

B. Franklin, Colonial Crusader

Benjamin Franklin was born in the part of Massachusetts Colony now known as Boston.

His father, a chandler and soap-maker by trade was a first-generation American having emigrated from England to North America.

As a child, Ben demonstrated a precocity which prompted his Mother, despite having several other children to occupy her time, to train him in the rudiments of Reading at the age of three years. His father was sufficiently impressed with his Son's demonstrated aptitude for Learning that he was willing to enroll the boy at a local Grammar School though that experience was short-lived due to a combination of financial considerations and Ben's inordinate ability for grasping Concepts at a greater rate than his fellow learners.

Initially it was determined that Ben should participate in his Father's trade - mainly Candle-making. Such however proved to be a poor choice insofar as the Boy evinced little interest in the Practice while his Father early became frustrated in his efforts to motivate his reluctant Apprentice.

In the meantime, an older Franklin son - James - had journeyed to England to learn the Printing-trade prior to opening his own Print-Shop in Boston. By the time his younger brother, at the Age of 12, was seeking a Trade, he was endeavoring to establish what was to be just the Fourth Newspaper to be published on the North American Continent - THE NEW ENGLAND COURANT.

Accordingly, it was decided that Ben should be Indentured to his Brother for a given number of years to learn the Print-business. This was in keeping with the customary practice in those times for a Male-child to remain "the property" of his Father until the Age of Majority - 21

years. Until that time, Ben was expected by terms of his Father's design to remain with his Brother, with no remuneration until the final year of his contract.

Though not particularly happy with these arrangements, Ben enjoyed Printing with its focus on the marketing of Intellectual Properties. He early on developed a desire to express his own ideas through Creative Writing. His Master however, despite the filial connection, strictly forbade this!

Being throughout his Life a Creative Genius, Ben soon discovered a way to get his thoughts printed in his brother's Newspaper.

During his off-work hours, he formed the habit of writing narratives over what today might be called "a nom de plume" - Silence DoGood. Late at night, when confident that the night-watchman had completed his hourly rounds, he would deposit these items surreptitiously at the doorstep of his Brother's place of business where when found were submitted to the Publisher's "advisory council". Such Pieces early earned approbation from all reviewers thus becoming in time a semi-permanent feature of THE COURANT despite originating "from source unknown"!

In time, James Franklin ran afoul of Boston's governing elite with the eventual result that he was enjoined from further publication of a Newspaper. He had injudiciously published criticisms of Government Policies.

Rather than abandon his enterprise as ordered, James opted to continue publication of the Paper under Ben's name, thus necessitating a rewriting of their original Indenture Agreement. The net result of these machinations was that the younger Franklin was afforded opportunity to escape such restraints as had been placed on him by Father and Sibling.

There being no other opportunities subsequent to this

episode for Ben to join a Print-Shop in the Boston area, he elected to head for New York City. His design was to seek employment with a Printer named William Bradford.

Scene 1: New York City, 1723
Benjamin Franklin
William Bradford

Bradford: WHO COMES HERE
TO MY DOOR
SO EARLY OF A Sunday Morn'?

Franklin: MY NAME, KIND Sir,
IS Benjamin Franklin.

Bradford: AND WHAT PRAY-TELL
MIGHT BE YOUR BUSINESS
MY GOOD YOUNG MAN ?

Franklin: I COME SEEKING EMPLOYMENT.

Bradford: WHAT SORT OF EMPLOYMENT
MIGHT YOU BE SEEKING ?

Franklin: I AM A Printer
BY Trade.

Bradford: HAVE YOU COMPLETED
AN Apprenticeship Program ?

Franklin: YES, Sir !
I HAVE RECENTLY SPENT
NEARLY FIVE YEARS
LEARNING THE BUSINESS