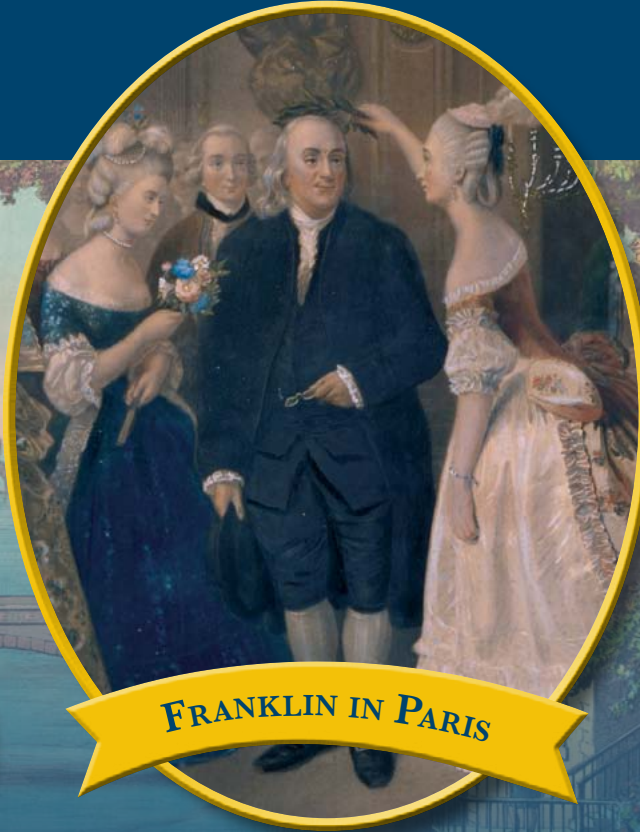


# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS



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# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

BY THOMAS FLEMING

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<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/franklin-CHARMS-paris>

By the time John Adams arrived in Paris in early 1778 to replace American diplomat Silas Deane, there was only one American name on everyone's lips: Ambassador Benjamin Franklin. "His name was familiar to government and people," groused the envious Adams. "To foreign courtiers, nobility, clergy and philosophers, as well as plebians, to such a degree there was scarcely a peasant or a citizen, a valet de chambre, coachman or footman, a lady's chamber maid or a scullion in a kitchen . . . who did not consider him as a friend. . . . When they spoke of him, they seemed to think he was to restore the golden age. . . . His plans and his example were to abolish monarchy, aristocracy, and hierarchy throughout the world."

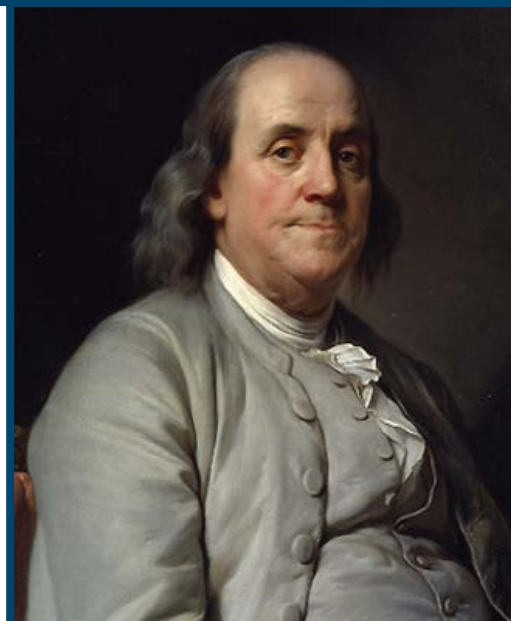
Even more intolerable for a self-respecting New Englander, Franklin took an enormous pleasure in this fame, indistinguishable to Adams from egotism and vanity; and his jeremiad against Franklin gives posterity a superb description of how the Quaker diplomat charmed Paris. Franklin invited Adams to join him in his nightly dinners with the rich and famous. In two weeks, Adams met Antoine de Sartine, the powerful minister of the navy; the Comtesse de Maurepas, the hugely influential wife of the prime minister; the noted philosopher the Marquis de Condorcet; and dozens of other people at the summit of French society. Adams utterly failed to grasp that these people combined high politics with champagne, wit, and canard à la bigarade: "these incessant dinners and dissipation were not the objects of my mission to France."

To the humorless Adams, Franklin's daily routine was "a scene of continual dissipation." Having usually partied until midnight, Franklin seldom rose early enough to discuss embassy business with Adams before breakfast. No sooner was that meal consumed than there descended "a crowd of carriages" bearing a small army of visitors, whom Adams dourly chronicled

as "philosophers, academicians and economists . . . but by far the greater part were women and children come to have the honor to see the great Franklin and to have the pleasure of telling stories about his simplicity, his balding head and scattering straight hairs."

Even worse were the rumors of Franklin's licentiousness. Adams and others were appalled by the way the ladies of France swarmed to exchange kisses with the ambassador, visible proof that he was a libertine with sexual appetites of gargantuan proportions. Franklin's fellow diplomat, Arthur Lee of Virginia, told his brother, Congressman Richard Henry Lee, that Franklin was "a wicked old man" who had made his headquarters in France "a corrupt hotbed of vice."

Adams and the others failed to see that Franklin's behavior was part of a stunningly successful—and critical—publicity offensive. The 70-year-old Franklin had arrived two years earlier as an envoy of the United States of America, a country invented just five months before that when its grandly named Continental Congress approved a Declaration of Independence from the British Crown. Whether the United States would survive another six months remained an open question. British commanders and their well-trained battalions had battered American armies into retreat on every front. The young Congress was close to abandoning its putative capital, Philadelphia, for the muddy backwater of Baltimore. Support from France could prove critical in helping the cash-strapped Americans succeed in their Revolution—and Franklin, a consummate and experienced backstairs diplomat, represented America's best chance for appealing to the French. It was a daunting task: a little more than a decade earlier, France had faced Britain in a bloody and coffers-draining war fought in



Portrait of Benjamin Franklin  
by French painter Joseph-Siffred Duplessis.

North America, Europe, Asia, and on the high seas. France had lost badly in North America and had been forced to renounce its colonial aspirations in that continent. While it nursed a bloody nose and wounded pride, France would think twice before engaging in another potentially debilitating conflict with Britain.

Over the course of a few short years, however, Franklin would create a diplomatic miracle by securing more than \$40 million in loans and gifts from the French treasury—the equivalent of perhaps \$600 million today—that would keep the bankrupt American government functioning. He would supervise the shipment of tons of supplies and weapons to the United States and would arm and equip American sea captains, such as John Paul Jones, who preyed on British shipping in their home waters with spectacular success. He would raise money and arouse sympathy for American captives in British jails. He wrote letters and gave interviews that encouraged opposition in Parliament to George III's determination to smash the rebellion.

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## — CONTINUED —

These accomplishments were only a glimmer in his eyes when he and his two grandsons arrived in the port city of Nantes after their long transatlantic voyage. The presence of these young men may have suggested to some that Franklin was combining diplomacy with preserving the remnants of his family from imminent capture. Sixteen-year-old William Temple Franklin was the illegitimate son of Ben's Loyalist son William Franklin, the erstwhile royal governor of New Jersey and now under house arrest in Connecticut. Benjamin Franklin Bache was the seven-year-old son of Franklin's daughter, Sally. It didn't take long for the British government to describe Franklin's voyage as a flight to escape a rebel's fate on the gallows.

But Franklin's reception in Nantes caused an uproar. Ignoring his murmured pleas for rest from his voyage, Nantes's merchant community staged a gigantic public dinner to honor the man world famous for discovering electricity and inventing the lightning rod. His reputation with France's rising bourgeoisie had soared to new heights when his book of aphorisms and preachments on how to succeed in business, *The Way to Wealth*, which he had written under the pen name of Richard Saunders, was published in France seven years earlier. The French had fondly dubbed the witty American Bon Homme Richard.

In Paris a very different drama was taking place. Franklin's arrival had come at an extremely inopportune time for the Comte de Vergennes, France's cautious foreign minister. In various ports there lay no less than eight ships loaded with war materiel that he had decided to smuggle to the United States by way of a dummy company set up by one of his secret agents, the playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. Vergennes ordered the Paris prefect of police to arrest anyone who announced that Franklin's arrival

signaled a French intent to sign a treaty of alliance with the upstart republic. With the dismal reports of repeated American defeats, he had no intention of signing such a treaty and entering into a war with Britain that could easily bankrupt the French government.

After several days recuperating at Nantes, Franklin and his grandsons set out for Paris, which was now in ferment over his impending arrival. Its prefect of police glumly informed Vergennes that the unforeseen arrival was creating an "extraordinary sensation," impossible to control. People lined the streets around

Franklin's  
unforeseen arrival  
was creating an  
"extraordinary  
sensation."

the Hôtel d'Hambourg on the Rue de l'Université, where Silas Deane had an apartment, hoping to glimpse the most famous living American. Franklin's closest friend in Paris, the physician Jacques Barbeau-Dubourg, who had translated many of his writings, was so excited by his imminent appearance that he became a one-man publicity machine.

Voltaire, the guiding spirit of the French Enlightenment, lamented to a friend that "Dr. Franklin's troops" had been defeated in battle after battle. But Franklin had no interest in Voltaire's military opinions. He did, however, have designs on using Voltaire's writings to further his cause. The French sage had written eloquently about Pennsylvania—a place he had never

visited—describing it as an idyllic place peopled by simple, honest, peace-loving Quakers. Franklin arrived at the Hôtel d'Hambourg ready to play the part, wearing the marten fur hat that had preserved him on the freezing Atlantic.

Paris buzzed with excitement: no distinguished man in memory had dared appear in public without a wig. Even more remarkable, Franklin was attired in the "complete costume" of the Quaker sect, complete with "extremely white linen" and a plain brown suit. "Everything about him announces the simplicity and innocence of primitive morals," noted one observer.

Those latter words struck a chord with the French, who were steeped in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's call for a return to the uncorrupted morality of the noble savage. The philosopher argued that recapturing this primitive state was France's only hope of escaping the effete rituals, burdensome finery, and flagrant greed and vanity of its faded civilization.

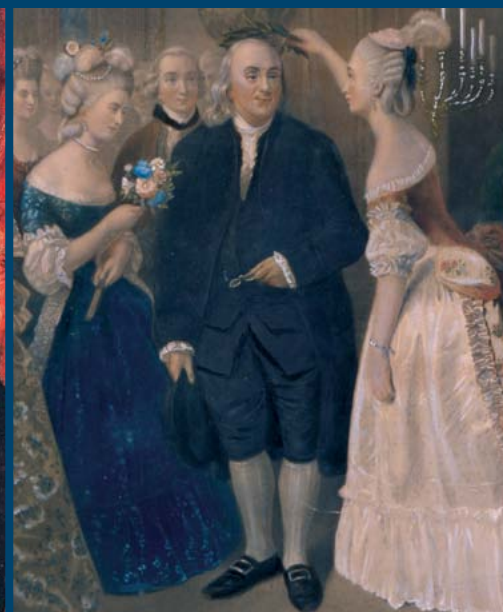
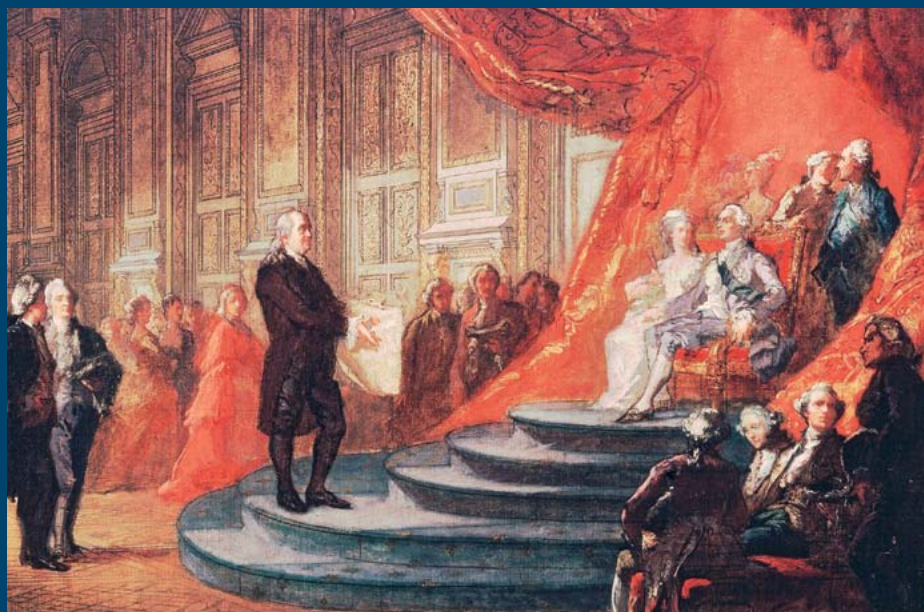
Meanwhile, in the Hôtel d'Hambourg, Franklin quickly learned of Silas Deane's involvement in the plans to smuggle weaponry to the States with Beaumarchais' help.

Neither man knew, however, that Vergennes had issued an edict forbidding a single ship to sail. The foreign minister soon met with Deane, Franklin, and a third diplomat, the Virginian Arthur Lee, who had been appointed when Thomas Jefferson declined to serve because of his wife's fragile health. Vergennes stressed that the Americans should make themselves as inconspicuous as possible, lest they anger the English.

Franklin did not argue, but he had no intention of becoming invisible. By this time he had met Beaumarchais' colleague, Jacques-Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont, an enormously successful operator in the East Indian trade, who had bought the spectacular 15th-century château of Chaumont in the Loire Valley. The

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## — CONTINUED —



Six weeks after the signing of the French-American treaty, Franklin shocked the French court by showing up in simple Quaker garb to thank King Louis XVI, above left. French aristocracy feted Franklin the moment he arrived in Paris in 1776, (above right, at a party in Passy).

diminutive merchant had already advanced Deane a million livres—approximately \$12 million today—out of his own pocket.

The two hit it off, and Chaumont took it upon himself to further brighten Franklin's star in France. He hired a first-rate Italian artist, Giovanni Battista Nini, who created a portrait of Franklin wearing a fur hat. In short order, the ceramics factory on Chaumont's Loire estate was churning out thousands of Franklin terra-cotta medallions, which were sold throughout the nation.

None too subtly underscoring their partnership, Franklin soon accepted an offer to live at Chaumont's estate in the suburb of Passy, on the road to Versailles and Vergennes' offices. In further conferences with the foreign minister, Franklin never said a word about the military alliance that the Americans so desperately needed. All he offered was a commercial treaty that would open American ports to French trade. But in every meeting his remarkable personality worked its magic on the veteran diplomat. In a matter of weeks, Vergennes offered another 2 million livres in secret aid from the French treasury and let the munition ships sail.

Both men knew they were surrounded by spies on the payroll of the British ambassador, Lord Stormont, who assiduously fed the French newspapers vicious slanders upon Franklin and reports of the collapse of General Washington's army. When a distressed French friend asked Franklin about the truth of one of these stories, he gravely replied: "Oh no, it is not the truth. It is only a Stormont." This bon mot swept through Paris, and Stormont became a synonym for lying.

Two weeks after his arrival, Franklin accepted an invitation from the 80-year-old Marquise du Deffand, whose semiweekly salon was the foremost social destination in Paris. Once more he wore his fur hat and Quaker costume. The marquise was blind and hence immune to the shock. But the rest of the bewigged, silk-clad aristocrats who packed the room were speechless with amazement.

This was by no means the last salon Franklin frequented. From previous visits, he knew that French women played an extremely important role in forming public opinion and even in influencing political decisions. Delighted by the feminine wit and intelligence that soon surrounded him,

he wrote to his sister Jane Mecom that such company was "extreamly [sic] agreeable."

The French ladies had no hesitation about kissing Franklin and inviting him to reciprocate, which he did with enthusiasm. "Somebody," he told a Boston niece, "gave out that I loved ladies; and then everybody presented me their ladies (or the ladies presented themselves) to be embrac'd—that is to have their necks kiss'd. . . . The French ladies have a 1000 other ways to render themselves agreeable, by their various attentions and civilities, & their sensible conversations." If a woman asked him whether he liked her more than the others, the discoverer of electricity would assure her that she was indeed his choice, as long as she remained close to him, "because of the power of the attraction." Needless to say, the lady would be thrilled.

What made Franklin's popularity doubly amazing was his limited command of the French language. "If you Frenchmen would only talk no more than four at a time, I might understand you and not come out of an interesting party without knowing what you are talking about," he protested amiably. In large groups, Franklin made it a policy to remain silent—which the voluble

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## — CONTINUED —

French promptly acclaimed as another Quaker virtue.

Pierre Jean George Cabanis, a French physician and philosopher who became a friend of Franklin's, expressed the delight so many of his compatriots felt when they met him. His "most original trait," wrote Cabanis, was an "art of living," which enabled him to combine business with pleasure without the slightest hint of conflict. "No matter when one asked for him, he was always available. His house in Passy . . . was always open for all visitors. He always had a half hour for you."

A less well-known aspect of Franklin's preternaturally winning ways was music—again inadvertently given substance by Adams's bitter observations: Franklin's postdinner activities most commonly involved visiting his women friends, who served him tea in the English fashion. "After tea the evening was spent in hearing the ladies sing and play upon their piano fortes and other instruments of musick." Many of these women were gifted performers. Franklin's Passy neighbor and closest woman friend, Madame Brillon de Jouy, was a pianist of such renown that several of Europe's leading musicians had dedicated compositions to her.

Franklin, who particularly enjoyed the traditional songs of Scotland and Ireland, often joined in musicales and played the violin, harp, or guitar. Perhaps the largest impression he made with music involved the armonica, an instrument he had invented and then perfected in 1762. It consisted of a nest of glass bowls transfixed on an iron spindle, which players worked with a treadle while touching the trembling glasses' lips with their fingers. Even before Franklin's arrival, the armonica's eerily other worldly sounds had become popular. Queen Marie Antoinette had learned to play it as a girl in Vienna; both Mozart and Beethoven composed for it. It was no small coup to have the instrument's inventor

playing away in one's drawing room.

Franklin also raised to a new and dazzling level a skill he had developed as a newspaper editor: ridiculing his enemies. When he learned that Washington had captured almost a thousand Hessians at Trenton, he faked a dispatch from the fictitious Count de Schaumbergh of Hesse-Cassel to the equally spurious Baron Hohendorf,

The largest impression Franklin made with music involved the armonica, an instrument he had invented and then perfected in 1762.

commanding the Hessian troops in America: "You cannot imagine my joy at being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 men killed and I cannot sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London." The count was getting recompensed for each man lost, and he looked forward to collecting 643,500 florins from the British exchequer. "I'm about to send you new recruits," crowed the count. "Don't economize them." His recent trip to Italy had cost him "enormously," and he had contracted for a "grand Italian opera" that threatened to empty his treasury. He urged

the baron to "encourage as much mortality as possible" by exhorting the newcomers to "seek glory in the midst of dangers." This malicious spoof met with roars of delight when read aloud in the cafés and salons of Paris.

Nothing appeared in print about one of Franklin's more directly warlike ventures, a naval offensive using French funds: he ordered Capt. Lambert Wickes, the commander of the USS Reprisal, which had brought him to France, to carry the war into British home waters. Wickes's squadron of three ships captured eight vessels and destroyed 10 others off the Irish coast.

Next Franklin unleashed another fighting sailor, Gustavus Conyngham, who circumnavigated the British Isles, destroying many vessels in the North Sea and the Baltic. London insurance rates soared, and British merchants began using French ships. Franklin let it be known that 40 French merchantmen were anchored in the Thames taking on cargo, yet another story most agreeable to French ears.

Meanwhile the war in America rumbled on, and except for Washington's real but not strategic victories at Trenton and Princeton, the news remained bad. British commander in chief Sir William Howe responded to the American victories by taking Philadelphia—the capital city—in September 1777. The members of the Continental Congress fled for their lives. Franklin's daughter, son-in-law, and their younger children, along with all of Franklin's property, now lay in enemy hands.



*Franklin's invention of the armonica, above, which a musician played by touching moistened fingers to spinning glass bowls, attracted the interest of Mozart and Beethoven as well as his flirtatious neighbor, the accomplished, but married, pianist Madame Brillon de Jouy.*

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## — CONTINUED —

Publicly, however, Franklin remained undaunted. A few days later, a fellow guest at dinner asked with obvious malice, “Well, Doctor, Howe has taken Philadelphia.” “I beg your pardon, sir,” Franklin shot back. “Philadelphia has taken Howe.”

Franklin’s retort contained some truth, as well as wit. He was a chess player, and one glance at the board showed that the city was only a symbolic conquest. The British army was now in a sea of hostile Americans and utterly dependent on the winding Delaware River for supplies. But diplomacy deals in symbols as well as realities; Franklin and his fellow diplomats were more than a little disheartened.

A week later, a rumor drifted into Paris from Nantes that an American ship had arrived bearing important dispatches. The three diplomats and many of their French friends gathered at Franklin’s house in Passy on the day their courier was anticipated, rushing out to greet the 30-year-old Jonathan Loring Austin of Boston as he dismounted from his chaise.

“Sir,” Franklin asked, “is Philadelphia taken?” He and everyone else had been hoping the story was another Stormont. But Austin nodded mournfully. “Yes,” he replied. Letting his head fall, Franklin turned with a sigh of deep dismay. “But sir,” Austin continued, “I have greater news than that. General Burgoyne and his whole army are prisoners of war!”

Beaumarchais leaped into his carriage and thundered into Paris to spread the news. At Passy, Franklin concentrated on getting it to the court and the Comte de Vergennes. For a little while, Versailles displayed some diplomatic hesitation, which evaporated when Franklin leaked to French spies that he was talking to the British secret service in France about signing a peace of reconciliation with the mother country.



**Aided by a French naval blockade and thousands of veteran French troops, above, Gen. George Washington secured a convincing defeat of British forces at Yorktown.**

Franklin never seriously considered such a semisurrender, but neither Vergennes nor any other Frenchman knew that this was a Stormont in reverse. Soon came an offer of the prize that Franklin had never requested: a military alliance and virtually unlimited access to the French treasury.

This could only mean war between France and England, but for aristocratic Parisians it also meant a partnership with the man they had come to love and admire more than any other foreigner. Bon Homme Richard, the sorcerer who had tamed lightning from heaven, would now help them defeat their oldest and most arrogant enemy.

The climax of the drama came on March 20, 1778, when Franklin journeyed to Versailles for an audience with Louis XVI after the treaty had been signed. It was also the ultimate performance of Bon Homme Richard, the imagined Quaker. He wore neither wig nor sword nor any other decoration on his simple brown suit and spotless white stockings and shirt.

When Franklin stepped down from his carriage, a stunned gasp ran through the huge crowd of spectators in the palace courtyard: “He is dressed like a Quaker!” From Vergennes’ apartment in a wing of the palace, Franklin and his fellow envoys were led down seemingly endless corridors to the door of the royal apartments. Noblemen lined the halls, murmuring their amazement at Franklin’s daring. Dress at Versailles was as carefully

regulated as at a solemn high mass at St. Peter’s Basilica. The royal chamberlain frequently barred those who violated the rules in the smallest way.

The chamberlain almost went into shock at the sight of Franklin’s outfit but, pulling himself together, led the visitors to the king’s dressing room. Louis met them with a lack of ceremony that suggests Vergennes had prepared him for the visit. In a loose robe with his hair hanging

to his shoulders, the young king told Franklin to “firmly assure Congress of my friendship. I hope this will be for the good of the two nations.” He added that he was “exceedingly satisfied with your conduct during your residence in my kingdom.” Franklin replied: “Your Majesty may count on the gratitude of Congress and its faithful observance of the pledge it now takes.”

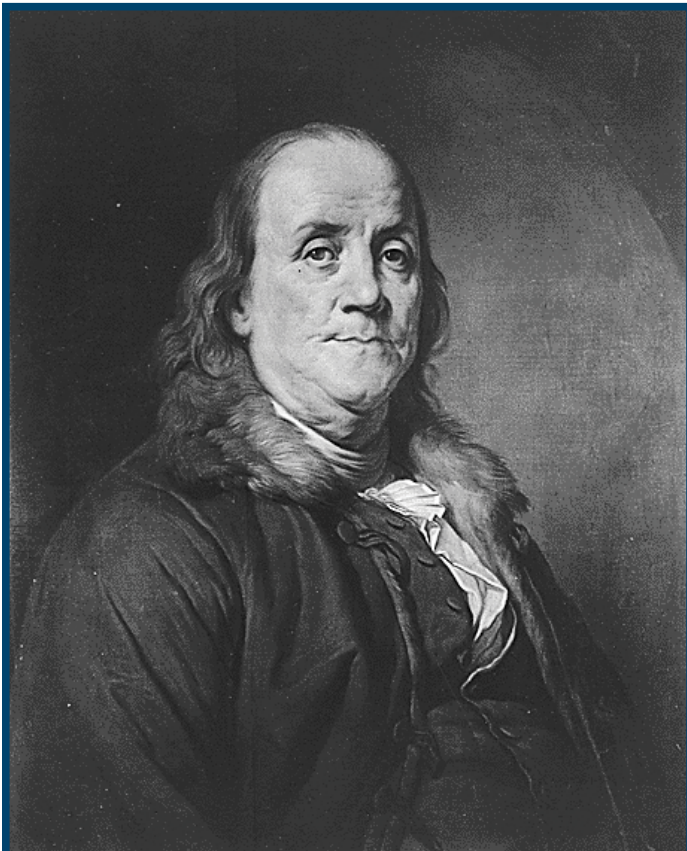
Back the Americans trudged to the courtyard, still choked with an immense crowd. The sight of Franklin triggered a complete abandonment of palace etiquette, and they burst into a tremendous cheer. Tradition holds that Franklin was so moved that he wept. The affection of these spontaneous people was a tribute to his ability to win hearts as well as to change minds in the service of his country.

The war lasted another five years. Throughout that time, French loans and gifts repeatedly rescued the Americans from financial collapse. In 1780 a 5,000-man French expeditionary force arrived in Rhode Island. The following year they joined Washington’s men in their historic march to Virginia to win the decisive victory at Yorktown. Counting the men in the French fleet that trapped the British army in the little tobacco port, there were some 7,800 French soldiers at Yorktown, and about 9,000 Americans. General Washington would have been the first to admit that no one deserved more credit for the victory than Bon Homme Richard. ♦

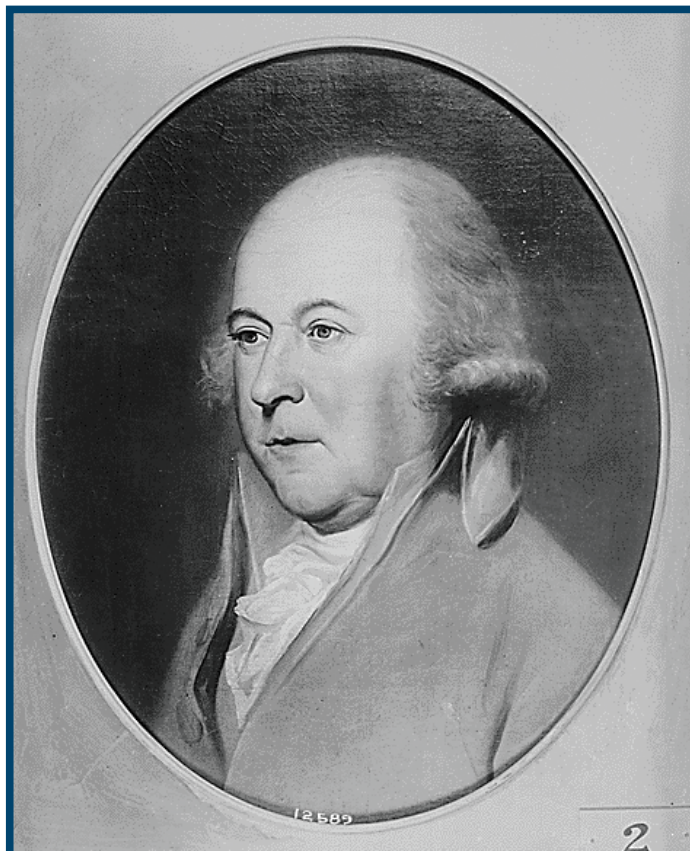
# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
JOHN ADAMS (BUST)

<http://docsteach.org/documents/532834/detail>  
<http://research.archives.gov/description/532843>



Portrait of Benjamin Franklin  
by French painter Joseph-Siffred Duplessis.



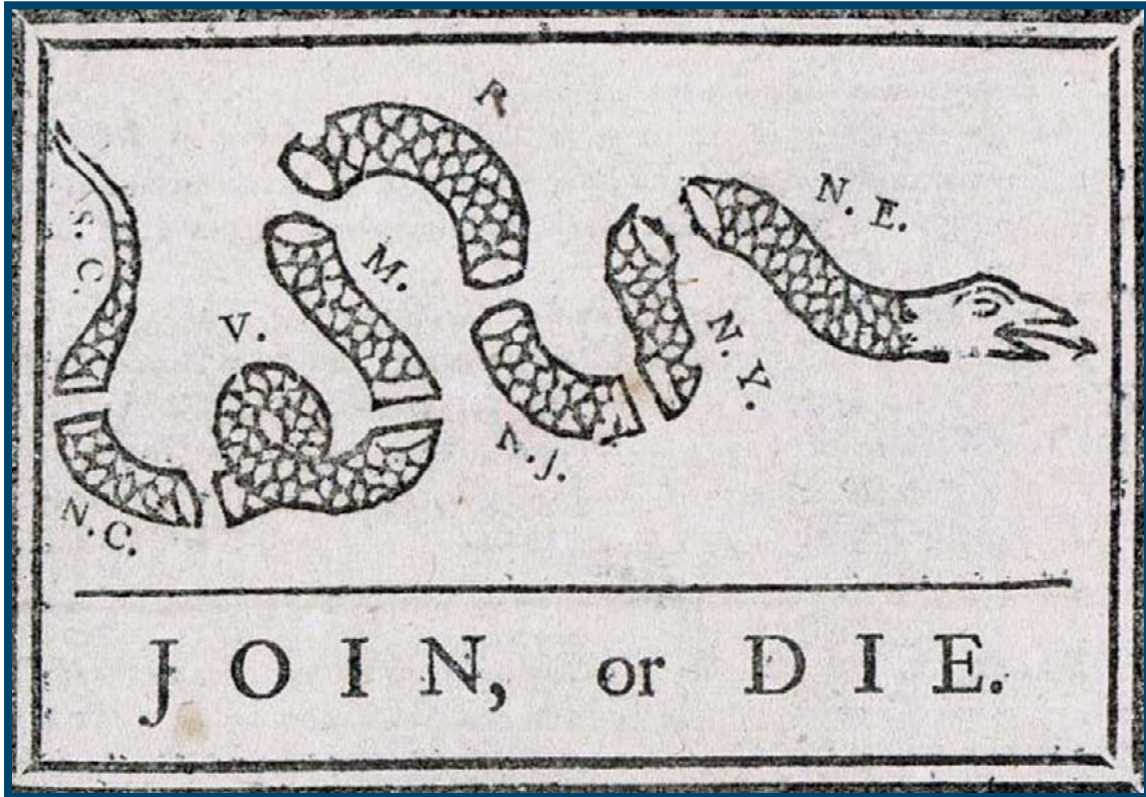
Portrait of John Adams.

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## JOIN OR DIE BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

MAY 1754

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3g05315/>



### Summary from Library of Congress:

Benjamin Franklin published this woodcut depicting America as a snake severed into various provinces. Franklin hoped to persuade Americans to unite their governments under his "Albany Plan" of national union to protect themselves from the French and their Native American allies. During the American Revolution the snake became a symbol of patriotic unity with the motto: "Don't Tread on Me."

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## LETTER FROM JOHN ADAMS TO JAMES WARREN

7 OCTOBER 1775

[http://www.masshist.org/revolution/image-viewer.php?item\\_id=816&img\\_step=1&tpc=&pid=2&mode=transcript&tpc=&pid=2#page1](http://www.masshist.org/revolution/image-viewer.php?item_id=816&img_step=1&tpc=&pid=2&mode=transcript&tpc=&pid=2#page1)

**SUMMARY:** *After a flurry of activity in the summer of 1775, Congress takes a brief recess in August. When the body reconvenes in September, five men representing the entire colony of Georgia are present. Several questions continue to plague Congress. What will become of American trade and foreign relations if the colonies separate from Great Britain? Would foreign nations trade directly with the American colonies? Would any nations be open to diplomatic relations? In the fall of 1775, Congress attempts to answer some of these questions by establishing two committees to negotiate with foreign powers. The first (the Secret Committee) is responsible for acquiring military supplies from abroad, while the second (the Committee of Secret Correspondence) is created to communicate with allies in Great Britain and other parts of the world. Throughout the fall, John Adams shares his insight on these matters with James Warren, president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.*

PHILADELPHIA OCTR. 7TH. 1775

Dr Sir

The Debates, and Deliberations in Congress are impenetrable Secrets: but the Conversations in the City, and the Chatt of the Coffee house, are free, and open. Indeed I wish We were at Liberty to write freely and Speak openly upon every Subject, for their is frequently as much Knowledge derived from Conversation and Correspondence, as from Solemn public Debates—

A more intricate and complicated Subject never came into any Mans thoughts, than the Trade of America.—The Questions [that] arise, when one thinks of it, are very numerous.

If The Thirteen united Colonies, Should immediately Surcease all Trade with every Part of the World, what would be the Consequence? In what manner, and to what degree, and how soon, would it affect, the other Parts of the World? how would it affect G.B. Ireland, the English West India Islands, the French, the Dutch the Danish, the Spanish West India Islands?—how would it affect the Spanish Empire on the Continent? how would it affect the Brazills and the Portuguese Settlements in America?—If it is certain that it would distress Multitudes in these Countries, does it therefore follow that it would induce any foreign Court to offer Us Assistance, and to ask us for our Trade or any Part of it? if it is questionable Whether foreign states

would venture upon Such Steps, which, would perhaps be Violations of Treatises of Peace, and certainly would light up a War in Europe it is certain that Smugglers, by whom I mean private Adventurers belonging to foreign nations, would come here, through all the Hazards they must run.—Could they be suffered to clear out for America in their own Custom houses? would they not run the risque of Seizure from their own Custom house officers, or of Capture from their own Men of War? Would they not be liable to be visited by British Men of War, in any Part of the ocean, and if found to have no Clearances be seized? When they arrived on any Part of the Coast of N. America, would they not be seized by Brittish Cutters, Cruizers, Tenders, Frigates without Number: But if their good Fortune should escape all these Risques, have We harbours or Rivers, Sufficiently fortified, to insure them Security while here? In their Return to their own Country would they not have the Same Gauntlett to run—

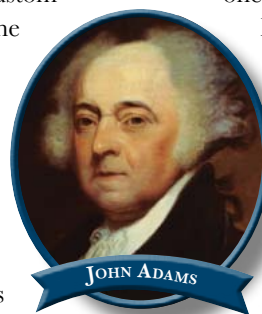
In Short, if We Stop our own ships, have We even a Probability that the ships of foreign Nations, will run the Venture to come here, either with or without the

Countenance and Encouragement of their severall Courts or States public or private open or secret? -- It is not easy for any Man precisely and certainly to answer this Question.—We must then say all this is uncertain.—

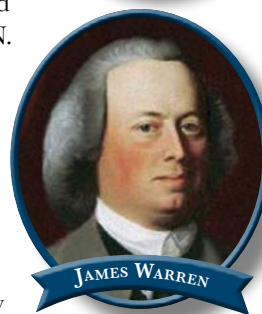
Suppose then We assume an intrepid countenance, and send Ambassadors at once to foreign courts. -- What Nation shall We court? Shall We go to the Court of France, or the Court of Spain, to the States General of the United Provinces? to the Court of Lisbon, to the Court of Prussia or Russia, or Turkey or Denmark, or Where, to any, one, more or all of these?—if We should is there a Probability, that Our Ambassadors would be received or so much as heard or seen by any Man or Woman in Power at any of those Courts—He might possibly, if well skilled in intrigue, his Pockets well filled with Money and his Person Robust and elegant enough, get introduced to some

of the Misses, and Courtezans in Keeping of the Statesmen in France, but would not that be all.—

An offer of the Sovereignty of this Country to France or Spain would be listened to no doubt by Either of those



JOHN ADAMS



JAMES WARREN

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## LETTER FROM JOHN ADAMS TO JAMES WARREN

### — CONTINUED —

Courts, but We should suffer any Thing before We should offer this - What then can we offer? an Alliance, a Treaty of Commerce?—What Security could they have have that We should keep it - Would they not reason thus, these People intend to make Use of Us to establish an Independency but the Moment they have done it: Britain will make Peace with them, and leave Us in the Lurch And We have more to dread from an Alliance between Britain and the United Colonies as an independent state, than We have now they are under one corrupted Administration. Would not Spain reason in the same manner, and say further our Dominions in South America will be a Prey to these Enterprizing and warlike Americans, the Moment they are an independent State—would not our proposals and Agents be treated with Contempt! - and if our Proposals were made and rejected, would not this sink the Spirits of our own People, Elevate our Enemies and disgrace Us in Europe.

If then, it will not be Safe to Stop our own Ships entirely, and trust to foreign Vessells coming here with or without Convoy of Men of War, belonging to foreign States, what is to be done? - Can our own People bear a total Cessation of Commerce? Will not Such Numbers be thrown out of Employment, and deprived of their Bread, as to make a large discontented Party? Will not the Burthen of supporting these Numbers, be too heavy upon the other Part of the Community? Shall We be able to maintain

the War, wholly without Trade? can We support the Credit of our Currency, without it?

If We must have Trade how shall We obtain it?—

There is one Plan, which alone, as it has ever appeared to me, will ensure the End in some Degree, at first. But this is attended with So many

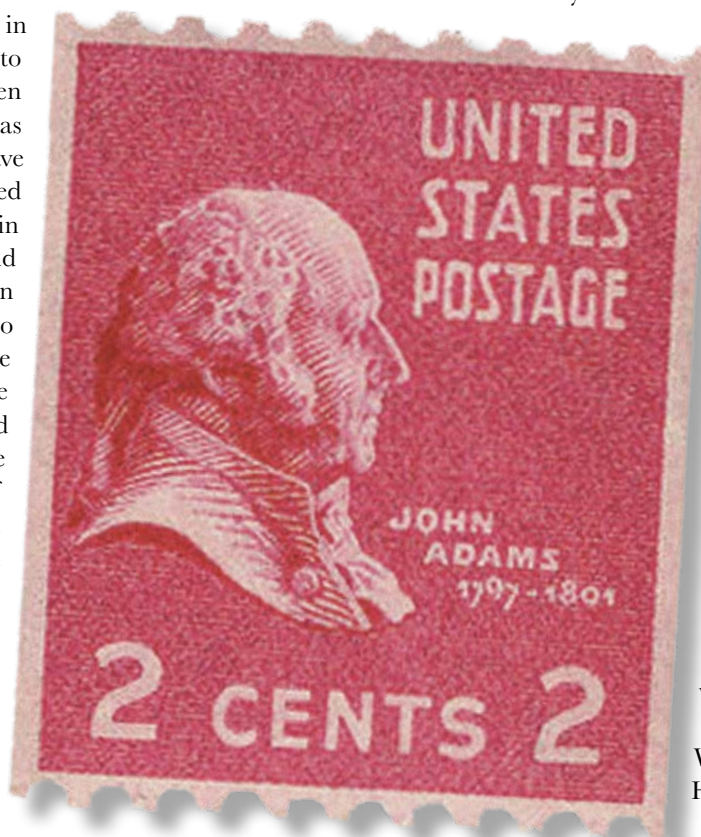
“God helps those who help themselves,” and it has ever appeared to me since this unhappy Dispute began, that We had no Friend upon Earth to depend on but the Resources of our own Country, and the good sense and great Virtues of our People. —We shall finally be obliged to depend upon ourselves.—

Our Country furnishes a vast abundance of materials for Commerce. Foreign Nations, have great Demands for them. - If We should publish an Invitation to any one Nation or more, or to all Nations, to send their ships here, and let our Merchants inform theirs that We have Harbours where the Vessells can lie in Safety, I conjecture that many private foreign Adventurers would find Ways to send cargoes here thro all the Risques without Convoys. - at the Same Time our own Merchants, would venture out with their Vessells and Cargoes, especially in Winter, and would run thro many Dangers, and in both these Ways together, I should hope We might be supplied with Necessaries.

All this however Supposes that We fortify and defend our own Harbours and

Rivers—We may begin to do this.—We may build Row Gallies,

flatt bottomed Boats, floating Batteries, Whale Boats, Vesseaux de Frize, nay ships of war, how many, and how large I cant say.—To talk of coping suddenly with G. B. at sea would be Quixotish indeed.—But the only Question with me is can We defend our Harbours and Rivers? if We can We can trade. ♦



Dangers to all Vessells, certain Loss to many, and So much Uncertainty upon the whole, that it is enough to make any Man, thoughtfull. —Indeed it is looked upon So wild, extravagant and romantic, that a Man must have a great deal of Courage, and much Indifference to common censure, who should dare to propose it.

## FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AT THE COURT OF FRANCE

LETTER FROM BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING RENEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE

<http://docsteach.org/documents/518217/detail?menu=closed&mode=search&sortBy=relevance&q=ben+franklin+france><http://docsteach.org/documents/6171405/detail?menu=closed&mode=search&sortBy=relevance&q=ben+franklin+france>

Benjamin Franklin at the Court of France.

Gentlemen,  
Paris Jan. 4. 1777. 13

I arrived here about two weeks since, where I found Mr. Deane. Mr. Lee has since joined us from London. We have had an Audience of the Minister, Count de Vergennes, and were respectfully received. We left for his Consideration a sketch of the proposed Treaty. We are to wait upon him tomorrow with a strong Memorial requesting the Aids mentioned in our Instructions. By his Advice we had an Interview with the Spanish Ambassador, Count d'Aranda, who seems well disposed towards us, and will forward copies of our Memorials to his Court, which will act, he says, in perfect concert with this. Their Fleets are said to be in fine Order, mann'd and fit for sea. The Cry of this Nation is for us; but the Court it is thought views an approaching War with Reluctance. The Press continues in England. As far as we can receive a positive Answer from the Court we shall dispatch an Express with it. I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> Servant  
B Franklin

The Committee of Secret Correspondence

## TRANSCRIPT:

Gentlemen Paris January 4, 1777 13

I arrived here about two weeks [since?] where I found [Mr.?] Deane. [Mr.?] Lee has since joined us from London. We have had the Audience of the Minister, Count de Vergennes, and were respectfully received. We left for his Consideration a sketch of the proposed treaty. We are to wait upon him tomorrow for a strong Memorial requesting the Aids mentioned in our Instructions. By his advice, we had an interview with the Spanish Ambassador, Count [?] Aranda who seems well disposed towards us, and will forward copies of our Memorials to his Court, which will act, he says, in perfect concert with this. Their fleets are said to be in perfect order mann'd and fit for sea. The cry

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Your most [obedient? Servant?]

B Franklin ♦

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## TREATY OF ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE

FEBRUARY 1778

<http://docsteach.org/documents/2524341/detail>

**Summary:** *This treaty formalized France's financial and military support of the revolutionary government in America. As part of the alliance between "the most Christian King and the United of North America," neither party could conclude a peace "with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other."*

The most Christian King and the United States of North America, to wit, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhodes island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, having this Day concluded a Treaty of amity and Commerce, for the reciprocal advantage of their Subjects and Citizens have thought it necessary to take into consideration the means of strengthening those engagements and of rendering them useful to the safety and tranquility of the two parties, particularly in case Great Britain in Resentment of that connection and of the good correspondence which is the object of the said Treaty, should break the Peace with France, either by direct hostilities, or by hindering her commerce and navigation, in a manner contrary to the Rights of Nations, and the Peace subsisting between the two Crowns; and his Majesty and the said united States having resolved in that Case to join their Councils and efforts against the Enterprises of their common Enemy, the respective Plenipotentiaries, empowered to concert the Clauses & conditions proper to fulfil the said Intentions, have, after the most mature Deliberation, concluded and determined on the following Articles.

### ART. 1.

If War should break out between France and Great Britain, during the continuance of the present War between the United States and England, his Majesty and the said united States, shall make it a common cause, and aid each other mutually with their good Offices, their Counsels, and their forces, according to the exigence of Conjunctions as becomes good & faithful Allies.

### ART. 2.

The essential and direct End of the present defensive alliance is to maintain effectually the liberty, Sovereignty, and independence absolute and unlimited of the said united States, as well in Matters of Gouvernement as of commerce.

### ART. 3.

The two contracting Parties shall each on its own Part, and in the manner it may judge most proper, make all the efforts in its Power, against their common Enemy, in order to attain the end proposed.

### ART. 4.

The contracting Parties agree that in case either of them should form any particular Enterprise in which the concurrence of the other may be desired, the Party whose concurrence is desired shall readily, and with good faith, join to act in concert for that Purpose, as far as circumstances and its own particular Situation will permit; and in that case, they shall regulate by a particular Convention the quantity and kind of Succour to be furnished, and the Time and manner of its being brought into action, as well as the advantages which are to be its Compensation.

### ART. 5.

If the united States should think fit to attempt the Reduction of the British Power remaining in the Northern Parts of America, or the Islands of Bermudas, those Countries or Islands in case of Success, shall be confederated with or dependent upon the said united States.

### ART. 6.

The Most Christian King renounces for ever the possession of the Islands of

Bermudas as well as of any part of the continent of North America which before the treaty of Paris in 1763. or in virtue of that Treaty, were acknowledged to belong to the Crown of Great Britain, or to the united States heretofore called British Colonies, or which are at this Time or have lately been under the Power of The King and Crown of Great Britain.

### ART. 7.

If his Most Christian Majesty shall think proper to attack any of the Islands situated in the Gulph of Mexico, or near that Gulph, which are at present under the Power of Great Britain, all the said Isles, in case of success, shall appertain to the Crown of France.

### ART. 8.

Neither of the two Parties shall conclude either Truce or Peace with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the other first obtained; and they mutually engage not to lay down their arms, until the Independence of the united States shall have been formally or tacitly assured by the Treaty or Treaties that shall terminate the War.

### ART. 9.

The contracting Parties declare, that being resolved to fulfil each on its own Part the clauses and conditions of the present Treaty of alliance, according to its own power and circumstances, there shall be no after claim of compensation on one side or the other whatever may be the event of the War.

### ART. 10.

The Most Christian King and the United States, agree to invite or admit other Powers

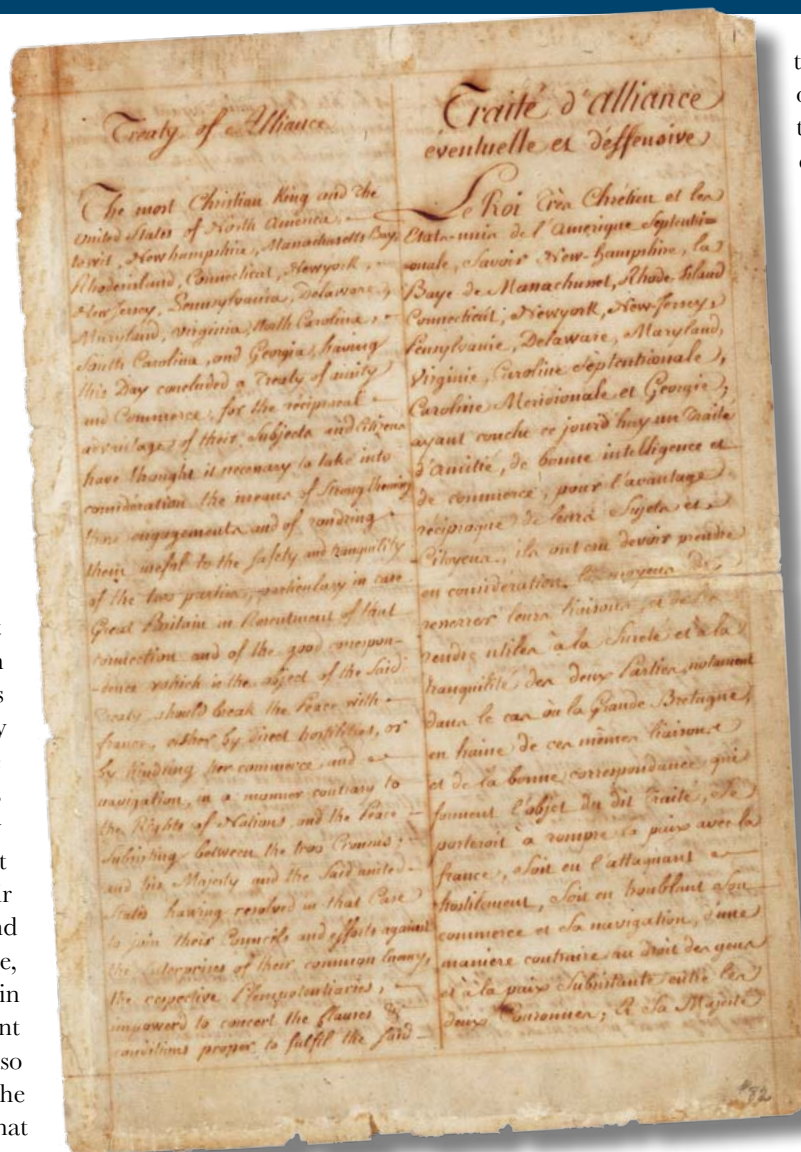
## FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

TREATY OF ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE  
— CONTINUED —

who may have received injuries from England to make common cause with them, and to accede to the present alliance, under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to and settled between all the Parties.

**ART. 11.**

The two Parties guarantee mutually from the present time and forever, against all other powers, to wit, the united states to his most Christian Majesty the present Possessions of the Crown of France in America as well as those which it may acquire by the future Treaty of peace: and his most Christian Majesty guarantees on his part to the united states, their liberty, Sovereignty, and Independence absolute, and unlimited, as well in Matters of Government as commerce and also their Possessions, and the additions or conquests that their Confederation may obtain during the war, from any of the Dominions now or heretofore possessed by Great Britain in North America, conformable to the 5th & 6th articles above written, the whole as their Possessions shall be fixed and assured to the said States at the moment of the cessation of their present War with England.

**ART. 12.**

In order to fix more precisely the sense and application of the preceding article, the Contracting Parties declare, that in case of rupture between France and England, the reciprocal Guarantee declared in the said article shall have its full force and effect

the moment such War shall break out and if such rupture shall not take place, the mutual obligations of the said guarantee shall not commence, until the moment of the cessation of the present War between the united states and England shall have ascertained the Possessions.

**ART. 13.**

The present Treaty shall be ratified on both sides and the Ratifications shall be exchanged in the space of six months, sooner if possible.

In faith where of the respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit on the part of the most Christian King Conrad Alexander Gerard royal syndic of the City of Strasbourg & Secretary of his majestys Council of State and on the part of the United States Benjamin Franklin Deputy to the General Congress from the State of Pennsylvania and President of the Convention of the same state, Silas Deane heretofore Deputy from the State of Connecticut & Arthur Lee Councillor at

Law have signed the above

Articles both in the French and English Languages declaring Nevertheless that the present Treaty was originally composed and concluded in the French Language, and they have hereunto affixed their Seals

Done at Paris, this sixth Day of February, one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight. ♦

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## THE DEFINITIVE TREATY OF PEACE 1783

SEPTEMBER 1783

<http://docsteach.org/documents/299805/detail?menu=closed&mode=search&sortBy=relevance&q=ben+franklin+france>

**Summary:** *The treaty, sent to Congress by the American negotiators, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay, formally ended the Revolutionary War. They emerged from the peace process with one of the most advantageous treaties ever negotiated for the United States. Two crucial provisions of the treaty were British recognition of U.S. independence and the delineation of boundaries that would allow for American western expansion. There are two duplicate originals of the treaty in the American Original file that are most easily distinguished from each other by the orientation of their seals, horizontal on one and vertical on the other.*

*Soon after the completion of the preliminary treaty of peace, the British government fell and a new round of negotiations started. John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and new British negotiator David Hartley revisited many of the old issues thought to have been settled. Signed on September 3, 1783, and ratified by Congress on January 14, 1784, the Treaty of Paris formally ended the Revolutionary War and established the United States as an independent and sovereign nation.*

### IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HOLY & UNDIVIDED TRINITY.

It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the Hearts of the most Serene and most Potent Prince George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and Lunebourg, Arch-Treasurer and Prince Elector of the Holy Roman Empire etc.. and of the United States of America, to forget all past Misunderstandings and Differences that have unhappily interrupted the good Correspondence and Friendship which they mutually wish to restore; and to establish such a beneficial and satisfactory Intercourse between the two countries upon the ground of reciprocal Advantages and mutual Convenience as may promote and secure to both perpetual Peace and Harmony; and having for this desirable End already laid the Foundation of Peace & Reconciliation by the Provisional Articles signed at Paris on the 30th of November 1782, by the Commissioners empowered on each Part, which Articles were agreed to be inserted in and constitute the Treaty of Peace proposed to be concluded between the Crown of Great Britain and the said United States, but which Treaty was not to be concluded until Terms of Peace should be agreed upon between Great Britain & France, and his Britannic Majesty should be ready

to conclude such Treaty accordingly: and the treaty between Great Britain & France having since been concluded, his Britannic Majesty & the United States of America, in Order to carry into full Effect the Provisional Articles above mentioned, according to the Tenor thereof, have constituted & appointed, that is to say his Britannic Majesty on his Part, David Hartley, Esqr., Member of the Parliament of Great Britain, and the said United States on their Part, - stop point - John Adams, Esqr., late a Commissioner of the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, late Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts, and Chief Justice of the said State, and Minister Plenipotentiary of the said United States to their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Netherlands; - stop point - Benjamin Franklin, Esqr., late Delegate in Congress from the State of Pennsylvania, President of the Convention of the said State, and Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the Court of Versailles; John Jay, Esqr., late President of Congress and Chief Justice of the state of New York, and Minister Plenipotentiary from the said United States at the Court of Madrid; to be Plenipotentiaries for the concluding and signing the Present Definitive Treaty; who after having reciprocally communicated their respective full Powers have agreed upon and confirmed the following Articles.

### Article 1st:

His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz., New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to be free sovereign and Independent States; that he treats with them as such, and for himself his Heirs & Successors, relinquishes all claims to the Government, Propriety, and Territorial Rights of the same and every Part thereof.

### Article 2d:

And that all Disputes which might arise in future on the subject of the Boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following are and shall be their Boundaries, viz.; from the Northwest Angle of Nova Scotia, viz., that Angle which is formed by a Line drawn due North from the Source of St. Croix River to the Highlands; along the said Highlands which divide those Rivers that empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean, to the northwesternmost Head of Connecticut River; Thence down along the middle of that River to the forty-fifth Degree of North Latitude; From thence by a Line due West on said Latitude until it strikes the River Iroquois or Cataraquy; Thence along the middle of said River into Lake Ontario; through the Middle of said

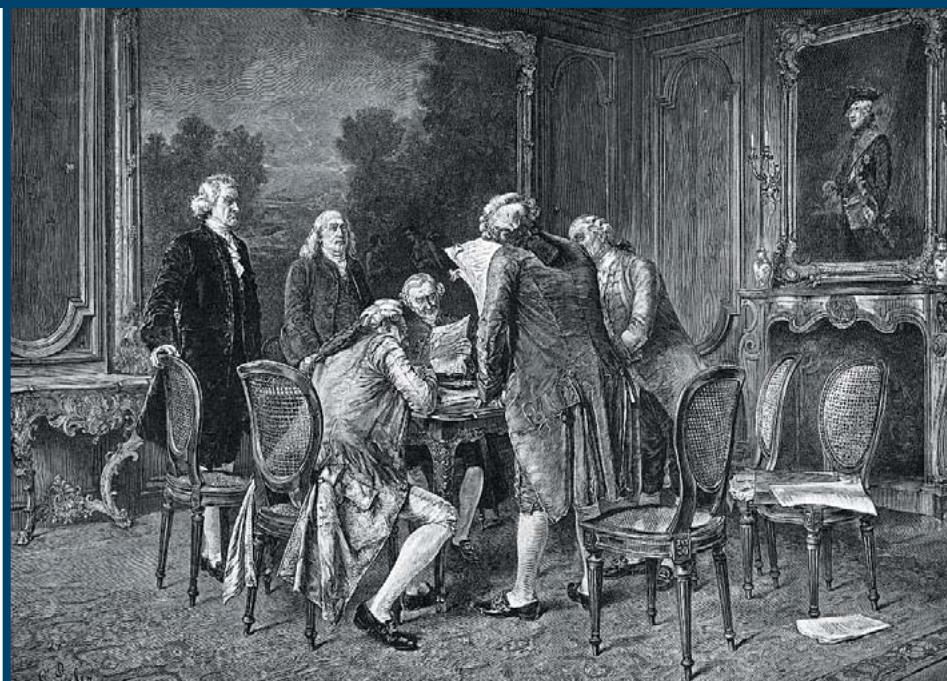
# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## THE DEFINITIVE TREATY OF PEACE 1783

SEPTEMBER 1783

— CONTINUED —

Lake until it strikes the Communication by Water between that Lake & Lake Erie; Thence along the middle of said Communication into Lake Erie, through the middle of said Lake until it arrives at the Water Communication between that lake & Lake Huron; Thence along the middle of said Water Communication into the Lake Huron, thence through the middle of said Lake to the Water Communication between that Lake and Lake Superior; thence through Lake Superior Northward of the Isles Royal & Phelipeaux to the Long Lake; Thence through the middle of said Long Lake and the Water Communication between it & the Lake of the Woods, to the said Lake of the Woods; Thence through the said Lake to the most Northwestern Point thereof, and from thence on a due West Course to the river Mississippi; Thence by a Line to be drawn along the Middle of the said river Mississippi until it shall intersect the Northernmost Part of the thirty-first Degree of North Latitude, South, by a Line to be drawn due East from the Determination of the Line last mentioned in the Latitude of thirty-one Degrees of the Equator to the middle of the River Apalachicola or Catahouche; Thence along the middle thereof to its junction with the Flint River; Thence straight to the Head of Saint Mary's River, and thence down along the middle of Saint Mary's River to the Atlantic Ocean. East, by a Line to be drawn along the Middle of the river Saint Croix, from its Mouth in the Bay of Fundy to its Source, and from its Source directly North to the aforesaid Highlands, which divide the Rivers that fall into the Atlantic Ocean from those which fall into the river Saint Lawrence; comprehending all Islands within twenty Leagues of any Part of the Shores of the United States, and lying between Lines to be drawn due East from the Points where the aforesaid Boundaries between Nova Scotia on the one Part and East Florida on the other shall, respectively,



Preliminary Signing of the Treaty of Paris.

touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean, excepting such Islands as now are or heretofore have been within the limits of the said Province of Nova Scotia.

### Article 3d:

It is agreed that the People of the United States shall continue to enjoy unmolested the Right to take Fish of every kind on the Grand Bank and on all the other Banks of Newfoundland, also in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and at all other Places in the Sea, where the Inhabitants of both Countries used at any time heretofore to fish. And also that the Inhabitants of the United States shall have Liberty to take Fish of every Kind on such Part of the Coast of Newfoundland as British Fishermen shall use, (but not to dry or cure the same on that Island) And also on the Coasts, Bays & Creeks of all other of his Britannic Majesty's Dominions in America; and that the American Fishermen shall have Liberty to dry and cure Fish in any of the unsettled

Bays, Harbors, and Creeks of Nova Scotia, Magdalen Islands, and Labrador, so long as the same shall remain unsettled, but so soon as the same or either of them shall be settled, it shall not be lawful for the said Fishermen to dry or cure Fish at such Settlement without a previous Agreement for that purpose with the Inhabitants, Proprietors, or Possessors of the Ground.

### Article 4th:

It is agreed that Creditors on either Side shall meet with no lawful Impediment to the Recovery of the full Value in Sterling Money of all bona fide Debts heretofore contracted.

### Article 5th:

It is agreed that Congress shall earnestly recommend it to the Legislatures of the respective States to provide for the Restitution of all Estates, Rights, and Properties, which have been confiscated belonging to real British Subjects; and

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## THE DEFINITIVE TREATY OF PEACE 1783

### SEPTEMBER 1783

### — CONTINUED —

also of the Estates, Rights, and Properties of Persons resident in Districts in the Possession on his Majesty's Arms and who have not borne Arms against the said United States. And that Persons of any other Description shall have free Liberty to go to any Part or Parts of any of the thirteen United States and therein to remain twelve Months unmolested in their Endeavors to obtain the Restitution of such of their Estates – Rights & Properties as may have been confiscated. And that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several States a Reconsideration and Revision of all Acts or Laws regarding the Premises, so as to render the said Laws or Acts perfectly consistent not only with Justice and Equity but with that Spirit of Conciliation which on the Return of the Blessings of Peace should universally prevail. And that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several States that the Estates, Rights, and Properties of such last mentioned Persons shall be restored to them, they refunding to any Persons who may be now in Possession the Bona fide Price (where any has been given) which such Persons may have paid on purchasing any of the said Lands, Rights, or Properties since the Confiscation.

And it is agreed that all Persons who have any Interest in confiscated Lands, either by Debts, Marriage Settlements, or otherwise, shall meet with no lawful Impediment in the Prosecution of their just Rights.

#### Article 6th:

That there shall be no future Confiscations made nor any Prosecutions commenced

against any Person or Persons for, or by Reason of the Part, which he or they may have taken in the present War, and that no Person shall on that Account suffer any future Loss or Damage, either in his Person, Liberty, or Property; and that those who may be in Confinement on such Charges at the Time of the Ratification of the Treaty in America shall be immediately set at Liberty, and the Prosecutions so commenced be discontinued.

#### Article 7th:

There shall be a firm and perpetual Peace between his Britanic Majesty and the said States, and between the Subjects of the one and the Citizens of the other, wherefore all Hostilities both by Sea and Land shall from henceforth cease: All prisoners on both Sides shall be set at Liberty, and his Britanic Majesty shall with all convenient speed, and without causing any Destruction, or carrying away any Negroes or other Property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his Armies, Garrisons & Fleets from the said United States, and from every Post, Place and Harbour within the same; leaving in all Fortifications, the American Artillery that may be therein: And shall also Order & cause all Archives, Records, Deeds & Papers belonging to any of the said States, or their Citizens, which in the Course of the War may have fallen into the hands of his Officers, to be forthwith restored and delivered to the proper States and Persons to whom they belong.

#### Article 8th:

The Navigation of the river Mississippi,

from its source to the Ocean, shall forever remain free and open to the Subjects of Great Britain and the Citizens of the United States.

#### Article 9th:

In case it should so happen that any Place or Territory belonging to great Britain or to the United States should have been conquered by the Arms of either from the other before the Arrival of the said Provisional Articles in America, it is agreed that the same shall be restored without Difficulty and without requiring any Compensation.

#### Article 10th:

The solemn Ratifications of the present Treaty expedited in good & due Form shall be exchanged between the contracting Parties in the Space of Six Months or sooner if possible to be computed from the Day of the Signature of the present Treaty. In witness whereof we the undersigned their Ministers Plenipotentiary have in their Name and in Virtue of our Full Powers, signed with our Hands the present Definitive Treaty, and caused the Seals of our Arms to be affixed thereto.

Done at Paris, this third day of September in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three.

D HARTLEY (SEAL)  
JOHN ADAMS (SEAL)  
B FRANKLIN (SEAL)  
JOHN JAY (SEAL) ❖

# FRANKLIN CHARMS PARIS

## DECREE OF FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE DEATH OF FRANKLIN

JUNE 1790

<http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/larger-image.html?i=/press/press-kits/franklin/images/death-decree-1.jpg&c=/press/press-kits/franklin/images/death-decree.caption.html>

**Summary from Library of Congress:** *Franklin was widely popular in France, where he had lived from 1776 to 1785 as the chief US diplomatic representative. After hearing of his death on April 17, 1790, the French National Assembly issued a decree that its members would observe three days of mourning. Further, the President of the Assembly would write to Congress informing it of the honor being paid to Franklin.*



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Franklin's popularity in France earned him an invitation to take up residence at Passy, above, a merchant's sumptuous 18-acre estate on the Seine between Paris and Versailles. Upon Franklin's death five years after leaving France, the French National Assembly honored him, by decreeing that its members would observe three days of mourning with the pomp and ceremony befitting a hero.

