suade the Kremlin to withdraw from NATO territory), the West in practice depends heavily upon the threats of "mutual assured destruction" to deter a Soviet attack.

Does this mean that strategy is now irrelevant?

Craig and Gilbert allude in the final chapter to the possibility that we live "in an age without useful precedents." Perhaps. But as Field Marshal Michael Carver of Britain reminds us in a useful historical survey, there has been ample room for strategy in conventional wars since Hiroshima.

Omnibus volumes like this are bound to have shortcomings. This one might have devoted more attention to the role of deception in war. Hitler's sundry nonaggression pacts and the Allied exploitation of German and Japanese communications are only two 20th-century instances of this effective strategic weapon. As Thomas Hobbes pointed out in *Leviathan* (1651): "Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues." Another flaw is the Eurocentric view that reduces 19th-century American and Russian strategic concepts to mere offshoots of European ones. But any reader could pick a dozen nits and still recognize the value of this unique collection. At the very least, it demonstrates that war is far too important to be left *only* to generals, admirals, or presidents.

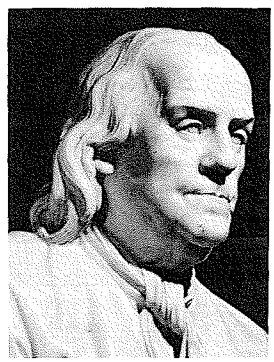
—David Yost '86

FRANKLIN OF PHILADELPHIA
by Esmond Wright
Harvard, 1986
404 pp. $25

In the social wisdom Americans have passed down since the early 19th century, Benjamin Franklin (1706–90) has been the archetype of the robust, successful individual. Whenever we have wanted to name the quintessential American, we have chosen not George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or Abraham Lincoln, but Benjamin Franklin. To us he is the self-made man, imbued with common sense, forthright, resourceful, witty, and self-satisfied. As this last quality would suggest, proclaiming that Franklin is the representative American has involved some discomfiting concessions. We are not completely at ease with the image of Franklin as unintellectual, unspiritual, uninterested in the arts, and uncommonly devoted to his own reputation.

A major achievement of Esmond Wright in this rich and satisfying new study is his demonstration that certain qualities—both positive and negative—that we have unthinkingly associated with Franklin as American individualist stem in fact from the working procedures of an enormously social man. We are unlikely to know a "private" Franklin. If our printer, inventor, politician, and consummate diplomat spent much time with second thoughts, or entertained intellectual and spiritual doubts, he kept these matters to himself. Virtually his every utterance was public. He wrote

even his autobiography (1771–88) as a piece of didactic literature. As Wright comments early on, "always at the root [of Franklin's persona] was a conviction that the individual is only truly himself in a gregarious, not in a solitary, setting." Thus a life of Franklin is a life of a man in society—in Boston (until age 17), in Colonial Philadelphia, in London and Paris, and, finally, in the new United States of America.



Wright, an Englishman who had a long career as director of the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London, has given us a Franklin who was, above all, engaged. Every manifestation of Franklin's genius—as scientist and inventor, as founder of institutions for the public good in Philadelphia, as politician determined to break the power of the largely absentee landholders of Pennsylvania during the 1750s, as courtier hopeful of preserving the unity of the British Empire and, finally, after 1776, as diplomat winning France's help for the new American nation—demonstrates that it was action with others that was the mainspring of his being.

Wright's sprinkling of Franklin's Poor Richard maxims throughout the text reminds us each time of how shallow a picture they give us of Franklin if seen only as separated from a lifetime of interaction with others. The common historical viewpoint has portrayed Franklin's experiments in electricity, for example, as inspired by curiosity but carried out as a private eccentricity. Wright, by contrast, shows us that Franklin pursued his scientific work with the desire to pull together communities of interest across the Colonies, across the Atlantic, and across the European continent.

In meticulous detail, Wright demonstrates the progress of Franklin's ideas about America's relationship to Britain, from his earliest involvement with the defense of the American frontier in the 1750s to his happy optimism in the 1780s about the future of the newly independent nation. Using Franklin's arguments, Wright traces the intricacies of Franklin's long allegiance to the British monarch and his hopes for an imperial parliament. "He insisted that America was a part of England, or at least as much part of it as Scotland; and at least until 1768 he was as ready to settle permanently in London as he had been to move to and settle in Philadelphia." The arrogance of England's Parliament forced him to his final conviction that America had to be independent—and not only independent but a republic, whose citizens had "natural" rights rather than "the rights of Englishmen." The book unfolds with an efficient sweep, as Wright organizes details into larger patterns. His style is graceful, his language precise.

Near the end of the book, Wright pauses to ask what Franklin means to us in the 20th century. To many, he is the father of all who are independent in spirit. Wright's impressive biography persuades us, however, that even more important, Franklin is the model of social man—the politician, the negotiator, and the conciliator.

—Elizabeth Johns '86