The Educational Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin and its Effect upon Modern Secondary Education

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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

AND

ITS EFFECT UPON MODERN SECONDARY EDUCATION

by

Emmett E. Givens
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Emmett E. Givens
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Franklin for Education

In education as in every other phase of life, the thing that most impresses one is Franklin's constant study and singleness of purpose to promote the welfare of human society.

As a result of having come to a knowledge of languages through his own efforts, Franklin was led to believe in a certain orderly progress from the nearest and easiest to the most remote and difficult. His whole life bore testimony to the value he placed on the practical things and it was upon this phase of education that he laid most emphasis.

Definition of Problem

The purpose of this study is to set forth, as accurately as available, information concerning the philosophy of Benjamin Franklin, and its influence down through the years, upon modern secondary education.

While secondary education is of primary concern, much of the development of elementary education is included. The two were so interwoven in the early days of education in this country that a separate treatment is almost impossible if a true picture is to be portrayed.
Source of Data

The information contained in this thesis is based upon secondary source materials. It would be supererogatory to list the numerous works consulted, therefore I simply mention a few of the most useful, even though some excellent titles must be omitted.


*The Educational Views of Benjamin Franklin* by Thomas Woody was perhaps the most useful source on Franklin's life, his methods of self-education and pertinent points of his philosophy. Pepper's *Facsimile Report* was the most helpful information relative to the founding of the Academy. Franklin's *Autobiography* gives valuable information on all points of his life. The other reference listed in
the bibliography have been referred to repeatedly and have been used as sources of information.

Procedure

In the preparation of this thesis, the writer did extensive research and reading in the references referred to in the bibliography, from which he made notes and took quotations. He also checked Franklin's beliefs, statements and program for education with the prevailing trends and philosophy of educational practices today. The information collected, furnished the background and materials around which the thesis was constructed.

Extensive quotations from, and specific references to Franklin's written and published statements in his various works are included for illustrative purposes only, and to show the relations of his theories, beliefs, and recommendations, to those which are pertinent in current educational theories and trends.
CHAPTER II

Sketch of Franklin's Life

Benjamin Franklin, American printer, writer, patriot, diplomat and physicist, was born in Boston, Massachusetts on January 6 (old style), 1706, of Old English Protestant stock. He was the son of a tallow-chandler, Josiah Franklin, and his second wife, Abiah Folger Franklin, the daughter of Peter Folger, ("a goodly, learned Englishman, who was one of the first settlers of New England"). His father, Josiah, was a man of good constitution, of pleasing voice, skilled a little in music and drawing, a mechanical genius, and one whose judgment and advice was sought and respected by the leaders of town and church, as well as by private individuals. Benjamin was the fifteenth child and tenth son of his father's seventeen children, and as stated in his autobiography, "the youngest son for five generations back.

The family was in moderate circumstances, like most of the struggling New Englanders of his day, but, while the parents possessed little wealth, they lived, lovingly together, and by constant labor and industry, brought up their large family in a manner befitting their station. Franklin's father liked often to have some sensible friend.

or neighbor at his table, and took care to start some useful topic of conversation, which might tend to improve the minds of his children, by this means, turning their attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life. He said of his parents: "He was a pious and prudent man; she, a discreet and virtuous woman."

Franklin's forebearers were practical men and according to the customs of England, the sons of the family were apprenticed out to learn a trade. The eldest sons of the family had been blacksmiths for generations back, while Benjamin's father and an uncle served apprenticeships in the dyeing trade.

Reared in such an atmosphere, Franklin received training in simplicity, industry, and frugality, which served to influence his entire life.

Early Life And Education

At an early age Franklin gave signs of budding talents and aptitudes for learning, so much so that friends of the family predicted he would become a good scholar. In his autobiography, he states he did not remember when he could not read.

At the age of eight, he was put to grammar school, his father intending to devote him, as the tithe of his sons,

---

to the service of the church. The boy's readiness in learning to read and the opinion of friends encouraged his father in this purpose, since it was a prevailing tradition in those days that bright boys should become ministers. Benjamin continued at the grammar school not quite a year, but he progressed rapidly in his studies and was prepared to enter the third class by the end of the year.

In view of the large size of his family, Benjamin's father could not afford the expense of a college education for him, and considering the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain, he altered his intention of devoting the lad to the church. He withdrew the boy from the grammar school, and sent him to the school of one Mr. George Brownwell to learn writing and arithmetic. In writing he did well, but failed in arithmetic. However, he later mastered this subject by himself with the aid of the renowned book of Crocker.

At the age of ten, Franklin was taken home to assist his father in his business of tallow-chandler and soap-boiler, a business his father took up on his arrival in New England. He continued in his father's business for two years, but the father, discerning how distasteful the trade was to his son, and fearful lest he run away to sea (as his brother had done), took him on walks to visit men of different trades, in an effort to determine the trade toward which Benjamin inclined. At last the cutler's trade was decided
upon and he was accordingly sent to one of his relatives
to learn this trade. He did not remain in this apprentice-
ship but a short time due to the fact that a fee was charged
which displeased the elder Franklin so much that Benjamin
again was sent home.

In his autobiography, Franklin states that he was
generally a leader of the boys, especially in a boat or a
 canoe and that he also often led them into scrapes. He
relates an instance when he persuaded his comrades to use
stones intended for a new house near a marsh to construct
a wharf upon which they could stand when fishing for min-
nows. The surprised workmen, finding the stones removed
next morning, soon discovered the perpetrators of the
deed and made complaint to their fathers, who forthwith
proceeded to correct the youths. Benjamin pleaded the use-
fulness of the work done by them, but his father convinced
him that nothing was useful which was not honest. This in-
cident, Franklin relates, made a lasting impression on him.

Although he had less than two years of formal schooling,
Franklin, through self-education, became one of the most
learned men of his age. From a child, he had been fond of
reading and any little money he obtained was spent for books.
His father's collection consisted chiefly of books on pol-
emic divinity, but he states that he read most of them.
However, in later life, he continues, he regretted the fact
that at a time when he had such a thirst for knowledge,
more proper books had not fallen, at an earlier date, along

his way. If young Franklin did not fully digest the contents
3. Ford, Paul Leicester, The Many-sided Franklin. The Cen-
tury Co., New York, 1899.
of these volumes, their serious nature and the substantial
devoted portions directed his mind into these
deep and serious channels which touched so many sides of
human life. Franklin reports that he was pleased with
Pilgrim's Progress and bought a collection of Bunyan's works,
which he later sold to purchase a cheap set of R. Burton's
Historical Collections, which seemed to have profitted him
more. He read abundantly, Plutarch's Lives and considered
the time well spent. Defoe's Essay on Projects and Dr.
Mather's Essay to Do Good, Franklin claims, gave him a turn
of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal
future events of his life. Chancing to procure a volume of
Addison's Spectator, Franklin set himself again to master
its style. A book Franklin most frequently mentioned as
influencing the trend of his life was Mather's Bonifacius,
and Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed
by those who desire to Answer the Great End of Life, and
to do Good while they live. The Memorabilia of Xenophon and
the writings of Collins and Shaftesbery also influenced his
thinking, so far as religion was concerned.

With such a bent for books, and since he did not have
the opportunity to pursue further a formal education, the
most promising apprenticeship open to Franklin, appeared to

4. Woody, Thomas, op. cit., p. 6
5. Ibid., p. 7.
be that of printing. Accordingly, in his twelfth year he apprenticed himself until his twentieth year, to his brother James who had just returned to Boston from England with a new printing outfit. He became proficient in a short time and a very useful hand to his brother. Here he had greater access to books and continued his program of self-education, often sitting up most of the night to read.

Being ambitious to become a good English writer, he spent much time at night and on Sundays in trying to improve his style by various exercises in both prose and verse. He composed some verses and his brother, thinking that he might make some money from them, encouraged Benjamin to write occasional ballads, which he printed and later sent Benjamin around the streets to sell. Franklin spoke of these ballads as "wretched stuff"; but one, The Lighthouse Tragedy (an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters,) sold wonderfully well, since this was a recent event and had made a great sensation. Franklin states that this flattered his vanity. His father discouraged him in this endeavor by ridiculing his ballads, telling him verse-makers were generally beggars.

Franklin's brother, James, in 1721, began to print a newspaper, New England Courant (the second paper in America) and after having worked in composing the type and printing the sheets, Franklin was sent through the streets to deliver

6. Ibid., p. 8
the papers to the customers. Some of James's friends, ingenious men, amused themselves by writing articles for the Courant, which made it much in demand. Benjamin, being desirous of trying his hand in writing an article, but being still a lad and feeling sure his brother would not print anything he wrote, disguised his handwriting and put an anonymous paper under the door of the printing-house at night. The paper met with approval. This encouraged Franklin to write several other papers which he conveyed to the press in like manner. He used the non de plume, Silence Dogood, representing himself as the widow of a rural preacher. In these articles, he criticised the privileged classes, the clergy, the collegians, and the government, in the manner of certain London papers of the day and in keeping with other contributors to the Courant. Franklin was sixteen at the time. During the summer of 1722, fourteen of these articles appeared, in the second of which, Franklin summed up his own character as follows, showing how firmly he, in the beginning of his career, was attached to certain principles to which he adhered throughout life:

"I shall conclude with my own character, which (one would think) I should be best able to give. Know then, that I am an enemy to vice, and a friend to virtue. I am one of an extensive charity, and a great forgiver of private injuries; a hearty lover of the clergy and all good men, and a mortal enemy to arbitrary government and unlimited power. I am naturally very jealous for the rights and liberties of my country; and the least appearance of an encroachment on those
invaluable privileges, is apt to make my blood boil exceedingly. I have likewise, a natural inclination to observe and reprove the faults of others, at which I have an excellent faculty. I speak of this by way of warning to all such whose offences shall come under my cognizance, for I never intend to wrap my talent in a napkin.*

The identity of the author of these articles, which brought so much criticism to the Courant, was kept a secret until Franklin divulged it to his brother some time later. As a result of this criticism, James was haled before the Assembly and imprisoned. Here he remained for a period of one month during which time the management of the paper was left to Benjamin.

Upon his release from prison, James was ordered not to print the paper any longer. To evade the order, it was continued under the name of Benjamin Franklin. The paper continued for a short time under this arrangement but things did not go well. Disputes began to arise between the two brothers and the situation became so unpleasant that Benjamin decided to leave the shop and launch out for himself.

Not being able to find employment in other print shops of the town, Franklin decided to leave Boston. He, therefore, decided to go to New York as this was the nearest place with a printing house and the most probable opportunity for employment. Not having any money, it became necessary for him to sell some of his books to get funds to help defray the expenses of the trip. With the small amount obtained and with the aid of a friend, he engaged passage on a sloop.

and left secretly for New York.

In three days he reached his destination. Here he found himself three hundred miles from home, knowing not a soul and without even a letter of identification or recommendation. Still he had the courage to seek work, and offered his services to a printer, William Bradford, by name. Mr. Bradford had sufficient help but he advised Franklin that his son in Philadelphia had recently lost, by death, his chief hand and that he might obtain work from him.

With this information, Franklin set out, by boat, for Philadelphia, and after a trying journey, reached his destination only to find the place had just been filled. Bradford's son, Andrew, received him civilly and told him of another printer by the name of Kelmer who had recently opened a shop in Philadelphia and might be in need of help. Again he was disappointed. Kelmer had nothing available for him at the time, but sent for him a few days later.

Franklin found Bradford and Kelmer poorly qualified for their trade, and believing neither capable of meeting the needs of a growing city, he began to think that he might, after awhile, become an independent printer with a shop of his own.

Sir William Keith, Governor of the province, became very much interested in young Franklin at this time and encouraged him to go into the printing business for himself. So great was his interest that he promised to procure for Franklin, public business and do any other service in his

power to make his undertaking a success.

The greatest problem facing Franklin, however, at this time was funds with which to equip his shop. Feeling that his father would be interested in his success, he decided to appeal to him for this assistance, so with a letter from the Governor, he returned to Boston to present the proposition to his father and seek from him the assistance needed. In this he was again disappointed. His father considered him too young to be trusted, with the management of a business so seriously important and told him that by steady industry and prudent parsimony, he might, through his own efforts, save up a sufficient amount by his twenty-first birthday to open up his business; that if Franklin came near the amount, he would then help out with the rest.

Franklin returned to Philadelphia and revealed to Sir William the result of his conference with his father, whereupon he was told by Sir William that his father was too prudent, but rather than have him disappointed, that he (Sir William) would set him up in business, and Franklin could repay him at such a time when he was able. He suggested that Franklin himself go to Europe and there select the necessary equipment, also to make the acquaintance of and establish correspondence with some of the leading book-sellers there. Keith promised Franklin that he would furnish him letters of recommendation to his friends and a letter of credit for the necessary funds, for the purchasing of printing equipment.

9. Ibid., p. 12
These papers, however, were not turned over to Franklin before sailing. He was told that they would be handed to him on board the ship; later he was told that he would get them upon his arrival in Europe; but they were never received. To his dismay, he learned from a fellow passenger that Sir William habitually made promises which he failed to keep.

Franklin immediately got work at Palmer's, in London, a famous printing house, where he remained a year, and then at Watts where he stayed for the remainder of his eighteen-month's sojourn abroad.

Having grown tired of London and being offered a job as clerk by a Mr. Denham, a merchant who was returning to Philadelphia, Franklin accepted the position and set sail for his homeland. They landed in Philadelphia on October 11, 1726. Mr. Denham died the following February, and Franklin returned to work again in Keimer's printing house.

Business Career

In 1728, Franklin and his friend Meredith, with assistance from the latter's father, set up their own shop, but Meredith's father being unable to advance enough money to pay for the equipment, the creditors instituted suit against them and the shop was closed. Later, however, Franklin was fortunate enough to obtain a loan from two of his friends of the Junto; to take over the entire business.
The excellence of his printing brought his office abundant work and this time it seemed that he would succeed.

Franklin's business expanded. In 1732 he began the publication of Poor Richard's Almanac, under the pseudonym of Richard Saunders. This publication, he endeavored to make both entertaining and useful, at which he was very successful. It came to be in great demand, sales averaging 10,000 copies annually, from which he reaped considerable profit. Franklin observed how generally the Almanac was read, so he conceived the idea of using it as a vehicle to convey instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books. Accordingly, he filled the spaces between the usual almanac data with proverbial sentences, chiefly those "which inculcated industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honest." In one issue, published in 1757, he assembled and formed into a connected discourse, proverbs containing the wisdom of many ages and nations, as the harangue of a wise old man, to the people attending an auction. The piece was universally approved and copied in newspapers not only at home but also abroad. Thus, we find the Almanac carrying the name and ideas of Franklin everywhere and bringing him fame and financial success.

In the year, 1732, he acquired from Keimer, for a

11. Ibid., p. 15.
trifle, the Pennsylvania Gazette, which Keimer had been unable to make pay, but to Franklin became extremely profitable.

As business prospered, branch printing-houses were established in other cities. One was established in Charleston, South Carolina, one in New York, and several in other places. All of these branch houses were a success and added nicely to his income. So successful was his business that by 1748, just eighteen years from the time he became sole owner of his own private shop, Franklin was able to dispose of all of his business to his partner, and retire from active work with a comfortable fortune. Primarily, he did not seek wealth, but this came as a result of perseverance, honesty, and frugality. To his mother he wrote, "... the last will come when I would rather have it said, he lived usefully, than he died rich." 13

Public Service

During the years of his business success, Franklin helped to promote other movements and organizations which were destined to be far reaching and of great value to society.

At his suggestion, the members of the Junto placed their books in a common library at the club room. While this proved of great use, some inconvenience occurred for want of due care of them. After about a year the collection

was separated and the books returned to their owners.

At this time (1731), Franklin set on foot his first project of a public nature—that of a subscription library. To do this he drew up proposals, had them put in proper form, and through the aid of his friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with and ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term that the company was to continue. Later a charter was obtained and the library was opened for use. This movement was the mother of all North American subscription libraries. Franklin looked upon this project with great pride. It not only was a means of improvement to himself (reading being the only amusement in which he indulged), but the people in general were helped. Franklin's views are aptly shown in the following quotation, "These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree, to the standard so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges."

Franklin at this time had become one of the most prominent and public-spirited citizens of Philadelphia. Besides forming the Junto Club, which later developed into the American Philosophical Society (1743), of which he was secretary and later president, and donating much towards

the promotion of libraries, he was instrumental in forming
the first police and fire company in the colonies; also a
system of street paving and lighting, and an organized
militia. He published a pamphlet which led to the founding
of the Academy and College, these later developing into the
University of Pennsylvania. His ideas on education and the
new College of Philadelphia also influenced the men con-
cerned with the founding of the University of North Caro-
lina. While the Academy was getting under way (1751),
Franklin promoted the establishment of the Pennsylvania Hos-
pital, the first of its kind in America. He also assisted
in creating the first chartered fire insurance company
which today bears his name.

Incidentally, Franklin had studied science. This
knowledge helped him to devise means for remedying smoking
chimneys; he also invented the Franklin stove, which gave
increased heat with economy of fuel. This, he explained in
a pamphlet, but refused a patent, that it might be free to
all people. In 1749, from experiments with a Lyden jar
(which he improved), he planned the lightning rod, and
gave the name positive and negative to the two types of
force. In 1752, by his great experiment with the kite,
he proved the identity of lightning and electricity. This
later won for him world-wide fame, and for it, he was
awarded the Coply medal from the Royal Society.

From his forty-eighth year, Franklin's life was that of a public man, and a part of the history of our country. In 1737, he was chosen clerk of the General Assembly which he spoke of as, "my first promotion" and in 1737 he was made postmaster of Philadelphia. In 1731 he became a member of the General Assembly and in 1753-54, was Postmaster General of the Colonies. In this latter capacity he visited nearly every post-office in the colonies, and increased the mail service between New York and Philadelphia from one to three times a week in summer and from once a month to once a week in winter.

In 1754, he was a delegate to a convention in Albany, to provide common defense against the Indians of the six Nations, and submitted the first definite plan for the union of all colonies. The plan was adopted by the convention, but not approved by several of the Colonies.

Upon the opening of the French and Indian War, Franklin secured supplies for Braddock's Expedition by pledging his personal credit. He was sent to England in 1757 as the agent of Pennsylvania, where he remained for five years, receiving many honors, including degrees from St. Andrews University and Oxford University (he already held degrees from Harvard, Yale and the College of William and Mary). Here he made numerous friends, among them, the prominent men of England.

Franklin was again sent to England in 1764, as the agent of Pennsylvania, and he at this time took a stand against the Stamp Act, which, however, was passed in 1765. Unfortunately and unjudiciously, Franklin then recommended John Hughes of Philadelphia, as the proper person for distribution of stamps, for which he was accused of betraying the colonies and his family was threatened with being mobbed. But through all of this storm, Franklin kept up his efforts for the repeal of the Act. He was examined before the House of Commons as to the effect of the Act, and Burke afterwards said the scene reminded him of "a master examined by a parcel of school boys." Franklin gained great honor in England through the Enquiry, and the Act was repealed in March, 1766, as a result of which, he regained his popularity at home.

After eleven years he came back to America (1775) to find that the war had already begun and the battles of Lexington and Concord had already been fought, thus changing him from an advocate of peace to a supporter of war.

He was elected to the Continental Congress, where he served on more than ten committees; was again made postmaster-general, which office he held for a year. At the age of seventy he went to Montreal in an effort to secure cooperation from Canada and on his return was made one of

the committee of five to draw up the Declaration of Independence, of which he was one of the signers.

In 1776, he went to France as one of the Commissioners to the French Government. In France, he became the idol of the day, if not indeed, of the Century. He was feted by society and honored everywhere for his reputation in philosophy. He was one of the eight foreign members of the French Royal Academy of Science and a member of every important learned society in Europe. He procured loans from the French Government and negotiated the treaty of Paris which made France an ally of the Colonies, and which was the turning point of the Revolution. Franklin was then appointed the first minister plenipotentiary from the new nation to the Court of France.

In 1781 he was appointed one of a commission to negotiate a treaty of peace with Great Britain. His preliminary negotiations resulted in the secession of the whole Northwest Territory to the new nation. The treaty was signed September 3, 1783, and Franklin, at his urgent request, was permitted to retire in 1785.

Upon his return to America, he was elected to important offices in Philadelphia. He was president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. He was chosen delegate to the Convention which drew up the Federal Constitution, where he opposed the centralizing policies of the Federalists. He was made president of the Abolition
Society and spent the last years of his life in an effort to abolish slavery.

Due to the troublous affairs after 1775, Franklin gave less and less time to philosophical interests. One is impressed as he turns the pages produced by Franklin's pen, by the brusque manner in which the business of war crowded out the affairs of science. One recalls his words, "There never was a good war or a bad peace". That this was not mere rhetoric is proved by numerous passages in his letters.

As an author, his works were many, usually written for some immediate, specific, purpose in a clear, simple, readable style. His Poor Richard's Almanac taught homely lessons of economy and thrift. His Autobiography showed his wit, and wisdom. The kite and string, and the doorkey used in solving the problem of electricity are typical of his work. He always stressed the essentials.

Franklin's religious belief was a matter of dispute. He rarely spoke of it himself. Just before his death he wrote to Ezra Stiles:

"You desire to know something of my religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your curiosity amiss, and shall endeavor, in a few words to gratify it. Here is my creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render him, is doing good to his children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice.

in another life, respecting its conduct in this. This I take to be the fundamental principles of all sound religion. . .

"As to Jesus of Nazareth. . . I think his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity. . . I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrine more respected and more observed. 20

Though he seldom attended public worship, he averred, he had an opinion of its propriety, and of its utility when rightly conducted, and he contributed regularly to the support of one Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia.

Franklin's early readings, his association with philosophers of the day and the thought common in Masonic circles of his day, encouraged a deistic religious philosophy. "His everyday religion was to do good". He drew up a strict code of conduct and strove for moral perfection. He stated "certain actions are not bad because they are forbidden, but are forbidden because they are bad".

After suffering much in his last years, he passed away in his Philadelphia home on April 17, 1790.

22. Ibid., p. 35.
Franklin's capability in filling public offices in his own city of Philadelphia; the value of his services as commissioner to foreign countries; the influence of his policies at the English Court of St. James and the Royal Court of France, and his contacts with the governments of Spain and the Netherlands, gave him an opportunity to observe the educational policies of those countries and enabled him to speak with great influence on educational matters and on the educational needs of his day.

The blending of the cultural and practical in his educational philosophy is abundantly shown in his letters (both business and personal) to his contemporaries, in his state papers and documents, in his Poor Richard's Almanac, and in his other numerous writings, during a long and distinguished career. The ease with which he conducted himself in social circles at home and abroad, and his success in business, are fully reflected in his ideas on education.

Though an old man at the time of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the framing of the Constitution of the United States, Franklin showed himself to be abreast of the times and with young men like Jefferson and Madison, subscribed to the principles of democracy, giving liberty to all.

Biographers have sought in varied ways to describe Franklin. The complexity of his life and voluminous
nature of his contributions test the descriptive powers of language. Many years ago, one wrote... "If we can imagine a circumference which should express humanity, we can place within it no one man which will reach out to approach it, and to touch it at so many points as will Franklin". By others he has been called the "amazing" and the "many-sided". By two of his most recent biographers, he has been named The Apostle of Modern Times, and The First American. Certainly he earned the former title.

"If to promote scientific knowledge rather than superstitious guesses and wonderment; if to advance liberalism and to shun bigotry; if to take a world's view when one could scarcely see beyond village boundaries; and if to do good to ones fellow men rather than to shout "Yea, Yea, Lord", are marks of civilization, Franklin merited the latter."

CHAPTER III

FRANKLIN'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Representations of His Philosophy

Franklin's whole life bears witness to the value he placed on the practical. His first experiments in the field of science were for the purpose of bringing to light some fact that would prove of use to his fellowmen. He believed, however, that no study, even in the field of science, should be pursued to the exclusion of other things of importance. He once wrote:

"No knowledge is equal in importance and dignity with that of being a good parent, a good child, a good husband or wife, a good neighbor or friend, a good subject or citizen; that is, in short, a good Christian."

Franklin never wrote an entire treatise in his whole life, but he dashed off letters, plans, proposals, and projects dealing with different phases of education, with the insight of a genius. His papers, most specifically educational, may be put in three classes:

1. Those dealing with means of formal school education, such as his Proposals for the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania and for the Academy in Philadelphia.

2. Those dealing with adult self-education, as his "Proposals", which led to the founding of the American

Philosophical Society.

3. Publications dealing with adult education of the everyday, homegrown variety, which were really sermons on industry and economy.

To John Alleyne he wrote:

"Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be, in general, and you will be happy."

In his letter of "Advice to a Young Tradesman", he again stressed the point that the road to financial independence is that of industry and frugality. He concludes the letter of advice with the following paragraph.

"In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality; that is, waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything. He that gets all that he can honestly, and saves all he gets, (necessary expenses excepted), will certainly become rich, if the being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavors, doth not in his wise providence, otherwise determine."

The speech of "Father Abraham" on The Way to Wealth quoting the sayings of "Poor Richard", is not an exaggeration of his contemporary influence. The following quotation gives us a glimpse of Franklin's Philosophy:

"Poor Richard was the revered and popular schoolmaster of a young nation during its period of tutelage. His teachings are among the powerful forces which have gone into shaping the habits of Americans. His terse, picturesque bits of wisdom and virtue of this world are familiar in their children; they have informed our traditions; they have influence over our actions, guide our ways of thinking, and establish our points of view, with the constant control of acquired habits which we little suspect."

The American Philosophical Society, a larger and more scientific Junto, the first scientific society in the Colonies and forerunners of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was established in 1774, according to the Proposals prepared by Franklin, dated May 14, 1743. The aim of this society was that observations and discoveries made by those "who desired to cultivate the fine arts and improve the common stock of knowledge" might be reported to the Society and these "Hints", which, "if well-examined, pursued, and improved, might produce discoveries the advantage of some or all of the British plantations, or to the benefit of mankind in general".

Steps In Practical Education

In his efforts to advance practical education, Franklin's first step was to avoid existing educational institutions, where nothing practical could be obtained. His first move toward improving the situation was a critical one. In some of his earliest literary attempts, at the age of sixteen,

4. The Pocket University, Vol. VI., Part II., and IV.
5. Ibid., p. 11.
he condemned the college dominated as it was by wealth, ecclesiasticism, and useless ancient languages. In one of his Dogood Letters to the New England Courant, he gave a recipe for making a New England Elegy, and did not miss the opportunity to say, "mix . . . all these ingredients well, put them into the empty skull of some young Harvard . . . and if you can procure a scrap of good Latin to put at the end. . . you will have an excellent elegy". In another Dogood Letter in May, 1722, he declared that the rich men's sons went to college (Harvard) because they were rich; and they were often unable to mount the "throne of knowledge", and when it became difficult, were content to sit at the feet of "Madam Idleness and her maid, Ignorance"; and that they were able to get their degrees only because they were rich enough to pay the poorer ones for assistance.

Thus, Franklin showed his views of the college education of his day. He put into the mouth of "Poor Richard" these words: "A learned blockhead is a greater blockhead than an ignorant one"; again, "Of learned fools, I have seen ten times ten; of unlearned wise men, I have seen a hundred"; To him it seemed foolish to expect all youth to pursue a classical college education; a waste of time and money not to educate them to fill the places to which they would be

7. Ibid., p. 111.
called to occupy in life. While the classical education was good for some, for the masses he believed practical education was best. In all of his educational projects, he emphasized the principle of practicality.

Several of his manuscripts dealt specifically with the subject of English, which he stressed as the most practical and immediately useful in a youth's preparation for everyday life. He believed that everyone should master the art of writing and speaking the mother tongue fluently and correctly, since to speak and write correctly "gives one a grace and gains a favorable attention to what one has to say." Since English is a language one has constant use of during his entire life, Franklin insisted that it was the language he should mostly cultivate and in which he should take most care to polish and perfect his style. Whether one's station were very high or very insignificant in later life, his proficiency in English would determine how well he would be able to make himself understood and how much he would benefit from the ideas of others. Franklin maintained that education should be an "orderly progress, from the nearest and easiest, to the most remote and difficult".

He followed this plan in instructing himself in foreign

10. Ibid., p. 111
11. Ibid., p. 38
languages. As Comenius had provided a vernacular school for ages from six to twelve, to precede the Latin School, Franklin urged an English School as the first most natural step in formal schooling; and, as Ratke would begin language with the German, using Genesis as a text, Franklin would begin with English and emphasize the use of his old friend, the Spectator.

His ideal of the English School was a clear-cut plan for an institution that should prepare for the everyday walks of life. The English School was to have neither ancient nor modern foreign languages. But owing to the influence of his friends who were to support his plans financially and who insisted upon the inclusion of the learned languages, his idea for a purely vernacular school was given up in favor of the Academy, which was to contain both Latin and English schools.

Franklin was also convinced of the political need for emphasis on English education in Pennsylvania. He feared the failure to establish English schools among the Germans who settled there in large numbers, "would make it impossible to preserve our language, and even our government would become precarious".

Proposals for the Establishment of an Academy

When the colonists settled in America, they brought with them the ideas of education which had been followed for generations. The character of elementary, secondary, and higher education was slow to change. But little change

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12. Ibid., p. 112
was made during the first hundred years and not until well into the second half of the eighteenth century, did the new conception of education find warm adherence and supporters.

In the field of what we today term Secondary Education, the founding fathers had the Latin Grammar Schools. These schools aimed to prepare for college and the college for the preparation of preachers who, on occasions, became teachers. The institutions were brought under sharp criticism from the awakening middle class, Franklin being among the better critics.

As early as 1743, Franklin drew up proposals for an academy, but due to the fact that other affairs came up which demanded his attention, he was forced to abandon the project until 1749, at which time he interested a number of friends in the undertaking.

As a first step, Franklin published a pamphlet, "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania", which he distributed free among the principal inhabitants. He introduced these proposals, not as an act of his but as that of some public spirited gentleman. While there was nothing novel in these proposals, they embodied the tendencies of Franklin's own time, and aimed to place on an organized and public basis, the unsystematic practices of the private schoolmasters of the day. His aim was clearly stated in the following from his proposals:
"The good education of youth has been es-
teemed by wise men of all ages as the surest
foundation of the happiness of private families
and of Commonwealths. Almost all governments
have, therefore, made it a principal object of
their attention to establish and endow with
proper revenues, such seminaries of learning
as might supply the succeeding age with men
qualified to serve the public with honor to
themselves, and to their country." 13

After his proposals, Franklin's next step was to set on
foot a subscription for opening and supporting the Academy.
He suggested that the subscriptions be paid in yearly
quotas, believing that the subscriptions would be larger if
payments were thus divided. Subscriptions were readily ob-
tained. To help put the project on a sound basis, the city
government made a donation from the public treasury in re-
sponse to an appeal which argued that (1) children could
receive a good education at home instead of going abroad for
it; (2) the Academy would meet the "great want of persons"
properly qualified for public offices; (3) "a number of the
poorest sort" could be prepared to teach in the country
schools; and (4) pupils would be enrolled from other parts
of the country and "spend considerable sums yearly among us".

Necessary funds were soon raised and further plans perfected.

Twenty-four trustees were appointed from among the sub-
scribers, and Mr. Frances, the Attorney-general, and Franklin
drew up the constitution for the government of the Academy;

13. Pepper, William, "Proposals Relating to the Education
of Youth in Pennsylvania", Facsimile Report, p. 5; Univer-
Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1926.
a house was hired, masters were engaged, and the Academy opened in 1749.

The character of the school was to be utilitarian. Its purpose was to supply the succeeding age with men qualified to serve the public with honor to themselves and to their country. Also, to prepare young men for business and other offices. Besides the above general purposes, the school was to serve in the preparation of teachers.

Franklin always held the vocation of teaching in high regard. In a letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, on August 23, 1750, he gave expression to his feelings in regard to those who teach. In this letter he states:

"I think with you, that nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue. Wise and good men are, in my opinion, the strength of a state; much more so than riches or arms, which under the management of ignorance and wickedness, often draw on destruction, instead of providing for the safety of the people. And though the culture bestowed on many should be successful only with a few, yet the influence of those few and the service in their power may be very great. Even a single woman, that was wise, by her wisdom saved a city".

"I think also, that general virtue is more probable, to be expected and obtained from the education of youth, than from the exhortations of adult persons; bad habits and vices of the mind being, like diseases of the body, more easily prevented than cured. I think, moreover, that talents for the education of youth are the gift of God;"


and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for the use of them, is as strongly called as if he heard a voice from heaven, nothing more surely pointing out duty in public service, than ability and opportunity of performing it. 17

In his Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania, Franklin suggested that the home selection for the Academy be located in or a few miles from town; that the situation be high and dry, near a river, if possible; that it have a garden, orchard, meadow, and a field or two. If located in the country it should have its own library, but if in town, the town library might serve; that it be equipped with maps, globes, some mathematical instruments and apparatus for experiments in natural philosophy.

He proposed that the rector be a man of good understanding, good morals, diligent and patient, learned in the languages and sciences, and a correct and pure speaker and writer of the English tongue. He also suggested that he have such tutors as were necessary under him.

As to their studies, continued Franklin, "It would be well if they could be taught everything that is useful and everything that is ornamental. But art is long and their time is short. It is therefore proposed that they learn those things that are likely to be most useful and most ornamental; those things that would be most useful in the several professions for which they are intended." 18

18. Pepper, William, op. cit., p. 11.
19. Ibid., p. 11.
The curriculum, as stated in the "Proposals", would include writing or (penmanship). He argued that youth should be taught to write "a fair hand and swift", since this would be useful to all. He recommended that Drawing should be taught because, "it is a kind of universal language, understood by all peoples and nations, a man often being able to express his ideas, even to his own countrymen, more clearly with a lead pencil, or a bit of chalk, than with his tongue". Drawing, too, he argued, "is no less useful to a mechanic than to a gentleman... by a little skill of this kind, the workman may perfect his own ideas of the thing to be done, before he begins to work".

Franklin next recommended arithmetic and accounts, and some of the first principles of geometry and astronomy; English and history were also stressed.

As to English, he suggested that grammar, letter-writing, and composition should be taught, the style of writing to be based upon reading of some of the best authors, such as, Tillotson, Addison, Pope, Algernon Sidney, Cato's Letters, and others.

Through history and geography, Franklin thought much useful knowledge could be obtained. The location of places where battles took place, the boundaries of States and the recognition of old names and of places constituted valuable

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21. Ibid., pp. 160-161
information. He maintained that morality, religion, oratory and politics could be obtained through these subjects.

He also strongly recommended the teaching of the sciences. This, he considered to be of great use to the youth in later life, whether they were to be merchants, ministers, handicraft workers or divines.

As to ancient and foreign languages, Franklin recommended that Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and German might be selected according to professional needs; although all should not be compelled to learn any of these languages, and none that had a desire to learn them should be refused.

To keep them in health and to strengthen their bodies, he recommended exercise in running, leaping, wrestling, and swimming.

Finally, he sums up his recommendations with the suggestion that, "The idea of true merit should also be often presented to youth, explained and impressed on their minds, as consisting in an inclination, joined with an ability to serve mankind, one's country, friends and family; which ability, with the blessings of God, is to be acquired or greatly increased by true learning; and should indeed, be the great aim and end of all learning."

The above analysis of Franklin's "Proposals for the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania", indicates the breadth and practical features of his philosophy of education and

22. Ibid, pp. 158-163
his plans for carrying out his ideas.

In addition, we should mention that Franklin approved, for girls, a practical, religious, education, with reading, writing, arithmetic, and modern languages, plus the womanly accomplishments of music, needlework and other household accomplishments. To Derby he wrote recommending that Sally should apply herself, "closely to French and music... and be a little more careful of her spelling."

Favorably impressed by the wife of a partner who handled his business well after his death, Franklin was convinced that accounts offered a desirable preparation for girls, in anticipation of the melancholy state of widowhood. The following quotation expresses his views in this regard:

"I mention this affair chiefly for the sake of recommending that branch of education for our young females, as likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music, or dancing, by preserving them from losses by imposition of crafty men and enabling them to continue, perhaps a profitable mercantile house, with established correspondence, till a son is grown up, fit to undertake and go on with it to the lasting advantage of the family".

Franklin urged on young women, with philosophical tendencies, a prudent moderation in that respect and as to politics, he seemed to have limited woman's activity to keep harmony among the men. In his letter to Derby in 1758, he wrote:

25. Ibid., p. 131
"You are very prudent not to engage in party disputes. Women never meddle with them except in endeavors to reconcile their husbands, brothers, and friends, who happen to be on contrary sides. If your sex can keep cool, you may be a means of cooling ours the sooner, and restoring more speedily that social harmony among fellow-citizens that is so desirable after long and bitter dissentions".

Franklin was also interested in the education of the negro. In his plan for "Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks", he recommended that a committee of twenty-four persons be elected annually, in order to perform the different services involved in looking after the negroes with "expedition, regularity, and energy"; that sub-committees be formed to "superintend the morals, general conduct, and ordinary situation of the free negroes, and afford them advice and instruction, protection from wrongs, and other friendly offices; to place children and young people with suitable persons and apprentices, to learn some trade or other business of subsistence. The society, so far as was practical, to have guardianship over the persons so bound, and to superintend school instruction of the children and youth of the free blacks, either by influencing them to attend the schools already established in the city, or to form others with this in view; also, to endeavor to procure constant employment for all those able to work."

Franklin, with all of his interests in education, was also interested in the education of orphans and the poor of the city.

26. Ibid., p. 131.
27. Ibid., pp. 250-251.
In his paper, "Hints for Consideration Respecting the Orphan Schoolhouses in Philadelphia" he expressed the belief that by a system of careful inspection and accounting, the orphan school would be able to meet the design of benevolent contributors. In 1752 he wrote an article expressing his views in this regard, a part of which we quote: ...

"by our opening a Charity School, in which one hundred poor children are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, with the rudiments of religion, we have gained the general good will of all sorts of people, from whence donations and bequests may be reasonably expected to accrue from time to time, and we think it is a promising one, especially as the reputation of our school increases, the masters all being very capable and diligent, and giving great satisfaction to all concerned."

From this study of Franklin's philosophy of education, we find that he touched many fields. He was not only an eminent statesman but a practical philosopher as well. The keynote of his creed and mode of living is best described by the word "utility". He firmly believed that the highest good was to be found in what was most useful to mankind. He strongly favored a form of education which would fit the individual for service in the political, social, business and general public life of his community. It appeared to him inconceivably foolish to educate youth for places in life to which they would not be called.

As an illustration of this utilitarian idea of education, Franklin, in a letter to Richard Jackson, related the story of an Indian Chief to the Commissioners:

"The little value Indians set on what we prize so highly, under the name of learning appears from a passage that happened some years since at a treaty between some colonies and the Six Nations. When everything had been settled to the satisfaction of both sides and nothing remained but a mutual exchange of civilities, the English Commissioners told the Indians that:

"They had in their country a college for the instruction of youth who were taught various languages; that there was a particular foundation in favor of the Indians, to defray the expense of the education of any of their sons who should desire to take the benefit of it; and said if the Indians would accept the offer the English would take half a dozen of their brightest lads and bring them up in the best manners."

The Indians, after consulting on the proposal, replied:

"That it was remembered that some of their youths had formerly been educated in that College, but that it had been observed that for a long time after they returned to their friends, they were absolutely good for nothing; being neither acquainted with the true methods of killing a deer, catching bears, nor surprising the enemy. The proposition, they looked on, however, as a mark of kindness and good will of the English to the Indians, which merited a greater return; and, therefore, if the English gentlemen would send a dozen or two of their children to Aponago, the Great Council would take care of their education, bring them up in what was really the best manner, and make men of them."

This episode with the Indians well represents Franklin's views and thinking in regard to the education of his day.

It is well, however, that we should state at this point that any conclusion based on the knowledge we have gained of Franklin's philosophy must be qualified with suitable phrases to enable us to understand the times in which he lived. He was one of a distinguished group of philosophers in Europe and America whose thinking influenced overt acts of tremendous importance. Aside from their influence, they certainly have to be accepted as the media through which the spirit of those times were expressed.

It is a point significant to this study that Franklin's philosophy was strikingly similar in basis to that variously expressed by Rousseau, Voltaire, Jefferson, Paine, and many others on both sides of the Atlantic, embracing a radically different approach to life and learning than had hitherto been found. They agreed in respecting much that previously had been accepted, both as to substance and methodology, and pointed the way to a new nationalism.
CHAPTER IV

FRANKLIN'S INFLUENCE UPON AMERICAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

Franklin's chief influence on American Secondary Education is to be found in his contributions directly or indirectly, to the recent and present-day psychological, scientific, sociological and vocational trends.

He held the view that education is the development of the powers of the individual. He stressed self-activity and believed in an orderly progress from the nearest and easiest to the most remote and difficult.

Throughout his life, Franklin showed an interest in science, constantly carrying on observations, trying experiments, and recording results. He organized societies for the advancement of science and, as a result of his scientific researches, he conceived the idea of promoting the elementary scientific education of youth.

Just as he conceived of education from the scientific standpoint, he also conceived it from the sociological standpoint, as is shown by his proposals, plans and projects on the subject of education. In these he stressed practical education for all youth, that they might take their places in the social life of the community, be qualified to fill public offices and be prepared to earn a living along the lines for which they were best suited.

The Curriculum

In his recommendation for the curriculum of the Academy, Franklin wrote, "It would be well if they could be taught everything that is useful and everything that is ornamental. But art is long and their time is short. It is, therefore, proposed that they learn these things that are likely to be most useful and most ornamental, regard being had to the several professions for which they are intended."

He recommended subjects which would stimulate an interest in mechanics, trade, agriculture, and the other sciences. These recommendations indicated Franklin to be a pioneer in the field of vocational education. He also stressed the teaching of the English Language, "To speak and write correctly", he said, "gives a grace and gains a favorable attention to what one has to say; and since it is English of which an Englishman will have constant use, that is the language he should chiefly cultivate and wherein most care should be taken to polish and perfect his style. To speak or write better Latin than English may make a man be talked of, but he will find it more to his purpose to express himself well in his own tongue that he uses every moment than to have vain commendation of others for a very insignificant quality."

2. Pepper, William, op. cit., p. 11.
While Franklin stressed the study of the English language, he recognized the value of Greek and Latin and the modern foreign languages in the preparation for certain professions, and the desirability of making them elective rather than required for all students, so that those who desired to pursue them might have the opportunity to do so. To show more clearly Franklin's views on this phase, we quote the following from his "Proposals":

"When youth are told that the great men whose lives and actions they have read in history, spoke two of the best languages that ever were, the most expressive, copious, beautiful; and that the finest writings, the most correct compositions, the perfect production of human wit and wisdom, are in those languages, which have endured ages and will endure while these nations endure; that no translation can do them justice or give the pleasure found in reading the originals; that these languages contain all science; that one of them has become almost universal, being the language of learned men in all countries; that to understand them is a distinguishing ornament, they may thereby be made desirous of learning those languages, and their industry sharpened in the acquisition of them. All intended for divinity should be taught the Latin, Greek and French; for law, the Latin, and the French; merchants, the French, German, and Spanish; and though all need not be compelled to learn Latin, Greek or the modern foreign languages, yet none that have an ardent desire to learn them should be refused; their English, arithmetic and other studies absolutely necessary, being at the same time neglected." 4

We have already mentioned the fact, that Franklin's interest in science led him to make observations and suggestions which were in the line of later developments in home economics and agriculture in the secondary schools.

4. Ibid., p. 173
Other vocational interests of Franklin, particularly industrial, are indicated by the following quotation from his "Proposals".

"The history of commerce, of the invention of arts, rise of manufactures, progress of trade, change of its seats with the reasons, causes, etc., may also be made entertaining to youth and will be useful to all. And this, with the accounts in other history of the prodigious force and effect of engines and machines used in war, will naturally introduce a desire to be instructed in mechanics and to be informed of the principles of that art by which weak men perform such wonders, labor is saved, manufactures expedited, etc."

Franklin always emphasized the practical and useful arts, but he did not neglect the aesthetic. His recommendations on music confined the teaching of this subject to girls, but he would have drawing of points and some principles of perspective studied by men and women. "Drawing", he maintained, "is a kind of universal language understood by all nations". He further emphasized the usefulness of this art to mechanics in enabling them to draw their plans before starting to work. Thus we see that Franklin, in his suggestions with respect to drawing, may be considered a forerunner in the modern courses of perspective and free-hand drawing in connection with industrial arts.

Franklin's interest in physical and health education is shown by the following quotation from his Proposals:

5. Ibid., p. 177.
6. Ibid., p. 158.
7. Ibid., p. 159.
"That to keep them in health, and to strengthen and render active their bodies, they frequently exercised in running, leaping, wrestling, and swimming."

It is of further interest to note Franklin's recommendations and plans with reference to the required or constant subjects; or in modern terms, those which are now known as the core curriculum.

In the Latin Grammar School of his time, the Core subjects were English, foreign languages, and mathematics; but in the past three quarters of a century, science and the social studies have also tended to become constants and to be included in the core curriculum. Mathematics has tended to disappear as a required or Core subject, on the senior high school level, and physical education has been added.

However, regardless of the changes that have been made, it is to be noted that the basic subjects recommended by Franklin are still retained in our modern curriculum.

Since Franklin so strongly emphasized effective oral and written expression in and through mastery of the mother tongue, it is significant and interesting to note that English has retained first place in the group of constants or required subjects, and it still holds the strongest position in the Core Curriculum of the American high school.

S. Ibid., p. 156.
This may indicate that Franklin's influence in the field of education had its weight along with educators of modern times.

Looking at the curriculum of secondary schools of today, we find a great similarity to what was recommended by Franklin.

The modern comprehensive high school curriculum is the best general illustration of present day trends in education, the aims of which are to make the pupil self-sufficient as an individual, to give him means to provide his own amusement, to develop his own vocational interest and to stimulate an interest on the part of the pupil, and to continue self-education after school days are over.

The subjects indicated in the modern curriculum are classified under four divisions: academic, vocational, special subjects, and extra-curriculum activities.

The academic group comprises language arts, including English language and literature, social sciences, consisting of history and civics for the senior high school, economics and sociology, community and vocational civics for the junior high school, problems of American democracy, and a fusion of integrated courses in social science; natural science, including general science, biology, physics, and chemistry; mathematics; general mathematics, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; and foreign languages, Latin, French, German, Spanish, and Italian.
The vocational group offered clerical and commercial subjects, also industrial subjects, including the manual arts, home economics, and agriculture.

Under the special subjects and extra-curricular activities, we find courses offered in music, the graphic and plastic arts, physical education and all extra-curricular activities, including literary and social clubs and debating societies.

Thus we see from a comparison of the two curriculums stated above, a great similarity in the educational thinking and planning, emphasis being placed upon the same subjects. One could not make a study of Franklin's philosophy of education and not be impressed with the importance he placed on the same subjects which are being stressed today, particularly on the ability to speak and write the English language correctly and fluently.

In his idea of the English school, from the first, he proposed that the pupils should learn spelling and the rules of English grammar on through the last or sixth class. This, he suggested, should be accomplished by means of reading with proper expression, of speaking properly and gracefully, and that the elements of rhetoric, composition, and letter writing should be emphasized and that the pupils should familiarize themselves with some of the best English writers. His whole idea was to perfect the youth in the use of the mother tongue. Several of his manuscripts dealt
specifically with the subject of English education as the most practical and immediately useful feature of the youth's preparation for everyday life. Such is the case with educational thinkers today.

Teacher Preparation

Franklin held the profession of teaching in high regard. In stating the qualifications for the rector, masters, and ushers for the Academy, he stressed, in addition to good morals, that they should be diligent, patient, and well versed in the subjects to be taught. He held a high standard for teachers yet the briefest glance at Franklin's scheme for education, in so far as it referred to teacher education, revealed the fact that the academic requirements were negligible compared with the requirements today, also that the professional training, as such was almost non-existent. It cannot, therefore, be deduced that he had much to do with the shaping of either the academic or professional standards now becoming prevalent as prerequisites to teaching, which today has become a very complex, time consuming and expensive process.

Functions of Secondary Education

The seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education handed down by the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association, in 1918, though somewhat vaguely generalized, nevertheless is perhaps the
best and most comprehensive brief statement of the aims
and functions of the secondary school that has yet been
produced in America and it is fitting that we use this
list as a check against Franklin's views and his influence
on modern education, for the reason that these seven aims
are a philosophical statement rather than a purely scientif­
ic or psychological classification.

The seven principles referred to above are as follows:

1. Health
2. Command of fundamental processes
3. Civic efficiency
4. Vocational efficiency
5. Worthy home membership
6. Worthy use of leisure
7. Ethical character

In our study of Franklin's views on education, it is
readily seen that he was deeply concerned with at least six
of these seven functions which the modern comprehensive
secondary school is expected to advance: namely, command
of the fundamental processes, civic efficiency, vocational
efficiency, worthy home membership, health and physical
education, and ethical character.

In his ideas of the English school, Franklin specif­
ically mentioned that "care should be taken to improve
them (the first class) in orthography" as well as to teach
them the rules of English grammar, and as we have previously
stated, he laid special emphasis on a thorough knowledge of
English, both oral and written. He, also, set forth the practical value of mathematics, especially arithmetic and geometry. Franklin, by both precept and example, laid emphasis on the idea of good citizenship. He stressed the importance of impressing upon youth of the Academy that "time-merit" was "to serve one's country, family and friends", for doing good to men is the only service of God in our power; and to imitate His beneficence is to glorify Him."

By capably filling public offices at home and abroad and by his contributions to science and his benefits to mankind, Franklin proved himself to be a good citizen.

As previously stated, his whole life bore witness to the value he placed on the practical, and in his idea of the English school, he recommended a practical education to replace that of existing institutions where nothing practical could be obtained.

In stressing English and mathematics he emphasized their practical value, and his inclusion of agriculture and other vocational subjects in the curriculum of the Academy, was in keeping with his idea that the youth should be efficiently educated for the vocations that they would follow in later life.

Franklin expresses his views on worthy home membership in his letter to Mary Henson, as previously quoted in this thesis, "no knowledge is equal in importance and dignity

9. Ibid., p. 179.
with that of being a good parent, a good child, a good husband or wife, or a good friend or neighbor."

Franklin was vigorous in his youth and his health hints were rather firmly rooted in his everyday life. His concern for health is shown in a set of *Rules of Health and Long Life* published in Poor Richard's Almanac in 1742. These rules he not only recommended for boys and girls but he practiced them in his own life. To be strong and healthy he recommended:

"Eat and drink such an exact quality as the constitution of the body allows of in reference to the services of the mind."

"They that study much ought not to eat so much as those that work hard, their digestion being not so good."

"The exact quality and quantity being found out is to be kept constantly."

"Exercise in all other things whatever, as well as in meat and drink, is also to be avoided."

"Youth, age and the sick, require a different quality and so do those of contrary complexion; for that which is too much for a phlegmatic man is not sufficient for a choleric."

"The measure of food ought to be (as much as possibly may be) exactly proportionable to the quality and condition of the stomach, because the stomach digests it."

"Wouldst thou enjoy a long life, a healthy body, and a vigorous mind, and be acquainted also with the wonderful works of God, labor in the first place to bring the appetite to reason."

Franklin also suggested that the youth of the Academy take certain exercises to keep them in health and to strengthen their bodies.

Because of his interest in exercises such as swimming, leaping, wrestling, and running, we might say that he was also concerned with the seventh function advanced by the modern secondary school, the worthy use of leisure time.

As stated above, Franklin not only recommended certain rules for students of the Academy but he practiced them in his own life.

In an effort to attain moral perfection and to correct certain faults, he drew up his "Rules of Conduct, and under the headings, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Chastity and Humility. Each day he would mark a dot for every fault he found upon examination, respecting those virtues in which the pupil had been lax.

In his Idea of the English School when recommending that the third class begin to read history he wrote: "In remarking on history, the master will have fine opportunities of instilling instructions of various kinds, and improving the morals, as well as the understanding of youth."  

For the fourth class he recommended that Dr. Johnson's Ethics, Elements, or First Principles of Morality, be read and explained by the master, to lay a solid foundation of.

virtue and piety in their minds." Again in recommending the reading of history in his programs for the Academy, he states that morality could be introduced "by descanting and making continual observations on the causes of the rise and fall of man's character, fortune, and power, mentioned in history; the advantages of temperance, order, frugality, industry, and perseverance. Indeed, he continued, "the general, natural tendency of reading good history must be to fix in the minds of youth, deep impressions of the beauty and usefulness of virtue of all kinds such as public spirit and fortitude."

Thus, from the above, we find that Franklin not only recommended for youth, the seven cardinal virtues mentioned above, but practiced them in his own life.

Influence of Franklin's Academy

Franklin's influence on education can best be shown by the institutions and movements which he was instrumental in founding and the influence that these had in turn in shaping the educational policies of generations to follow.

The most renowned of these movements and the one exerting the greatest influence upon future education, was the Academy movement which had its beginning in America in 1751.

In America, as in Europe, social changes were taking place. As these changes came about, there arose the need

13. Ibid., p. 123.
for a secondary school broader in scope than that offered through the restricted curriculum of the Latin grammar school. This need was met to a great extent by the curriculum offered in the Academy.

Although when founded, the new school did not follow the lines mapped out by Franklin, it did provide for three schools, the Latin School, the English School, and the Mathematical School. It was clearly a type of institution different from any of its predecessors.

The early founders had in mind the founding of a school which, as contrasted with the Latin-grammar school, should provide a rather extensive training covering a number of subjects of study. These subjects were to have value, not only for preparation for college but also to better fit the student for the changed conditions of life and society and to be of practical value to them in whatever kind of life or vocation they were destined to follow.

Apparently this sort of education, introduced by the Academy, met this very definite need in the field of secondary education. "It was, in effect an expression of expanding democracy."

The Academy movement gained an early and firm hold in America, especially in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania,

North Carolina, and Virginia, towards the middle of the nineteenth century. It spread rapidly and was intimately related to the development of the public high school movement which followed later.

The high school movement, however, did not gain any great impetus until after the middle of the nineteenth century, hence, it is obvious that the Academy was the dominating institution of secondary education, in this country from its inception in the latter part of the eighteenth century until well into the second half of the nineteenth century.

The development of the Academy coincided with the development of a newly established Republic and this movement was marked by the extended curriculum offered boys and girls who were to become citizens of that Republic.

The very existence of the new institution depended upon its ability to attract students, hence it was necessary for them to offer many subjects for which there was a demand. This resulted in an extraordinarily large range of subjects.

Monroe gives a list of about seventy-five which, in 1837 were reported to the Regents of the University of the State of New York as being taught by the Academy.

18. Ingles, Alexander, _op. cit._, p. 174
19. Ibid., p. 183.
20. Ibid., p. 179.
Cubberly states that one hundred and forty-nine new subjects appeared in the Academies of New York between 1787 and 1870.

Thus, we see that radical changes were taking place in the curriculum of the secondary schools. Much experimentation was taking place not only in subjects but also in methods of teaching. Stress was being placed upon the study of things rather than on words.

About the curriculum in the Latin-grammar school had developed a body of traditional methods employed in the teaching of Latin and Greek. This, also was transferred to the new language studies but the new subjects now introduced were not fortified with these traditional methods which placed emphasis upon the acquisition of information rather than upon the formal catechetical method of teaching as used in the former teaching.

In contrast with the Latin-grammar school, we note another marked change in the curriculum of the Academy.

In the former, the curriculum ran parallel to the elementary school, whereas the Academy built upon the curriculum of the common school. It received pupils who had completed an elementary education and gave them a secondary education which fitted them for active participation in the affairs of daily life or entrance to college, whereas, the primary aim of the Latin-grammar school was

preparation for entrance to college. Douglas, in support of the Academy, writes as follows: "Indeed, it encroached upon the field of the college to such an extent that entrance requirements were materially increased. It thus made an important contribution in the development of an articulated school system."

Although in formulating the curriculum for the Academy, Franklin had to make concessions to the aristocratic notions of many concerning the value of classics, he himself never modified his belief that the best education for the middle class and one that was most serviceable to their children, was the practical and scientific. This, he believed, would better enable them to follow the advice, "Get what you can and what you get keep."

As stated previously in this study, Franklin placed great emphasis on the teaching of English. He even went so far as to issue a warning to the effect that "The preservation of our language and even our government was precarious unless English schools were established among German-speaking groups." Thus we find that he conceived of education as an agency of society's control.

Franklin's influence was far reaching, touched many fields. As one writer states, "Franklin proved a veritable

John the Baptist for Jefferson whose educational thought was even more characteristic of the eighteenth century than was that of the author of "Poor Richard." Jefferson's scheme outlined while he was Governor of Virginia, in the Bill of General Diffusion of Knowledge, 1779, bore at least implicitly, the marks of class society. Yet Jefferson inspired by hostility to an entrenched aristocracy and faith in universal education as a necessary instrument of democratic republicanism, advocated a system of schools and higher institutions which went considerably farther than Franklin's ideas toward breaking down class barriers in education. As stated by Curti, both "Franklin and Jefferson had slight sympathy with ecclesiastical sanctions, privileged and autocratic. Both advanced educational ideals with social implications that were hostile to much of religious and class character of existing practice. Both were truly prophets and were destined to have great influence on American education."

That Franklin's ideas and influences were carried over into the high school movement, is indicated in the report of a sub-committee which was appointed in Boston in 1821 to consider the question of establishing the high school; in its findings the committee reported, "The mode of education now adopted and the branches of knowledge that are taught in our English-grammar schools are not sufficiently extensive nor otherwise calculated to bring

28. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
the powers of the mind into operation nor to qualify youth to fill usefully and respectably, many of the stations both public and private, in which he may be placed. . . is under the necessity of giving him a different education from any which our public schools now can offer."

The aim of the high school was further stated in the regulations of the School Committee for 1833. As set forth by this committee, the report states, "It (the high school) was instituted in 1831 with the design for furnishing the young men of the city who are not intended for college, courses of study . . . with the means of completing a good English education to fit them for an active life or qualify them for eminence in private or public station."

From the above reports we find the same principles being stated by these committees as stated by Franklin many years before. It is therefore safe to assume that his thinking, along with others of his day, had its influence.

Perhaps his greatest single contribution was to have participated in a movement for the creation of a new type of secondary education, which in turn, had far-reaching effect upon American education.

In the words of the following writers we can best sum up his influence on education:

1. "It first opened the door to girls, a step which resulted in co-educational high schools and in higher education for women.

2. "It gave attention to the preparation of teachers for the lower schools and was thus the precursor of the normal school.

3. "It built upon the curriculum of the elementary school instead of running parallel to it as the Latin-grammar school had done and so contributed in the final evolution of the "educational ladder".

4. "It popularized if not democratized secondary education in America and prepared the public mind for universal secondary education, which was to be attempted later through the public high school."

33. Inglis, op. cit., p. 182.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In reviewing the life of Benjamin Franklin, we find one whose whole life bore testimony to the value he placed on practical things. His continual excursions into the unknown always had the purpose of bringing to light something useful to his fellow men. He took the position that no study, not even a scientific one, should be pursued to the exclusion of other things of importance. No knowledge, he wrote, is equal in importance and dignity, "with that of being a good parent, a good child, a good husband or wife, a good neighbor or friend, a good subject or citizen, that is in short, a good Christian". This idea of practicality carried through in all of his recommendations pertaining to education. Particularly was this true in his recommendations for his Academy. It, also, was true in every practical agency of self and adult education which he founded.

Franklin's capability in filling public offices in his own city of Philadelphia, the value of his services as commissioner to foreign countries, the influence of his policies at the English Court of St. James and the Royal Court of France and his contacts with governments of Spain and the Netherlands enabled him to speak with authority on educational matters and on educational needs of his day.

1. Letters to Mary Henson, June 11, 1760.
   From Smyth, A. H., The Writings of Benjamin Franklin,
The blending of the cultural and practical into his educational philosophy is abundantly shown in his letters (both business and professional) to his contemporaries, in his state papers and documents, in his Poor Richard's Almanac and in other of his numerous writings during a long and distinguished career. The ease with which he conducted himself in social circles at home and abroad and his success in business are reflected in his ideas for education.

Though an old man at the time of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the framing of the Constitution of the United States, Franklin showed himself to be abreast of the times and with young men like Jefferson and Madison, subscribed to the principles of democracy, giving freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and liberty to all. Franklin, as Paul Leicester Ford, one of his most ardent biographers, described him was truly, "The Apostle of Modern Times".

A caution, however, is necessary in the matter of attributing and tracing modern educational trends and practices to Franklin or any one of the vast number of philosophers, theorists, and experimentalists in modern Europe and America. The influence of all have been so wide spread and inter-lacing that it would not be just to credit any one of them with a dominating influence on more than just a few of the many lines which have been converging on the present educational scene in the United States. However, this caution must not minimize or discredit the powerful
and lasting influence of Benjamin Franklin on modern education. In the field of practical training for the duties and responsibilities of everyday life and for the business of earning a living, he made a real contribution.

Comparing his philosophy with that of prominent educators of today, we find a great similarity. Although there was a swing back to the classical side of education after Franklin's time, the practical is again being introduced and emphasized. His philosophy is constantly being referred to by leading educators today, so we must conclude that his thinking had its influence. Woody, in an effort to evaluate Franklin's influence, writes as follows:

"The profound influence exerted by his essays on American education, in the narrower as well as the broader sense, places Franklin among the greatest American educators, which is by way of saying that the greatest educators are, frequently, not professional ones."

In seeking to appreciate the philosophy of such a man, account must be taken of his conviction that the problem of education is a desire on the part of an individual to continue the broadening, deepening and quickening of his mental equipment. With this thought in mind, he introduced into the curriculum of the academy those subjects and activities which would bring about this desired end. In this sense, it must be concluded that Benjamin Franklin had a great part in influencing the direction of American secondary education. He was open-minded in matters of

physical science, but there was too much of, "Poor Richard" in him to leave room for very much radicalism frequently found in the social.

It is significant, for this study, that Franklin's philosophy was strikingly similar to that variously expressed by Rosseau, Voltaire, Jefferson, Paine, and numerous others on both sides of the Atlantic. It, constantly, must be recalled that Franklin with his kites, Paine with his iron trusses and internal combustion wheels, Jefferson with his incubators and experimental crop-rotations and Rosseau with his new system of musical notation were working with a limited information in comparison with our present knowledge on such subjects. They were living and working at a time when the frontiers of the unknown were within sight of the untrained investigator's naked eye. Therein may be found an explanation of the amazing many-sidedness of these men.

Perhaps, Franklin's greatest single educational contribution was to be found in the part he played in creating a new type of secondary school which was destined to have a far-reaching effect on American secondary education. This new institution was instrumental in the establishment of schools for girls as well as for boys. It created an interest in the education for teachers which led to the establishment of the normal school. In addition it led to the establishment of a curriculum built upon the curriculum of the elementary school and so contributed in the final evolution of the educational ladder. It, also, was instrumental in bringing
about a democratic spirit in education and helped to pave the way for universal secondary education.

Franklin's life was rich with experiences. He served as printer, postmaster, member of Congress and diplomat. He held numerous offices concerned with public welfare.

He was at home with scientists, writers, and philosophers. His breadth of experience enabled him to see a democratic way of life.

Among the fundamental principles of democracy must be considered concern for the general welfare, respect for the rights and duties of individuals, consideration for the important differences with which men are endowed and the extension and diffusion of knowledge through the masses, since democracy rests on the consent of the governed. The democracy of the school system is reflected in the breadth of its curriculum and in the personnel admitted. Franklin's contribution to a democratic system of education has been shown in proposals to promote an academy which "should promote the welfare of its students when they shall go forth to the duties of active life. His concern for the rights and duties of individuals and consideration for important

individual differences has been shown in his proposal that "Though all should not be compelled to learn Latin, Greek, and modern foreign languages, yet none that have an ardent desire to learn them should be refused." The extension of education to the masses resulted from Franklin's proposal for education, for, as a result of his proposal, citizens of Philadelphia pledged eight hundred pounds annually for five years and the city of Philadelphia voted two hundred pounds and in addition, one hundred pounds annually for academies. Franklin intended to establish a system of schools in Pennsylvania for in the charter for Franklin's Academy the trustees were authorized to establish academies elsewhere in Pennsylvania. We may conclude, therefore, that Benjamin Franklin helped in supplying the foundation for the democratic school system which we are still endeavoring to develop and perfect.

6. Ibid., p. 77  
7. Ibid., p. 77  
8. Ibid., p. 78
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