

Dear Friend Franklin and Babcock Correspondence

Hugh A. Barton

October 11, 2026

Dear Friend

Philad^a Nov. 10. 1763

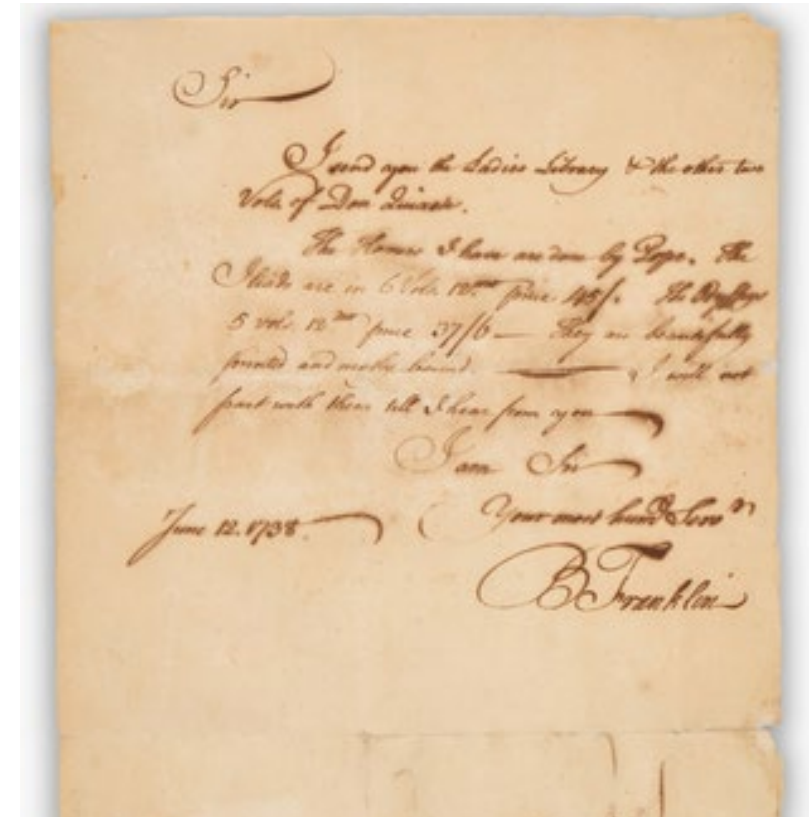
Your Goodnature will be pleas'd to hear that your Guests went on well after they left you. — We got early into New York the next Morning, staid there one Day, had a Pleasant Passage over the Bay the next Morning; spent some time with Friends in different Places of the Jerseys, and got safe and well home on Saturday Evening, where we had the additional Happiness of finding all well. — Sally joins in grateful Remembrance of your many Civilities & Kindnesses to us, at your House & on the Road; and in best Wishes of every Felicity to you & yours. Our Respects to good M^{rs} Babcock, the Colonel and your other Children. By next Post you will hear from M^r Foxcroft & me; he presents his Compliments. I am, with sincerest Esteem and Affection,

Dear Sir

Your most obedient
Humble Servant
B Franklin

Sotheby's est. 1744

- 24 June 2026
- Selections from The Jay T. Snider Collection of Benjamin Franklin
- Autograph letter signed ("B Franklin") to John Ladd ("Sir"), half page (312 x 192 mm; 12.3 x 7.6 inches) on a leaf of laid paper (watermarked heraldic shield), [Philadelphia,] 12 June 1738, regarding Ladd's purchase of books from Franklin's shop, verso with autograph address panel and reception docket; browned, worn at folds with some neat repair. Half green morocco folding-case gilt, chemise.
- \$35,840
- <https://www.sothebys.com/en/digital-catalogues/the-jay-t-snider-collection-of-benjamin-franklin>



Benjamin Franklin | "the Day of the D...
Estimate: 80,000 - 120,000 USD



Benjamin Franklin | Franklin commis...
Estimate: 35,000 - 50,000 USD



Benjamin Franklin | Recommending ...
Estimate: 50,000 - 70,000 USD

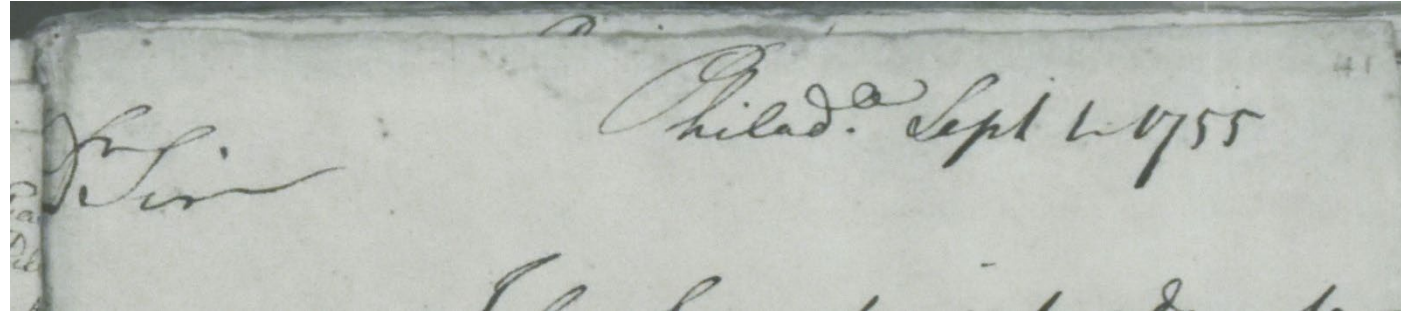


(Benjamin Franklin) | A bequest to B...
Estimate: 7,000 - 10,000 USD



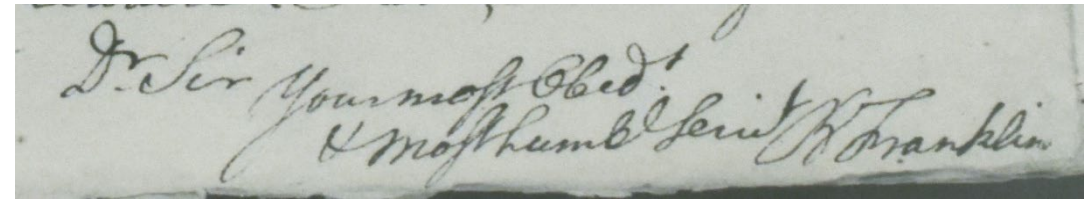
Benjamin Franklin | "God knows whe...
Estimate: 70,000 - 100,000 USD

September 1, 1755 Philadelphia



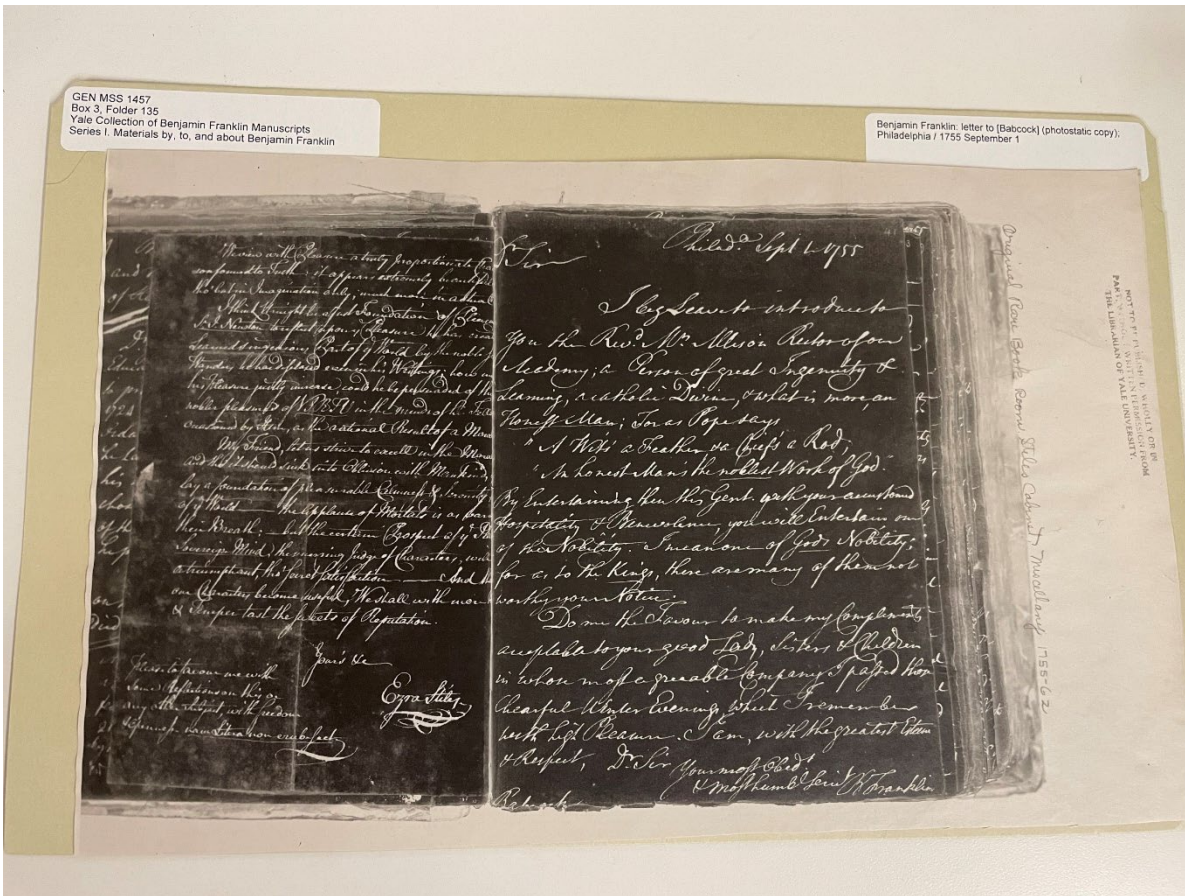
- Earliest known letter between Franklin and Babcock
- Letter begins by introducing Revd. Mr. Allison, Rector of Bordentown Academy and asks Joshua Babcock to entertain him.
- “Do me the Favour to make my Complements acceptable to your good Lady, Sisters and Children in whose most agreeable Company I passed those Chearful Winter Evenings, which I remember with high Pleasure.”
- When and how Joshua Babcock (1707-1783) and Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) met is unknown. Winter evenings were likely Jan/Feb 1755. Franklin traveled to Boston 1733, 1743, 1754/5, 1763. Only 1754/5 was winter.
- BF Papers project Annotation – Of Mrs. Hannah (Stanton) Babcock, Stiles (Literary Diary, III, 66-7) wrote that she was “a most excellent Woman, the Law of Kindness was upon her Tongue, her prudence and amiableness of manners as well as her virtues and love of all the religions rendered her the ornament of her sex.” Her husband “accounted her his glory.”

September 1, 1755 Context

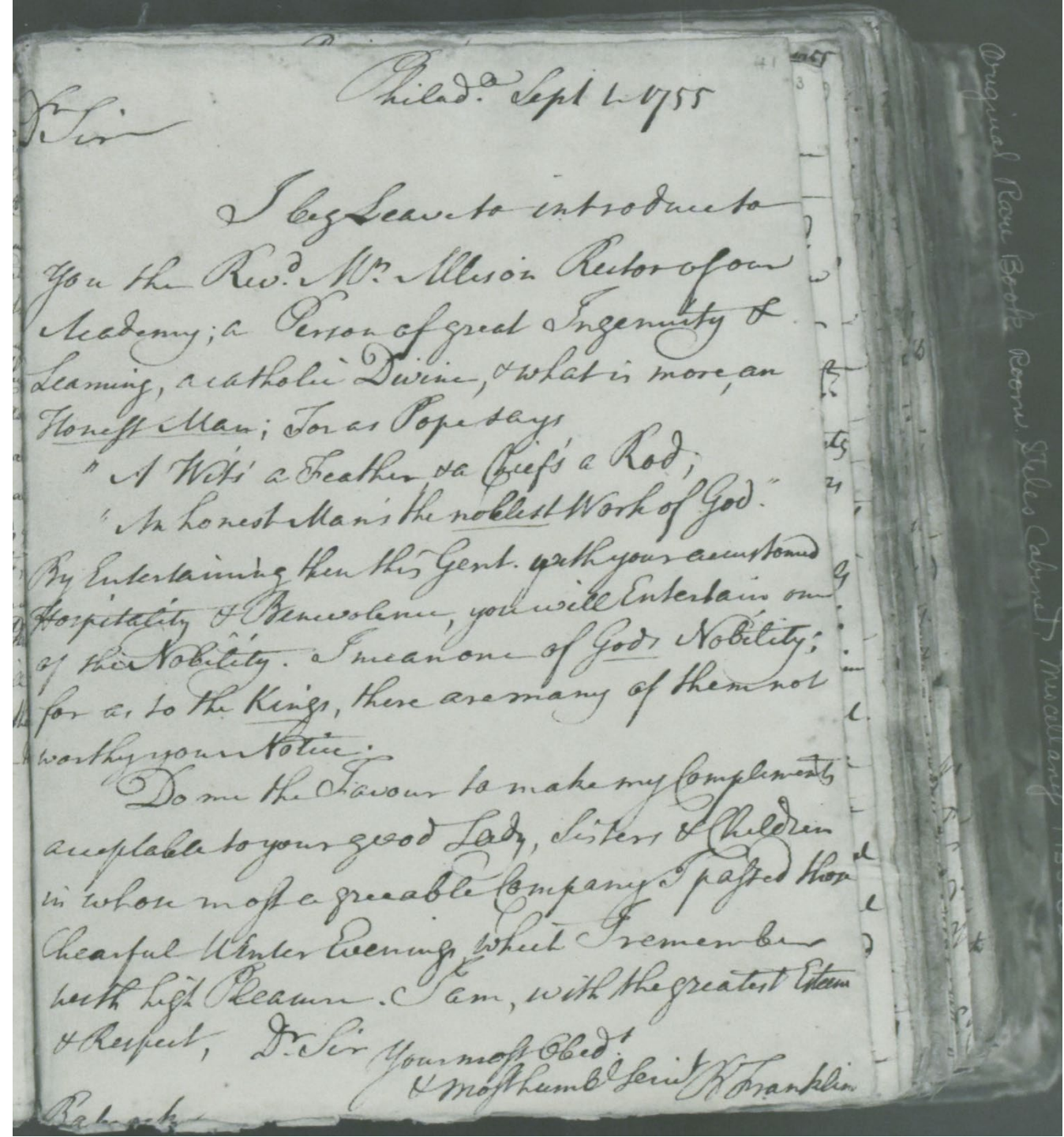


- BF also wrote Ezra Stiles and Jared Eliot on September 1, 1755
- Approximately 15,000 Franklin letters known (6 per week for 50 years)
- French and Indian War (Seven Years War 1754 – 1763) Much of Pennsylvania had been lost to the French. Franklin was heavily involved in organizing defense of Philadelphia.
- Catharine (Katy) Ray friendship 1754-55
 - Met through family in Boston late 1754, 23 years old, daughter of Simon and Deborah Ray of Block Island
 - BF to CR 4 Mar 1755 Annotation – “They set out from Boston, Dec. 30, 1754, visited Catharine’s sister Anna, wife of Samuel Ward, at Westerly, R.I., whence Catharine returned to Block Island and BF to Philadelphia.”
 - 1758 she married William Greene, future governor of RI
 - He was enamored with her and she him but refused physical advances... friends for 30 years. *Benjamin Franklin and Catharine Ray Greene – Their Correspondence 1755-1790. Edited and Annotated by William Greene Roelker (Director RIHS), American Philosophical Society, 1949 159 p*

September 1, 1755 Document



Yale University Library has photostatic copy. Appears bound into book of letters.

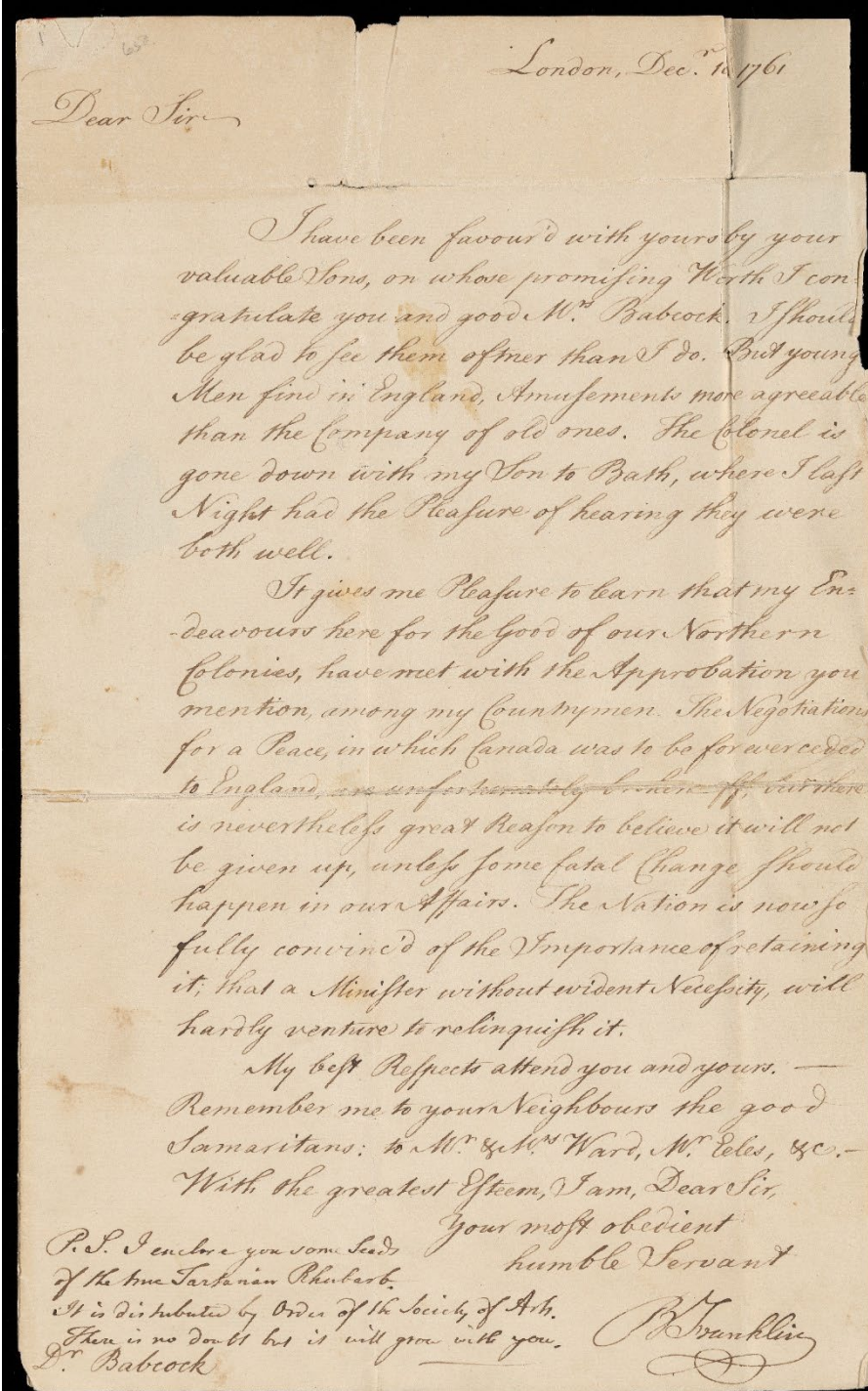


Ben Franklin's Box
of 10 Dec^r 1762 from London
with seed of Tartarⁿ Rhubarb

10 December 1761
London

Ben Franklin's Box
of 10 Dec^r 1762 from London
with seed of Tartarⁿ Rhubarb
21 Apr 1762
To
Dr Babcock
at Westerly
Rhode Island Gov^t
Ben Franklin

10 December 1761



10 December 1761

text

Founders Online

[\[Back to normal view\]](#)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOSHUA BABCOCK, 10 DECEMBER 1761

To Joshua Babcock⁵

ALS: Yale University Library

Dear Sir

London, Decr. 10. 1761

I have been favour'd with yours by your valuable Sons, on whose promising Worth I congratulate you and good Mrs. Babcock.⁶ I should be glad to see them oftner than I do. But young Men find in England, Amusements more agreeable than the Company of old ones. The Colonel is gone down with my Son to Bath, where I last Night had the Pleasure of hearing they were both well.⁷

It gives me Pleasure to learn that my Endeavours here for the Good of our Northern Colonies, have met with the Approbation you mention, among my Countrymen.⁸ The Negotiations for a Peace, in which Canada was to be for ever ceded to England, are unfortunately broken off, but there is nevertheless great Reason to believe it will not be given up, unless some fatal Change should happen in our Affairs.⁹ The Nation is now so fully convinc'd of the Importance of retaining it; that a Minister without evident Necessity, will hardly venture to relinquish it.

My best Respects attend you and yours. Remember me to your Neighbours the good Samaritans: to Mr. and Mrs. Ward, Mr. Eeles, &c.¹ With the greatest Esteem, I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant

B FRANKLIN

P. s. I enclose you some Seeds of the true Tartarian Rhubarb.² It is distributed by Order of the Society of Arts. There is no doubt but it will grow with you.

Dr. Babcock

Addressed: To / Dr Babcock / at Westerly / Rhodeisland Governmt / Free / B FRANKLIN

Endorsed: Ben Franklin Esq. of 10 Decr. 1762 from London with seed of Tartarn Rhubarp Recd 21 Aprl. 1762

Another note in an almost illegible hand: Tower Hills April 21. 1762 By My Master and forwardd by Ser [?] Hurd Ser John

⁵. On Joshua Babcock, physician and storekeeper of Westerly, R.I., Ezra Stiles's "stay-at-home Protestant," see above, vi, 174 n.

⁶. Babcock's letter not found. The Babcocks had four sons: Henry (1736–1800), Luke (1738–1777), Adam (1740–1817), and Paul (b. 1748). The one referred to here as the "Colonel" was Henry, B.A., Yale, 1752; an officer in the R.I. militia who had served at Crown Point and Ticonderoga. He was a member of the R.I. Assembly, 1766–69, and served briefly in the militia again early in the Revolution. If only one of his younger brothers accompanied him to England in 1761 it was probably Luke, B.A., Yale, 1755, who kept shop in New Haven and became postmaster there in 1767. Two years later he went to England for Episcopal ordination and was a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Yonkers, N.Y., 1771–77. Like many Episcopal clergymen in the northern colonies, he was a Loyalist at the outbreak of the Revolution. Dexter, *Biog. Sketches*, II, 277–80, 362–4; Wilkins Updike, *A History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett*, D. B. Updike, ed. (Boston, 1907), II, 47–58.

⁷. See above, p. 394, for WF's visit to Bath.

⁸. Probably a reference to the Canada Pamphlet.

¹. Samuel and Anna Ward of Westerly (the latter the sister of Catherine Ray), and probably the Rev. Nathaniel Eeles (1711–1786), A.B., Harvard, 1728, minister at nearby Stonington, Conn. *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, VIII, 407–16.

². The Tartarian rhubarb (*Rheum officinale*) was introduced to Europe from China through Russia and promoted in Great Britain by BF's friend Sir Alexander Dick (above, VIII, 440 n). It was highly prized for its medicinal uses. In 1774 the Society of Arts awarded its gold medal to Dick for his contribution. Robert Dossie, *Memoirs of Agriculture and other (Economical Arts* (London, 1768–82), II, 258–91; III, 208–25.

10 December 1761
p.s.

P.S. I enclose you some seeds of the true Tartarian Rhubarb. It is distributed by order of the Society of Arts. There is no doubt but it will grow with you. Dr. Babcock.



10 December 1761 context

- Franklin in London 1757 to August 1762
 - Representing Pennsylvania Assembly in dispute with proprietors (William Penn's descendants)
- George III became King on 25 October 1760 at age 22
- Franklin's glass "armonica" created in 1761. 1791 Mozart wrote Adagio and Rondo for glass harmonica, flute, oboe, viola and cello in C minor, K. 617
- Oxford University 1762 honorary Doctor of Civil Law

16 December 1762
Philadelphia

Ben Franklin Esq
Dec. 16. 1762
rec. 6 Jan'y 1763

Dear Sir,

Philad. Dec. 16. 1762.

I thank you most cordially for your kind Congratulations on my Arrival, which I have the more Pleasure in, as among my other Friends, I find you & yours, alive and well: I rejoice with you likewise in the safe Return of your two valuable Sons, to whom, on Acc^t of their own Merit as well as the Obligations I am under to you, I wish it had been in my Power to have been any way serviceable. Be so good as to assure them of my best Respects & Wishes, which also attend M^{rs} Babcock & the other Branches of your good Family. I hope to have the Pleasure next Summer of seeing you all once more, in a Journey I purpose to Boston. I shall ever retain a grateful Re-

membrance

membrance of your Hospitality, & of the pleasing Hours I have pass'd in your Conversation & with your most agreeable Family, and I long for a repetition of that delightful Entertainment. Please to remember me affectionately to the good Samaritans, and do me the Justice to believe me ever, with the sincerest Obedience & Respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged
I most obedient
humble Servant

B. Franklin

Hon. Jos. Babcock Esq

16
December
1762

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO JOSHUA BABCOCK, 16 DECEMBER 1762

To Joshua Babcock⁴

ALS: Yale University Library

Dear Sir,

Philada. Dec. 16. 1762.

I thank you most cordially for your kind Congratulations on my Arrival, which I have the more Pleasure in, as among my other Friends, I find you and yours alive and well: I rejoice with you likewise in the safe Return of your two valuable Sons, to whom, on Account of their own Merit as well as the Obligations I am under to you, I wish it had been in my Power to have been any way serviceable.⁵ Be so good as to assure them of my best Respects and Wishes, which also attend Mrs. Babcock and the other Branches of your good Family. I hope to have the Pleasure next Summer of seeing you all once more, in a Journey I purpose to Boston. I shall ever retain a grateful Remembrance of your Hospitality, and of the pleasing Hours I have pass'd in your Conversation and with your most agreeable Family; and I long for a Repetition of that delightful Entertainment. Please to remember me affectionately to the good Samaritans;⁶ and do me the Justice to believe me ever, with the sincerest Esteem and Respect, Dear Sir, Your most obliged and most obedient humble Servant

B FRANKLIN

Honble Joshua Babcock Esqr

Endorsed: Ben Franklin Esq Decr. 16. 1762 recd. 6 Jan'y 1763

[Note numbering follows the Franklin Papers source.]

⁴. On Joshua Babcock (1707–1783) of Westerly, R.I., physician, merchant, and public official, see above, vi, 174 n. BF often enjoyed his hospitality when passing through Westerly on journeys to or from Boston.

⁵. Two of Babcock's sons had called upon BF in London the year before; see above, ix, 397 n.

⁶. Probably Samuel and Anna Ward of Westerly and Rev. Nathaniel Eeles of Stonington, Conn., or "the charitable Misses Stanton," relatives of Mrs. Babcock, to whom he sent greetings through Catharine Ray in 1757. See above, vii, 143.

5 September 1763 Boston

Returning hither from Portsmouth, I find your agreeable Favour of Augt. 19. containing your kind Invitation to Westerly, where I am sure I could pass some Days with great Pleasure; but doubt whether it will be in my Power.

I perceive the Artifice of your Eloquence, which in some degree saves me from being carried away by its Force. You promise me the Communication of some new Philosophical Discovery. Then you pique my Pride, by challenging me at Drafts, and insinuate that I have not the Courage to meet you. Then you work upon my Fears, by your Prophecies and Auguries, threatening me with Mischief and Misfortune if I travel any other Road. All this is very good in its place; but you omit an Argument that weighs much more with me, the Happiness I should enjoy in your Conversation, and in the true, ancient, cordial Hospitality, with which you and good Mrs. Babcock always entertain your Friends. I can only wish that the more powerful Calls of Business and Duty, did not too forcibly draw me another way.

My sincere Respects and best Wishes, will however attend you and yours, while I am,

Dear Doctor

Your most obedient and most humble Servant

B Franklin

My compliments to my young Friend the Colonel; hope his Farming succeeds to his wish.

First Session, Wednesday Evening, March 3rd

WITH A CONTEMPORARY PAINTING ON THE FORE-EDGE

175. FORE-EDGE PAINTING. FITZWILLIAM (G. W.). The Pleasures of Love: Being Amatory Poems, Original and Translated, from the Asiatic and European Languages. Second Edition, improved. *Frontispiece*. 16mo, full red straight-grain morocco, gilt edges. [London] 180.

FINE CONTEMPORARY PAINTING of an English country seat on fore-edge.

176. FRAGONARD (HONORÉ). GRAPPE (GEORGES). H. Fragonard. Peintre de l'Amour au XVIII^e Siècle. *Extensively illustrated with portraits and numerous fine views, reproduced in colors and in various tones, each accompanied by a protective tissue bearing legend in red type and vignettes. Plates artistically mounted within borders.* 2 vols. 4to, full purple French crushed levant morocco, richly gilt ornamental border on sides, gilt paneled backs, inner gilt dentelle borders, gilt tops, uncut, original wrappers and backbones bound in, by TAFFIN. Paris [1913]

A FINE MONOGRAPH ON THIS FAMOUS FRENCH ARTIST.

177. FRANKLIN IMPRINT. The Charters of the Province of Pensilvania and City of Philadelphia. [Followed by] A Collection of All the Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania: Now in Force. [Also] An Appendix; containing a Summary of such Acts of Assembly as have been formerly in force . . . but since Expired, Altered or Repealed. Folio, full crimson French levant morocco gilt line borders on sides, gilt paneled back, gilt inside borders, gilt edge BY MACDONALD. In morocco-edged slip-case.

Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, 17

FINE COPY, except for a few time discolorations.

A VERY UNUSUAL LETTER BY FRANKLIN TO JOSHUA BABCOCK,
CHIEF JUSTICE OF RHODE ISLAND

178. FRANKLIN (BENJAMIN). Autograph Letter Signed,—“B. Franklin.” 2pp. 4to, Boston, Sept. 5, 1763. To “The Honble. Joshua Babcock, Esq. Westerly, Rh. Island Governmt.” With address sheet in Franklin's autograph and subscribed by him “Free. B. Franklin.”

A VERY FINE FRANKLIN LETTER WRITTEN IN A WHIMSICAL VEIN. FRANKLIN WAS GENERALLY VERY SERIOUS IN HIS CORRESPONDENCE, AND SUCH A LETTER AS THE PRESENT IS PROBABLY UNIQUE. It is also unusual to find a letter with the address-leaf bearing a superscription, or frank, by Benjamin Franklin. This letter was written shortly after his return from England, and very aptly illustrates that Franklin had a keen sense of humor. The letter reads,—“Returning hither from Portsmouth, I find your agreeable Favour of Augt. 19. containing your kind Invitation to Westerly, where I am sure I could pass some days with great pleasure; but doubt whether it will be in my power.

“I perceive the Artifice of your Eloquence, which in some degree saves me from being carried away by its force. You promise me the communication of some new Philosophical Discovery. Then you pique my pride, by challenging me at Drafts, and insinuate that I have not the courage to meet you. Then you work upon my fears, by your prophecies & Auguries, threatening me with Mischiefs & Misfortune if I travel any other road.—All this is very good in its place; but you omit an argument that weighs much more with me, the Happiness I should enjoy in your Conversation, and in the true, ancient, cordial Hospitality, with which you & good Mrs. Babcock always entertain your Friends. I can only wish that the more powerful Calls of busy and duty, did not too forcibly draw me another way.

“My sincere Respects & best wishes, will however attend you & yours, while I am, Dear Doctor
Your most obedient & most humble Servant,
B. Franklin”

“My compliments to my young Friend the Colonel; hope his Farming succeeds to his wish—”

5 September 1763 Provenance

- “Benjamin Franklin and Joshua Babcock, B.A. Yale 1724” Dorothy W. Bridgwater, The Yale University Library Gazette, October 1950, Vol. 25, No. 2 pp. 63-69
- Auction March 4, 1926
- “New Franklin Letters” Leonard W. Labaree The Yale University Library Gazette, April 1966, Vol. 40, No. 4 pp. 188-193

Beinecke
Library

MS Vault
Shelves
Beck

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790

ALS to Joshua Babcock

1763 Sep 5, Boston

2 p., with address. 22 cm.

Removed from James M. Beck's The Constitution of the United States, New York [1924], preceding page 61.

Gift of Edwin J. Beinecke, and Frederick W. Beinecke, 1965.

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of PITTSBURGH, PA.

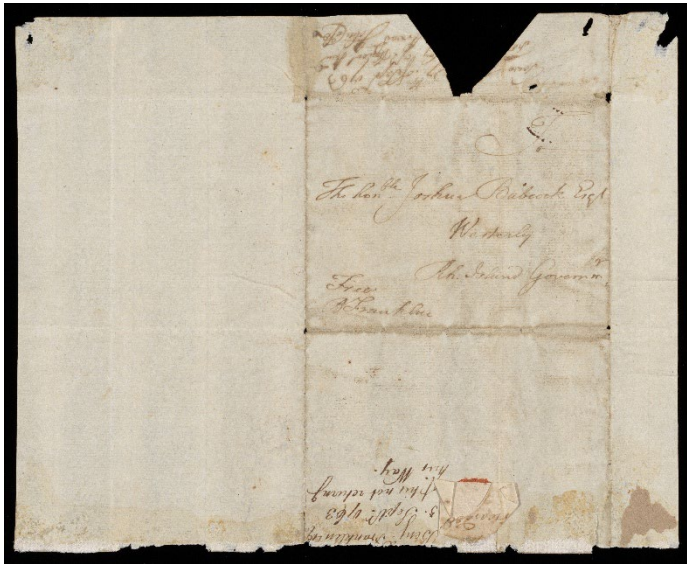
(Sold by Order of Christian I. Shannon, Executor)



To be sold on the evening of Wednesday, March 3,
and the afternoon and evening of Thursday,
March 4, 1926

AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION • Inc.
MADISON AVENUE 56TH TO 57TH STREET
ENTRANCE 30 EAST 57TH STREET • NEW YORK

5 September 1763 Autograph Letter Signed



Beinecke Rare Book and
Manuscript Library,
Yale University.

Dear Sir

Boston, Sept. 5. 1763.

Returning hither from Portsmouth I can only wish that the more powerful calls of
find your agreeable Favour of Augst 21st & Duty, did not too forcibly draw me another
containing your kind Invitation to Westbury. —
where I am sure I could pass some Days with My sincere Respects & best Wishes, with some
great Pleasure; but doubt whether it will find you & yours, while I am,
in my Power.

Dear Doctor,

I perceive the Artifices of your Eloquence
which in some degree saves me from being carried
away by its Force. You promise me the
Communication of some new Philosophical
discovery. Then you pique my Pride, by challenge
ing me at Drafts, and insinuate that I have not
not Courage to meet you. Then you work
on my Fears, by your Prophecies & Augurs
threatning me with Mischief & Misfortune
I travel any other Road. — All this is very
in its place; but you omit an Argument of
weight much more with me, the Happiness
should enjoy in your Conversation, and in
your ancient, cordial Hospitality, with which
& good M^r Babcock always entertain your

Your most obedient
& most humble Servant
B Franklin

18 October 1763

Dear Sir

Newport, Tuesday
Oct. 18, 1763

I hop'd to have had the Pleasure of being with you before this time, but various Remora's have detain'd us in various Places. We are to set out this day, so as to lodge at Cases' to night, and **purpose to take a Bed under your hospitable Roof the Night**, if not cast away among the dangerous Rocks of your Coast. My best Respects to Mrs. Babcock, &c. I am, Dear Friend,

Yours affectionately
B Franklin

Dear Sir, Newport, Tuesday
Oct. 18. 1763

I hop'd to have had the Pleasure of being with you before this time but various Remora's have detain'd us in various Places. We are to set out this day, so as to lodge at Cases' to night, and purpose to take a Bed under your hospitable Roof the Night, if not cast away among the dangerous Rocks of your Coast. My best Respects to M^{rs} Babcock, &c. I am, Dear Friend

Yours affectionately
B Franklin

18 October 1763

Case's

EARLY HOUSES

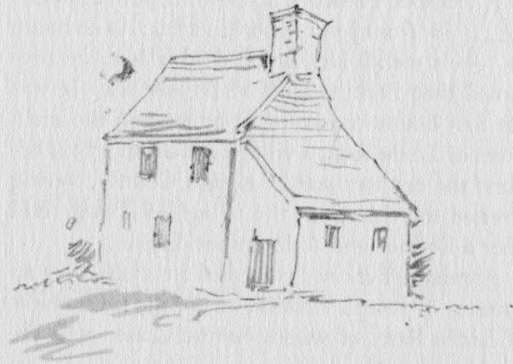
of the King's Province
in
The Narragansett Country

By WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

With Drawings by
NORMAN MORRISON ISHAM



WAKEFIELD
Rhode Island
1941



stayed with Squire Case on his travels up and down the Colonies. As to which Case was the host of Case's Tavern recommended in the *Vade Mecum*, it is left to the curious to decide. Both these houses were on the road traveled by the post-rider from Newport to Westerly, at which town he was met by the "Western Rider."

FINIS

Rob^t Case's House

Located on the southerly side of the road leading from the Post Road at Tower Hill eastward to the Pettaquamscutt River. Case's lot adjoined the church lot where Reverend Dr. Torrey lies buried.

OF ROBERT CASE, churchman and publican, comparatively little information can be found. He purchased his acre of land from one John Kenyon, innkeeper, in 1720, and was admitted a Freeman of Kingstown in 1722. He was a member of the vestry of St. Paul's Church, Narragansett, from 1722 until 1729.

Case's Tavern on Tower Hill was famous during the first half of the Eighteenth Century and is mentioned in Thomas Prince's *The Vade Mecum for America or a Companion for Traders and Travellers*, 1732. Case had evidently some difficulty in receiving his desired license. In 1731 the Town Council twice "voted that Robert Case have no Lycence." However, in a meeting at Ichabod Sheffield's in 1732, the records state that "It is Voted that Rob^t. Case shall have a Lycence till the Second Monday in June next for the keeping a house of Entertainment and Selling Strong Liquers in his now Dwelling House."

John Case, Squire Case, also had a house on the same road and he was granted a license before Robert. Franklin is reputed to have habitually

[33]

18 October 1763 Provenance



- Special Collections, West Chester University - Email: Ron McColl, Associate Professor, Special Collections Librarian
- The letter is encased in a leaf in a book, which the owner had tipped in when it was bound for him. The cover was cropped to just include the text contained on it.
- The dimensions of the trimmed cover are 3 ¼ w x 2 ½ h inches. The letter is trimmed to 5 ¼ w x 6 ¾ h inches.



Franklin's Postal Inspection Tour – Boston Post Road 1763

Dear Friend

Philad Nov. 10. 1763

Your Goodnature will be pleas'd
to hear that your Guests went on well
after they left you. — We got early into
New York the next Morning, staid there one
Day, had a Pleasant Passage over the Bay the
next Morning; spent some time with Friends
in different Places of the Jerseys, and got safe
and well home on Saturday Evening, where we
had the additional Happiness of finding all
well. — Sally joins in grateful Remembrance
of your many Civilities & Kindnesses to us,
at your House & on the Road; and in best
Wishes of every Felicity to you & yours. Our
Respects to good M^{rs} Baceache, the Colonel and
your other Children. By next Post you will
hear from M^{rs} Foxcroft & me; he presents his
Compliments. I am, with sincerest Esteem
and Affection,

Dear Sir

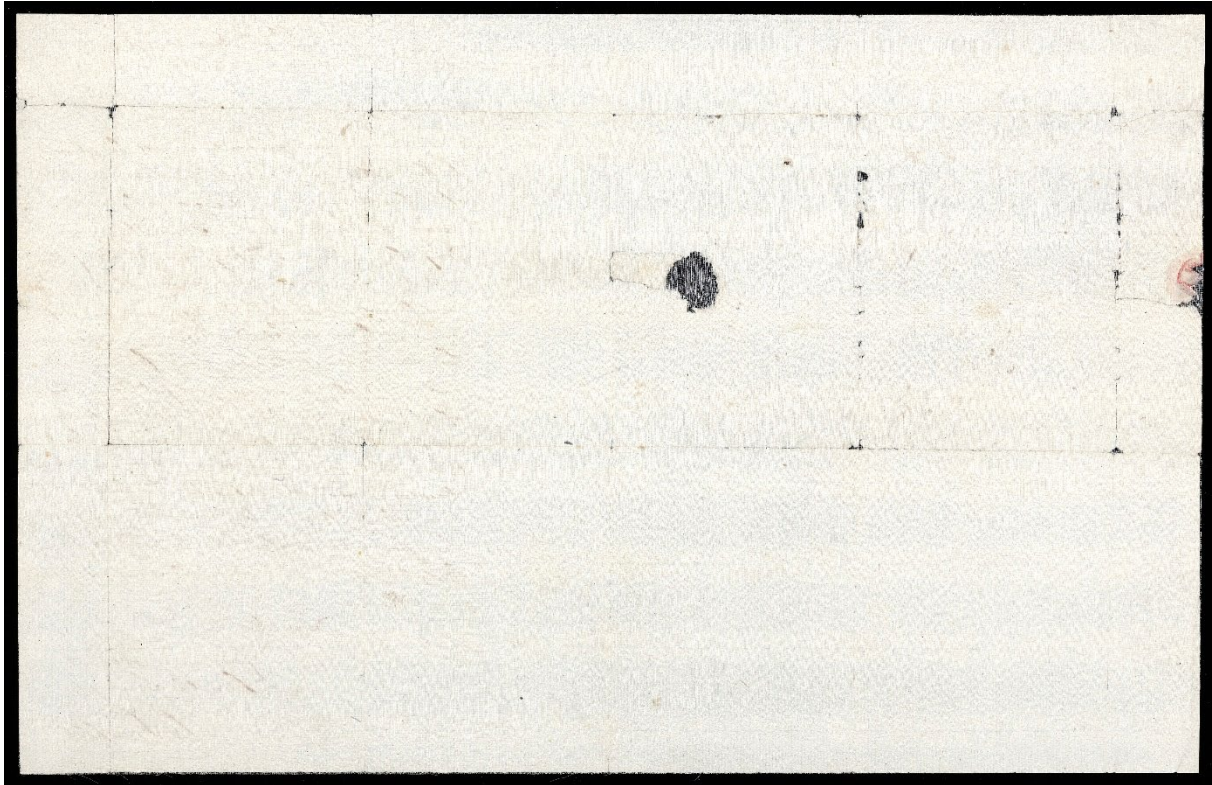
Your most obedient
Humble Servant

B. Franklin

10 Nov 1763
Philadelphia

Beinecke
Rare Book
and
Manuscript
Library, Yale
University.

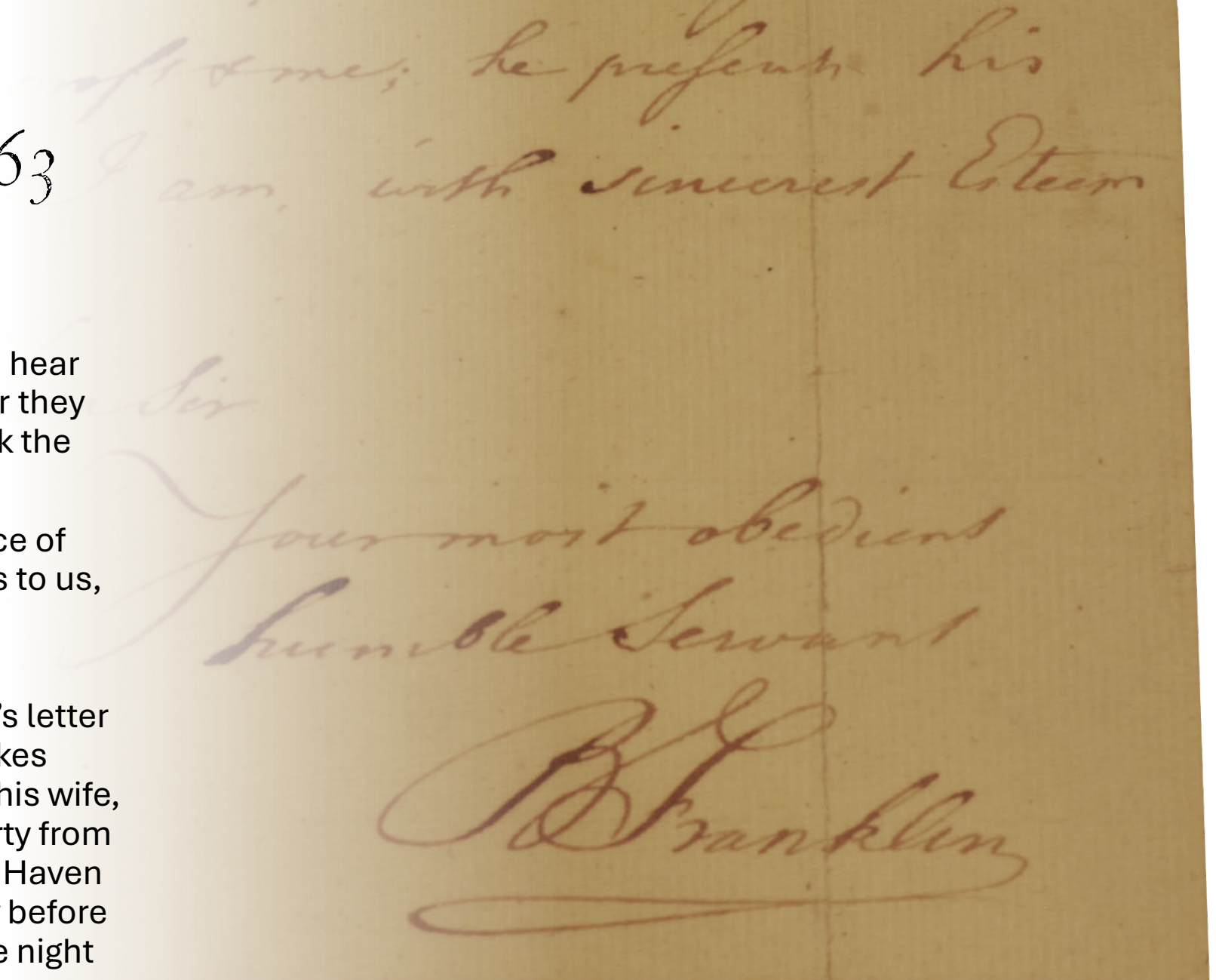
10 November 1763 Provenance



- Mrs. Harold McKinnon, San Francisco
- Lineal descendent of Joshua Babcock according to “New Franklin Letters” by Leonard W. Labaree
- “Six of the eight known letters from Franklin to Babcock are now in the Library of Babcock's alma mater. If he could have been told that anything of this sort would happen, he would have been astonished and vastly pleased.”

10 November 1763 trip

- Your Goodnature will be pleas'd to hear that your Guests went on well after they left you. We got early into New York the next Morning...
- Sally joins in grateful Remembrance of your many Civilities and Kidnesses to us, at your House and on the Road...
- Franklin Papers Annotation "This statement, in conjunction with BF's letter to Jane Mecom (sister), Nov 7, makes clear that Babcock, and probably his wife, had accompanied the Franklin party from Westerly to New London and New Haven and then for another day's journey before they separated on October 30, one night away from New York City"



10 November 1763 Westerly Postmaster



- “By next Post you will hear from Mr. Foxcroft & me; he presents his Compliments”
- “In this letter Franklin describes the rest of the journey to Philadelphia and clearly confirms what had been only surmised before, that it was on this visit to Westerly that, as joint Deputy Postmaster General of America, he had offered Babcock the position of Postmaster at Westerly, to which Franklin and his associate John Foxcroft commissioned his friend soon” “New Franklin Letters” by Leonard W. Labaree

Sotheby's

- Selections from The Jay T. Snider Collection of Benjamin Franklin

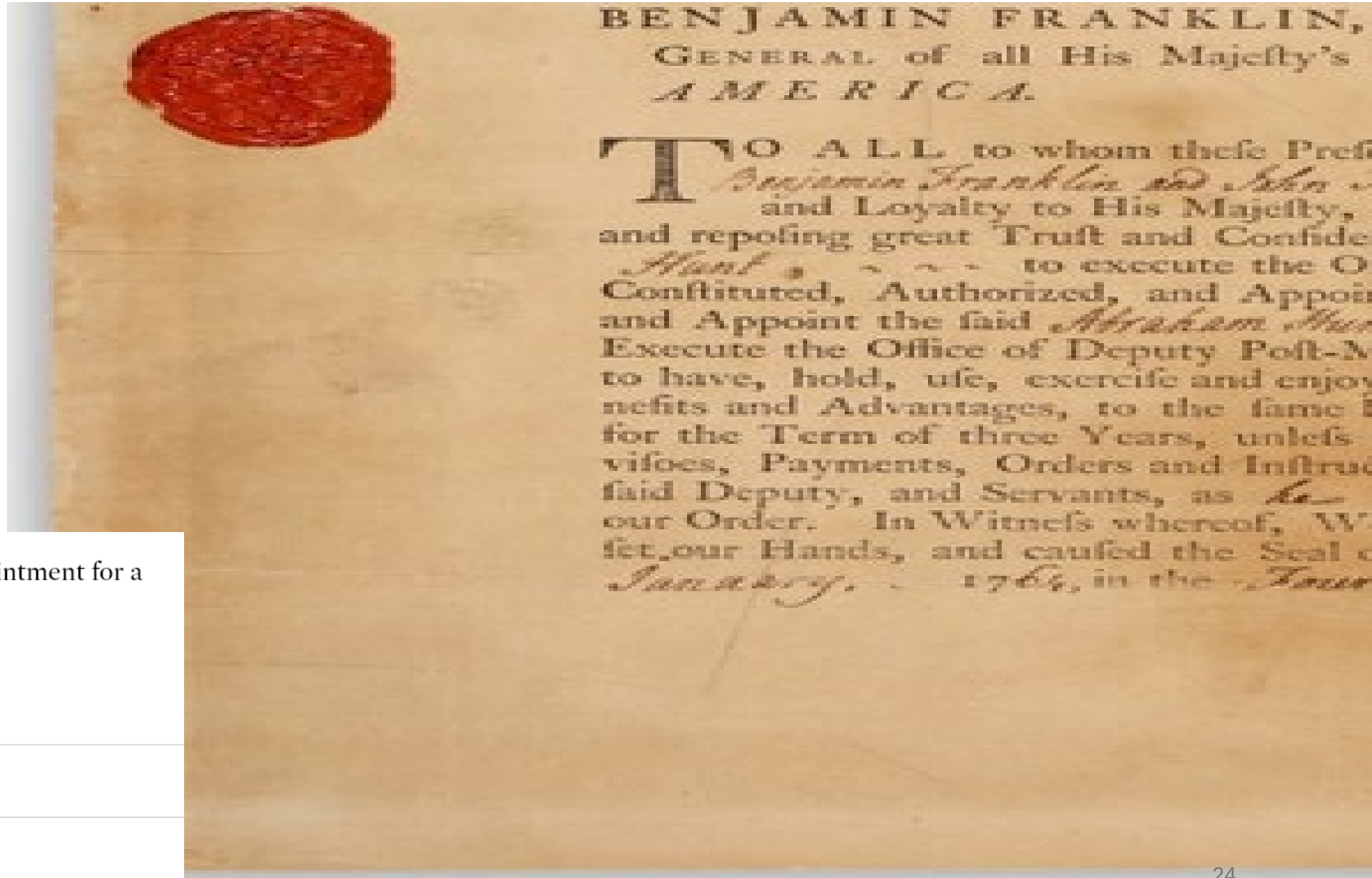
Benjamin Franklin | An appointment for a Deputy Postmaster

GP [New York Gantry Point Warehouse](#)

Auction Closed
June 24, 05:04 PM EDT

Estimate
18,000 - 25,000 USD

Lot Sold
40,960 USD



Westerly Post Office 1772

From the Post Office at Westerly to New Port
At 1.8 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Single ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Sums Due
2 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ : 2.16
April 23 1772 For Joshua
Babcock Esq.
James Helmes Jun^r

From Post-Office Westerly to Post-Office N Port
At 1.8 2 Sing^l 2 1.8 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Sums due
2.16
May 7. 1772
Babcock

1658
Dear Sir,

London, Feb. 26. 1770

It is a long time since I have had the Pleasure of a Line from you; indeed I have not deserved it; for I am a Debtor on Ac^t of several of your Favours that remain unanswered. The Truth is, I have too much Writing to do. It confines me so much, that I can scarcely find time ^{for} sufficient Bodily Exercise to keep me in Health. Hence I grow more and more averse to Writing; and sometimes almost wish I had never learnt to write. The consequence is, that when I have many Letters to answer, I take the Liberty of postponing those to Friends on whose Goodness in excusing me I can most rely. I never fail, however, of enquiring after you and yours of every one I meet with that can give me Information, and I was glad to hear by your Son, that you continue well and prosperous.

I wish I could send you an Account by this Opportunity of the Redress of all our Grievances by Parliament. But tho' some here are sanguine enough to

Joshua Babcock Esq

26 February 1770

London, Feb. 26. 1770

- “The Truth is, I have too much Writing to do. It confines me so much, that I can scarcely find time for sufficient Bodily Exercise to keep me in Health.”
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26 February 1770

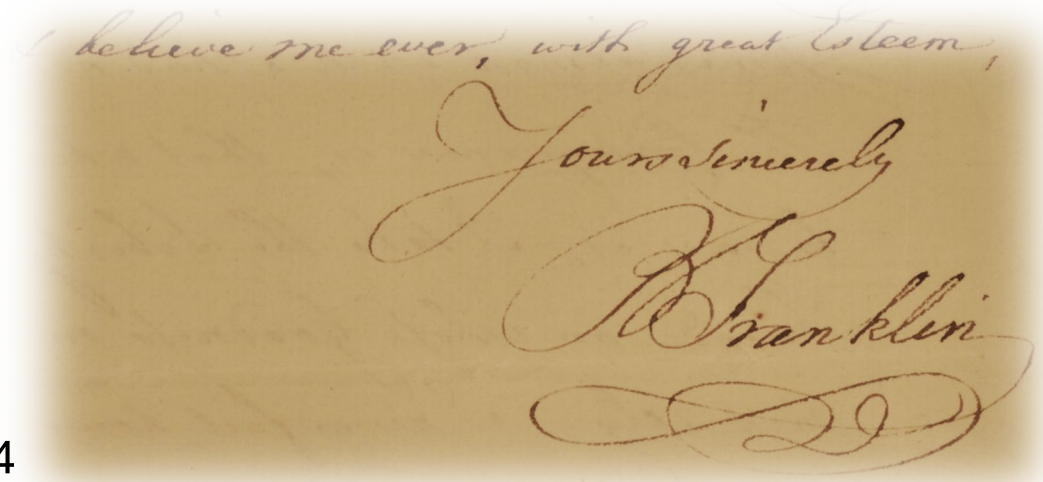
"I wish I could send you an Account by this Opportunity of the Redress of all our Grievances by Parliament. But tho' some here are sanguine enough to expect it this Session, I cannot say I think they have much Foundation for their Hopes. We have lately lost out of the Cabinet almost every Man that was in the least favourably dispos'd towards America; and it will be strange if our Relief should come spontaneously from our Adversaries."

to expect it this Session, I cannot say I think they have much Foundation for their Hopes. We have lately lost out of the Cabinet almost every Man that was in the least favourably dispos'd towards America; and it will be strange if our Relief should come spontaneously from our Adversaries.

Be so good as to make my Respects acceptable to Mrs. Babcock, remember me affectionately to the Colonel, & believe me ever, with great Esteem,

*Yours sincerely
B Franklin*

1763 to 1774 Context



- Franklin in London **1757 – 1762** and **1764 – 1774**
 - Postmaster General of British America 1753 – 1774
 - Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly member 1751 – 1764
- Stamp Act 1765 – direct tax on British colonies in America required many printed items to be made on paper from London with revenue stamps (legal documents, magazine, playing cards)
 - Franklin witness in House of Commons Feb 11 – 13, 1766 for repeal
 - repealed 1766 by Duties in American Colonies Act
- Quartering Acts 1765 – Colonies required to provide food and housing for British Army
- Townsend Acts/Duties 1766/7 – Taxes and regulations on colonies
 - Repealed March 1770 except tax on tea
- Boston Massacre – March 1770
 - Franklin didn't learn of it for weeks after
- Franklin's perspective changes from trying to make relations with Britain work to believing separation necessary
 - 1764 returned to London as anti-proprietorship (Penn family) and pro-monarchy
 - 1774 returned to Philadelphia as pro-independence

13 January 1772

It was with great Pleasure I learnt by Mr. Marchant, that you and Mrs. Babcock and all your good Family continue well and happy. I hope I shall find you all in the same State when I next come your Way, and take Shelter as often heretofore under your hospitable Roof. The Colonel, I am told, continues an active and able Farmer, the most honourable of all Employments, in my Opinion as being the most useful in itself, and rendring the Man most independent. My Namesake, his Son, will soon I hope be able to drive the Plough for him.

Following, but perhaps some of them are of later Date tho' ascribed to him, for to me there seems too great a Quantity & Variety of Ceremonies & Prayers to be directed at once by one Man. In the Scotch Church they have increased gradually in a Course of Ages to their present Bulk. Those who added new ones from time to time found it necessary to give them Authority by Pretences of their Antiquity. The Books of Moses indeed, if all written by him, which some doubt, are an Exception to this Observation.

With great Esteem, I am ever Dear Sir
Your affectionate Friend & humble Servant
A. B. M. H. M.

To Babcock
Dear Sir
47 London Jan. 12. 1772

I have with great Pleasure & Honour by Mr. Marchant, that you with Mr. Babcock and all your good Family continue well & happy. I hope I shall find you all in the same State when I next see the Reverend of ~~you~~ come your Way, and take the ^{first} Shelter under your hospitable Roof. The Colonel, I am told, ~~is~~ ^{an} active and able Farmer, the most honourable of all ^{active} ~~the most~~ ^{useful} ~~in itself~~ ^{and rendering} ~~the Man most~~ ^{independent.} ~~My Namesake, his Son,~~ ^{I have lately read in your thro' Ireland} ~~will soon I hope be able to drive the Plough for him.~~ ^{and Scotland, in these Countries a small Part}

^{of the Society are Landlords, great Noblemen, and} ~~I have lately read in your thro' Ireland~~ ^{Gentlemen, extremely opulent, living in the high} ~~and Scotland, in these Countries a small Part~~ ^{est Affluence & Magnificence: The Bulk of the} ~~of the Society are Landlords, great Noblemen, and~~ ^{People, Servants, especially poor, living in the most} ~~Gentlemen, extremely opulent, living in the high~~ ^{sordid ~~and~~ Wretchedness in Houles of Mud & Straw, and} ~~est Affluence & Magnificence: The Bulk of the~~ ^{cloathed only in Rags. I thought often of the Misery} ~~People, Servants, especially poor, living in the most~~ ^{of New England, where every Man is a Freeholder,} ~~sordid ~~and~~ Wretchedness in Houles of Mud & Straw, and~~ ^{has}

13 January 1772

I have lately made a Tour thro' Ireland and Scotland. In these Countries a small Part of the Society are Landlords, great Noblemen and Gentlemen, extreamly opulent, living in the highest Affluence and Magnificence: The Bulk of the People Tenants, extreamly poor, living in the most sordid Wretchedness in dirty Hovels of Mud and Straw, and cloathed only in Rags. I thought often of the Happiness of New England, where every Man is a Freeholder, has a Vote in publick Affairs, lives in a tidy warm House, has plenty of good Food and Fewel, with whole Cloaths from Head to Foot, the Manufactory perhaps of his own Family. Long may they continue in this Situation!

a Vote in publick Affairs, lives in a tidy warm House, has plenty of good Food and Fewel, with whole Cloaths from Head to Foot, the Manufactory perhaps of his own Family. Long may they continue in this Situation! But if they should ever among the Trade of these frontiers, I can put them in a way to obtain a share of it. Let them with the generosity of the People of Ireland, lease the Year round or Potatoes & Butter with ~~the~~ without. Think, then may they their harbours export Beef, Butter & Lard, let them with the generosity of the common People of the land go ~~the~~ fast, then may they make large Exports in Hides and Pickering. And if they will be content to send Rags like the Weavers of England, they may make Cloth & Linen for all Parts of the World. Further, if they my countrymen should ever wish for the Honours of having among them a Gentleman universally wealthy, let them sell their Farms & pay such Rents, the rest of the Landlords will sell what of the Tenants is disposed, who will soon become poor, dirty, & ~~poor~~ subject in spirit. And I never ~~was~~ ^{from in} the American Colonies, but was to form my Judgment of Civil Society by what I have lately seen. I should never advise a Nation of a large, to admit of Civilisation: For I assure you, that in the Possession & Enjoyment of the Comforts of Life, compared to these People every Indian is a Gentleman. For the Effect of this kind of Civil Society seems only to be, the ~~and~~ depressing & multiplying below the Savage State that a few may be raised above it.

My best Wishes attend you & yours, being ever with great Esteem Dear Sir,
Your most obed^t & most hum^l Serv^t
R. L.

15 February 1774 Babcock Writes Franklin

American Philosophical Society Scope and Contents note

- Westerly. Concerning the fate in Boston of the India Company's 342 chests of tea; many towns in the Colonies entering into agreements and forming resolutions to quit all dutied tea. Question of appointing an agent for their little colony [Rhode Island]; inconsiderable salary; if, however, Franklin would forget his real dignity and be so unconscious of his intrinsic worth as to deign to write Governor Wanton, feels sure he would be solicited to accept the agency. He is often toasted in Connecticut. Tells him of a noted subterraneous prison (once a mine) in Simsbury, appropriated for the confinement of felons; calls it a hell.
- This is one of two extant letters from him. The other, May 31, 1778 (APS), confirms the impression given by this one that Babcock loved words not wisely but too well.

Experience has taught, that it is our Duty to rest quietly in the Absence of One of the greatest Usefulness, for whom We have the strongest Affection, whose Absence is as necessary as productive of our best Emolument. In Fine Sir that You may long very long continue as a Guardian Angel the Conservator of the Rights Libertys and Immunitys of N. America, that your Weight and Importance may rise in Proportion to your Years and Experience is the sincere Wish of her every true Son, and of no One with more Truth and Cordiality than of your most obedient most affectionate and most humble Servant

Josh Babcock

31 May 1778

To You, Dear Doctor

- Joshua Babcock to Benjamin Franklin

Scope and Contents Note: Westerly, Rhode Island. Means taken for the defense of Rhode Island against the enemy; slaves emancipated to serve in battalions. General Spenser's abortive attempts against the enemy.

Exorbitant prices charged for the necessaries of life. Does Franklin know any better expedient for mending the currency than severe taxation? Congratulates him on the negotiation of the treaties with France. The King and Queen of France and his Excellency daily toasted in the political circles of America. Concerning Franklin's address to Lord North on behalf of his captive countrymen. Pays him many compliments. (American Philosophical Society Description)

American Philosophical Society

Westerly 31 May 1778
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To You, Dear Doctor, amidst the Glare of Applause (augmented with the Consciousness of having well executed the high & important Trust reposed in You, had I the Misfortune to have known Nothing of your Excellency) should have been puzzled, in what Mode to have made my Addresses, but that am assur'd that Titles & Eclat & Panegyric have not the Weight of a Feather, in your Estimation, am therefore under no Kind of Sollicitude in Writing You from this State; one fourth Part of which has been in Possession of the Enemy, for a Year past without any Molestation: an Invasion of Providence daily dreaded, some feeble Attempts they have made at & near Point-Judith, yet such have been the Vigilance & indefatigable Duty of the Inhabitants in Arms, that 'till the Militia & the Marum-List have, during the last Summer been constantly on Guard by Reliefs, till at most Christmas, & half that Quantity during the chief of the past Winter; since which our Gen^l Assembly have made an Act for the Emancipation of such Slaves, as shall voluntarily enlist into the Service during the War, their Master's to be paid for each not exceeding 400 Dollars, this noble Battalion well uniformed and well conducted, bid fair for Service. The Smallness of this State, expos'd by the large Extent of Sea-Coast has subjected it to the Attacks of the Enemy beyond any of her Sisters, many Vessels (& always when within Reach of our Cannon) have been sav'd, which the Enemy have push'd towards the shore, who have been compell'd to retire with Shame & Disappointment. The two continental Frigates 32 Guns

31 May 1778

able and most obedient Servant
Joseph Babcock

Guns each, built at Providence, have got out by Night, the Enemy Watchfulness notwithstanding, tho' each, as they say'd gave it rec^d. Fire, with all their Fury.

You must have heard of Gen^l Spencer's projected but successful Expedition last Year against the Enemy on Rhode Island, which after 30 Days Preparation (the Time the Troops were intended for) proved abortive, whereupon the old Trojan, that he might not be plagued with an Enquiry, obtain'd Leave to resign, whom the State of Connec^t have left out of the List of Counsellors, succeeded in this by a good Man, viz. Mr. Hooper, in the other by Gen^l Sullivan, who by being supported, we hope, will make a Figure.

The exorbitant Prices, the necessary Articles of Life are swollen up to, have engaged the United States to make an Experiment by severest Penalties to make Water run up Stream, at Fixing by Oaths & Trines, Prices, which the Law binds not to violate, this you know will bind the honest, but how shall we force in the rest, i. e. the Bulk of Mankind? Of a Piece this, with Doct^r Eliot's Negroe's working all one Sunday, piling up his Fence, as high as he could reach, to shut out the Squirrels from his Corn-Fields.

Connec^t Assembly in their present Session have appointed a Com^{tee} to treat with Massachusetts & this State to press us into the same Restriction they themselves had previously given into, which had invariably adhered to. This State really meant to have adopted the same Plan, but waited for Massach^{tts} to give the Lead, on which we always determin'd to follow Suit, & conjectured that we shall join the same the second Time, having been luckless the first. Can You recommend any better Expedient to mend the Currency which

Which, excepting a little Change, is entirely continental; than that of severe Taxation?

You must not confound our highest warmest Congratulations on your negotiating the Treaties of these States with the Court of Paris, which have transcended our most sanguine Expectations, wherein the most Christian King by his magnanimous heroic Concessions has — also immortalized his Name, who in Concert with the Queen of France is daily toasted in the golddest Circles in America, in Company with your Excellency.

Gov^r Cook having early noticed our Gen^l Assembly of his Resolution to resign, Deft^r Gov^r Bradford and your old Favourite Husband were the Candidates, but Mr. Green gained a small Majority — You know the honest Soul.

Your Address to Lord North, December last in Behalf of our captiv'd Countrymen suffering under infamous British Barbarity, exhibits in the most striking Light the tenderest Feelings of Humanity, and we hear has shamed them the Enemy into a partial but reluctant Reformation.

Suffer me now for a Moment to figure in Idea, the Situation of One, condemn'd to Silence, against whom Solicitor Gen^l Wedderburn was bitterly inveighing in the most haughty insolent Tone in his Philippsic Interrogatories & Taunts, on whom the American Philosopher could then only look down with Sovereign Contempt. — and the present Feelings for having obtained Freedom and the sacred Rights of Mankind for 3 Millions of his Countrymen, then threatened by the haughtiest corruptest Power in Europe with the most abject Slavery & ruthless Vengeance. Or is the Court of London so lost to Reflection, so sunk into Dissipation, as not to be capable to recollect their Fate by incurring the Resentment, the Curse of Mal-treating a Patriot? whose Influence they now must distrustfully feel (if they are not past-Feeling) having roused up the mightiest Powers in Europe to resist.

Respect, amongst other Injuries, this Affront, and whom these are now proud to care as Generous as their Friend and what is more as a Friend to Mankind.

We seem to realize the Golden Age advancing! — May You continue in your Prime (for we find you have not pass'd it, I mean, in the best Sense) till you shall have effectuated for the 13 United States the most honorable Peace and have formed a better Plan of Government and a better Police than ever in Rome ever known. May you patiently bear the Steppes the Showers of Applause from this your native Country, and later on late either enter into the Miltonium or into the beatific Region as you be most conformable to your philosophic Casuistry.

I have the Honor to be with every Sentiment of Gratitude and Respect your best, most humble and most obedient Servant.

Joseph Babcock

Respectfully
His Excellency Gov^r Franklin

14 October 1858

Narragansett Weekly, Westerly RI



A LETTER FROM "PEQUOT."
To the Editors of the Narragansett Weekly :

Westerly Library Local History Collection online

and convenience to the apartment. I also trod reverently in the chamber where often had slept DOCTOR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, who, in his journeys from Philadelphia to Boston and back, always timed his stopping places, so as to spend a night, and sometimes days, with his old friend, Dr. Babcock, who was himself a learned man, and for many years Chief Justice of Rhode Island. Tradition has ventured to assert that WASHINGTON himself had also honored this house by his presence. This assertion I had no means of verifying. It may have been so, as Dr. B. was one of the most prominent patriots of the times that tried men's souls. I should not have noticed a secret passage adjoining the principal dormitory, had not the obliging hostess called our attention to it.) Who can tell to what uses the patriotism or fears of our forefathers, a hundred years ago, may have put such places of concealment.

Franklin and Babcock Letters Summary

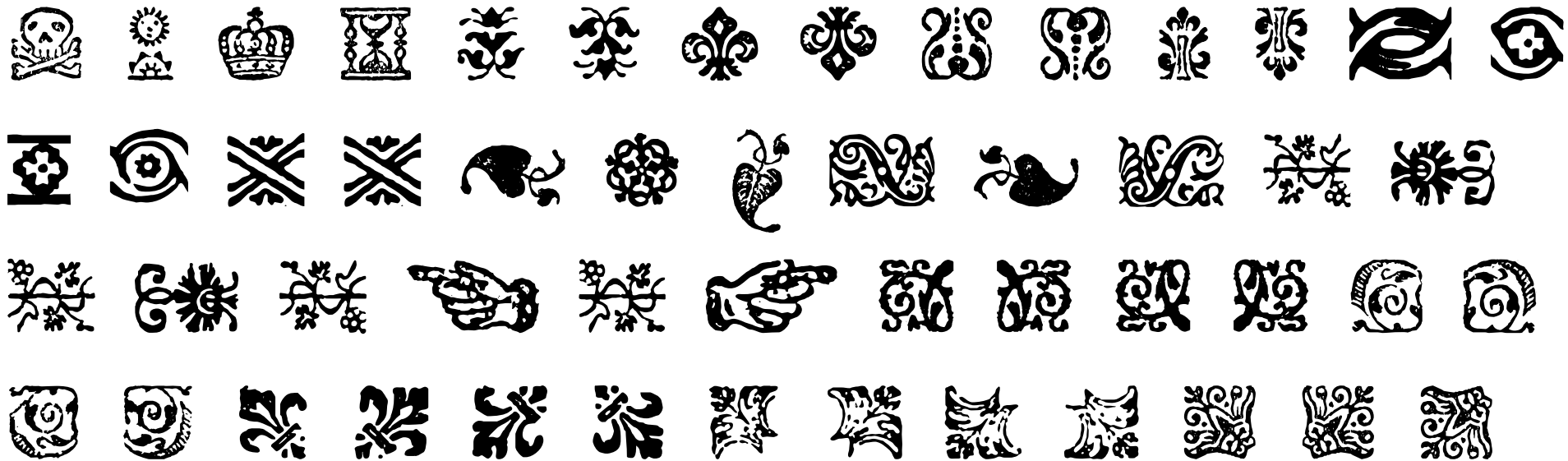
- Eight letters from Franklin to Joshua Babcock from 1755 – 1772
- Two letters to Franklin from Babcock 1774 and 1778
- Friendship between the two families and friends in Westerly – Franklin, his daughter Sally and son William, Babcock, his wife, sons Harry and Luke, the Wards and others
- Original sources for historical events – medicinal Tartarian rhubarb, Franklin sleeping at Babcock's house, appointment as Westerly postmaster
- Letters with addresses artfully formed by folding paper sheets
- History (provenance) of letters

Photo Credits

- September 1, 1755 – original image from Yale Library; reverse image photo by James Karpeichik
- 10 December 1761 – Betty-Jo Cugini-Greene (2 images), Yale Library (2 images)
- 16 December 1762 – C GEN_MSS_1457_B 4_F 237-4 Yale Collection of Benjamin Franklin Manuscripts. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 5 September 1763 – photos by James Karpeichik, Extra-illustrations in James M. Beck's The Constitution of the United States, 1763-1924. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University (Autograph letter signed)
- 18 October 1763 - Photos of cover and letter courtesy of Special Collection West Chester University
- 10 November 1763 – letter and back Yale Collection of Benjamin Franklin Manuscripts. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. photos by James Karpeichik
- 26 February 1770 – photos by James Karpeichik
- 13 January 1772 – American Philosophical Society.
- 15 February 1774 – American Philosophical Society.
- 31 May 1778 - Joshua Babcock to Benjamin Franklin, 1778 May 31, f5e8d850-4f45-45cd-b0e0-69bbdb8c86d1. American Philosophical Society.

P₂₂ Franklin Caslon

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n O o P p Q q R r S s T t U u V v W w X x Y y Z z



THANKS!!

Dear Friend

Philad Nov. 10. 1763

Westerly 31 May 1778

①

To You, Dear Doct.^r, amidst the glare of Applause (augmented with the Consciousness of having well executed the high & important Trust reposed in You, had

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