

RENAISSANCE MAN

This exhibition honors the 300th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, the first of our Founding Fathers to reach that milestone. In many ways, Franklin was America's first Renaissance man. During the 84 years of his life, Franklin, with remarkable success, embodied the role of a politician, scientist, inventor, diplomat, statesman, writer and printer.

Highlights of the exhibition include the first edition of Franklin's *Autobiography*, several original *Poor Richard's Almanacks*, Franklin's copy of *Oedipus*, the first complete edition of his *Experiments in Electricity*, numerous prints and engravings that have never appeared publicly, the first bust that Franklin sat for when he went to France to serve as the first American Ambassador, and numerous historical documents from colonial America.



FRANKLIN AT 300

Franklin celebrations are taking place all over America. Philadelphia, Franklin's home city, is celebrating with a year-long series of events, the largest of which is an exhibition at the National Constitution Center, *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*. This exhibition features items from 50 different institutions and 20 individuals, and will travel to four other American cities and to France.

*Images of Benjamin Franklin* is the only major Franklin tercentenary celebration in New York City. It features over 150 items from the collection of Stuart Karu. Beginning with the first publications that Franklin worked on as an apprentice printer, the exhibit tells the story of the multifaceted Franklin — as citizen, as politician, as founding father, as diplomat, and as the foremost media mogul of his time. Using documents, books, engravings, artifacts, and fine art pieces that are intrinsically valuable as well as informative, the exhibition creates a window into a period of history through the perspective of Franklin and his contemporaries.



*"...the Thing most like living one's Life over again, seems to be a Recollection of that Life, and to make that Recollection as durable as possible, the putting it down in Writing."*

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*

Exhibit opening February 2006, closing December 2006

New York University  
Elmer Holmes Bobst Library  
Mamdouha S. Bobst Gallery  
70 Washington Square South  
New York, NY 10012

Gallery hours:  
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Mon-Sat  
or by appointment  
For information  
please call 212.998.2646



Images of  
**BENJAMIN  
FRANKLIN**  
as seen by himself and others

A TRICENTENARY CELEBRATION

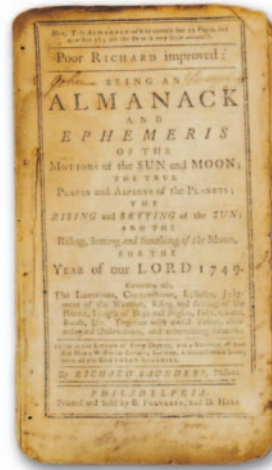
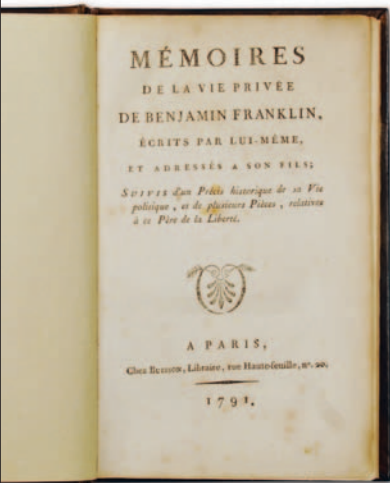


## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Franklin's *Autobiography* is perhaps the most famous autobiography ever written and provides a fascinating window into the early history of colonial America. Franklin tells his life story from birth to 1757 in beautiful, easy to read prose in the form of a letter to his son William. The first edition was published in Paris in 1791, one year after his death. The first English translation was published in London in 1793.

One of seventeen children, Franklin was born in Boston on January 6, 1706, but lived in Philadelphia for most of his life.

He had only one year of formal education, and at the age of twelve became an apprentice to his older brother James, a printer. Franklin learned the trade well and with hard work, clean living, and natural gifts he soon became his own master.



## POOR RICHARD

Perhaps the most famous of the many roles Franklin assumed during his life was that of Richard Saunders, Philomath, better known as Poor Richard. In this guise, Franklin published an annual almanac from 1733 to 1766. Aside from the normal almanac material, he created a forum for his philosophies of life.

These philosophies took the form of maxims, such as "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," "God helps them that help themselves," and "Work as if you were to live a hundred years, Pray as if you were to die tomorrow." While Franklin did not always abide by these sayings, over time, they began to define his public image.

## PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

In 1729, Franklin purchased *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, a weekly newspaper. He both printed the publication and contributed articles under a number of different pseudonyms. This exhibition features a number of issues of the *Gazette*, which provide a first-hand view of the news and information disseminated to people in 18th Century Pennsylvania.



## ENGLAND AND FRANCE

The history of America is inextricably tied to Great Britain and France. Franklin represented several American colonies in England from 1757 until 1775, during which time he attempted to resolve the growing number of disputes. Many of the documents displayed reflect the escalating tensions between England and America and Franklin's position as mediator.



In 1776, at the age of 70, Congress sent Franklin to France to raise money, prestige and recognition for America. The French embraced Franklin as the simple American in search of liberty for his people, Bonhomme Richard, the man who could tame electricity, and Mon Cher Papa, a kindly father figure. Through his skills as a diplomat, statesman, politician, and humble bon vivant, Franklin was able to charm and cajole the French government into supporting the war effort, at first financially and finally militarily.