

The Reconstruction of Benjamin Franklin's Library: An Unorthodox Jigsaw Puzzle

Author(s): Edwin Wolf 2nd

Source: *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, First Quarter, 1962, Vol. 56, No. 1 (First Quarter, 1962), pp. 1-16

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Bibliographical Society of America

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24300972>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



and The University of Chicago Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*

JSTOR

THE PAPERS *of the*  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY  
OF AMERICA

VOLUME FIFTY-SIX

FIRST QUARTER, 1962

---

The Reconstruction of Benjamin  
Franklin's Library:  
An Unorthodox Jigsaw Puzzle\*

By EDWIN WOLF 2nd

"AFTER it was dark," Manasseh Cutler wrote in his diary on 13 July 1787, describing a visit to Benjamin Franklin, "we went into the house, and the Doctor invited me into his library, which is likewise his study. It is a very large chamber, and high studded. The walls were covered with book-shelves filled with books; besides there are four large alcoves, extending two-thirds of the length of the chamber, filled in the same manner. I presume this is the largest, and by far the best, private library in America." After Franklin's death in 1790 his executors obtained an appraisal of the library which listed 351 folio volumes, 150 topographical pamphlets, 767 quartos, 1,548 octavos, 1,260 duodecimos, and 200 duodecimos stitched, for a total of 4,276 volumes, which were valued at £184.7.10. In his will, written in 1788, the old bookman spoke of a catalogue made of his books. That catalogue has not been found.

What we have, therefore, in attempting to reconstruct Franklin's

\* Mr. Wolf's paper was read at the annual meeting of the Society, held at The Grolier Club in New York City on 26 Jan. 1962.

library and to locate the books which he owned is an unorthodox jigsaw puzzle. All we know is that it had 4,276 pieces, and that, put together, the completed picture should look like what the finest private library in 1787 ought to have looked like. It is as though a child had thrown his puzzle into a trashcan, illustrated box and all. We do not know where the pieces are, nor are we sure, when we find a likely one, if it belongs. Franklin used no bookplate, rarely signed his name in a volume, only occasionally annotated, had no secret mark like Jefferson's, but did put in a penciled shelf mark the significance of which has only recently been recognized (see Plate I). The pencil mark was frequently rubbed out by a neat owner, more frequently thrown away with the old covers and flyleaves when a volume was rebound.

The problem as presented is not so hopeless as I make it sound. Perfection is unqualifiedly hopeless. Yet, it is surprising how many pieces can be described with a reasonable degree of accuracy, how many large segments of the puzzle can be fitted together. On the basis of various kinds of evidence hundreds of titles can be placed in Franklin's library and hundreds have been located and identified.

The story of Franklin's steady accumulation of a library begins with the account of his youth in the *Autobiography*: "From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books." One of the books he mentioned as having owned as a teenager, Nicole's *Logic; or, the Art of Thinking*, has been found at the Library Company, to which institution he gave it in 1733. The child became a successful printer; the little money became a comfortable income. Books were always at the center of his existence, printing them, publishing them, selling them, buying them, reading them, and—as the Philadelphia printer became first a colonial and then an international figure of importance—receiving them as gifts.

Franklin's library as it existed in 1776, with the acquisitions of over half a century in America, vastly supplemented by those of his residence in London, was left in his house at Philadelphia when he went on his mission to France. When the British threatened Philadelphia, his son-in-law Bache packed up the books and had them carted to Lancaster for safekeeping. Meanwhile, the most popular American ever to hold a diplomatic post abroad like a magnet attracted books to his house at Passy. Some of the latest works he bought; learned societies

Henry Anderson ex dono Tho: Holland  
Παρρησια

D. Elizabethæ, Dei gratiâ Angliæ, Franciæ, &  
Hiberniæ Regine.

658 A 1140  
SERMON PREACHED AT PAULS  
in London the 17. of November Ann. Dom. 1599. the  
one and fortieth yeare of her Maiesties raigne, and aug-  
mented in those places wherein, for the shortnes of the  
time, it could not there be then delivered.

Whereunto is adioyned an Apologeticall discouffe,  
whereby all such sclanderous Accusations are fully  
and faithfully confuted, wherewith the Honour of  
this Realme hath bene vncharitably traduced by  
some of our aduersaries in foraine nations, and at  
home, for observing the 17. of November yeerely in  
the forme of an Holy-day, and for the ioisfull exerci-  
ses, and Courthy triumphes on that day in the honour  
of her Maiestie exhibited.

By THOMAS HOLLAND, Doctor of Divinity,  
& her Highnes Professour thereof in her Vni-  
versity of Oxford.

A Great Character of  
this Holland in wood.  
Vol. I. p. 320.



AT OXFORD,

Printed by JOSEPH BARNES, and are to be solde in  
Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Bible.  
Ann. Dom, 1601.

PLATE I

elected him to membership and sent him their journals; schoolbooks and handbooks in the French language he secured for himself and his secretary-grandson Temple Franklin; many more were sent to him by scientists, economists, writers on government and politics, even poets and novelists, all seeking to honor Franklin with their works, and themselves by the great man's acceptance of them. When the tired old diplomat left France to return home, among his vast and varied baggage were scores of boxes of books.

As to all good bookmen so to Franklin was presented the problem of space. The old library, possibly still in its Revolutionary boxes, the French additions crated for transatlantic shipment, and a house full of little Baches! Franklin, as all good bookmen, solved his problem positively. He built a wing to his house, the second floor of which was the library seen by Manasseh Cutler. There, on shelves made of the neatly constructed boxes—or so, at least, I believe—books lined the walls and made alcoves. Being of a utilitarian nature, Franklin knew that books on shelves, without any way of knowing where what was, were but chaotic bits of a valuable machine. So, he did what any sensible man would do under like conditions; he had them numbered and catalogued. In each book was placed—by his grandsons Temple Franklin and Benny Bache we may be sure, for gout and age would have prevented Dr. Franklin from scrambling up ladders—a shelf number locating each volume in its case and in its position in that case. And opposite the title of the work in the catalogue was placed the shelf mark, for example, C47 N4, so that it could be found, taken out and replaced quickly and simply. The catalogue was also used by the old bookman to designate those books which he wanted to go to his two Bache grandsons and to his nephew Jonathan Williams. In his will he mentioned that they were to get such books as he had marked with their names on his catalogue. All the rest and it was apparently the bulk of the library, after a few specific bequests to institutions and other individuals, were to go to Temple Franklin.

It is strange that so fine a judge of books should have been so poor a judge of grandsons. We are not sure that Jonathan Williams ever received his share. In a number of surviving angry letters he complained that he had not. Among a group of books which Williams gave a philosophical society at the Military Academy at West Point in

1810 none can be identified as having come from Franklin's library. Both Benjamin Franklin Bache and his brother William apparently got those volumes which their grandfather had destined for them. A few volumes went to William and Thomas Hewson, the children of Franklin's old London friend Polly Stevenson. Three large sets of scientific works went to the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston, and the Library Company of Philadelphia, where they still are. The rest were Temple Franklin's, and he apparently did not set great store by them.

Temple left for England in 1790 a few months after his grandfather's death, and never returned to Philadelphia. A few authorities, without giving substantiating evidence, said that Temple took all or part of the books with him. He did take some of Franklin's papers; these are the lot discovered by Henry Stevens and sold to the Library of Congress. No similar cache of books has ever turned up, and I doubt very much that Temple encumbered himself with cases of books. I believe it much more likely that he left them, as he did the major portion of the papers, in the care of his Philadelphia friend George Fox.

In a business deal with Robert Morris, Jr., the details of which are not too clear, Temple pledged or sold his grandfather's library to Morris. At this point, no documentation carries the story over a lacuna of several years. Either Robert Morris, Jr., decided to liquidate this asset, or the creditors of the Morris family made that decision. In any event, on 14 Oct. 1801 the French bookseller N. G. Dufief informed the readers of the *Aurora*, "That he had just added to his numerous collection of books in various languages, a considerable part of the select and valuable Library of the celebrated Philosopher and Statesman, the late Dr. Benjamin Franklin." And so, without great fanfare, the fragmentation of the library of one of the country's greatest bookmen was begun. Coincidentally, in Dufief's hands at exactly the same time was the remnant of a great, somewhat earlier American library, that of William Byrd of Westover.

Let it be recorded in the annals of American book collecting that the early years of the nineteenth century might have broken even the ebullient confidence of a Rosenbach. Poor Dufief, with one of the most unusual collections ever gathered by an American bookman, found that

he was offering in a stagnant market. A series of letters from the French bookseller in Philadelphia to President Jefferson spell out his situation in dreary words. There was, to be sure, a flurry of interest after Dufief's public announcement in the newspapers. He told Jefferson a week after it appeared that the enthusiasm of their fellow citizens to acquire the books had prevented him from making a catalogue of them. A few days later William Duane editorially in the *Aurora* bemoaned the fact that the volumes were being scattered over different parts of the continent. We know some of the major purchasers—Zachariah Poulson, Jr., Philadelphia printer and publisher, then Librarian of the Library Company, the American Philosophical Society and its alert secretary John Vaughan, and William Mackenzie, Philadelphia merchant and bibliophile—and no others that we have been able to discover who bought more than a volume or two. The flurry was a nine day's wonder.

In November, 1802, Dufief wrote Jefferson that William Duane was interested in buying the approximately two thousand volumes still left of Franklin's library. Should he not buy them, Dufief would send Jefferson a catalogue of what he had on hand. Duane was hesitating. On the last day of January, 1803, the imaginative bookseller veered on a new tack. With the catalogue of the remaining books (alas, returned by Jefferson and now disappeared) he sent a suggestion that the Library of Congress buy the collection in whole or in part. "What more worthy use of the money," he told the President, "than to employ it to buy the books of one of the Founders of the American Republic and of a great man!" "It is not a spirit of speculation," he continued, "which makes me use such language, for, apart from the fact that these books belong in a national library, being for the large part on the politics, legislation and affairs of America, I would put such a low price on them that no one could accuse me of such a thing." Perhaps, if Congress would not buy them as a lot he would have to break it up and sell them as best he could. "No, Sir," he answered himself in his letter, "although a bookseller I would never sell except in spite of myself the books of Galileo, Newton and Franklin."

To titillate Jefferson's interest he sent on a few books with copious notes by Franklin. Jefferson from the catalogue ordered a handful more for himself. He told Senator Baldwin that the offer had been

made and patted Dufief on the back with the statement, "My dealings with him give me confidence that his prices would be moderate." It was theoretically unfortunate that Congress did not have the imagination to buy Dufief's collection; in retrospect it has enabled me to hope that other pieces to the puzzle may be found somewhere sometime. Two thousand volumes from Franklin's library would have been burned in 1814.

The negotiation ended with a note from Jefferson to Dufief on 1 Mar. 1803, telling him that the congressional committee had returned the catalogue to him with the information "that they had already exhausted their funds, and that therefore it was unnecessary for them to take the subject into consideration." Jefferson bought a 1556 edition of Athenaeus, *The First Two Books, of Philostratus*, London, 1680 (lacking the title and last leaf), and the Logographic Press printing of Derham's long-popular *Physico and Astro Theology*, and was given three volumes of Revolutionary tracts which Dufief sent with his compliments "in spite of the religious desire to keep them which they have inspired."

I wish this were a fairy tale and I could now end my story with an account of a knight-in-armor and "they lived happily ever after." Shortly after Jefferson's last letter Dufief had to act, in spite of himself. "Dr. Franklin's Library" was announced for sale by Shannon and Poalk at public auction on 12 Mar. 1803. "This collection, besides a variety of excellent and scarce works in English, French, Italian, German, Greek, Latin, &c., contains several manuscripts, all of which will be sold without reserve. It may with propriety be observed that there never yet was sold at public sale, the library of a man so illustrious, both in the annals of America, and in those of the Arts and Sciences, which he so much aggrandized." This ends the account of the major dispersal of Franklin's library. Although Franklin made or had made a catalogue of his books which was mentioned in his will, although Dufief sent a smaller one to Jefferson, and although one was announced as available at the auction sale, none has survived. The top of the box in which the puzzle came is lost. We have no picture to guide us.

Almost all this information was known to and printed by George Simpson Eddy, whose account of Franklin's library, appeared in the

*Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* in 1925. He was the first to try to put the jigsaw puzzle together. He continued for a number of years to gather information and track down volumes with a Franklin provenance. His catalogue in its final form with notes—sometimes detailed, sometimes speculative—of approximately 1,500 volumes located or supposed to have been in the Doctor's collection is now at Princeton, where its custodians have been most kind in lending it to me for a time span exceeding that of the usual interlibrary loan. Mr. Eddy was on the verge of the breakthrough which has enabled me to go beyond his findings.

The breakthrough was the identification of the shelf mark which was put in Franklin's books, presumably when the catalogue mentioned in his will was made. It is simple; a C denoting case followed by a number, and an N denoting the location in that case also followed by a number, for example, C38 N7, which would mean the seventh book in case 38. If my premise is accepted, that Franklin's bookshelves were the boxes in which the books had been packed, or similar neat boxes which could be placed on one another to make shelves, this becomes perfectly clear. A case was the equivalent of a shelf.

But now, we must go back and work along another spoor, so that the evidence which led to this discovery becomes clear. We know how and when Franklin's library was broken up, but we still do not know what books were in it. Our knowledge of that, a knowledge of what a single piece of the puzzle looked like, comes from various sources. First, we have Franklin's correspondence and the letters written to him. When he wrote to Peter Collinson on 19 Dec. 1756: "I have received Messrs. Hoadly and Wilson on Electricity," it may be assumed that he had obtained those gentlemen's *Observations on a Series of Electrical Experiments*, London, 1756. When Crèvecoeur wrote to Franklin in 1787 that he had entrusted to John Paul Jones a copy of "the Second Edition of the American Farmer's Letters, with the addition of a 3d Volume, which please to accept," it may be assumed that the three-volume edition of 1787 of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur Americain* was delivered to Franklin Court. But this is evidence of a sometimes deceptive nature. Franklin did not keep in his library every book he cited, thanked for, or received. It must be remembered that during the first half of his life he was a secondhand bookseller as well as a printer—

most of the books ordered from his London colleague Strahan would seem to have been bought for resale. Yet, even this cannot be relied upon. Bower's history of the Popes, an unlikely work for his personal shelves, did apparently remain there until presented a few years after its purchase to Yale. On the other hand, in 1747, when Franklin was busy forming a militia company, he asked Strahan to send him "Folard's Polybius, in French; it is in 6 Vols. 4to. printed at Paris, and costs about 3 Guineas." Since the editor added a body of material on military science, it might have been reasonable to assume that Franklin wanted it for himself. Almost a year later, however, he wrote to Strahan that he was glad the Polybius had not come, as he had wanted it for his son who had been considering a military career, but had given up the idea. The cancellation of the order apparently arrived too late; the set was delivered in Philadelphia. But, as a letter from James Logan in October, 1749, indicates, it was sold to him, and is now in the Loganian Library.

The letters, filled as they are with citations from books, and statements of books sent and received, must be used eclectically. Some works Franklin lent to friends were the Library Company's and not his own. Some books, the receipt of which he acknowledged, were merely on loan. A folio volume of bird plates which Franklin himself inscribed on the front end paper: "From the Count de Buffon to the Society," never reached the American Philosophical Society during his lifetime. John Bayne saw it at Passy in 1783; Franklin sent it to Aitken to be bound or rebound in 1786; it bears the Franklin shelf mark; and it did not end up in the Society's collection until some later, unknown date. One does not now know whether to describe the eighteenth-century practice of borrowing books permanently and shortstopping them on the way to their destination as charming informality or mere irresponsibility. Franklin's library was both enriched and impoverished by the practice. (As a footnote, I would add that he was not alone. In the library of Allegheny College I found the massive tables of longitude which the English commissioners had compiled, with an inscription in Franklin's hand from the University of Cambridge to the Philosophical Society, sent to John Winthrop for, charitably, inspection and transmission. Winthrop kept it, the inscription denying his

title and, since it was not crossed through or erased, not bothering his conscience.)

Other major sources for the reconstruction of Franklin's library are various lists. The earliest of these is the catalogue of the sale of the books of Franklin's early friend James Ralph, which took place on 5-6 Apr. 1762. John B. Shipley found a copy in the British Museum with the purchasers' names added, and from that compiled a list of the items bought by Franklin. My count of his purchases comes to 141 volumes plus a rather indefinite lot described as "A Parcel of Waste." Some of these titles I found with the Franklin shelf mark in the Library Company. The next is a list of 23 titles in 37 volumes bought by Franklin on 13 May 1769 from the booksellers D. Wilson and G. Nicol. So far I have been able to identify only one volume from this list as Franklin's copy, but this list I turned up only late in the summer, and hence there is still hope.

One of the richest harvest of titles came through the discovery of a collection of fifty-one volumes of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century tracts which the librarian Zachariah Poulson, Jr., presented to the Library Company on 3 Dec. 1801, at which time it will be remembered that Dufief was doing his best to sell the Franklin books. The discovery of the Franklin shelf mark in many of these and of further evidence from a letter from the Doctor to his cousin Samuel Franklin in July, 1771, established the Franklin provenance without question. The Philadelphian told his English kinsman that he had just bought "A curious Collection of Pamphlets bound in 8 vols. Folio, and 24 Vols 4to, & 8vo." in which he found tables of contents and notes in a hand which he identified as that of his uncle Benjamin Franklin, Samuel's grandfather. As an autograph expert the all-embracing Franklin left something to be desired. A comparison of the handwriting in the pamphlet volumes with that in commonplace books known to have been kept by uncle Benjamin shows Benjamin II was mistaken. It would have been a nice story if true, but at least the handwriting permitted me to bring together the "uncle Benjamin" volumes, the shelf marks still remaining in some to establish their Franklin origin, and others from a different original source also with shelf marks to make it certain that all fifty-one volumes of the lot came

together from Dufief's hands directly to Poulson's and thence to the shelves of the Library Company.

Among the Franklin Papers at the University of Pennsylvania is a list in the hand of Temple Franklin. It is headed in French: "List of the Books of Mr. Franklin taken from his room in the office, December 31, 1781," with a subheading: "List of the Books taken to the Office, January 8, 1782." Here we find binder's titles for 71 works in 65 volumes. A similar list, in the Franklin Papers at the American Philosophical Society, certainly also made at Passy is headed succinctly: "List of Books." It contains 121 titles in 160 volumes. These two lists are similar, and present similar and tantalizing problems. There are annoying titles, such as "English Cookery," "Essay on Punctuation," "Le Babillard," "Instructions sur les Muriers," and "Quinti Horatii Flacci," in 2 vols. In some cases I have been able to identify the work without question and to pinpoint Franklin's copy; in a score of instances I am still trying to find out what "Coup d'Etat" or "Consultations pour M. Alexandre" are; in others it has been impossible to ascertain which of dozens of editions of La Fontaine's *Fables* and *Contes* Franklin owned, which Caesar, Virgil, or Juvenal. These lists present a further problem. Some of the volumes which I have been able to trace in a direct line through the hands of Franklin descendants turn out to bear Temple Franklin's signature on the titles. Reluctantly but ineluctably, I have come to the conclusion that Temple's books were intermingled with his grandfather's at Passy and never sorted out in Philadelphia, so that Manassah Cutler by chance might have pulled a book from the shelves he saw in the library and found it to be young Franklin's. I believe they were included in the 1790 count, and hence I am including them in my reconstruction.

No other lists made during Franklin's lifetime are known, or at the present are known to have survived. Chronologically, the next which has been found is a list of books marked with Benjamin Franklin Bache's name in the catalogue according to the will, and delivered to him by Temple Franklin. The original of this document has not been located; a typescript obtained by George Simpson Eddy from Franklin Bache about thirty years ago is our sole record. And this is a key document. It lists 74 titles in 217 volumes, and preceding the titles is a column listing numbers for Case and Number and a letter for a

Panel, which last I assume to be a section of the library or group of shelves. It was the discovery of books with shelf marks matching those on the list which enabled me to prove that this particular shelf mark was Franklin's. Benny Bache died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1798, and his widow married William Duane. I am now working on the theory that Duane took over most, if not all the Franklin books. A number which I have traced were sold at his sale in 1836, and I have noticed a great number of other titles common to the Bache list and the Duane sale, although I have not yet completed my analysis of them.

Second only to Duane, the American Philosophical Society was alert to the opportunities offered by Dufief. On 2 Oct. 1801, the committee appointed "to examine Dr. Franklin's Library" reported that they had spent \$107.62. On 16 Oct. they reported the outlay of an additional \$91.50, at which time they were told to go ahead and buy another twenty dollars worth. The 69 titles in 175 volumes, which included runs of European learned society transactions, were listed in full in the minutes. At the auction sale in 1803 the Society again returned as a purchaser, this time securing 62 works in 54 volumes, plus 76 volumes of bound almanacs. With the exception of a few volumes later disposed of as duplicates (one has turned up at Princeton) the Society still possesses its rich haul of 1801-3. George Simpson Eddy listed the works from the titles given in the minutes and in the original bills from the bookseller Dufief and the auctioneers Shannon and Poalk which are in the Society's archives, but he was not able to examine all the books. They have now been segregated, described, and held in proper veneration. For those looking for a bargain, it is safe to say no more will be sold as duplicates.

I have noted the purchase by Zachariah Poulson in 1801 of the English tract volumes now in the Library Company. Another major earlier purchaser recognized the worth of the wares being so forlornly cried by Dufief. It was natural that he should, for the wise bibliophile was William Mackenzie, a wealthy Philadelphia merchant and the first American who we know collected rare books as rare books. How much he bought from Franklin's library we do not know. But in the course of my recent enthusiasm we began turning up in the Library Company dozens of volumes with the Franklin shelf mark, all

originating in the lot bequeathed by Mackenzie or sold to the library by his executors on favorable terms stipulated by him. With excitement we went through every Mackenzie book printed before the date of Franklin's death. Many of them had been rebaced and had old end papers covered. These had to be uncovered. Enough marks were found to make this one of the prime sources for books from Franklin's library, and to deliver me into the hands of frustration. For every volume we found with old end papers intact, there were half a dozen volumes completely rebound with all original end papers gone and no sign left, except a gnawing between intuitive certainty and the uncertainty of evidence, that these had been Franklin's. I found many titles, which from other sources I knew had been his, but the Mackenzie copy told me nothing. In the case, for instance, of a set of Chinese history complete in thirteen volumes, of which the rebound Mackenzie set had only twelve, and we have a record of only twelve into Franklin's hands, where my intuitive certainty overbears my innate desire for proof, I have included those tantalizingly unmarked Mackenzie books in my list of located Franklin volumes, with the knowledge that my honest statement of the weakness of my position will be sympathized with by my friends and attacked by my critics.

The third chief repository of Franklin books, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, came by its treasures indirectly. William Duane, who more than any other individual was conscious of the importance of the provenance, bought a considerable number of volumes from Dufief after Jefferson had turned them down, or at the auction. Among these were 148 tract volumes, several of the political ones of the pre-Revolutionary period with extensive notes in Franklin's hand. In 1822 Duane sold them to the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, together with a run of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from 1729 to 1747, said by an old history of the institution to contain notes by Franklin giving the names of the contributors of articles. Alas, the Athenaeum was a lending library. How any one could "borrow" and not return a dozen and a half folio volumes of a newspaper is not known. The run of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* is gone, and no set with Franklin annotations has been found even by so keen a Franklin bloodhound as the persistent, scholarly Dr. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. Gone, too, before authorities at the Athenaeum became aware of the value of their holdings were twenty-seven

of the tract volumes. Broken out of their bindings and separately rebound, usually in morocco, by dealers who knew a good thing when they saw it, and may or may not have known their origin, many of the pamphlets, dripping with Franklin marginal comment and frequently not a little of his biting pen, turned up in such distinguished sales as those of Menzies and Brinley. Not bearing a sign of their previous ownership (the Athenaeum did not use defacing rubber stamps until after the thefts became known) some of these thin precious volumes are in the Boston Public, New York Public, Morgan, Antiquarian Society, and the collection of Boies Penrose. I am not suggesting that we enter into a Texas-British Museum debate or that a hundred-year-old theft now be atoned for by innocent possessors, but I would like to discover where the rest of the twenty-seven volumes went. The Athenaeum in 1888, aware that historical treasures should be in a historical library, turned over the remaining 121 volumes to the Historical Society where they now are. Although Eddy made a rough list of the pamphlets in the collection, the titles do not appear in the card catalogue of the Historical Society, and the tract volumes—of supreme importance to the Franklin scholar—have been little used and are little known.

This brings us down almost to the day before yesterday. Occasionally books which bore unmistakable signs of a Franklin provenance were sold at auction sales or were discovered in libraries. It is amazing how difficult it is to trace a book sold or seen fifty years ago, or even twenty-five. These scattered volumes would, however, barely fill a shelf. But there did remain unscattered another major cache of Franklin books. I do not think Jonathan Williams ever received his share of the library. Temple Franklin's we have traced in dispersal. Bennie Bache's ended up, I believe, in the hands of Duane and were sold at his sale. That leaves us with Billy Bache's book legacy from his grandfather. These, I am convinced, were passed down in the family and ended up in the hands of Franklin Bache. This lineal descendant was a friend of Eddy and sent him not only a copy of the document listing Benny Bache's share—none of which he owned—but another list of books in his own possession compiled some time before 1914. This list has been another of my major sources.

After the death of Franklin Bache's widow, almost all these books

were sold at Freeman's in 1947. Franklin Bache had carefully put cloth wrappers around many of the volumes on which he had typed "From Benjamin Franklin's Library." Some of the volumes bore presentation inscriptions, others had the shelf mark, a number the signature of Temple Franklin, a few that of his father William. It was at this sale that I first noticed the shelf mark and called it to the attention of Dr. William E. Lingelbach of the Philosophical Society. He and Mrs. Gertrude D. Hess had already noticed it in some of the Society's books, and conspiratorially before the sale we came to the conclusion that it had been put in by Dufief. We were interested in it, but not fully convinced of its Franklin importance. I could not speak so feelingly of this sale had not I been one of those blind to its opportunity. For the Philosophical Society, Percy Lawler, who attended the sale, bought a number of lots. The rest were scattered among other successful bidders, who found themselves declared the winner after a bid of three or five dollars a lot. Even the volumes with presentation inscriptions to Franklin or bearing his name in a contemporary hand on a cover went for prices which can only be described as dwarf low. What mass psychology convinced the audience at the sale that, in spite of evidence to the contrary, none of the books had really belonged to Franklin I do not know. Perhaps, it was Franklin Bache's amateurish attempt to establish the pedigree by putting wrappers on all the books which shrieked the fact. Three volumes of Priestley's scientific works, presentation copies delivered to Franklin by the scientist Magellan, went to the astute Dr. John Fulton for only \$90. Seven volumes of Rozier's work on agriculture with a long inscription hailing Franklin as the Aristotle of America was bought for the Philosophical Society for \$30. Journals of Congress, in original boards, some with Franklin's name on the front cover, went for from \$3.50 to \$16.00. Volumes with Temple Franklin's signature went for even less.

I am now convinced that all these books came from the house on Franklin Court after its owner's death, and were all part of Franklin's library. Since some of them, including a good many with definite indications that they were the Doctor's, do not have the shelf mark, I can only assume that either the task of marking the books was not completed before Franklin's death or that books shelved in rooms other

than the library were not marked (4,276 volumes are a great many to have been squeezed in a room 17 by 33 feet which also served as an office). It would seem that the task of tracing books sold as recently as 1947 would be a comparatively easy one. It has not been. Many of the purchasers set so little store by their cheaply bought acquisitions that they discarded them. Others sold them or put them away and do not now know where. I am still looking for scores of volumes from the Bache sale, for many of which I have found supporting evidence of Franklin's ownership in the letters and the lists.

This brings me to the end of my story. By all the means described, in the American Philosophical Society I have identified as Franklin's 426 titles in 457 volumes, plus 76 volumes of almanacs; in the Library Company 1,293 titles in 223 volumes; in the Historical Society 861 titles in 121 volumes. These are where most of Franklin's books ended up. Scattered in twenty-five other collections are some more. By looking in many libraries at copies of books I know Franklin owned I have been able to locate additional volumes. In the Library of Congress by this method I found Franklin's copy of Fournier's history of printing, recently rebound in library buckram but fortunately still with the original flyleaf bearing the shelf mark which matched that on the list of books delivered to B. F. Bache. At Princeton I found a ten-volume set on Chinese history, a record of which existed in a letter. It too had the shelf mark in some volumes. Searching haphazardly through a shelf of pamphlets at the American Antiquarian Society I found one with a table of contents in Franklin's hand. Now separated from its fellow pamphlets and bound in morocco, it is probably one of the lost Duane-Athenaeum volumes, and was sold at the Brinley sale for \$10 to the Society unaware until this summer of its Franklin provenance. From the list of books once owned by Franklin Bache, I found twenty-six volumes at the Free Library of Philadelphia, given it by Bache in 1914. Another work, once there, was discarded as "used" in 1919, for the Franklin connection of none of the volumes had been recognized. In the Franklin Institute I found the Philadelphia printer's copy of Moxon, identifiable only by a single brief note in Franklin's hand, but presumably the B. F. Bache copy sold at the Duane sale, bought by the press manufacturer Adam Ramage and given by him to the Institute. By pure chance I discovered on the shelves of the Patent

Office Library a seven-volume set of inventions and machines approved by the Académie Royale des Sciences. I took it off the shelf, opened it and saw the telling shelf mark. These are but needles in haystacks. There are lots of similar haystacks still to be searched in the country, and probably some needles yet to be found. I have identified and located a total of 2,981 titles in 1,020 volumes, plus the hundreds of individual almanacs in the 76 volumes. I have records of, but have not located or identified, an additional 640 titles in 1,106 volumes, and I have not yet finished working through the Franklin Papers. Since Mr. Eddy spoke of having discovered 1,350 "volumes," which I gather from his lists was a combination of volumes and titles, all of which he had not located or identified, I believe that I am fair in saying that I have doubled his results. To return to my original metaphor, about one-quarter of the puzzle in terms of volumes has been put in place. I know what another quarter looks like, but I have not found the pieces. I am still hunting, piecing together, and praying for a major stroke of serendipity.