

# Benjamin Franklin's Daughter

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Sarah, the third child and only daughter of Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) (Figure 1) and his wife, Deborah Read (1708–1774), was born in Philadelphia on September 11, 1743.<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Franklin called her Sally. Of her early years little is known, other than that she had some talent for music and played the harpsichord.<sup>2</sup> Her father, who was deeply fond of her, described her as “affectionate, dutiful and industrious.”<sup>3</sup> From 1757 until 1762 and from 1764 until 1775 Franklin represented the interests of Pennsylvania in England, while from 1776 until 1785 he was in France, as minister to the court of Louis XVI (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> Sarah’s letters to her father—containing political news as well as descriptions of social and family life—suggest something of her education and character. She was knowledgeable and wrote quite well. While she could be frivolous, and was occasionally corrected by her father on this account, she was always hardworking and warmhearted.

On October 29, 1767, Sarah married Richard Bache (1737–1811). The *Penn Chronicle and Universal Advertiser* took note of the wedding: “Last Thursday evening Mr. Richard Bache of this city, Merchant, was married to Miss Sally Franklin, a young lady of distinguished merit. The next day all the ships in the harbour displayed their colors on the happy occasion.”<sup>5</sup> The couple moved into the house that Deborah Franklin had built during Benjamin’s absence and in which she died in 1774. When Franklin returned permanently to Philadelphia in 1785, the Baches and their growing family continued to share his home, Sarah acting as his hostess and caring for him until his death. In his will Franklin provided generously for both Richard and Sarah Bache, who spent part of their inheritance on a trip to England in 1792–93.<sup>6</sup> A year after their return, the couple retired to a property they called Settle Farm, located in the Delaware River valley near Bristol, Pennsylvania.

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Figure 1. Joseph Siffred Duplessis (French, 1725–1802). *Benjamin Franklin*, 1778. Oil on canvas, oval, 72.4 x 58.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931 (32.100.132)

Richard Bache, born September 12, 1737, was six years older than Sarah.<sup>7</sup> In his early twenties he had emigrated to New York from the village of Settle in Yorkshire. Later he moved to Philadelphia, where by the mid-1760s he found himself suffering reverses in business. Sarah’s half-brother, William, informed their father that Bache’s “Load of Debt [is] greatly more than he is worth, and that if Sally marries him they must both be entirely dependent on you for Subsistence.”<sup>8</sup> However, Franklin did not stand in the way of the marriage. Trusting the judgment of his wife, who approved of the match, he only advised her “not [to] make an expensive feasting Wedding, but [to]



Figure 2. Jean Laurent Mosnier (French, 1743/44–1808). *Louis XVI*, 1790. Ivory, diam. 69 mm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Millie Bruhl Fredrick, 1962 (62.122.69)

conduct every thing with Frugality and Oeconomy, which our Circumstances . . . require.”<sup>9</sup> Franklin first met Sarah’s husband in 1771 and found that he liked him. Although he offered Bache advice about his business enterprises,<sup>10</sup> he never lent him any money. In 1776 Bache succeeded his father-in-law as postmaster general, an office he held until 1782. There is no evidence to suggest that he was notably successful in any capacity. He enjoyed a long retirement and died in 1811, having survived his wife by three years.

From her mid-twenties Sarah Bache was occupied with the couple’s offspring: Benjamin Franklin (1769–1798), known as Franklin; William (1773–?1820); Sarah (1775–1776); Elizabeth (1777–1820), known as Eliza; Louis (1779–1819); Deborah (1780–1865); Richard (1784–1848); and Sarah (1788–1863).<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, during the Revolutionary War, she rose to the sort of prominence that might have been expected of a member of Benjamin Franklin’s family, leading many hundreds of Pennsylvania women in their efforts to supply clothing to the soldiers in the field. Her letter on this subject was written on December 26, 1780, to General Washington at his headquarters.

[W]e packed the shirts in their Boxes and delivered them to Coll Miles, with a request that he would send them to Trenton immediately lest the river should close, where they now mail your Excellency’s orders; there are two thousand and five in number; they would have been at Camp long before this, had not the general Sickness which has prevailed prevented, we wish them to be worn with as much Pleasure as they were made—<sup>12</sup>

She continues:

My Father in one of his last letters says “if you happen again to see Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington, assure him of my very great and sincere Respect, and tell him that all the old Generals here [in France], amuse themselves in studying the Accounts of his Operations, and approve highly of his conduct—<sup>13</sup>

Writing in the same year, a friend of Benjamin Franklin described Sarah’s activities to him in the following terms:

If there are in Europe any women who need a model of attachment to domestic duties and love for their country, Mrs. Bache may be pointed out to them as such. She passed a part of the last year in exertions to rouse the zeal of the Pennsylvania ladies, and she made on this occasion such a happy use of the eloquence which you know she possesses, that a large part of the American army was provided with shirts, bought with their money, or made by their hands. In her applications for this purpose, she showed the most indefatigable zeal, the most unwearied perseverance, and a courage in asking, which surpassed even the obstinate reluctance of the Quakers in refusing.<sup>14</sup>

While the role Mrs. Bache played in support of the army was a commendable if conventional one, her success in engaging the Quaker women of Pennsylvania in the war effort suggests uncommon determination and resilience. As the progenitor of all the recognized Franklin family descendants, she in any event qualifies as a minor icon of American history, an aspect effectively conveyed in an etching by Peter Kraemer (Figure 3).<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Franklin had two sons: the younger, Francis Folger, was born in 1732 and died of smallpox shortly after his fourth birthday, while the elder, William, probably born in 1731, was illegitimate.<sup>16</sup> William Franklin, who became the loyalist governor of New Jersey, moved permanently to London in 1782. His two marriages were childless; his illegitimate son left no legitimate offspring. By contrast, Sarah and Richard’s son Franklin, who accompanied his grandfather to France in 1776, became the well-known publisher of the *Philadelphia Advertiser*, later called the *Aurora*.<sup>17</sup> William Bache, a physician, was for a time surveyor of the port of Philadelphia.



Figure 3. Peter Kraemer, after John Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, n.d. Engraving, 14 x 10.8 cm. The New York Public Library, S. P. Avery Collection, Print Collection (photo: New York Public Library)

Deborah's husband, William J. Duane, became secretary of the treasury, while the youngest daughter, Sarah, married Thomas Sergeant, afterward judge of the supreme court of Philadelphia. Sarah Franklin Bache died in 1808. By the middle of the nineteenth century her descendants numbered well over one hundred (see the Appendix for a Franklin family tree).<sup>18</sup>

Upon the completion of his diplomatic mission to France in 1785, Benjamin Franklin received from Louis XVI a miniature portrait of the king surrounded by 408 diamonds.<sup>19</sup> Franklin left the miniature to his daughter, stipulating frugally that the precious stones were not to be made into ornaments that would encourage the "expensive, vain, and useless fashion of wearing jewels in this country."<sup>20</sup> Instead, some time after Franklin's death in 1790 Mr. and Mrs. Bache sold the diamonds, and with a portion of the proceeds set off for Europe with their oldest daughter, Eliza. Before leaving, Sarah wrote to friends offering to carry out their commissions in England; their replies suggest that the Baches departed in late May or early June of 1792.<sup>21</sup> In August of that year they were with Richard's family at Preston in Lancashire, and Richard noted in December that he had made a tour of Scotland.<sup>22</sup> Eventually they settled near William

Franklin and his second wife in London, where they rented rooms from a Mr. Perica, perfumer, in Duke Street, Grosvenor Square.<sup>23</sup> They were still abroad on July 30, 1793, but were preparing to depart.<sup>24</sup> It is during this period that Mr. and Mrs. Bache's portraits were painted by John Hoppner (1758–1810).<sup>25</sup>

Subsequent to the deaths of Thomas Gainsborough in 1788 and Sir Joshua Reynolds in February 1792, and prior to the rise of Thomas Lawrence, Hoppner, at the height of his powers, was arguably the most sought-after portraitist in London. He had entered London's Royal Academy Schools to begin his formal training on March 6, 1775.<sup>26</sup> Shortly thereafter, Joseph Wright, son of the American sculptor and wax-modeler Patience Lovell Wright (1725–1786), was also admitted. In 1780 Hoppner first exhibited at the Academy; in 1781 he married Mrs. Wright's daughter Phoebe. As Benjamin Franklin and Patience Wright had corresponded while Franklin was in Paris, there was a connection between the families, and it is not surprising that the Baches would have turned to Mrs. Wright's son-in-law for their portraits.

When Hoppner painted Sarah Franklin Bache, she was approaching her fiftieth birthday. His rather sober image (Figure 5) shows her to have been a robust woman of upright carriage with an unlined face and a slight double chin. Her skin is rosy, her eyes and eyebrows dark brown. Her unpowdered, wavy graying hair frames her face and falls to her collar line. She is seated frontally, well forward in the picture space. The composition, which conforms to the traditional pyramid, is anchored at the corners by her elbows. She looks downward and slightly to her right, so that the angle of her gaze follows the diagonal contour of her shoulder and meets the opposing diagonal formed by the upper edge of her white shawl. She wears a gray dress with a pattern of large dots (visible on her left sleeve only); its folds are shaded in a rich chocolate brown. The starched muslin fichu is crossed over in front and tied in back. A muslin shawl serves as a wide belt. Her starched kerchief is of the same material and patterned with embroidery.

The conservative costume conforms to what one might expect from an American woman of Sarah Bache's age, station, and particular circumstances who was visiting a foreign metropolis: the colors are restrained, the materials good, and the style up-to-date. Whether by chance or by design, her clothes may also betray French influence. (The Baches had hoped to travel to France but were prevented from crossing the Channel by the Revolution.) There was continuing reciprocity between England and France in matters of fashion even during the early years of the

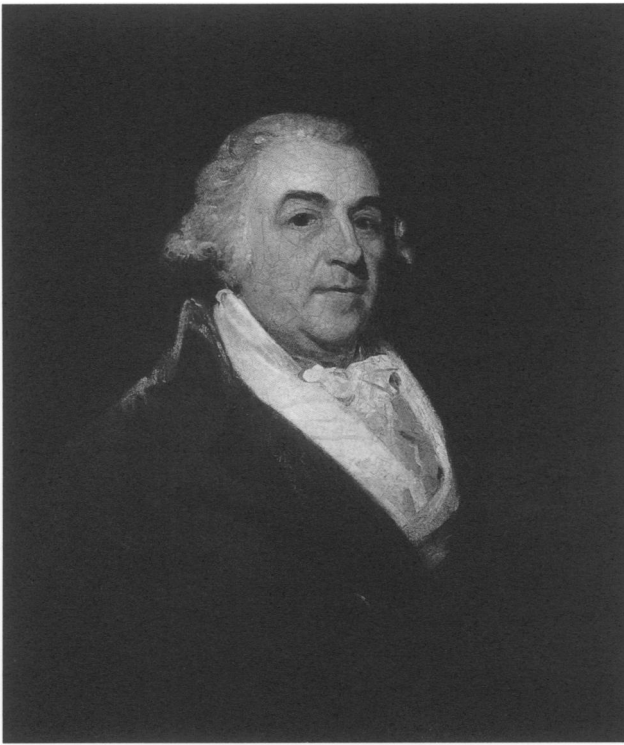


Figure 4. John Hoppner (English, 1758–1810). *Richard Bache*, ca. 1793. Oil on canvas, 74.9 x 62.2 cm. Private collection (photo: Metropolitan Museum)

Revolution. Luxury fabrics were out of place or unavailable in France by the early 1790s; modesty in dress was politically advisable, and dark colors or white were safest because they were politically neutral. In an atmosphere in which simplicity was encouraged, French sitters posed in their daily dress. So, apparently, did Mrs. Bache, but it is impossible to know whether she was merely wearing new clothes of good quality, or whether—as has been supposed—her kerchief was intended as an allusion to her republican or bourgeois sympathies.<sup>27</sup>

A product of many years of academic training, Hoppner had emulated Reynolds and had long admired the painters of the Venetian Renaissance. He was a fine colorist with a preference for a restrained palette who was particularly skilled at chiaroscuro effects, working as assuredly with impasto as with a broad brush. His contemporaries found him to be exceptionally good at capturing a likeness. Sarah Bache's portrait is a characteristic example in good state of his mature style. Hoppner effectively suggests the sitter's forthright, benevolent character. His technique, impressively fluent, conveys the motion of the wet and dry brush, with many angular strokes and bright highlights for the hair, the forehead, and the

bridge and tip of the nose, as well as throughout the white drapery. The variation in tone in the white passages and the handling of the lost right profile are accomplished. Perhaps to achieve a more monumental effect, the artist has omitted the hands, which are often shown in paintings of this size and format. The background is neutral. The light enters from the right, where the grays are more transparent; the foreground, showing the ends of a fur wrap, is a warm brown. The canvas is of the small standard size called a three-quarter because its height approximates three-quarters of a yard.

Richard Bache (Figure 4) poses with his right shoulder forward and his face in three-quarter view. His eyes are golden brown. Glancing in the direction of the viewer, he cocks his right eyebrow quizzically. His salt-and-pepper hair, which looks to be his own, is unpowdered. The mole-colored coat with a high collar and large buttons and the white waistcoat and cravat are typical of the early 1790s. There is a patch of bright red paint under the gaping left side of the waistcoat. The gunmetal gray background, less differentiated than that of Sarah's portrait, resolves into a sunset, and the contours of trees in full leaf appear in the lower right corner. Hoppner seems to have been less interested in Mr. Bache: the face is slack, the details of the costume are ill defined, and the contours of the shoulder and swelling chest are uninteresting.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the Baches must have been pleased with both portraits, which they brought back with them to Philadelphia. Some light is shed on the connection between the Hoppners and the Baches by a letter Phoebe Hoppner wrote to Sarah from London on January 1, 1794.<sup>29</sup> Phoebe discusses at length and with gratitude Mr. Bache's intervention on her behalf in the matter of her late father's estate and notes that "the attachment I feel to you, & M<sup>r</sup> Bache, & the pleasure I had in your friendship and acquaintance, has made your interests mine." She mentions proudly that her husband has been chosen a member of the Royal Academy and continues,

M<sup>r</sup> Hoppner presents his thanks for the many pleasing things you say of the Portraits, I assure you he is highly gratified that your Children approve them, his wish was that they would find them like, he bids me say he is sorry he cannot write by this Packet, as he is particularly engaged today, and tomorrow will be too late as the mail is closed tonight. . . . Mr. [William] Franklin who I saw, told me of the opportunity. . . . M<sup>r</sup> H & I will both write by the next vessel.

The Hoppner portraits of Sarah and Richard Bache became family heirlooms. After Richard's death in 1811, his portrait went to the Baches' sixth child,



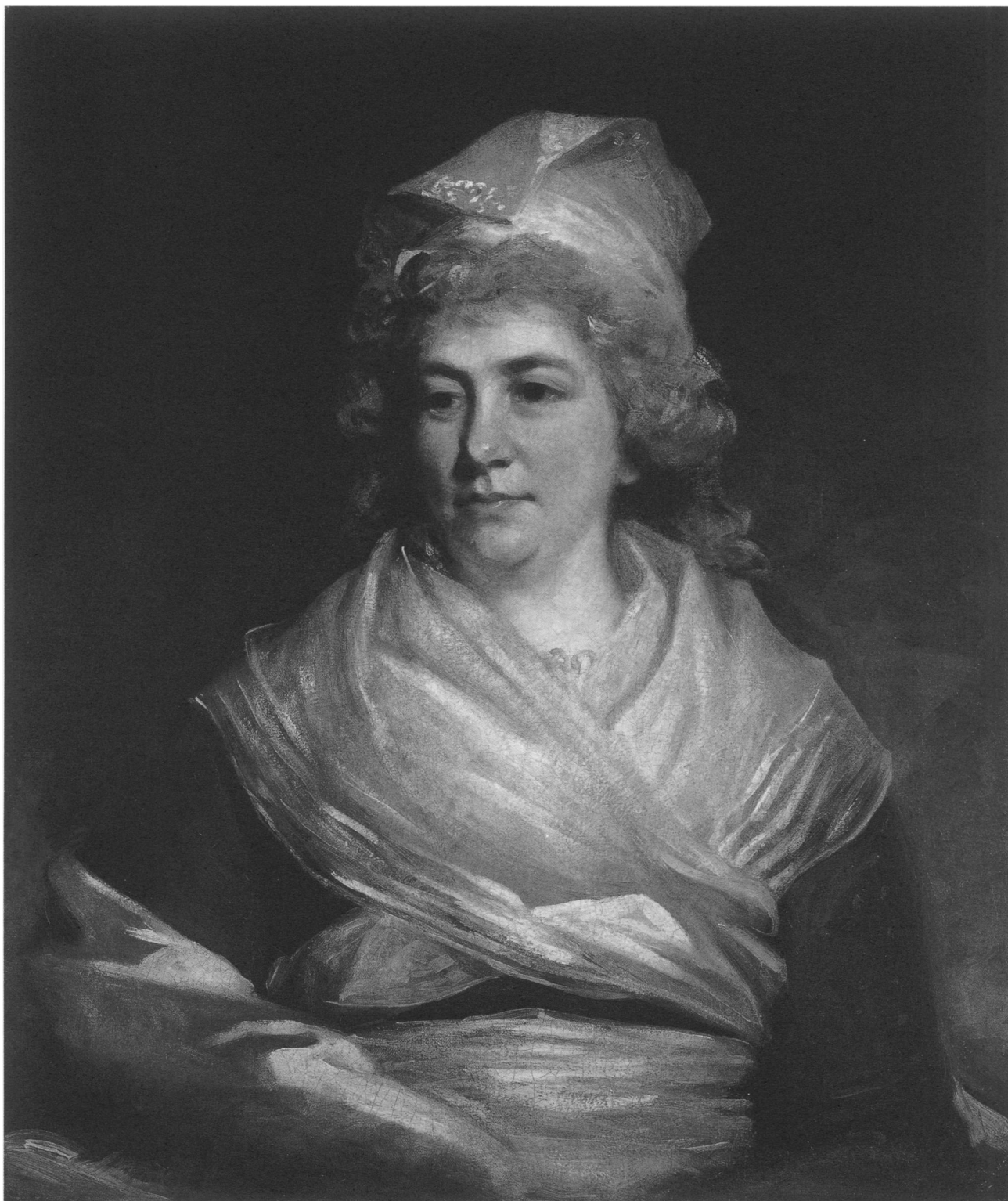


Figure 5. John Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, ca. 1793. Oil on canvas, 76.5 x 63.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1901 (01.20). See also Colorplate 5

Deborah Duane, who died in 1865.<sup>30</sup> While still owned by a member of his family, it has long been deposited at the Metropolitan Museum. The portrait of Sarah belonged to the couple's youngest son, Richard, who died in 1848, and in turn to his eldest son, Alexander Dallas Bache. In 1901 it was offered for sale to the Museum by a descendant representing the surviving children and grandchildren of Richard Bache Jr.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile numerous copies of the two portraits were ordered by other family members. In 1812, or more probably 1813, a pair of copies was commissioned from Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860) by Mrs. William Bache, the wife of Richard and Sarah's oldest surviving son. As her father-in-law had died a year or two before, the Hoppners must have been borrowed from her husband's sister and brother in Philadelphia.

The owner of Peale's copy (Figure 6) of Sarah's portrait has supplied the text of a letter, which has always been kept with the painting, in which Peale outlines the circumstances of the commission to Mrs. Bache:

Dr. Madam

Altho' it was my expectation to be doing before this the copies of your father & mothers portraits which I am to give in exchange for the old picture of Alfred; yet I must beg your further indulgence until I return from Maryland whither I am just about to depart. I assure you that the state of my health & other business have made it entirely impossible for me to have done them as well as I wish & intend.

Yours respectfully

Rembrandt Peale

Tues: July 14. 1812<sup>32</sup>

Decades later, Peale offered a fuller account to Professor Charles Hodge of Princeton, the husband of Mrs. Bache's daughter Sarah:

Philad<sup>a</sup> July 19th 1847

In the summer of 1813 Mrs. Bache offered to present to the [Pennsylvania] Academy Chamberlain's Picture of Alfred in the Cow-herd's Cottage, on condition that they have it repaired. I was applied to by Mr. Hopkinson for that purpose, but could not undertake it for less than \$150, as it was much damaged. Not long after that Mrs. Bache offered the Picture to me, to buy for my own Gallery, as she wished me to Copy for her the Portraits of old Mr. & Mrs. Bache which had been painted by *Hopner*. It occurred to me that Mr. Hopkinson, not long before this, in speaking of these portraits had praised them as *inimitable* specimens of Portrait painting. I therefore offered to make the Copies in exchange for the Alfred—She agreed, & the Portraits were to be sent to me the next morning at 8 o'clock. Determined to make use of the occasion to prove that Hopner's style was not difficult to imitate,

I immediately waited on several artists, & invited them to see the Originals in my Room, where I requested them to call again on the evening of the next day, and they should see my Copies finished. I accordingly commenced them at 9 o'clock, and had them entirely finished to my satisfaction the next day before dark—requiring only to be dried and varnished.

A few years later, I saw these portraits at one of our Annual Exhibitions, and I cannot but well remember the circumstance, because Mr. Hopkinson, much to my gratification, had mistaken them for the Originals, until I convinced him they were my Copies, made for Mrs. Bache, who on this occasion lent them to the Academy, where for many years they remained. I was afterwards informed by some member of the family that enquiries being made for them at the Academy, they could not be found, being probably lost sight of in one of the old lumber closets. This year I perceived them again as belonging to the Academy no one about the premises knowing anything to the contrary.

I presume it will only be necessary for Mrs. Hodge to present the foregoing statement to the President of the Board of Directors, now that the Portraits of her Progenitors are found, and they will be restored to their rightful owners.<sup>33</sup>

It has been supposed that the Peale copies were returned to Mrs. Hodge in 1847;<sup>34</sup> subsequently that of Richard Bache disappeared.

Rembrandt Peale belonged to a dynasty of American painters: he was the second and most gifted son of Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) and the brother of Raphaele (1774–1825) and Rubens (1784–1865) Peale.<sup>35</sup> Having studied with his father and in England, and having worked in France, he returned to the United States to become one of the nation's leading Neoclassical portraitists. While living in Philadelphia, he traveled frequently to New York and Boston in search of commissions, as well as to Baltimore, where from 1812 until 1822 he managed the Baltimore Museum. In his later life he was much given to copying, his own work as well as old master paintings. Peale's copy after Hoppner is on canvas, subsequently mounted on a solid support to which a much damaged old label has been stuck: "... [ ] g a Tooth of the Mammo[ ] / Pa[ ] ted by. ..." According to information supplied by the owner in 1953, the label read "Rembrandt Peale/holding a Tooth of the Mammoth/Painted by Himself/London April 1803."<sup>36</sup> An X-radiograph (Figure 7) confirms that the description on the label is correct.<sup>37</sup> Peale must have carried his self-portrait home from Europe and years later, having it to hand in his studio, painted over it his copy after Hoppner's *Sarah Franklin Bache*.

The portraits of Sarah by Hoppner and Peale are instructive examples of the two artists' contrasting



Figure 6. Rembrandt Peale (American, 1778–1860), after Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, 1813. Oil on canvas, later mounted on a solid support, 71.1 x 60.3 cm. Private collection (photo: Metropolitan Museum)

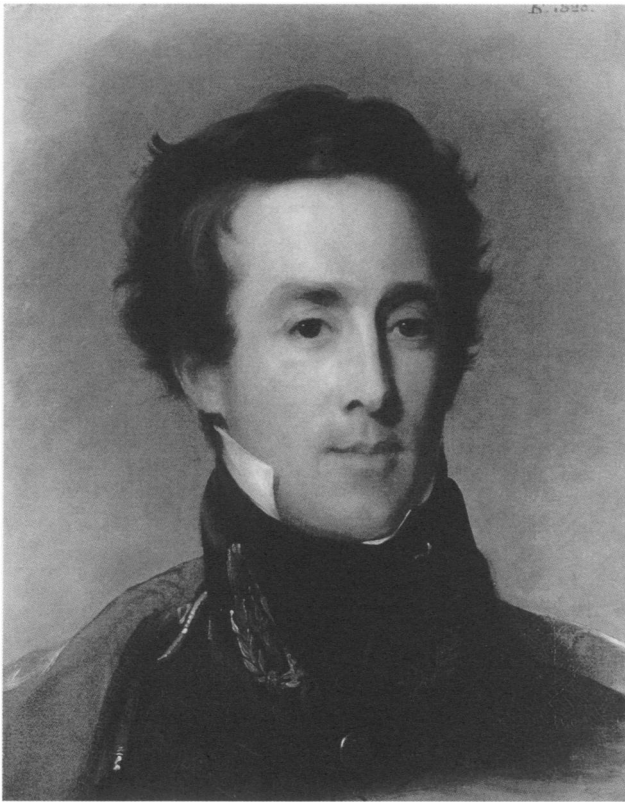


Figure 7. X-radiograph of the painting illustrated in Figure 6, showing Rembrandt Peale's self-portrait "holding a Tooth of the Mammoth . . . 1803" (photo: Roland White, for The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)

styles and of the differences between an original and a copy. Hoppner attacked his canvas energetically, using much loose and some dry brushwork. The Peale is softer and the blended strokes are largely indistinguishable. Peale's highlight on the sitter's nose is less bright and distinct; the same is true of lighter passages on the eyelids, forehead, and chin. Hoppner used a dry brush liberally for the sitter's gray hair, while Peale employed this technique only sparingly. Peale records some embroidery on the front V of the cap, but less of it, whereas Hoppner shows dots of embroidery sprinkled about. The original indicates ruffles at the neck where the fichu crosses; in the Peale copy, this passage is illegible. Hoppner suggests five rows of trim on the fichu, which Peale omits. Peale's drapery is less crisp throughout and not as well defined around the shoulders. In Hoppner's portrait Sarah's dress is gray, with large dots on her left sleeve and a bold brown shadow on her right sleeve. These are absent from the Peale portrait, in which the dress is very dark brown, almost black. Peale softens both the fur passage in the foreground of the original and the loose brushwork at the lower right, as well as substituting a uniform dark background.

Philadelphia society in the nineteenth century was close-knit, and Sarah's portrait later came to interest

another of the city's most prominent artists. Rembrandt Peale was a close friend of Sarah Bache's grandson Professor Alexander Dallas Bache, whom Thomas Sully (1783–1872) knew as well.<sup>38</sup> Sully's first contact with the family, however, was with another of Sarah's grandsons, Captain Hartman Bache (1797–1872) (Figure 8), who sat for him for a portrait head begun on July 19, 1824, and completed on September 16, 1826.<sup>39</sup> Sully kept extensive records and, lacking information to the contrary, it may be assumed that the order for the portrait came from the sitter, whose granddaughter bequeathed it to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Captain Bache, having graduated with distinction from West Point in 1817, would eventually become the highest-ranking officer in the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers.<sup>40</sup> In 1828 a replica of his portrait was commissioned from Sully by the sitter's mother, Margaret Bache Duane (1776–1836).<sup>41</sup> For this replica, painted between June 7 and June 14, the artist charged fifty dollars, by comparison with the thirty dollars he had charged for the original portrait head in 1826.<sup>42</sup> While the present whereabouts of the replica are unknown, precedent suggests that it may still belong to a member of the family.



Eight years later, Sully painted—“[f]or myself”—the first of his two copies of Hoppner’s *Sarah Franklin Bache*, this one of the same size as the original but with an arched top (Figure 9). He borrowed the Hoppner canvas from the sitter’s son Richard Jr. and completed his own between May 19 and June 8, 1834.<sup>43</sup> A descendant reported that this painting went to a dentist in payment of a debt;<sup>44</sup> if so, it was either given to or bought back by another relative, for it was bequeathed to the Philadelphia Museum by Caroline D. Bache, Hartman’s granddaughter. The last of Sully’s Bache family portraits was yet another copy of Hoppner’s portrait of Sarah (Figure 10), which by then belonged to Alexander Dallas Bache. Painted “for her grandson,” according to the artist’s register, it was completed between March 15 and 22, 1865.<sup>45</sup> That canvas, which was given by a Bache family member to the United States Department of State, is fully inscribed on the

Figure 8. Thomas Sully (American, 1783–1872). *Captain Hartman Bache*, 1826. Oil on canvas, 48.4 x 38.4 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Bequest of Henrietta D. Pepper (Mrs. John W. Pepper), 1958, 1958-28-1 (photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art)



Figure 9. Thomas Sully, after Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, 1834. Oil on canvas, arched top, 76.2 x 63.5 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Bequest of Caroline D. Bache, 1958, 1958-27-1 (photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art)



Figure 10. Thomas Sully, after Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.8 cm. Diplomatic Reception Rooms, United States Department of State, Washington, D.C., Bequest of Miss Elizabeth Bache Coleman, 1975, 75.19 (photo: Will Brown)



reverse: "Sarah Bache, daughter of Dr. B. Franklin. Painted in 1793 by Hoppner. This copy by TS 1865 March."<sup>46</sup>

Sully valued his first copy at one hundred twenty-five dollars, and his second and last at one hundred dollars. His pricing makes some sense, because, in regard to all the portraits of Sarah (including Peale's), the more distant the copy is in time from the original, the more broadly it seems to have been painted. This may be demonstrated by comparing passages by Hoppner (Figure 5) with the same passages from each of Sully's two paintings (Figures 9, 10), which might more properly be called variants: the drapery under and over the sitter's right arm, in the lower left corner of each picture. The shapes are progressively looser and less meaningful, until in Sully's 1865 canvas the sense of the structure and placement of the sitter's right shoulder and forearm are lost, resulting in an awkward flattening of the forms at the lower left, which seem to be closer to the surface of the picture. The sitter's weight no longer appears to rest on her torso, with the result that the entire figure looks crooked. From one picture to the next, the range of tone narrows and the light evens. Could it perhaps be



Figure 11. Thomas Wilcocks Sully (American, 1811–1847), after Hoppner. *Sarah Franklin Bache*, 1838. Oil on canvas, 75.2 x 63.2 cm. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Bequest of Herbert L. Pratt, Class of 1895, 1945.74 (photo: Mead Art Museum)

argued that these changes are partly a reflection of the copyists' increasing sense of historical distance? The later of Sully's variants was painted almost seventy-five years after Hoppner's original, which over time must have seemed increasingly old-fashioned, and by which time Sully himself was an elderly gentleman.

The fact that Thomas Sully was an English-born American might conceivably account for his interest in Hoppner, whose work would have been little if at all represented in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Sully had emigrated in 1792 with his family and as a young man had lived in Virginia, where he began his training with a French miniature painter, and in New York. After visiting New England, he finally settled in December 1807 in Philadelphia and two years later became an American citizen. In 1809–10 he returned to England to receive instruction from Benjamin West (1738–1820). Extremely prolific, as well as peripatetic, Sully painted more than two thousand portraits in a career of some seventy years. He also taught painting, and among his pupils in May 1830 he numbered his nineteen-year-old son, Thomas Wilcocks Sully (1811–1847).<sup>48</sup>

Of Thomas Sully's family life relatively little is known. In 1806 he married his brother Lawrence's widow, Sarah Annis Sully, and assumed responsibility for her three daughters.<sup>49</sup> One child, the couple's infant son Thomas Sully Jr., died in 1810 during his father's absence in London. By May 1820 the painter was supporting a family of ten—his wife, their six children, and his three stepdaughters—among whom Jane Cooper, Thomas Wilcocks, Blanche, Ellen, Rosalie, and Alfred are recorded as having worked in their father's studio. It is impossible to know which of them showed any degree of promise. Thomas senior often had difficulty collecting what was owed him for commissioned portraits. He had numerous pupils, but many of them seem to have received instruction without payment of fees. He must therefore have relied upon his children for assistance of various kinds.

Alfred abandoned painting and entered West Point in 1837. In the same year and from then on, Thomas Sully was often accompanied on his travels by his daughter Blanche, who was with him when Queen Victoria sat for him in London. By mid-September of 1838 they were back in Philadelphia, where, it must be assumed, Thomas Wilcocks Sully painted another professional copy of Hoppner's *Sarah Franklin Bache* (Figure 11).<sup>50</sup> It is said to have been inscribed, on the reverse, under the lining canvas, as follows: "Copied by T. Sully Jr. 1838. The original by J. Hoppner, London, 1793."<sup>51</sup> Thomas Wilcocks may have borrowed

the Hoppner from Richard Bache Jr., as his father had done four years earlier. Is is also possible that he copied his father's 1834 copy.<sup>52</sup> Both Sullys asserted in their inscriptions that Sarah sat for Hoppner in 1793. This information can only have come from Richard Jr., the son of the sitter, and supports the very reasonable assumption that the couple commissioned their portraits shortly before returning to America, rather than early in their stay in England.

Given Sarah Bache's historical importance, Hoppner's status in England, and the existence of no less than four copies—three by major American painters—Hoppner's canvas must have been among the most influential English portraits in Philadelphia, and quite possibly in the United States, during the first half of the nineteenth century.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My friend John Wilson's work on the much-neglected Hoppner led me to try to find all the Bache portraits and place them in context. I much appreciate the cooperation of the owners of Hoppner's *Richard Bache* and Rembrandt Peale's *Sarah Franklin Bache*, both of whom are members of Sarah's family. I am also grateful to Carol Eaton Soltis and to my colleague Carrie Rebora Barratt for recommending me to Carol. Much of the meticulous research for this article was carried out by Josephine Dobkin.

## NOTES

1. See *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree et al., vol. 1 (New Haven, 1959), pp. lxii–lxv, lxxvii, for Franklin family genealogy, and William Duane, "Sarah Bache," in Elizabeth F. Ellet, *The Women of the American Revolution*, 4th ed. (New York, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 332–48, for a standard life of Sarah Franklin Bache, written by her grandson and first published in 1848.
2. Whitfield J. Bell Jr., "Sarah Franklin Bache," in *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), vol. 1, p. 75.
3. Ibid.
4. James Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia "Aurora"* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 2. In chapter 1, pp. 1–22, "Franklins and Baches," Tagg offers an up-to-date account of Sarah Bache's life.
5. E. D. Gillespie, *A Book of Remembrance* (Philadelphia and London, 1901), p. 19. Mrs. Gillespie was Mr. and Mrs. Bache's granddaughter.
6. Ibid., p. 27, and Claude-Anne Lopez and Eugenia W. Herbert,

- The Private Franklin: The Man and His Family* (New York, 1975), pp. 306–7.
7. *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, p. lxiii, and Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, pp. 3–16.
  8. Thomas Fleming, ed., *Benjamin Franklin: A Biography in His Own Words* (New York, 1972), p. 212.
  9. Ibid.
  10. Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, pp. 7–8.
  11. *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, pp. lxiii–lxv.
  12. Sarah Franklin Bache Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
  13. Sarah Franklin Bache Papers. The letter closes with compliments and is signed "S Bache."
  14. Duane, "Sarah Bache," pp. 344–45.
  15. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 7 (1892), p. 60, is particularly laudatory, and the illustration on the same page has a heroic quality absent from Hoppner's portrait of Sarah (Figure 5).
  16. *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, pp. lxii–lxiii.
  17. Ibid. See also Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, and, for other members of that generation, James Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1864), pp. 628–31, and Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*.
  18. Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, p. 631.
  19. Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, p. 27, and Lopez and Herbert, *The Private Franklin*, p. 306. The portrait miniature, without the diamonds, now belongs to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia and is reproduced in Fleming, *Benjamin Franklin*, p. 34.
  20. Lopez and Herbert, *The Private Franklin*, p. 306.
  21. Frances Simond writes to Sarah Bache on May 1, 1792: "I hope . . . this will reach you before your departure." Eliza Ferguson writes on May 12, noting "that you were about sailing for England." Sarah Franklin Bache Papers.
  22. There is a letter written by Sarah Bache from Preston on August 17, 1792. Richard Bache mentions his tour of Scotland in a letter sent from London to his son Will on December 3, 1792. Sarah Franklin Bache Papers.
  23. Richard Bache's sister wrote "to bid a Last Adieu" on July 17, and Sarah Vaughan wrote on July 30, 1793. The first letter was addressed to number 12 and the second to number 11 Duke Street, Grosvenor Square. Sarah Franklin Bache Papers.
  24. See Sarah Vaughan's letter of July 30, 1793; Sarah Franklin Bache Papers. See also Duane, "Sarah Bache," p. 346, and Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, pp. 30–31. Although most sources indicate that the Baches were in England for about a year, thirteen months would perhaps be a more accurate estimate.
  25. See principally William McKay and W. Roberts, *John Hoppner, R.A.* (London, 1909), pp. 9–10, and John Human Wilson, "The Life and Work of John Hoppner (1758–1810)" (Ph.D. diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 173–76, vol. 2, figs. 38, 39. Additional literature on the portraits, which primarily concerns that of Sarah, is extensive but uninformative. References not otherwise cited herein are given at the end of these notes.
  26. Wilson, "John Hoppner," pp. 28, 36, 173.
  27. Lopez and Herbert, *The Private Franklin*, p. 307, call her kerchief a Phrygian cap and her shawl a *fichu Marie-Antoinette*.
  28. While the portrait of Sarah Bache is in notably good state, that of Richard Bache is worn and flattened by lining.
  29. Sarah Franklin Bache Papers.

30. The former owners of the portrait of Richard Bache are: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bache, Settle Farm, near Bristol, Pennsylvania (until 1808); Richard Bache, Settle Farm (1808–d. 1811); the Baches' daughter Deborah Bache Duane, Philadelphia (1811–d. 1865); by descent to Richard Bache Duane, New York, and Locust, New Jersey (by 1931–d. 1982); Dr. Richard Bache Duane Jr. (1982–d. 1988); by descent (from 1988).
31. The former owners of the portrait of Sarah Bache after the two pictures were separated are: the Baches' son Richard Bache Jr., Philadelphia (1811–d. 1848); his son Alexander Dallas Bache (1848–d. 1867); his sister Mary Bache (Mrs. Robert J.) Walker, Washington, D.C. (1867–at least 1898); Alexander Bache's and Mary Walker's descendants, represented by Isabella K. Walker (until 1901).
32. Transcribed in a letter to Lillian B. Miller, January 22, 1988. "[T]he old picture of Alfred" was *Alfred in the Cowherd's Cottage* by a painter named Chamberlain, for which see Peale's letter of July 19, 1847, below. The Baches fled Philadelphia before the British occupation, and Richard Bache mentioned the painting in a letter to Benjamin Franklin of July 14, 1778: "The rest of the pictures are safe and met with no damage, except the frame of Alfred, which is broken to pieces." Duane, "Sarah Bache," p. 339.
33. For Peale's letter of July 19, 1847, see *The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, ed. Lillian B. Miller (Millwood, N.Y., 1980), microfiche, ser. 6A, 10E6–10E10. The Mr. Hopkinson mentioned by Peale was Joseph Hopkinson, a lawyer and a founder of the Pennsylvania Academy. The artist Chamberlain may be Mason Chamberlain, an Englishman who painted a well-known portrait of Benjamin Franklin. For this information, I am indebted to Tess Mann, assistant editor of the Charles Willson Peale Papers.
34. The former owners of Peale's *Sarah Franklin Bache* are: Mr. and Mrs. William Bache, Philadelphia (1813–?1820); Sarah Bache Hodge Stockton, Princeton (?1820–d. 1849); by descent to Katharine Stockton Miles; by descent.
35. See Lillian B. Miller, *In Pursuit of Fame: Rembrandt Peale, 1778–1860*, exh. cat., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Washington, D.C., and Seattle, 1992).
36. See the Frick Art Reference Library photo mount for Peale's *Sarah Franklin Bache*.
37. Miller, *In Pursuit of Fame*, pp. 58, 59, fig. 23 A (X-ray). B. I would like to thank Carol Eaton Soltis for her help with the Peale, which was examined and photographed at the Metropolitan Museum in the summer of 2000.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–27.
39. Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, *The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872)* (Philadelphia, 1921), p. 90, no. 62, when in the collection of Mrs. Albert D. Bache of Philadelphia, and *Paintings from Europe and the Americas in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 300, ill. This portrait, given to the Philadelphia Museum by one of the sitter's granddaughters, is signed and dated (upper right): "TS 1826." For a copy of the record I am grateful to Darrel Sewell, curator of American art at the Philadelphia Museum.
40. Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, p. 629, and Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, p. 78.
41. Charles Henry Hart, *A Register of Portraits Painted by Thomas Sully* (Philadelphia, 1909), p. 23, no. 58, painted "for mother," and Biddle and Fielding, *Thomas Sully*, p. 90, no. 63, when in the collection of Mrs. R. Meade Bache of Philadelphia. Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, notes that Captain Bache married a sister of General George Meade and the owner in 1921 would have been his daughter-in-law.
42. Biddle and Fielding, *Thomas Sully*, p. 90, nos. 62, 63.
43. Hart, *Thomas Sully*, p. 23, no. 59, as Mrs. Bache, "deceased. Hoppner's. For myself." See also Biddle and Fielding, *Thomas Sully*, p. 90, no. 64, when in the collection of Mrs. Albert D. Bache of Philadelphia, and *Paintings from Europe and the Americas*, p. 301, ill., given by her to the Philadelphia Museum. This portrait, with an arched top, is inscribed by the painter (on the reverse): "TS 1834/Portrait/Copied from Hoppner."
44. Letter from Emily H. Bache to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, February 20, 1950, Records of the Philadelphia Museum.
45. Hart, *Thomas Sully*, p. 23, no. 60, as Mrs. S. Bache, "for her grandson. Copied from Hoppner." See also Biddle and Fielding, *Thomas Sully*, p. 91, no. 65, and Monroe H. Fabian, *Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872)*, exh. cat., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Washington, D.C., 1983), p. 121, no. 81, ill. One of Alexander Dallas Bache's brothers, George or Richard, would likely be the grandson to whom Sully referred. According to records held by the Department of State, the picture had been the property of Elizabeth Bache Gould Coleman, daughter of William Saltonstall Gould and his wife, the former Jane Bache, of New York.
46. Fabian, *Mr. Sully*, p. 121.
47. For Thomas Sully's biography, see *ibid.*, pp. 10–21.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 13–16, for scant details about the Sully children.
50. Copies of Hoppner's portraits of both Richard and Sarah by members of the Bache family and by others are recorded in the literature. An unattributed portrait of Richard belongs with that of his wife to the Diplomatic Reception Rooms (information kindly supplied by Thomas G. Sudbrink). It is inscribed in pencil on the reverse: "W. S. Francis paid to get father copied get him to do my mother." See also, for example, Gillespie, *Book of Remembrance*, p. ix, ill. p. 25, for a copy of the portrait of Richard by his daughter Mrs. Thomas Sergeant.
51. Information kindly supplied by Karen Cardinal of the Department of Rights and Reproductions, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.
52. This assessment is based on black-and-white photographs; examination of the originals would probably yield a definitive conclusion.

#### Additional References to Hoppner's *Sarah Franklin Bache*

- William Duane, ed., *Letters to Benjamin Franklin from His Family and Friends, 1751–1790* (New York, 1859), p. 3, ill. opp. p. 57, mentions two copies by Sully and illustrates the print after Hoppner's portrait by Peter Kraemer (Figure 3).
- W. Stanton Howard, "Portrait of Sarah Bache," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 106 (1903), p. 797, ill., reproduces a wood engraving by Henry Wolf.
- The Pictorial Life of Benjamin Franklin* (Philadelphia, 1923), n.p., ill.
- C. H. Collins Baker, *British Painting* (London, 1933), p. 280.
- Thomas Fleming, *The Man Who Dared the Lightning: A New Look at Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1971), ill. opp. p. 180.
- John Wilson, "John Hoppner," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London, 1996), vol. 14, p. 754, ill.

Exhibitions of Hoppner's *Sarah Franklin Bache*

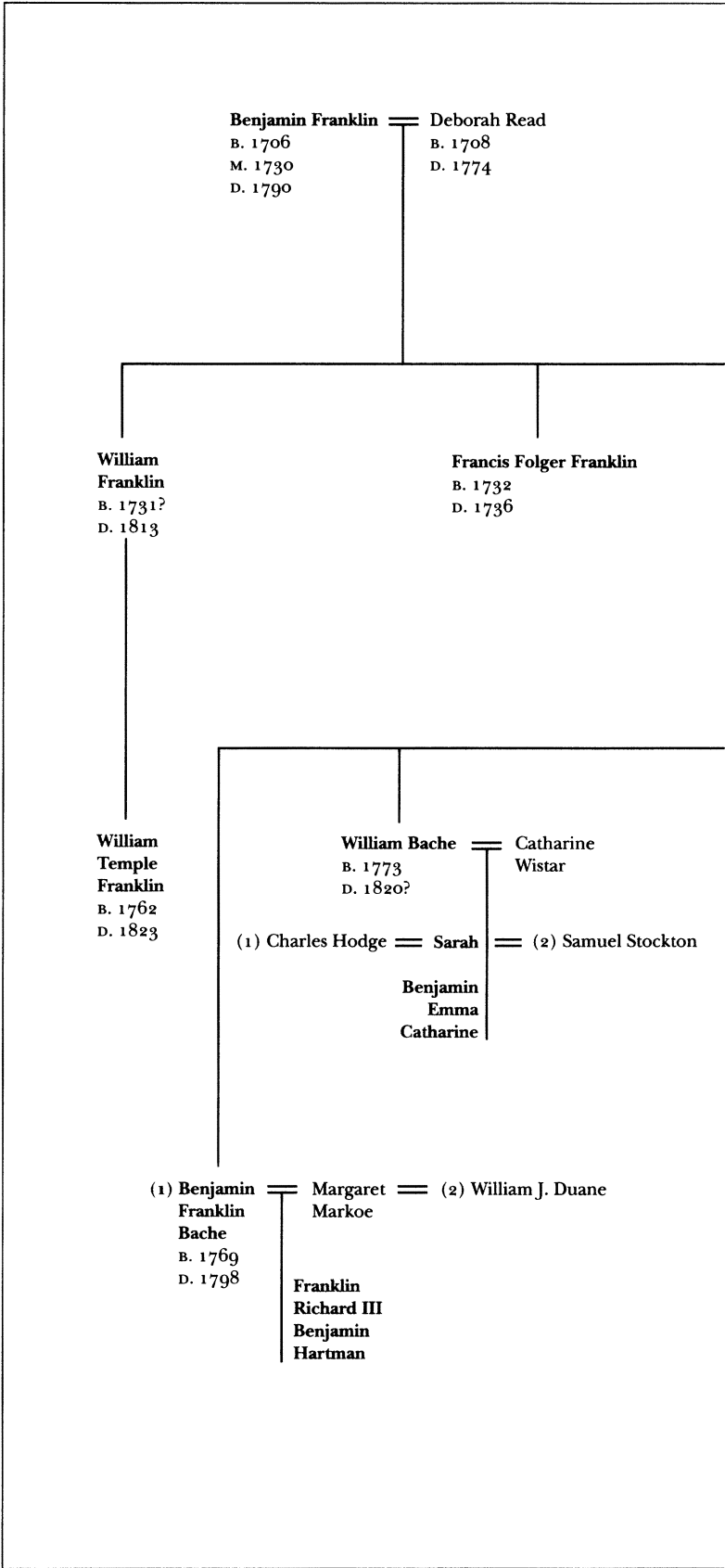
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, May 11–September 13, 1936. “Benjamin Franklin and His Circle,” nos. 85 (Sarah), 86 (Richard).

Palm Beach, The Society of the Four Arts, January 12–February 4, 1951. “Portraits, Figures and Landscapes,” no. 22.

Plymouth, Mass., Pilgrim Society, June 30–September 26, 1976; Atlanta, High Museum of Art, October 16–November 14, 1976; Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, December 3–31, 1976; Chicago Historical Society, January 18–February 20, 1977; Austin, Texas, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, March 15–April 23, 1977; New-York Historical Society, May 10–June 15, 1977. “Remember the Ladies: Women in America, 1750–1815,” p. 93, ill. p. 92.

Washington, D.C., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, June 3–September 5, 1983. “Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872),” no. 80.

Iowa City, University of Iowa Museum of Art, February 7–March 23, 1987. “Women and the American Revolution.”



Appendix: Descendants of Benjamin Franklin  
After *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree  
et al., vol. 1, pp. lxii–lxv, lxxvii

