Franklin and one to him survive for these years, and his early published writings in newspapers, pamphlets, and almanacs fill most of the volume. Materials on the first sixteen years of Franklin's life are scanty, consisting only of records of birth and baptism, some of his father's writings, and a few possible remains of his own early ballads. The record is fuller beginning in 1722 with the Silence Dogood letters, published in the New England Courant. Thereafter, the amount of Franklin's literary productions increased, and the volume contains a number of his contributions to the American Weekly Mercury and the Pennsylvania Gazette; the first two years of Poor Richard's Almanack; and his two earliest pamphlets, A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, published in London in 1725, and A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper-Currency, published in Philadelphia in 1729. Many other miscellaneous documents throw much light on Franklin's early business interests and his relationship with the Junto, the Library Company, and the St. John's Lodge of Masons. Here too are Franklin's fascinating "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion" as well as the epitaph he composed for himself at the age of twenty-two.

A model of editorial accomplishment, the volume contains explanatory introductions to all documents that require them and ample notes. The editors have further enhanced its value by providing a full genealogy of the Franklin family, a thorough index, and a statement of editorial method that might well serve as a guide to all editors of eighteenth century material.

The Papers of Benjamin Franklin has made an auspicious beginning. Along with The Papers of Thomas Jefferson and projects now in progress to publish similar editions of the papers of John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, it will provide the student of early American history with a wealth of published personal materials for the leading statesmen of the period that is perhaps unparalleled for any other field of history.

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Jack P. Greene


The publication of the Adams-Jefferson correspondence by the Institute of Early American History and Culture is an event of major importance to all students of American history and to all scholars of the Age of the Enlightenment. Not since the appearance of Zoltan Haraszti's John Adams and the Prophets of Progress in 1952 has so penetrating a light been shed upon the intellectual world of Adams,
and the feast that is spread before Jefferson enthusiasts in these two volumes should add zest to new labors. Perhaps the most important thing to be said about these letters is that they are revelations of the most intimate kind. While every public question that ever engaged the energies of these two great men is touched upon, often in depth, it is with a profound sense of having been exposed to a great body of literature that one reads this correspondence. If there is a subject that eighteenth-century men were likely to have pondered or a problem in religion, history, government, or the practical arts that men of the Revolutionary generation might be expected to have wrestled with, Jefferson and Adams pondered or wrestled with it. Fortunately, their letters were written for one another out of a friendship that grew deeper as a result of the problems they encountered in preserving it. It is not difficult to hear the voices of men talking, oblivious to the use which listeners may make of their words. They communicated in order to make themselves understand, not by posterity, but by one another. The result is an unrivaled clarity of meaning and expression that would certainly have been lost otherwise.

All of the letters contained in these volumes are either already available or soon will be in editions of the Adams and Jefferson papers. Great value is to be gained, nevertheless, in having the exchange of thought between these two men in juxtaposition. Their differences of temperament and background are the more apparent, and their wide areas of agreement the more surprising as a result. Differences so bitterly felt during the period covered by their presidential administrations receded into the background as they became increasingly aware of the importance of their Revolutionary heritage, an awareness sharpened as contemporaries slipped away. A better explanation of what deism implied to men who reached maturity in the latter half of the eighteenth century would be difficult to find outside these letters. Adams and Jefferson's concurrence on religious questions and their vital sense of the meaningfulness of life heightened their sense of dedication to the cause of freedom as they grew older. Yet the skepticism of Adams and the sanguine expectations of Jefferson remained constant.

Lester J. Cappon's introductory passages to each of the chronological periods covered by the letters of the friendship, his footnotes, and his editorial sense are admirable. Wisely, he chose to include Abigail Adams' sprightly letters to Jefferson written during the middle period of their lives. The impression remains that Jefferson found the New England matron more congenial than her husband in this period, for there is a jocular quality to his Paris letters that is rare in the broad range of his writings. John Adams, who wrote more profusely and more often than Jefferson, reveals all the strength and vitality that was in him in these letters. We stand in debt to Mr. Cappon and the many others to whom he so generously pays tribute in his introduction for making readily available the record of a great friendship and some of the finest prose in the English language.

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Stephen G. Kurtz