

**SUGGESTED READING:**

**WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, BEN FRANKLIN?**  
Jean Fritz  
Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., NY 1976

**THE MANY WORLDS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**  
Frank R. Donovan  
Harper & Row 1963

**BEN AND ME**  
Robert Lawson  
Little, Brown & Co. 1939

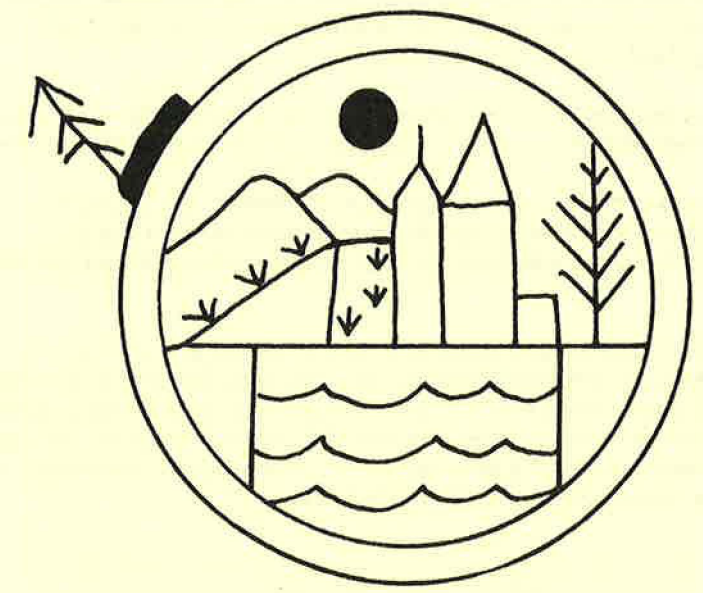
**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**  
Ingri & Edgar Parin D' Aulaire  
Doubleday & Co. 1950

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND OTHER WRITINGS OF  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**  
Dodd, Mead & Co. 1963 NY.

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN OF OLD PHILADELPHIA**  
M. Cousins  
Random House 1952

The mural depicts many of the themes which were the most important parts of Benjamin Franklin's life. The circles in the mural are symbolic of life never ending but of continuous growth. The triangular shape in the center of the mural is a symbol for wisdom and the shape itself is representative of the mountains. The tower (with the symbol for lightning) is next to the mountain. These are but a few of the meanings of my artwork. The most important thing is that the mural is located in the library where a world of knowledge is available to each child. It is hoped that the mural will cause some children to use their imagination as Benjamin Franklin did and hopefully enrich their life.

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



Franklin Elementary  
Port Angeles

**A mural by Kay Slusarenko**

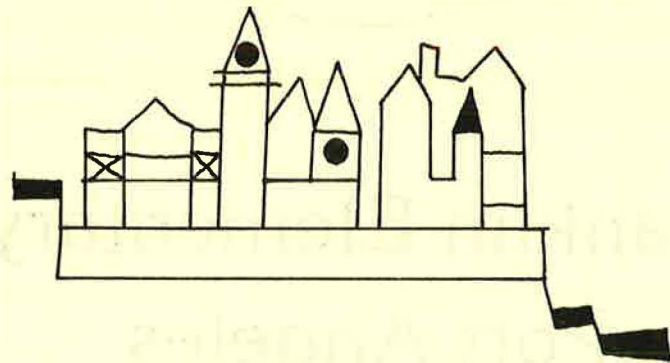


On January 17, 1706, in Boston, Benjamin Franklin was born. He was the last son in a family of seventeen children. Ben went to school for a while but then his father decided that he would be better at learning a trade. Ben was placed in a printing shop operated by his older brother. Ben did not like this arrangement for he wanted to be his own boss instead of being ruled over by his brother.

It was the hours away from his job as a printer that Ben loved. He was always trying new things . . . always questioning the world around him.

Ben loved the water and was an excellent swimmer. To improve his speed in the water he invented wooden paddles for his feet but the paddles were so heavy it was hard to go a long distance without becoming very tired.

Each day Ben explored and questioned all that was around him. Yet what Benjamin really wanted to do was to go to sea. The ships fascinated him. He would watch them every day after work and would dream about the beauty of the sea and the freedom of the birds flying above the water. Finally Ben could not stand it any longer . . . at the age of seventeen, he packed his few possessions and ran away to sea.

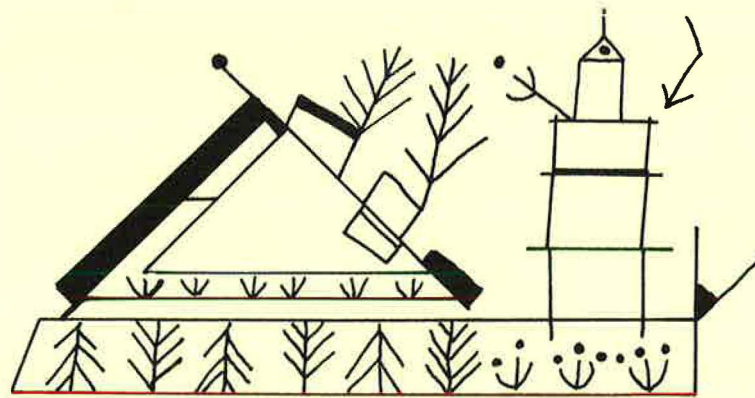


He left the ship when it docked in New York and traveled by land to Philadelphia, Penn. He liked the city and decided to stay there and become a printer. Soon he was a very popular printer and a successful businessman.

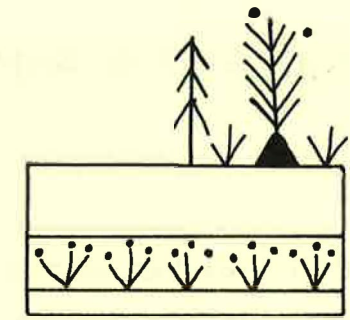
Benjamin looked around him and saw that the city he loved was not as good as it could be. He began to work on improving the city so that the people would be safer and more comfortable. He started the first free public hospital, organized the police force and the Fire Department. He showed the people how to light the streets at night for safety and how to dispose of garbage.

He opened the first free circulating library and made the post office more efficient.

At the age of 40 Benjamin became fascinated with the phenomenon of electricity. At this time electricity was little understood and there were no practical uses for electricity. Rather it was looked upon as a magical trick which was fun to use. In France and England many people had fun with the interesting curiosity. A French electrician had amused Louis XV and his court by shocking 700 Monks so that they would all jump into the air at the same time.

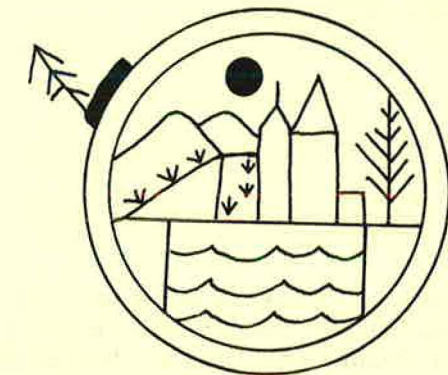


But it was Benjamin Franklin who realized that electricity was more than a toy and he set out to prove that electricity and lightning were identical. He wrote a letter to a scientist in Europe and told him to build a sentry box on the top of a high tower and put a pointed rod on the tower. A man was to stand in the box during a storm so that he could see that lightning was attracted to a rod, just as was electricity; proving that electricity and lightning were indeed the same. The only reason that Benjamin did not make the experiment himself was that Philadelphia did not have a high enough tower or even a high hill. In the spring of 1752, three scientists in Europe tried the experiment and all three proved that Franklin's idea was correct. (One scientist was killed.)



Benjamin Franklin was now 46 years old and had retired from his printing business. This newfound time gave him the opportunity to become a public servant to his country. He wanted to develop the West and he helped organize an expedition to seek the Northwest Passage. In fact, the first territory west of the Appalachians was called Franklin until it was later renamed Tennessee.

You would think that this was enough for any one man to do during his life time, but not so for Franklin. He had just begun! He was asked to go to London and help the British to understand the American Colonies better. Benjamin lived in London for 18 years and enjoyed it very much. But he realized that England treated America as its slave and not as a country of free men. Finally, Ben returned to America to help Thomas Jefferson with the Declaration of Independence.



In 1776, at the age of 70, Benjamin Franklin was sent to France to try to talk the French into entering the war for America's freedom from the British. Ben stayed in France until he was 82 years old.

He then returned to America to help with the writing of the Constitution of the United States. At the age of 84, he died. He had been a man with many important ideas but the best one that we have continued to share in is the idea of having an independent and free United States.