, a house with almost fifty workmen and one of the great printing establishments of London. At first Franklin chose to join the pressmen, "imagining I felt a Want of Bodily Exercise I had been us'd to in America" (p. 99). After some weeks, however, Watts asked him up to the composing room where with his skill at the cases he was frequently assigned urgent jobs which paid better than usual wages. Talking one day with his Quaker merchant friend, Thomas Denham, Franklin found out that Denham planned soon to return home. Needing a clerk, he offered the post to Benjamin, promising to set him up handsomely in the West Indies as soon as he mastered the business. Franklin accepted Denham's proposition and "took leave of Printing, as I thought for ever" (p. 105). He helped assemble the cargo for the voyage back and sailed with his new employer in his ship the *Berkshire*, July 21, 1726. The vessel arrived in Philadelphia October 11.

Denham rented a store on Water Street, close to the docks where he and his young clerk "lodg'd and boarded together" (p. 107). Denham taught him to keep a set of books and to sell merchandise, two skills that stood him in good stead as long as he remained a printer. Franklin kept careful accounts of his own business and insisted later that his partners do the same, and in his early years as a printer he disposed of a good deal of sundry merchandise that came to hand. In February, 1727, shortly after his twenty-first birthday, Franklin and the older Denham both fell ill. Franklin thought he would die, and his employer eventually did. Denham's executors took over the stock, and Franklin on advice of Captain Holmes turned once again to the printing business.

Among the changes that occurred during Franklin's prolonged absence in London, Sir William Keith had been replaced as governor. When he and Franklin met in the street, "he seem'd a little asham'd at seeing me, but pass'd without saying any thing" (p. 106). The printer Keimer, on the other hand, appeared to be prospering. He had moved to another location, was well supplied with new printing type, owned a plentiful stock of stationery, and had assembled some half-dozen workmen and an apprentice. When Franklin applied for work, Keimer

asked him to take charge as the new foreman. At first Franklin was pleased with the high wages, but as time wore on, he saw that Keimer's design was to have him train the inexperienced workmen and then let the foreman go. Benjamin, nevertheless, took over the shop, did an occasional engraving, contrived to cast sorts in short supply, mixed the ink, ran the warehouse, and generally improved the quality of Keimer's business. By the end of the second quarter Keimer was complaining that he paid Franklin too much, and shortly thereafter when the foreman stuck his head out the window to see about a commotion below, Keimer gave him a curt reprimand before bystanders, there were cross words, Keimer gave notice, and the angry Franklin turned on his heel and left the shop.

Franklin, discouraged over his prospects, thought about returning to Boston, but Hugh Meredith, one of Keimer's older workmen who regarded the younger man highly, urged him to stay on in Philadelphia. Keimer, he pointed out, was already much in debt and a poor manager. Once he failed, Franklin could take over his trade. When Franklin argued that he lacked money, Hugh replied that Simon Meredith, his father, impressed with Franklin's influence over his son, given at times to heavy drinking, would put up the amount needed if Franklin saw fit to accept Hugh as his partner. Franklin drew up an inventory of needed equipment, and Simon Meredith carried it to a local merchant. Meanwhile Keimer, with prospects of printing a profitable emission of paper currency for the New Jersey Assembly, patched up matters with Benjamin. Keimer knew he lacked the skill to do the job and feared that Bradford might hire Franklin and win the New Jersey contract for himself. Keimer and Franklin went off to Burlington to execute the work on a copper-plate press which Franklin claimed was the first seen in the Colonies. Not long after they returned to Philadelphia, the new printing equipment arrived by ship, Hugh's time was out with Keimer, and Meredith and Franklin, having parted amicably with their old employer, rented a small house "on the north side of Market Street a few doors below Second Street."[7] The partners persuaded Thomas Godfrey and his family to move in with them and help share the rent, and opened their "New Printing-Office near the Market" in the spring of 1728.

At the beginning the partners were hard put to make ends meet. Bradford and Keimer both had established customers, and the city seemed scarcely able to sustain a third printer. Franklin concentrated on job printing, offering printed legal forms, which thanks to his friend Joseph Breintnal, the scrivener, were textually the most accurate to be found anywhere in the city. Through Breintnal also the

7. H. B. Roach, p. 139.

new firm received from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends the printing of some forty sheets of a subscription edition of Sewel's *History of the Quakers*, which Keimer had been unable to complete in three years. Franklin, determined to compose a sheet a day, often worked late into the night, and once, after imposing his formes and thinking his day's stint done, "one of them by accident was broken and two Pages reduc'd to Pie" (p. 119). Meredith's task was to work off the formes each morning, and one may, if he examines the final pages of this folio, see the evidence of Meredith's inexpertness as a pressman. In the late fall of 1728, Franklin, thinking Andrew Bradford's *American Weekly Mercury* "a paltry thing, wretchedly manag'd, and no way entertaining, and yet . . . profitable" (p. 119), divulged to George Webb in confidence his plan eventually to start a second newspaper in Philadelphia. Webb, a former Oxford student just free of his indentures to Keimer and seeking employment with Franklin, carried the tale back to Keimer and with him helped found the *Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences; and the Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 24, 1728, much to Franklin's disappointment and chagrin.

Owing mainly to Franklin's individual effort, the business fortunes of the partners began in 1729 to improve. In Bradford's *Mercury*, February 4, 1728/29, Franklin published the earliest of his unsigned "Busy Body" essays designed to ridicule Keimer's new weekly. Keimer was no journalist. His gazette, staggering along under the dull burden of encyclopedia entries which it systematically reprinted, finally collapsed and was taken over by Franklin on October 4, 1729. In April, Franklin published anonymously the first of a series of pamphlets on current issues of the times which were to become over the next thirty-five years a distinctive characteristic of his printing house. The essay dealt with the much debated subject of monetary credit and was entitled *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*. The publication won Franklin friends in the Assembly and led, he claimed, to securing the contract the following year to print a new emission of Pennsylvania paper money. In this same year Franklin reprinted "elegantly and correctly" and distributed gratis to each representative a copy of one of Governor Gordon's addresses to the Assembly which Bradford as the official printer had earlier run off "in a coarse and blundering manner." The assemblymen "were sensible of the Difference; it strengthen'd the Hands of our Friends in the House, and they voted us their Printers for the Year ensuing" (p. 121).

If one were to pick a time when Franklin the printer stood up to the vagaries of fortune and at last saw his way clear, it would probably be the year 1730. Despite

the best of intentions, Hugh Meredith, Franklin's partner, found himself dissatisfied with the printing business. He had been bred a farmer, became discouraged with his progress in an alien craft, and, gradually drifting back into his old habits of drinking and gambling, began to bring the partnership into ill repute. Franklin was determined to stick with the agreement until Hugh's father unexpectedly defaulted on the money he had promised. Their creditors sued, and Franklin faced through judgment and execution the loss of his press and letter. The dissolution of the partnership was amicable. Hugh admitted that he was unsuited to the trade and, resolving to settle on a farm in North Carolina, promised Franklin that he would relinquish all claims if Benjamin would pay Simon the money he had lent the partners, take over Hugh's debts, and buy him a new saddle. Franklin agreed, and then accepted the generous offers of two friends, William Coleman and Robert Grace, to advance the funds he needed to square his debts and get on with his affairs. Meanwhile Keimer's business failed, and he sold his equipment to his former apprentice David Harry, whom Franklin had trained. "I was at first apprehensive of a powerful Rival in Harry," Franklin wrote later, "as his Friends were very able, and had a good deal of interest" (p. 126). He offered Harry a partnership which was scornfully turned down, luckily for Franklin. Shortly thereafter Harry's business failed also, and Franklin, having passed his last danger, was left with Bradford, "who was rich and easy" (p. 126), as his only competitor.

On July 4, 1730, ten days before Franklin and Meredith parted, Franklin opened the journal for his new stationery store which he eventually expanded to include the sale of books. At about the same time he hired a former London acquaintance, Thomas Whitemarsh, an excellent journeyman, and took Joseph Rose, Aquila's orphaned son, as an apprentice. Deborah Read Rogers, whom Franklin had courted before leaving for London, became his wife, September 1, 1730, and proved frugal and helpful in his trade. "She assisted me chearfully in my Business, folding and stitching Pamphlets, tending Shop, purchasing old Linen Rags for the Paper-makers, &c. &c." (p. 145). The previous January he had been awarded the official printing of the Pennsylvania Assembly, a privilege from which he profited until the termination of his partnership with Hall in 1766. At about the same time, through the influence of Andrew Hamilton he also became the printer of official documents for the Lower Counties.

The highlights of his expanding trade in the decade of the 1730's began with his forming a partnership with Whitemarsh and sending him and the equipment

for a new printing house to Charleston, South Carolina, late in September, 1731.[8] Two years later Whitemarsh was dead, and on November 26, 1733, Franklin signed new papers with Louis Timothy,[9] another of his journeymen, whose widow fulfilled the terms of the six-year agreement and then purchased the equipment for the use of her son Peter. In December, 1732, Franklin published his first *Poor Richard Almanack*, an immediate success which rose in subsequent editions to about 10,000 copies a year and proved one of his most popular and lucrative ventures. Four months later on March 21, 1732/33, Franklin paid Nathaniel Jenkins £35 for a lampblack house.[10] This assured Franklin thereafter of a steady supply of an ingredient important in making printer's ink. It also allowed him to catch up with his competitor Bradford, who had been manufacturing his own lampblack since 1718.[11] During a seven-week visit to New England in the early autumn of 1733 Franklin had "a very cordial and affectionate" reunion (p. 169) with his brother James, now settled with his press in Newport, Rhode Island. James, his health worsening, asked that at his death Benjamin take his little son Jamey into his home and instruct him in the printing business. This Franklin did. First he sent him to school, then accepted him as an apprentice in his Philadelphia shop in 1740, and in 1748 sent him back with new types to Newport where his mother, "Sister Ann," had been conducting the family business. What Franklin called "my first Promotion," occurred in 1736 with his appointment as clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly (p. 171) and new assurance that he would continue to enjoy the privilege of the official printing. Franklin's *Gazette* in the interim grew steadily in prestige, but merchants still preferred advertising in the *Mercury* because Bradford as Philadelphia deputy postmaster controlled the principal means of communication in and out of the city. And it was not until after Franklin replaced Bradford as postmaster in October, 1737, that he attracted the greater share of the advertisers his way. Now Franklin had first call on the latest foreign news for the columns of his paper and could afford to cease bribing the mail coach riders whom Bradford had forbidden to deliver the *Gazette* outside of Philadelphia.

The year 1739 began and ended in unusual activity for Franklin and his workmen. On January 11, 1738/39 he announced in the *Gazette* that he had

8. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, I (1959), 205–208. Cited hereafter as *Papers*.

9. *Papers*, I (1959), 339–342.

10. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger A & B," 1728–1739* (New York, 1928), p. 45.

11. *Pa. Archives* (Ser. 8), II, 240 (May 31, 1718).

moved "four Doors nearer the River, on the same side of the Street" into buildings owned by his old friend Robert Grace. Franklin and his household occupied the Market Street dwelling. The printing office was established in larger quarters than before in the rear of his home and to the north, opening onto Pewter-Platter Alley[12] where it remained for the rest of Franklin's career as a printer in Philadelphia. But the activity of moving in January must have appeared mild compared with what Franklin and his men faced in December and the months following. On November 2, the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield arrived in the city from London and began a preaching tour through the Jerseys up to New York and back that drew increasingly bigger and more enthusiastic audiences. Helped by resident clergymen who shared his convictions, Whitefield soon stirred his followers to a frenzy of religious excitement and his opponents to a level of vituperative rebuttal heretofore unknown in the American Colonies. On November 15, 1739, Franklin published proposals for an edition of Whitefield's sermons and journals by subscription in four duodecimo volumes. The last two came off the press in August, 1740, with the demand outstripping the size of the printing. The pamphleteering that continued for the next two and one-half years tripled the number of titles issuing from Franklin's press. It also caused the shop to fall behind schedule in completing the printing of books considered today among the most notable from his press—the charters and collected laws of the Province of Pennsylvania, James Logan's translation of Cicero's *Cato Major*, and Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela*.

Amid the heavier responsibilities of his growing business Franklin's innovative mind continued to prod him in the decade of the 1740's into engaging in new enterprises. Earlier he had helped found the first subscription library in the Colonies and was a leader in establishing the first fire company in the city. In the winter of 1739–1740, it appears, he completed work on his invention of a Pennsylvania Fireplace[13] and wrote and printed in 1744 a little essay explaining how the new stove worked. In 1743, following the lead of the botanist John Bartram, he undertook to establish a society wherein natural philosophers throughout the Colonies could meet and exchange ideas. In the fall of 1740 he composed a pocket almanac as a novelty for the Philadelphia Fair and saw it catch the interest of the public. He published it in annual editions of about 2,000 copies thereafter for the next twenty-five years. Concurrently he laid plans for beginning a periodical called the *General Magazine*, and missed by a few days issuing the first such publication in America. Again it was a man named Webb who thwarted him, this

12. H. B. Roach, p. 146.

13. *Papers*, II (1960), 419.

time John Webb, an attorney whom Franklin hoped to persuade to be his new editor. Webb carried the idea to Andrew Bradford and with him founded the *American Magazine*. Both ventures failed within six months. This was Franklin's last brush with the ailing Andrew Bradford, whose death in November, 1742, smoothed the way for his nephew, William Bradford 2nd, and a young man of considerable ability with influential friends. Bradford's *Pennsylvania Journal* and press activity gave Franklin formidable competition in the fifties and the sixties. Also in 1742 Franklin felt the time propitious for introducing a new printer to New York City where the principals were William Bradford, Sr., nearing his eightieth year, and John Peter Zenger, who had difficulties with the English language and was at times an indifferent workman. The man Franklin chose as his newest partner was his dependable foreman, James Parker,[14] who had been apprenticed for almost eight years to old Bradford before joining Franklin in 1733. Parker quickly established himself in New York and kept thereafter close ties with Franklin and on occasion worked in tandem with the Philadelphia office in printing books and almanacs.

One problem which Franklin with all his ingenuity as a printer and developing politician was not able to solve was how to communicate with, and influence the thinking of, the constantly expanding German-speaking population in the Province. A major difficulty was the power that Christopher Saur, a printer in Germantown from 1738 until his death in 1758, wielded over many of his fellow countrymen through his newspaper and the vigorous activity of his press. Saur was an able, outspoken, but somewhat eccentric individual who held strong opinions and refused to print the writings of those with whom he disagreed. He would not print the pamphlets of Count Ludwig Zinzendorf and his followers in 1742 and helped hobble the count's efforts to unite the German-speaking dissenting denominations and sects. Another problem was that Saur owned a fine array of fraktur and schwabacher types which Pennsylvania Germans preferred to the roman, italic, and small amounts of gothic owned by the English-language printers. In the mid-forties a new German printing house did appear in Philadelphia. Gotthard Armbrüster operated it from 1746 to 1748 and then passed from the scene. Who financed the venture originally is not clear. Armbrüster could have purchased the equipment of Joseph Crellius, who had earlier printed a German newspaper for a short time, or Armbrüster may himself have been responsible for bringing the printing house to Philadelphia, failed to make a go of things, and then sold out to Franklin. Or perhaps Armbrüster was Franklin's foreman from

14. *Papers*, II (1960), 341–345.

the outset. In any case by 1748 Franklin owned the equipment and enjoyed the services of the capable and energetic Johann Böhm until his untimely death from lockjaw in 1752.[15] The press remained moribund until 1754 when Franklin sold it to the trustees of the Charitable Scheme organized with London money to educate and anglicize the children of poor German families.[16] From that point Anton Armbrüster ran the press, first in cooperation with the trustees, afterwards as a private enterprise. Neither of the Armbrüsters was a match for Saur. Böhm, who had the ability, arrived too late and did not live long enough to tilt the balance.[17]

Saur's refusal in 1742 to make his press available to Zinzendorf forced the count to turn to Franklin, who must have turned to Joseph Crellius to handle the German composition, or perhaps even Olaf Malander. The latter was a former Lutheran who had joined the United Brethren. He worked for a brief period in Franklin's shop and in 1743 translated Zinzendorf's *Kurzer Catechismus* into Swedish. In the same year Franklin was looking also for an experienced young man to run his Philadelphia office now that he had set up Parker in New York. It was therefore with considerable encouragement that Franklin replied on July 10, 1743, to a letter from the London printer William Strahan concerning a young man named David Hall, who "understands his Business exceedingly well, is honest, sober, and industrious to the last Degree . . ." and seeks something "better than working Journey-work. . . ."[18] The man who crossed the Atlantic in response to Franklin's invitation was a native of Edinburgh, 31 years old, unmarried, formerly a fellow-apprentice with Strahan in the Edinburgh firm of Mosman and Brown, and more recently Strahan's journeyman and a close friend.[18] Hall at first expressed doubts about his American prospects, and Franklin remained reserved.[19] Over a period of four years, however, the two men learned to trust and appreciate each other. Franklin, desirous of more leisure for the pursuit of his scientific and civil interests, eventually decided to make Hall his Philadelphia partner and turned

15. *Pensylvanische Berichte*, Aug. 16, 1751; "William McCullough's Additions to Thomas's *History of Printing*," *Amer. Antiquarian Soc. Proc.*, n.s. XXI (1921), 190.

16. Whitefield J. Bell, Jr., "Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools," *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.*, 99 (1955), 383.

17. By 1752 Franklin had set up or acquired another German- and English-language printing house in Lancaster which was manned for brief periods in the 1750's by Samuel Holland, Henry Miller, James Chattin, William Dunlap.

18. J. A. Cochrane, *Dr. Johnson's Printer* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 60.

19. Franklin at first considered sending David Hall to set up a new printing house at Antigua in the Leewards, but later changed his mind, and eventually sent Thomas Smith as his partner in 1748. After Smith's death in 1752, Franklin sent his nephew Benjamin Mecom, who brought back the printing equipment to the northern Colonies in 1756 and then purchased it for his own use (See Wilberforce Eames, "The Antigua Press and Benjamin Mecom, 1748–1765," *Amer. Antiquarian Soc. Proc.*, XXXVIII, n. s. (1928), 303–348).

over to him the full responsibility for the day-to-day running of the business. The articles of agreement, effective on January 21, 1747/48, stipulated that the partners would share and share alike over a period of seventeen years. It was understood also that "before any Piece of Work of great Importance, either on account of its Cost or Consequences, be entered upon and begun, the Advice and Consent of the said Benjamin Franklin . . . shall be asked . . ." and that at the end of the specific term Hall had the option to purchase the printing equipment if he was so disposed.[20]

Franklin's assessment of Hall's work in 1750, "Mr. Hall . . . manages perfectly to my Satisfaction,"[21] anticipates his final verdict set down years later long after the agreement had expired and Hall was dead: ". . . a very able, industrious and honest Partner. . . . He took off my Hands all Care of the Printing-Office, paying me punctually my Share of the Profits" (p. 195). Franklin was indeed fortunate in his choice, but one would go wrong to assume from that statement that Franklin simply turned over the keys of the shop to Hall and walked away. True, in those years Franklin was engrossed in his experiments in electricity and involved in civic affairs. He helped to organize a voluntary militia for the Province and to found the Pennsylvania Hospital. In 1753 he reorganized the American colonial post office system after receiving jointly with William Hunter the appointment as deputy postmaster general. He also accepted appointments as magistrate, common councilman for the city, and then membership in the Assembly itself. Concurrently, however, Franklin with the assistance of his wife Deborah carried on what was virtually a wholesale business in marketing locally manufactured printing paper. Thus he assured himself a reasonably priced, steady flow of that needful commodity not only for his Philadelphia partner but also for many of his other partners, former partners, and correspondents from New England to the Leeward Islands. Doubtless he often talked informally with Hall about what should and should not appear in the *Gazette* and how politically explosive issues were to be treated. By stipulation of the Articles of Agreement he would have discussed with Hall the printing of the three-volume compilation of the *Pennsylvania Votes and Proceedings*, 1752–1754. This was the most ambitious piece of printing which the partners ever undertook, and they needed a fresh supply of Caslon type to finish the job. Ordering type for the Philadelphia shop was a responsibility Franklin had assumed from the outset of the partnership, as Hall makes clear in a letter to Strahan dated November 21, 1764.[22] From 1748 then until at least 1755 when Frank-

20. *Papers*, III (1961), 263–267.
21. *Papers*, III (1961), 480.
22. American Philosophical Society MS: David Hall Letter Book No. 3, David Hall to William Strahan, Nov. 21, 1764.

lin was first obliged to leave the city to gather supplies for the British forces under General Braddock on their way to Fort Duquesne, he helped his partner with a limited but essential group of tasks. Why, otherwise, would Hall have written to Strahan on December 17, 1755, that involvement with hostilities on the frontier "employs Mr. Franklin so much that he has no Time to think anything about our particular Business, which gives me the more to do . . ."?[23]

During the partnership years, 1748 to January 21, 1766, Hall chose to focus much of his energy on those aspects of the printing business which were best established and likely to be most profitable—the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the public printing for the Assemblies of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties, the *Poor Richard* and pocket almanacs, and the primers. The money realized from the advertisements and subscription fees of the newspaper amounted alone to more than fifty per cent of the income of the partnership. The considerable profit derived from the public printing—the laws, votes, treaties, paper currency—is difficult to determine exactly. The remainder of Hall's energy was invested in managing his stationery and book shop, the returns from which went solely to Hall. He had paid Franklin £681.1*s* for his stock when Hall took over the store at the beginning of the partnership in 1748. Other than that figure, there are only bits and scraps to be found in Hall's lengthy correspondence with Strahan, who acted as his London agent. On one occasion, at least, Hall received in 1761 a book order valued at £1,727.8*s*.4*d*., in 1763 carried a balance with Strahan exceeding £2,000,[24] and over the years received repeatedly from his old London friend compliments on his punctuality in settling his bills. Hall's remittances to Franklin from the profits of the partnership was yearly about £750.[25] How much more than that Hall earned for himself through the bookstore one can only guess.

The termination of the Franklin and Hall partnership, January 21, 1766, came and went probably unnoticed by the public caught up in the turmoil over the Stamp Act. Hall in an effort apparently to protect the partnership from legal reprisal had published the *Gazette* without an imprint during December and January. When he returned to the old form in February, Franklin's name had disappeared. James Parker, meanwhile acting as Franklin's agent, drew up on February 1, 1766, a statement of the finances of the partnership which calculated the worth of the printing-house material at £313 and showed Franklin indebted to Hall for the overall sum of £933.11.6.[26]

23. American Philosophical Society MS: David Hall Letter Book, 1750–1759, David Hall to William Strahan, Dec. 17, 1755.

24. J. A. Cochrane, p. 73.

25. *Papers*, XIII (1969), 89–90.

26. *Papers*, XIII (1969), 99.

Franklin was in London, embroiled in colonial affairs, having arrived there in December, 1764, and would not return again until 1775. The set of figures which Parker sent Franklin patently distressed him. He thought the shop materials were undervalued, questioned the inexactness of certain charges, and pointed out the absence of an offer to buy the debts outstanding, or of estimates of the worth of his right of copy in the *Gazette* and the *Poor Richard* and pocket almanacs, not to mention his implicit privilege in the public printing.[27] The problems involved were obviously too complex even for men of good will to attempt to settle 3,000 miles apart. For the next six years Hall and Franklin shared the receipts from the *Gazette* and the government printing and divided moneys belatedly collected from their mutual debtors. After their father's death in 1772, Hall's sons and heirs took a less sympathetic view of Franklin's claimed rights, and pressed for a settlement. Matters dragged on during Franklin's long sojourn in Paris. His letter to the ailing Strahan, an old friend of both Hall and Franklin, asking him to set a fair price on the worth of an established newspaper, went unanswered. Franklin was still endeavoring to arrive at an equitable solution in the fall, 1789, but died some five months later leaving the problem unresolved.[28]

FRANKLIN AND THE TYPE FOUNDERS

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND HUGH MEREDITH (1728–1730)
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1730–1747)
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND DAVID HALL (1748–1766)

(1) Earliest roman and italic fonts cast in 1727 in foundry of Thomas James(?), London. Used steadily until 1738. Fonts of worn English and pica sent to "Sister Ann" Franklin, Newport, R.I.

(2) Later roman and italic fonts cast in 1737–1741 and at intervals thereafter until 1760 in foundry of William Caslon, London.

(3) Non-Caslon bourgeois font, somewhat worn, acquired by 1744 and used on rare occasions until 1748. Foundry unidentified.

Franklin throughout his years as a printer and for a long time thereafter took a lively interest in the art of the typefounder and in changing fashions in letter design. Soon after he went to London to live in 1757, he had his six subscription copies of Baskerville's splendid printing of Vergil's poems bound up in vellum and

27. *Papers*, XIII (1969), 110–116.

28. *Papers*, XIII (1961), 99–104.

sent home[1] in an effort to call attention in the Colonies to the fine work of this new engraver-publisher. Franklin's name appeared along with that of Isaac Norris, Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, among the subscribers of Baskerville's edition of *Paradise Lost*, finished in 1758,[2] and during a trip in 1759–1760 that took him and his son through Birmingham, Franklin called on Baskerville at his establishment. Once back in London, Franklin wrote Baskerville a humorous account of how he tricked a would-be detractor into pointing out the shortcomings of Baskerville's letter design in a Caslon specimen sheet which Franklin had slyly substituted for one supposedly just acquired at the Birmingham foundry. The Franklin letter eventually found its way into Baskerville's 1763 printed advertisement for the Cambridge folio Bible.[3] Twenty years later Franklin was almost as excited over the work of the Fournier family. He stocked his small press at Passy with type cast in their foundry, and had the satisfaction of seeing copies of a specimen sheet displaying type cut especially for him by S. P. Fournier *le jeune* in 1781 making the rounds of printing offices in Paris.[4]

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, however, when Franklin's young eye was first becoming accustomed to letter configuration, type cast from matrices made in Dutch foundries dominated English printing. There were, of course, no letter-founders in the Colonies at this period and few British foundries of any note. The crabbed letter owned by brother James in Boston and the equally unattractive type which he encountered in Keimer's Philadelphia shop were all that the youthful Franklin knew at first hand until he arrived in London, late in December, 1724, had his high expectations jolted, and was obliged to seek employment in his trade.

In Bartholomew Close near Samuel Palmer's printing office where Franklin worked for almost the entire year of 1725, stood the well-stocked and important type foundry of Thomas James. Franklin wrote years later that he had visited "James's in London" and "had seen type cast"[5] there. He observed enough of the procedure so that, when in 1727 he took over as foreman in Keimer's shop back in Philadelphia and ran short of particular letters in his cases, he "contrived a mould, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supply'd in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies."[5] He also must have

1. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 16 vols., 1959–1973), VIII (1965), 53 n., IX (1966), 257.
2. *Papers*, VIII (1965), 157 n.
3. *Papers*, IX (1966), 257–260.
4. Luther S. Livingston, *Franklin and his Press at Passy* (New York, 1914), pp. 111–124, fold-out plate after p. 196.
5. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1964), p. 111.

seen on a specimen sheet from James's shop, or in use by Palmer or Watts, the attractive typeface that he was to order in both pica and English to serve as the principal text types once he and Meredith decided to set up their own shop in 1728. Equally plausible, though impossible to document, is that Franklin heard about the work of William Caslon, a remarkably talented new letter-engraver in London. Franklin had probably been acquainted with Charles Ackers, a fellow compositor in Palmer's shop, and may well have discussed with him the task of setting the text of a Psalter (1725) in Arabic from a new font which Caslon had spent two years designing and had completed casting only in 1724.[6]

The first types Franklin ordered late in 1727 were cast in all probability from matrices in the James London foundry.[7] In size the text types ranged from long primer (10 point) through pica (12 point) and English (14 point) to double pica (22 point), and in weight averaged probably about 300 pounds each for the three smaller types, with signs and figures in the long primer necessary in the printing of almanacs, and about 100 pounds for the larger double pica, employed also in titling, or a total of roughly 1,000 pounds. In addition Franklin ordered the usual twenty or thirty pounds of quotation marks, an assortment of type ornaments or flowers appropriate for use with the three smaller text types, probably a few pounds of crooked letters designed exclusively for use in printing paper currency, and several alphabets, roman and italic, of two-line pica (24 point) and French canon (48 point), reserved primarily for setting titles. Except for a very limited amount of scriptorial English and a small quantity of gothic or black letter long primer used in designating holy days in almanacs and in setting German-language advertisements in the *Gazette*, this was the extent of Franklin's type holdings for the first ten years of his business.

Fortunately all four of his first text types (illustrated in Appendix) possess distinctive and readily identifiable characteristics, which have made it possible to identify much unsigned Philadelphia printing between the years 1728 and 1742 as the work of Franklin's press and to eliminate items inaccurately ascribed to his press by previous bibliographers. For his journeyman Thomas Whitemarsh, whom Franklin sent to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1731, to open the first of a series of printing partnerships which Franklin founded during his business career, he reordered quantities of types from London identical in appearance to those

6. James Mosley, "The Early Career of William Caslon," *Jour. Printing Hist. Soc.*, III (1967), 71–72, 75–76.

7. C. W. Miller, "Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Type," *Studies in Bibliography*, XI (1958), 183–185. Much of what follows in the text is taken from this more detailed study.

employed in his Philadelphia house. This practice, which Franklin followed consistently whenever he opened a new partnership, was not without its purpose. In the forties and fifties Franklin and his New York partner, James Parker, occasionally undertook the joint printing of books or almanacs, and because both shops used type of identical fonts there was no way by which the ordinary reader could perceive that the assembled parts of the volume were other than the work of a single printer.

The considerable increase in Franklin's printing business during the thirties and the consequent wear in his original stock of types prompted him, probably in the fall of 1737, to send to England for a new supply. In the *Gazette* on May 4, 1738, Franklin exhibited for the first time in Philadelphia, and very probably in any of the American Colonies, the gracefully designed letter cut by William Caslon, who by 1730 had begun to carry off the London trade and would within a decade or two sweep the Colonies as well. The first two fonts acquired by Franklin in this series of purchases were his pica and small pica (11 point) in the year 1738; the long primer and first Caslon flowers followed in 1739; and in 1740 he began using the new Caslon English and his earliest font of brevier (8 point). It was the acquisition of this type that caused him to claim, according to John Webb, in the course of their negotiations over the editorship of the *General Magazine*, that "he had a small Letter that no other Printer in America had besides himself."[8] Fonts of Caslon great primer (18 point), paragon (20 point), and double pica along with smaller quantities of Caslon titling type—two-line long primer, two-line pica, and French canon—began appearing in his printing during 1741. The Caslon black letter brevier for use in the *Gazette* German-language advertisements followed in 1742.

From this point, with one exception, Franklin purchased Caslon text types exclusively for his Philadelphia office and for those of his new partners; James Parker in New York (1742), Thomas Smith in Antigua (1748), Parker and Holt in New Haven (1754), in addition to the new letter he furnished his nephew James Franklin, Jr., when the latter completed his apprenticeship in Philadelphia in 1747 and returned to Newport. After Franklin made the acquaintance of William Strahan in 1743 and learned to rely on his assistance, Franklin channeled his orders through his London correspondent—a new shipment of brevier in 1750 and 471 pounds of bourgeois (9 point) in 1756. In July, 1757, Franklin arrived in London and dealt directly with the Caslon foundry for an additional casting of bourgeois type in 1758 and a third font of brevier in 1760. By this year Hall was

8. *Papers*, II (1960), 268.

setting the news columns of the *Gazette* in bourgeois and brevier and the advertisements in all brevier. A year later Hall wrote Franklin requesting yet another font of brevier. The advertisements were becoming so bulky, Hall explained, that he was being forced "to distribute the standing ones in order to set up the new."[9] Franklin's mounting involvement with colonial affairs thereafter made him unreliable for Hall's purposes. Consequently Hall turned in 1764 to Strahan for assistance, asking him to order the casting of 500 pounds of brevier and have Caslon charge Hall rather than Franklin ". . . as his Time and mine will, in all probability be out before I have the pleasure of seeing him again. . . ."[10] The total weight of all this type purchased by Franklin and Hall over the seventeen years of their partnership—worn out, battered, half worn, and usable—amounted to almost 4,000 pounds according to Parker, who in his separate inventory of the printing-house equipment of late January, 1766, carefully itemized the weight, size, and estimated worth of each font in the accumulation.[11]

What Parker omitted from that final list, we may be assured, either was no longer in the printing-office or monetarily inconsequential, yet certain of the omissions are not without interest in the retrospective view of Franklin's long printing career. There is, of course, no mention of those earliest text types probably bought from Thomas James in 1728; presumably they would have been discarded as soon as the new Caslon type arrived. The fact is, however, that Franklin's original pica and English went up to Sister Ann, Brother James's widow, in Newport, and were used in her shop well into the forties. The first long primer lingered on in the advertisements of the *Gazette* until 1743, and then disappeared, perhaps the 240 pounds of "old printing letters" sold to Andrew Bradford on April 18, 1744,[12] but because of Franklin's practice of keeping a certain portion of his *Poor Richard* in standing type from year to year, letters from that original long primer reappeared annually in the almanac until 1748 when Franklin altered the format and reset the entire text. Nor does Parker mention the handful of letters in Greek pica which Franklin used only twice in his Philadelphia printing career—once in the *Cato Major*, to the annoyance of that fine classicist James Logan, who wished Franklin had "not begun in pa: 49 with Greek Letter since thou hadst not enough of the same Character to go with it," and might lead some readers to suspect that "I understood not the Language."[13] The last omission[14] concerns the

9. C. W. Miller, p. 191.
10. C. W. Miller, p. 192.
11. *Papers*, XIII (1969), 60–63.
12. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger D"* (New York, 1929), p. 46.
13. *Papers*, II (1960), 401–402.
14. The 1766 itemized inventory of the type owned by Franklin and Hall includes only the "663[pounds] Burgois," which Parker described as "eight years worn."

only non-Caslon font acquired by Franklin after 1738. It is a distinctive bourgeois (illustrated in Appendix) which Franklin used first in setting the text of a 1744 book-auction catalogue. The type reappeared in five issues of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* during the autumn of 1746 and for the last recorded time in Philadelphia in the tickets of the Second Philadelphia Lottery printed by Franklin and Hall in 1748. On August 12, 1751, James Parker pressed the font into service in his *New-York Gazette* to relieve the congestion of advertisements and continued using it in his newspaper until August 8, 1757.

FRANKLIN AND THE PAPERMAKERS

Colonial American papermakers whose paper sales occur in Franklin's account books or whose identifiable watermarks appear in Franklin or Franklin and Hall printing. The dates assigned refer to recorded periods of activity with Franklin.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia County: Wissahickon Creek—John Gorgas (1728–1733); Nicholas Rittenhouse (1733); William Dewees, Sr. (1737); William Dewees, Jr. (1736–1741); Henry Dewees (1741–1742); Matthias Meuris (1742–1746); Jacob Hagy (?) (1747–1757).

Berks County: Manatawny Creek—Daniel Womelsdorf (1747–1757).

Delaware County (part of Chester County in the Franklin period): Chester Creek (west branch)—Thomas Willcox (1729–1757).

Montgomery County (part of Philadelphia County in the Franklin period): Mill Creek—Conrad Schütz (1745–1758); Christopher Robins (?) (1757–1764); Frederick Bicking (1764–1766). Sandy Run—Anthony Newhouse (1748–1750); Gerhard Heinrich Schütz (1751–1766). Trout Run—Anthony Newhouse (1746–1752); Jacob Hagy (1752–1766).

New Jersey

Middlesex County: Matchiponix Branch, South River—Frederick Roemmer (1759–1761).

Virginia

James City County: Archer's Hope Creek—William Parks (1743–1750).

Finding a ready source of usable and reasonably priced printing paper was a problem that faced every American printer, especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the same year that Franklin and his partner Hugh Meredith set up shop in 1728, Daniel Henchman and his associates in Boston were converting an old fulling mill on the Neponset River near Milton, Massa-

chusetts, in an effort to establish the first paper mill in New England. Waldo was seven years away from his abortive venture into papermaking on the Presumpscot River in Falmouth, Maine, and sixteen years would pass before William Parks would build the first Virginia paper mill on a tributary of Archer's Hope Creek south of Williamsburg.[1]

The American paper mills in operation before 1728 were all located in the Middle Colonies. The newest, in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, was started by William Bradford of New York in 1726,[2] and the oldest, the mill of William Rittenhouse and his son Nicholas, or Klaus, on Paper Mill Run, a branch of the Wissahickon, was built originally in 1690.[3]

In time Franklin's choosing to build his trade as a printer in Philadelphia conveniently near to the only existing paper mills in the Colonies proved fortunate indeed, but not in 1728. He had no ready money, no supply of linen rags to offer a papermaker, and no significant connections. William Bradford, Andrew's father, had been one of William Rittenhouse's original partners, and over the years Andrew Bradford and Klaus Rittenhouse, the sons, had nurtured a long and profitable business association. Samuel Keimer, Franklin's former employer, appears to have learned what could happen if one crossed Andrew Bradford, as Keimer did by accepting a contract to print Sewel's *History of the Quakers* at a price cheaper than his competitor's after Bradford had circulated the original subscription lists. Keimer began the work in 1725 with a good supply of local paper from the mill of John Gorgas, Klaus Rittenhouse's son-in-law; with Franklin's help Keimer finally completed the printing three years later. The reason Keimer gave the Society of Friends for the long delay was that the papermaker had reneged on his promise and only through the generous financial assistance of James Logan was Keimer able to secure from abroad the paper necessary to complete the volume.[4] Franklin in his career as a wholesale paper merchant may have dealt years later in his career with Klaus's son, William, but in the early years of Franklin printing the three-leaf clover, or *klee-blatt*, the well-known Rittenhouse watermark, appears only once, in the paper used in printing the 1733 Brady and Tate version of the Psalms (No. 64), a piece of work which Bradford commissioned Franklin to do for him and for which Bradford presumably supplied a portion of the paper stock.

So for the first years as master of his own shop, 1728–1733, Franklin pur-

1. Dard Hunter, *Papermaking in Pioneer America* (Philadelphia, 1952), pp. 33–36, 38–40, 42–49.
2. D. Hunter, pp. 29–32.
3. D. Hunter, pp. 20–28.
4. Philadelphia Society of Friends Archives MS: Miscellaneous Papers.

chased his paper from abroad, probably largely Dutch laid, marketed to the Colonies through British wholesalers. What Franklin was obliged to do at the outset of his business many colonial printers did throughout the whole of their years in the trade. Imported paper generally was superior in quality to native American paper, and available, if one did not mind the delay of the ocean-crossing and the risk of its getting wet and mildewing, whereas the output from the Pennsylvania mills in the 1720's and 1730's was a limited commodity and much in demand among the local printers. Foreign paper had only one major drawback—it was expensive, and in an economy where negotiable currency was scarce and the rate of exchange generally favored the pound sterling, a colonial printer did his best to find a local source of printing paper or sacrificed a large portion of his margin of profit, particularly when he undertook to publish a newspaper.

Few colonial printers, if any, however, relied wholly on American-made paper, not even the enterprising Franklin. They imported the colorful and more durable cover stocks, marbled or embossed, flowered or gilt, and as many as four grades of writing paper, the finest made largely from linen rags, fine in texture, smooth, and often creamy white. It was carefully sized to permit handwriting with ink and quill, and on occasion was used for printing special jobs.

From local American papermakers the printers obtained (1) blue paper, a cheaper and more homely cover stock than the Dutch marble or gilt; (2) cartridge paper; (3) brown paper, used only for the least costly of printing jobs, and far more often for wrapping such items as soap or spermaceti candles; and (4) the tougher, sometimes specially wrought and high priced, currency papers. The kind of paper which colonial printers needed most and consequently purchased in greatest quantity was ordinary printing paper—good to fair in quality, made from linen and cotton, or largely cotton fibers, and used for political and religious pamphlets, sermons, almanacs, and newspapers.

The imported paper which Franklin used in the earliest years was ordered from local merchants: 46 reams from Mr. Beards during July, 1730, at 12*s.* a ream and 273 reams more from William Allen in 1730 and 1731, at prices ranging from 8*s.* to 15*s* a ream.[5] In the summer of 1730 when Franklin opened his stationery store he increased his purchases to supply Philadelphians with different qualities of writing paper in quantities of a few sheets, one or two quires, or even by the ream as well as to supply the needs of his busier press. In the years 1748–1766, the period of the partnership when Hall took over the running of the stationery shop

5. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger A & B,"* (New York, 1928), p. 31. Cited hereafter as Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. I.*

for his own gain, surviving letter books show Hall dealing directly with the London paper firm of Bloss and Johnson, and later Johnson and Unwin. He received each spring and fall 250 to 300 reams of writing paper, the greater portion in small sheets, pot (12.5 x 15.5 in.) and pro patria (13.5 x 16.5 in.), each size generally sold in four grades.[6] Hall insisted on quality standards: ". . . send no more Paper at 4*s*.6*d*. a Ream, for it will not answer here"; the new pro patria "at 8*s*. . . . seems very coarse, and is full of black Specks"; ". . . let the Second Sort be better than that you charge at 6*s*."[7]

Vital to the success of Franklin's printing venture, and later to that of the partners Franklin and Hall, however, was a steady supply of inexpensive laid paper from local manufacturers. Batches of Pennsylvania-made paper show up sporadically in his printing in 1733 and 1734, but it was not until 1735 that accounts with local papermakers begin to appear in his ledgers. By that date Franklin had doubtless come to understand that the Province of Pennsylvania possessed the capability for becoming a center for the paper industry. There were in the vicinity of Philadelphia an abundance of clear, rapidly flowing creeks, a continuing stream of trained papermakers coming to America from the Low Countries, Switzerland, and Germany, shrewd and venturesome Philadelphia merchants willing to risk capital on outfitting paper mills, and a population large enough to keep the craftsmen supplied with linen and cotton rags. What these men needed if they were to ply their trade and pay the usual £50 yearly paper mill rental was someone who would take the responsibility for collecting the rags for them, for furnishing them with the credit and currency necessary for their business and family wants, for ordering paper moulds from overseas when they were needed, and for assuring them a ready market for their product. The *Gazette* on April 11, 1734, carried for the first time the note: "Ready Money for old Rags, may be had of the Printer hereof," and Franklin was launched on a new enterprise.

The production of native paper appears to have risen sharply in the years 1735–1741, both from the indications on Franklin's ledger and from the increasing occurrence of American paper in Franklin printing, especially in the *Gazette*. During that period, selling rags at 1½*d*. per pound, Franklin furnished Thomas Willcox with over 16,000 pounds and the Dewees family with more than 55,000 pounds.[8] In return he purchased paper and pasteboard from Willcox worth £257

6. American Philosophical Society Library MS: David Hall Letter Book, 1750–1759: D. Hall to Bloss and Johnson, July 13, 1750, Sept. 27, 1750, Nov. 28, 1752, Apr. 7, 1755, etc. Cited hereafter as HLB, 1750–1759.

7. HLB, 1750–1759: D. Hall to Bloss and Johnson, June 2, 1750, July 13, 1750, Sept. 27, 1750.

8. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. I*, p. 32.

and, from the Dewees, worth almost £1,200.[9] Willcox, a Staffordshire man, had established his mill during the year 1729 on the west branch of Chester Creek, twenty miles southwest of Philadelphia, in what is today Delaware County, and developed the art of manufacturing glazed fuller board to the degree that "famous Philadelphia fuller board" was sold as far away as New York and Rhode Island. Thomas Willcox lived on until 1779, and under his son Mark, who took over the business in 1767, Ivy Mills, as it was later known, gained a wide reputation in the early Federalist period for making fine writing and currency papers.[10] The only Pennsylvania papermaker patronized by Franklin who lived farther away from Philadelphia than Willcox was Daniel Womelsdorf. He seems to have worked in the late thirties and mid-forties for Willcox and Conrad Schütz, and then in 1747 moved to a 200-acre tract in Amity Township, Berks County,[11] where along Manatawny Creek he operated both a paper mill and a fulling mill. On September 1, 1750, Womelsdorf purchased the property, helped by a mortgage given by Franklin.[12]

Franklin normally depended for his main supply on papermakers closer to his printing office and hence in the late thirties relied heavily on the Dewees, especially William Dewees, Jr. The smaller share in that period came probably from the first mill built by the elder William Dewees, Klaus Rittenhouse's brother-in-law, in 1710 on a branch of the Wissahickon west of Germantown Avenue close to the dividing line between Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties.[13] The much larger portion was laid in the mill which William, Sr., built in 1736 for his son on the west side of the Wissahickon between Wise Mill Road and Hartwell Lane.[14] The documentation on this mill is fuller than that for the others, so that one can trace its activity with some certainty. It was a major source of printing paper for Franklin from 1736 to 1746, and possibly to 1753, when it was sold at auction. From 1736 to 1741 William Dewees, Jr., with help from Anthony Newhouse, ran the mill. Matthias Meuris bought the mill from Dewees, May 31, 1742,[15] and became an important Franklin supplier until he died, badly in debt, on December

9. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. I*, p. 30.

10. Historical Society of Pennsylvania MSS: Wilcox Papers, Vol. IV; Joseph Willcox, *Ivy Mills, 1729–1866* (Baltimore, 1911).

11. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger D."* (New York, 1929), pp. 30, 34–35. Cited hereafter as Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*.

12. Phila. Mortgagee Books, X-1, 264; X-2, 112.

13. Hannah Benner Roach, "The Back Part of Germantown: A Reconstruction," *Penna. Geneal. Mag.*, XX (1956), 79, 126.

14. H. B. Roach, pp. 81, 89, 127.

15. Phila. Deed Book, G-4, 84.

28, 1746.[16] Franklin bought seventy reams of brown paper and twenty-seven reams eight quires of printing paper at the Meuris public vendue, May 14, 1747;[17] the mill with its forty-five acres of farm land went for £410 to Philadelphia merchant Peter Kock, a native of Karlscron, Sweden.[18] Who operated the mill for Kock until his death, November 9, 1749,[19] and until its sale in 1753 is not known. Among the papermakers thought to have worked there in that interval are Jacob Hagy, or Haga, Frederick Bicking, or Bocking, who had been Meuris' apprentice,[20] and Nicholas Hasselbach.

Far more important to Franklin than Meuris in the forties was Anthony Newhouse, who had been Dewees' foreman in the late thirties. His paper accounts with Franklin show him to have been a versatile artisan, producing a variety of paper. In the years 1742 to 1749 he bought 49,242 pounds of rags from Franklin and sold him hundreds of reams of paper, including most of the paper which Franklin used in printing the Provincial currency.[21] The flakes of mica visible in the Pennsylvania bills starting in the 1740's make it clear that Newhouse and Franklin were experimenting with the ingredients used in that particular paper in an effort to help thwart counterfeiters. On September 30, 1746, Newhouse purchased land in Whitemarsh Township, Montgomery County, along Trout Run, a tributary of the Schuylkill River, in an area which is today called Miquon.[22] He built a new paper mill on the site and worked it until he sold the property to another papermaker in 1752. Meanwhile he was also renting and operating in 1748–1750 a paper mill situated on Sandy Run in the northwest corner of the old Springfield Manor, now named Springfield Township, Montgomery County.[23] The tract already had a paper mill erected on it, along with a dwelling and a lime kiln, when Jacob Colliday and his wife, on May 2, 1746, sold it to the Proprietary Receiver-General and Keeper of the Great Seal, Lynford Lardner,[24] so perhaps it was here that Newhouse worked after Dewees sold the Germantown mill to Meuris in 1742 and before Newhouse appears in Lardner's account book entry in 1748.

16. Phila. Orphans Court, Letters Testamentary, 1746–1752, File G, Roll 104, p. 27; American Philosophical Society Library MS: List of Debts due from Matthias Meuris.

17. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, p. 26.

18. Phila. Orphans Court, Letters Testamentary, 1746–1752, File G, Roll 104, p. 33.

19. "William McCulloch's Additions to Thomas's *History of Printing*," *Amer. Antiquar. Soc. Proc.*, n.s. XXI (1921), 127; Rudolf P. Hommel, "Two Centuries of Papermaking at Miquon, Pa.," *Bull. Hist. Soc. Montgomery Co., Pa.*, V (1947), 283.

20. Phila. Archives, Inventory of Matthias Meuris's goods, Jan. 17, 1746–47.

21. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, pp. 26–30.

22. R. P. Hommel, pp. 275–290.

23. Rosenbach Foundation MS: Lynford Lardner, Sundry Account Book, 1748–1751.

24. Phila. Deed Book, G-8, 51.

The long history of this Sandy Run mill has another chapter in the Franklin story too. After Newhouse left it in 1750, Lardner spent almost £100 in renovations and then rented it in the spring of 1751 to Gerhard Henrich Schütz, who had arrived in the Colony, August 29, 1739, two years after his brother Conrad. On December 23, 1751, Lardner acknowledged receipt of a note from B. Franklin in the amount of £17 toward Henry Schütz's rent,[25] the first in a series of Franklin payments for him, probably from credits which Henry had accumulated through the sale of paper to the partners. Henry continued to lease and operate this mill until 1769—his watermark GHS appears in the paper of several Franklin imprints starting in 1759. Lardner died in 1774; in 1792 Henry Schütz, Jr., and his son, Henry Schütz 3rd, purchased the mill from the residuary heirs for £1,500 paid in gold and silver coins,[26] and worked it on into the nineteenth century.

If 1735–1741 was the cradle age of the rising paper industry fostered by Franklin in Pennsylvania, then the era of the forties was its youth. Newhouse, Meuris, and his successors did what they could to meet the growing demand, but they needed help—and opportunely it came in a flood of cheap but very good Genoese pot paper. This began appearing in abundance during the spring of 1743. Franklin sent seventy-two reams to Brother John in Boston, May 31, and forty-eight reams to Sister Ann in Newport in November for use in printing the Rhode Island charters and laws of 1744. Meanwhile Rogers and Fowle in Boston launched the *American Magazine* printed on Genoese paper from September, 1743, to December, 1746, Franklin shipped Jonas Green forty-eight reams in Annapolis on June 7, 1744,[27] and Franklin, Parker, and William Bradford 2nd used it in their gazettes until it disappeared from Franklin printing during the summer of 1747 as abruptly as it had come. Only Parker managed to lay in a stock that allowed him to continue printing the *New-York Gazette* on Genoese into the early fifties. The source of Parker's additional supply, if we knew it, might throw light on a request for "Spanish Paper" sent him by Franklin. On September 7, 1747, Parker replied, "I don't know any Body has any Spanish Paper to sell cheap. I believe 5 or 6*s*. will be the lowest. I know several ask 8*s*. I can gladly spare you 4 or 5 Bales of that I have, having got about 10 Bales [240 reams] yet entire."[28] During this whole period, from October, 1739, to October, 1748, England was at war with Spain, and after March, 1744, with France also; the city of Genoa was

25. L. Lardner, Sundry Acc't. Bk., Apr. 13–Dec. 23, 1751.

26. Montgomery County, Pa., Deed Book, 7–182.

27. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, pp. 58, 56, 64.

28. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, III (1961), 172–173.

under long siege. One can only wonder whether "Spanish Paper" and Genoese are the same and by what circuitous route and through whose hands all this Genoese paper reached the American market.

Some six months before Genoese paper began appearing in the presswork of American printers, the well-established Williamsburg printer, William Parks, advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 23, 1742, for a millwright and papermaker willing to travel to Virginia in order to build and put into operation a paper mill on a branch of the Archer's Hope Creek in James City County. The papermaker who responded and eventually set up Parks's mill for him with the assistance of several carpenters was Johann Conrad Schütz,[29] Henry's brother, a German-trained artisan from the Palatinate, resident in Pennsylvania since August 30, 1737.[30] Acting as Parks's agent, Franklin provided Schütz with cash for his expenses, and during his absence furnished his wife with money. Franklin likewise assembled and sent Schütz the mill equipment he needed, supplied Parks on March 30, 1743, with 915 pounds of rags, and sent him in the interval between June 25, 1745, and June 2, 1747, another thirteen hogsheads of rags, just over 10,000 pounds. On September 3, 1744, Franklin credited Parks with £55.12.9 for "paper left for me at Apoquinimy,"[31] the first apparently which Franklin received from the Virginia mill, antedating by almost three years the earliest identifiable Parks paper yet found in Franklin printing.

Schütz had, meanwhile, returned to Pennsylvania, evidently early in 1744; he worked for perhaps a year with Willcox at the Chester Creek mill, and then began in the summer of 1745 the regular purchase of large quantities of rags from Franklin. The earliest instance in Franklin printing of signed Schütz paper—the first to bear the crown-enshielded fleur-de-lis with the initials BF and the countermark CS—appeared in a Pennsylvania proclamation dated June 9, 1746 (see No. 429). At what mill Schütz was working in the years 1745–1748 is not known. On May 8, 1748, he purchased from David Davis, a fuller, one hundred acres on Mill Creek in the upper part of Merion Township, Montgomery County, at a cost of £400[32] and by March 21, 1749/50, had "lately erected a Paper Mill" on the property, secured by a £200 mortgage from William Allen. Two years later Franklin and Hall gave him a second £200 mortgage, perhaps to help him build

29. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, pp. 98–104; Rutherford Goodwin, "The Williamsburg Paper Mill of William Parks, The Printer," *Papers Biblio. Soc. America*, XXXI (1937), 21–44; D. Hunter, pp. 41–49.

30. R. B. Strassburger and W. J. Hinke, eds., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Norristown, Pa., 1934), I, 169, 171.

31. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, pp. 98–100.

32. Phila. Deed Book, H-12, 197; Phila. Mortgagee Book, X-1, 188; X-2, 47.

his second paper mill. Schütz died intestate in 1771, possessed of two paper mills which with the land were valued at £1,756.2.8,[33] and left a widow and eight children involved in litigation that extended well beyond the American Revolution.

Of all of Franklin's papermakers, Conrad Schütz's handiwork offers the greatest array of distinctive watermarks and is one of the most easily identifiable because he regularly put his initials on his moulds. In addition to the fleur-de-lis with BF, Schütz's watermarks include two varieties of the Penn Arms, the unicorn, the serpent on a rod, and, perhaps his later most characteristic mark, the centermarked sun, or many-pointed star with an initial on either side.

While Schütz was making his way in Pennsylvania, his old employer William Parks, after operating his Virginia mill for several years, decided to revisit England and died aboard ship on April 1, 1750. The Virginia mill was sold in 1752,[34] and there is no documentary evidence for its continued operation by or for the benefit of Parks's successor, William Hunter, who with Franklin was appointed in 1753 joint deputy postmaster general for the American Colonies. What persist like ghosts from the grave, however, are Parks's old watermarks, particularly the Arms of Virginia and the Irish quartering from the British Seal, on paper used in the years from 1751 to 1763. Dard Hunter encountered the Virginia Arms in the 1763 German Bible of Christopher Saur 2nd, and mentioned someone's suggestion "that perhaps the Virginia moulds may have been taken to Pennsylvania and used there for making paper without troubling to remove the watermark wires, a supposition not entirely devoid of foundation."[34] But in the end Hunter concluded that Saur used paper made in Virginia "a number of years" before. What Hunter did not find time to do was examine the paper used in printing the weekly gazettes from Philadelphia to Boston in the mid-1750's. The Virginia marks are widespread, especially the shielded harp, in the North,[35] but are not met with in the *Virginia Gazette* or in Williamsburg printing of the same period, though since William Hunter was purchasing paper from Franklin in 1751[36] and perhaps later, it would not be surprising to find Virginia marks in paper sent to Williamsburg. Paper moulds were costly and hard to come by. It is difficult to believe that Schütz did not retrieve those Virginia moulds when Parks's mill closed, probably at a handsome savings, and press them into use in his own Merion mills.

33. Phila. Orphans Court, Collateral Papers, 1769–1772, IX, 311–312, 324.

34. D. Hunter, p. 48.

35. See Hugh Gaine, *NY Mercury*, Nov. 25, 1754–Nov. 17, 1755; Huske and Holbrook, *Boston Post-Boy*, 1754; James Parker, *NY Gaz.*, March 3, 1753–Dec. 30, 1754.

36. University of Virginia Library MS: William Hunter Account Book, 1750–1752, Apr. 2, 1751.

Joining Schütz as a major source of printing paper used by Franklin and Hall in the 1750's was the Swiss papermaker Jacob Hagy, who on February 18, 1752,[37] purchased Anthony Newhouse's mill on Trout Run. Hagy's paper, marked simply IH, made its first appearance in Franklin printing in 1754, and persists until the termination of the partnership in 1766. In 1757, about the time Franklin left Philadelphia for London, and Conrad Schütz's paper had begun to fade in Franklin and Hall presswork, a new watermark appeared, CRA, or CRA with crossed hammers, and continued until 1764. The papermaker is unidentified, but in 1754 the proprietor of the Three Tuns Inn in Whitemarsh Township, Christopf Rapp, who anglicized his name to Christopher Robins, acquired a paper mill on Mill Creek, across the Schuylkill from Miquon, in Lower Merion Township. Robins sold his mill in 1769 to Hagy, who in turn transferred the title on January 7, 1785, to his son William for a consideration of 5*s*.[38] The association of CRA with Christopher Robins is tempting, but wholly without corroboration.

By the late 1750's and early 1760's the rise in the number of papermakers in the Philadelphia area was considerable, and their production far beyond the needs of Franklin and Hall and the dozen or more printers in the Middle Colonies. In a period of four years, 1759–1763, according to a report of John Swift, collector of customs at Philadelphia, 6,432 reams of American-made paper cleared the port,[39] remarkable testimony to the rapid growth and vigor of the new colonial industry. Of the new watermarks emerging in Franklin and Hall presswork during the final years of the partnership four are notable. The first in point of time, 1757–1761, is a fleur-de-lis WP, a mark much cruder than those found in the original William Parks moulds used by Schütz, and the second, 1758–1763, a delicately wrought shieldless Arms of Britain with an accompanying lacy crown as the countermark. The third, the initials FR and a large number 4, appearing in 1759 and 1761, identify the paper of the German papermaker Frederick Roemmer, who arrived in America on September 14, 1754, and in 1765 was operating a paper mill on the Matchiponix Branch of South River, Middlesex County, New Jersey.[40] The last, occurring in 1764–1765, was that consisting of the initials FB, the mark of John Frederick Bicking, Matthias Meuris' seventeen-year-old apprentice in 1747, who in 1762 purchased land near Schütz's along Mill Creek in Merion Township

37. R. P. Hommel, p. 280.

38. Charles R. Barker, "The Old Dutch Church in Lower Merion," *Bull. Hist. Soc. Montgomery Co., Pa.*, IX (1955), 213; "Glimpses of Lower Merion History," *ibid.*, XI (1958), 258; Phila. Deed Book, I-5, 63; Montgomery Co. Deed Book, I, 112.

39. R. P. Hommel, p. 276.

40. New Jersey, Middlesex County, Mortgage Book, I, 247.

and erected a paper mill,[41] and then as he prospered, acquired two additional properties adjoining his original land, one in 1770, the second in 1784.[42]

Thus in a thirty-year span under Franklin's careful nurturing and with favorable conditions for development,[43] papermaking became an important part of the rising commerce of the Province, and the envy of the other colonies. For Franklin's family, at least until Benjamin sailed for England in 1757, the wholesale paper business was a joint venture. Franklin himself directed the enterprise, getting orders while on his post office inspection tours, and checking deliveries; Deborah kept the books and negotiated with the local papermakers; Williams, the Philadelphia postmaster, arranged the transportation. When in 1788 Franklin told his French traveler friend Brissot de Warville that he had helped establish some eighteen American paper mills, he did not, of course, go on to point out which ones, but surely many of them must have been the mills which furnished Franklin and his partners with paper for their printing offices, identifiable today only through land documents, ledger charges, or the telltale watermark designs in the crumbling paper.

FRANKLIN AND THE BINDERS

Colonial American binders whose binding charges occur in Franklin's account books or whose identifiable tooling appears on leather bindings of Franklin or Franklin and Hall imprints. The dates assigned refer to the years during which these men were active.

Philadelphia Area

Andrew Bradford (1712–1742)
William Davies (1722–1740)
Joseph Goodwin (1742–1746)
Nathaniel Holland (1747–1752)
William Muir (1753–1761)
Stephen Potts (1730–1757)
George Christopher Rheinhold (1762–1793)
Mr. Saits (1742–1743)
John Balthazar Schuppius (Schuppy) (1743–1760)
Johann Gottfried Seelig (Schlee) (1690–1745)
Samuel Taylor (1762–1781)
Unnamed German binder (1742–1752)

41. C. R. Barker, "Old Dutch Church," p. 211.

42. Phila. Deed Books, D-10, 115; D-11, 6.

43. The one crisis was the near imposition of the Stamp Act in 1765 which would have required in newspapers the use of stamped paper imported from Great Britain, and would, Hall wrote to Strahan, on Sept. 19, 1765, "intirely ruin all our Paper-Makers, unless they can fall into some other Branch of Business, which is not easily done."

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Charles Harrison (1739–1746) Unnamed Boston binder (1742)

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Francis Skinner (1736–1783)

Of all the aspects of Franklin's printing business one of the most precarious on which to generalize is the history of the art of binding in the early American Colonies. From the *Autobiography* one may infer that Franklin, working as Keimer's foreman, knew enough of the craft to teach the fundamentals to Stephen Potts, "a young Country Man of full Age,"[1] bred to farm work, but there is no evidence that Franklin later bound any of the books he printed in his own shop. Nor did he patronize consistently any particular binder throughout his twenty years as master except in the early 1730's when, eager apparently to match the services Bradford offered his following, Franklin leased space to Potts in his shop and advertised in the *Gazette* that Philadelphians could have their bookbinding "done reasonably, in the best Manner."[2]

Providing a book or pamphlet with a protective cover increased the cost of producing it, and in the tight economy of eighteenth-century colonial America the printer more often than not was inclined to pass that expense on to his customer. Many pieces like almanacs, catechisms, individual provincial laws, Indian treaties, or small religious tracts were sold simply "stitch'd," i.e., the folded sheets were sewn together with thread, a task performed frequently by the printer's wife or a growing daughter. Franklin regularly shipped printed texts in sheets to his correspondents and partners in other cities and left it up to them or their customers to furnish suitable bindings. In one exceptional instance Franklin offered for sale "unstitch'd" Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela*, in two parts, probably in an effort not to add to the price of 6*s*., considered expensive by colonial standards, especially for a piece of fiction, but in light of its popularity and the cost of obtaining a copy from Great Britain, truly a bargain.

The least expensive cover material current in colonial America was paper wrappers. The most common in Franklin's printing were blue wrappers often faced with an inner lining of white paper and usually described as "pasted blue paper wrappers." Readers or authors wanting a somewhat more durable and color-

1. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1964), p. 108.

2. This advertisement was first added to the *Pa. Gaz.* imprint in the issue of May 18, 1732, and dropped with the issue of Sept. 11, 1740.

ful paper wrapper had the choice of ordering covers of imported marbled paper, the binding form in which trade copies of the *Cato Major* were advertised, or embossed Dutch gilt or flowered paper, like that found on the Rosamond Loring copy of the *Cato Major* at Harvard and the bindings year after year of Franklin's *Pocket Almanacks*.

The book covering in this period stouter than paper wrappers but cheaper to produce than full leather was made of binder's board or pasteboard covers held together by a strip of leather across the spine and with leather pieces protecting the outer corners, known in the nineteenth century and today as "half bound," or from the kind of leather used called half bound in calf, or sheep, and without the corner pieces termed "quarter bound." Examples of Franklin's imprints bound in this manner are scarce and date for the most part from the later portion of Franklin's association with Anthony Armbrüster or David Hall: two copies of Scougal's *Das Gottes Leben in der Seele des Menschen*, 1756 (No. 653), half bound, and the unique copies—quarter bound—of the New-England Primers, 1760 and 1764 (Nos. 732 and 812).

The most durable, attractive—and expensive—bindings of the colonial period were, of course, those done entirely in leather, especially if they bore blind or gilt tooling on their boards and spine. Attractiveness is, however, a matter of comparative judgment. To the eye of many a nineteenth- or twentieth-century bookman eighteenth-century colonial leather bindings appear prosaic in the extreme. Except for a handful, the most decorative bindings in the Franklin period carry little more than blind-tooled double paneling. The exceptions are those few with gilt filleting around the boards, sometimes tooling on the board edges, and a red gilt spine label with a fillet and occasionally an added scallop roll. How many original bindings have been casually discarded by nineteenth-century collectors anxious to exhibit their treasures in the gayer and more impressive bindings of Bedford or Riviere, or have been lost in the last 200 years is difficult to surmise. From the whole span of Franklin printing, 1728–1766, there are preserved in American leather bindings only about 250 copies of signed imprints involving roughly fifty titles. One-half of these titles exist in three or four copies. The other half, composed largely of folios, many designed for the use of public officials, range as high as eighteen copies. Franklin's imprints in leather binding far exceed in number those of his contemporaries in the Middle Colonies, and the group as a whole is remarkable for the variety of binding styles and the numbers of different craftsmen involved.

"You were wrong," Hall wrote a Liverpool correspondent in 1756, "in send-

ing the Books here in Sheets as every Thing in the Book-binding Way is a great deal Dearer here in proportion than in England,"[3] that is, at least until the 1760's when the price of leather doubled there.[4] Philadelphia printers who also traded in imported books like Andrew Bradford and later his nephew William, or Franklin, and after 1747 his partner Hall, normally refused to accept shipments of books in sheets and obliged their London correspondents to have the books bound in leather, preferably calf, before they were sent across the Atlantic. When in January, 1770, Strahan sent Hall a few law books bound in sheep, Hall complained, and Strahan replied, "But as you tell me, they will not answer in that way with you, I will send no more in that Manner."[5]

The leather used in trade bindings in the Colonies was predominantly sheep, in part because that leather was cheaper than calf. The Williamsburg printer William Hunter, for example, paid 25*s.* a dozen in 1752 for calf skins, and 16*s.* a dozen for sheep skins.[6] Among extant Franklin imprints bound in leather, sheep bindings outnumber calf nine to one. Indeed one might conclude from the existing evidence that save for a few notable exceptions calf was reserved among bookmen in the Province of Pennsylvania for fine bindings. The one recorded exception is the extra gilt morocco binding on the Boston Public Library copy of the 1733 Brady and Tate translation of the Psalms (No. 64). Sewel's *History of the Quakers*, 1728, the first book in which the young Franklin was involved as master of his own shop, is the lone instance of binding the entire folio edition of 500 copies in calf. The publication was underwritten by subscription, 17*s.* a copy, of which 5*s.* went for the cost of binding, and perhaps the Overseers of the Press for the Society of Friends might have relented on the quality of the cover material, had circumstances been different. The Friends had had a falling out with Andrew Bradford over the earlier printing arrangements and contracted with Keimer to do the work. Keimer was three years getting the work completed, and in the meantime Bradford was tempting the subscribers with a corrected London edition of the *History* bound in full calf.[7]

Calf bindings appear also on a large portion of the extant copies of editions of

3. American Philosophical Society Library MS: David Hall Letter Book, 1750–1759, D. Hall to R. Williamson, Sept. 23, 1756.

4. J. A. Cochrane, *Dr. Johnson's Printer* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 78.

5. J. A. Cochrane, p. 79.

6. University of Virginia Library MS: William Hunter Account Book, 1750–1752, April 15, 1752. The inventory of William Muir's stock taken at his death in 1761 fixed the value of Philadelphia calfskins at 20*s.* a dozen, and Philadelphia sheepskins at 10*s.* per dozen.

7. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger A & B"* (New York, 1928), p. 43. Cited hereafter as Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. I.* See also notes in text.

the collected laws commissioned by both the Assembly of Pennsylvania and that of the Lower Counties as well as the three-volume reprinting of the Pennsylvania *Votes*—copies ostensibly designed for the prolonged use of important officials, the added cost paid for out of the public coffers. The remaining group of existing calf bindings consists of volumes printed by Franklin essentially as prestige items: (1) the 1734 *Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (No. 80) and the 1744 *Cato Major* (No. 347), both done on Genoese paper and a portion in Boston rather than Philadelphia bindings and (2) a select few fine-paper copies ordered probably by the authors for purposes of presentation like the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and Library Company copies of the Reverend Mr. Richard Peter's 1751 *Sermon on Education* (No. 541) and the gilt-tooled copy of the Reverend Mr. Samuel Johnson's 1752 *Elementa Philosophica* (No. 554) owned by Columbia University.

An account of the binders who worked on books issuing from Franklin's press and the variety of styles these craftsmen employed rests in part on a reconstruction of relationships gleaned from Franklin's shopbooks, in part on a careful scrutiny of surviving contemporary bindings, and finally on the wealth of detailed knowledge of the work of these men outside of Franklin printing gathered by Willman Spawn in his research on the binders of the American Colonies. When Franklin set up his shop in 1728, there were at work in the Philadelphia area as many as six binders, four of whom appear to have been involved with Franklin-printed books: William Davies; an unnamed German craftsman, possibly Johann Gottfried Seelig, or Schlee;[8] Andrew Bradford; and Stephen Potts. Davies, a Welsh Quaker, received the contract to bind Sewel's *History* (No. 1), and farmed out what he could not handle to a second binder, very probably German-trained, because in German fashion, instead of lacing the cords through the boards, he frayed the ends and pasted them onto the inner sides under the waste and end paper. The third binder, Andrew Bradford, bred a stationer, had come to Philadelphia from New York in 1712, with a fine assortment of binding tools—many more than those reproduced in this study—and enjoyed for over a decade a virtual monopoly in printing and stationery. Since Franklin in the 1730's offered his own binding service and Bradford was dead by late 1742, only the occasional Franklin imprint like the issues of the 1741 *General Magazine* (No. 239) carries a Bradford binding, commissioned probably by a gentleman from his accustomed binder for his private library.

The binder who joined forces with Franklin in 1730 was Stephen Potts, a

8. Julius F. Sachse, *The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania . . . 1694–1708* (Phila., 1895), pp. 337, 340.

Pennsylvania Quaker, two years older than Franklin, who had first met Potts at Keimer's shop where in 1727 Franklin became Keimer's shop foreman.[9] For a period Potts lived in the Franklin house, but paid for his board and rent for his room in the garret and working space in the shop, and kept his own binding shop-book which has since disappeared.[10] In 1737 when Franklin was appointed clerk of the Assembly, Potts was made the doorkeeper, a job he performed along with his binding chores until 1741,[11] and then in 1743, shortly after Bradford's death, he set up his own shop in Front Street. He continued active as a binder at various addresses until almost the end of his life; he and Franklin settled their accounts and "exchanged receipts" on March 7, 1757.[12] Nine years earlier, in 1748, Potts had acquired a "small publick House" near the Barracks, and there died in the late spring of 1758.[13]

Since Potts practiced his craft for so many years in Philadelphia, during the period when Franklin or his partner Hall was active, Potts's work bulks large in Franklin printing and accounts for nearly one-third of the surviving bound titles signed by Franklin or the partners Franklin and Hall. Especially remarkable in the history of Pennsylvania colonial binding are Potts's gilt morocco binding of the Boston Public Library copy of the 1733 Psalms (No. 64) and the 1732 printing of the Arscot (No. 47) bound with a flat back, the result of recessed cords rather than with the raised cords normally found in other Potts and Philadelphia binding.

The marked increase in the productivity of the Philadelphia presses caused in large part by a reawakened interest in religion during the early years of the decade of the 1740's obliged Franklin to turn to Boston for a binder with the shop force capable of handling the large printing in duodecimo of Whitefield's Sermons and Journals. The man he chose was the bookseller-binder Charles Harrison, "over against the Brazen-Head in Cornhill."[14] The work Harrison could not complete was sent out to an unnamed second Boston binder. Characteristic of much New England work, the Whitefields were done in sheep, blind-tooled, over wooden boards with the grain run horizontally, and the quires secured both by sewing and stabbing with the thong ends fastened to the outer sides of the boards under the leather covering.

9. *Autobiography*, p. 108.

10. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. I*, pp. 38–43.

11. *Pa. Arch.* (Ser. 8), III (1931), 2374, 2701.

12. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, "Ledger D"* (New York, 1929), p. 108. Cited hereafter as Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II.*

13. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1965), VIII, 84.

14. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II.* p. 70.

By 1742, a London-trained binder, Joseph Goodwin, had landed in Philadelphia and set up shop, the most skillful of craftsmen in the art to work in the city from 1742 until his death in 1746. He bound the 1741 Delaware *Laws* (No. 232), and shared with Harrison the binding of the 1742 *Pennsylvania Charter and Laws* (No. 288) and the 1744 *Cato Major* (No. 347). His "complete sett of Bookbinders tools" offered for sale at his death in the *Gazette*, February 10, 1746–1747, by his executors, William Hartley and Lewis Evans,[15] eventually came into the hands of Nathaniel Holland (*fl.* 1747–1752?), known for the bindings on the two fine-paper copies of the 1751 edition of Peters' *Sermon on Education* (No. 541), finished in a double panel on sprinkled calf, and for his work on the 1752 first volume of the reprint of the Pennsylvania *Votes* (No. 563).

Among the other binders associated with Franklin printing in the early forties were three little-known German craftsmen, "Mr. Saits," who covered Blair's 1742 *Doctrine of Predestination* (No. 275);[16] John Balthazar Schuppy or Schuppius (*fl.* 1743–1759), living in Strawberry Alley at the Sign of the Book, who may have done a number of otherwise unidentified Franklin bindings in this period, but who is mentioned specifically in a memorandum itemizing the expenses of printing Estaugh's 1744 *A Call to the Unfaithful Professors of Truth* (No. 348); and a third, the unnamed binder of Allein's 1741 *An Alarm* (No. 225), the 1743 Baptist *Confession* (No. 317), and the copy of the 1742 United Brethren tracts (No. 298) owned by the Moravian Archives, a man skilled in his craft whose work shows up again in the early 1750's. The one other identifiable binder, not a German, is Potts, who did work on the 1745 Westminster *Confession* (No. 371) and the 1748 *American Instructor* (No. 439), but the absence of any trace of his tools on the bindings of major printing ventures in Franklin's busiest years in the early forties raises an interesting question about the Potts-Franklin relationship during that period.

The number of recorded Franklin and Hall titles bound in leather dropped off noticeably in the 1750's, and fancy blind-tooling on bound books, especially single and double paneling, gave way to fillets or a fillet with a single roll run on the board edge and along the spine side. The one printed book that proved an exception was Arndt's 1751 *Wahren Christenthum* (No. 520), published by subscription among the German religious community and printed by Franklin's German printing-office partner, Johann Böhm. The only other leather bindings

15. Eddy, *BF Acc't Bk. II*, p. 60.

16. American Philosophical Society MS: B. Franklin, Ledger D, p. 305. See also Hannah D. French, "Early American Bookbinding by Hand," *Bookbinding in America* (1941), p. 34.

on which Mr. Spawn found the Philadelphia binders continuing to lavish their more decorative artistry were those fashioned for blank books, more often than not done in suede.

Binding the more than 500 copies of the Arndt volume, advertised to be covered in sheep, must have taxed the energies of at least two identifiable German binders, one using the two-line fillet associated with Christopher Saur's Germantown shop, the other, the unnamed German binder active in Philadelphia in the 1740's and the craftsmen who in 1751 fashioned the only known copy of the Arndt bound in pigskin, (owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania). Normally the German binders favored the use of sheep over wooden boards, the wood grain run vertically, with clasps, occasionally studs, and a variety of styles from no tooling to elaborate paneling with wide floral rolls and corner stamps. The German binder associated in the fifties with Franklin and Hall imprints, two of them (Nos. 439 and 445) dated in the late 1740's but bound after he returned to America from Germany in 1753, was George Christopher Rheinhold, whose work is characterized by a single wide fillet run once on the three sides and three times along the spine side.

The drop in the number of titles printed by Franklin and Hall bound in leather during the fifties came about as a result of diverse forces. The times had by mid-decade become unsettled and austere because of the hostilities between the British and the French and Indians. The partners faced stiffer competition from their fellow printer-publishers—William Bradford, James Chattin, and after 1757 and on into the sixties, William Dunlap and Andrew Steuart. Further, Hall spent a good deal of his time building up his trade in imported books, and more time managing a larger and more widely circulating *Pennsylvania Gazette* and keeping up with the mass of governmental job printing. The rest of his time he devoted to publishing the revised and enlarged 1752 Delaware *Laws* (No. 548), the aforementioned three-volume reprinting of the *Pennsylvania Votes and Proceedings* (1752–1754), and the second Philadelphia edition of Franklin's reworking of Fisher's *American Instructor* (No. 568). All five volumes, recorded in five or more leather-bound copies, exhibit the plainer tooling of the period and the finest array of differing binder's tools in the Middle Colonies during the Franklin and Hall later period. Stephen Potts worked on the bindings of four of the five volumes, the last preserved evidence of his continuing association with Franklin printing, and Nathaniel Holland, the purchaser of Goodwin's tools, helped bind the first volume of the *Votes*, just prior apparently to his leaving Philadelphia for government service at Fort Augusta on the Susquehanna.

These five publications also bear witness to the emergence of a skillful new Philadelphia binder, William Muir, of Scottish origin, who set up shop in the city in the early 1750's, certainly by 1753. Muir played a major role in helping with the binding of the large folio editions and influenced greatly a young Philadelphia-born lad in the craft, Samuel Taylor, who after Muir's death in 1761,[17] fell heir to many of his former master's tools and conducted his own business at Muir's old address in the city from 1762 until his early death in 1781. Years after Franklin and Hall completed printing the three-volume Pennsylvania *Votes*, the partners retained an ample stock of the text in sheets,[18] which following the dissolution of Franklin's partnership with Hall in 1766 came into the hands of his son and William Sellers. From them Taylor presumably secured the copies he bound thereafter as new sets were required or on one occasion as companion pieces to Henry Miller's 1774–1775 reprinting of the later Pennsylvania *Votes*, known as Volumes IVand V (see copies at the Temple University Law School Library).

17. Phila. Wills, William Muir, probated Nov., 1761.

18. *Pa. Gaz.* adv., June 2, 1763. See also *Papers*, XIII (1969), 113, entry no. 30.