WHERE DID BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GET THE IDEA FOR HIS ACADEMY?

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About the first of July, 1729, Reverend Philip Doddridge, pastor of the dissenters' church at Market Harborough in England, opened an academy for the instruction particularly of ministerial students but to which others might be admitted,¹ in which lectures are said to have been given, not in Latin as in other schools,² but in English.³ The academy was transferred to Northampton when Mr. Doddridge left Market Harborough on December 24, 1729, to become pastor of the Castle Hill Church.⁴ The school was a success, though it suffered from some of the inconveniences incident to such institutions, as discipline, insubordination, etc.⁵

In November, 1730, Reverend Francis Hutcheson became a professor in the University of Glasgow, and then or soon after, began lecturing in English at the University, thus setting for the universities an example similar to that of Mr. Doddridge in the dissenters' academies.⁶ It is doubtful whether there was any direct connection between these two events but it is interesting to note that they happened so nearly simultaneously.

² Ibid., II. 473.
³ Ibid., II. 489. Merely implied here, but stated in Herbert McLachlan, English Education under the Test Acts (Manchester, 1931), pp. 21, 144; and Irene Parker, Dissenting Academies in England (Cambridge, 1914), p. 92.
⁴ Humphreys, op. cit., III. 5.
⁵ Ibid., IV. 362; V. 452.
So far as actual priority in the use of English for purpose of instruction is concerned, Reverend Charles Morton at Newington Green is probably the first who employed it, since he is said to have followed this practice for about twenty years, ending in 1685 when he went to New England. Since, however, neither in England nor in America was his example known to have been followed for a number of years, whereas that of Dr. Doddridge was followed extensively and soon, it seems justifiable to name Dr. Doddridge as the father of the use of English for a vehicle of instruction.

Nearly ten years after Dr. Doddridge began his work as a teacher, Reverend George Whitefield, the celebrated pulpit orator of the Methodist movement, spent a night at Northampton and must have been with Dr. Doddridge for nearly two hours for in his Journal for May 23, 1739, he said, "Reached Northampton about five in the Evening, and was most courteously received by Docter Dodridge, Master of the Academy there,—At seven, according to Appointment, I preached to about three thousand Hearers on a Common near the Town, from the Starting-post." Though Dr. Doddridge’s friends were horrified that the famous dissenter should have fellowship with a Methodist, a friendship was begun that evening which was to last through many years. That Dr. Doddridge highly esteemed this friendship is shown by the fact that he recorded in his diary for his birthday, June 26, 1739, "... adding to me the friendship of some excellent persons, among whom I must mention Mr. Whitfield." Knowing the interest of both men in education as we do, we may at least..."
jecture that during those two hours or less spent together, the conversation turned to the subject of educational practice as exemplified in the academy at Northampton.

Shortly after this, Mr. Whitefield came to America, reaching Philadelphia late Friday night, November 2, 1739. What he did between that date and the eighth of the month is narrated in his Journal and in Benjamin Franklin’s newspaper. Throughout this time, the Church was open for his use. In the issue of November 8, the newspaper published an advertisement nearly a half-column in length announcing that at Rev. Mr. Whitefield’s house some miscellaneous goods itemized in the advertisement which had been brought from England were to be sold and the proceeds used to buy materials for the Orphan House in Georgia. One week later, Mr. Franklin advertised that Rev. Mr. Whitefield had turned over to him his sermons and journals to be printed, and the printing would be done by subscription. On December 6, he announced the names of agents for these publications who would take subscriptions in other towns. On May 22, 1740, he announced that Mr. Whitefield’s work, in two volumes, was ready to deliver. Mr. Whitefield spent the winter of 1739–40 in Georgia, but returned to Philadelphia in the spring. It has now been shown that within seven months Mr. Whitefield, always interested in education, made intimate personal contacts with Dr. Philip Doddridge, who first used English extensively for classroom lectures, and Benjamin Franklin, the first in America who staunchly advocated an educational institution in

11 Whitefield, op. cit., p. 266.
12 Ibid., pp. 266–69.
13 Pennsylvania Gazette, November 8, 1739.
14 Whitefield, op. cit., p. 268.
15 Pennsylvania Gazette, November 15, 1739.
16 Ibid., December 6, 1739.
17 Ibid., May 22, 1740.
which the English branches should receive no less attention than the classical studies.\textsuperscript{18}

Mr. Whitefield returned to Philadelphia, April 14, 1740, and on the following day was informed that he could no longer have the use of the Church.\textsuperscript{19} Obviously some place should be provided over which no denomination should have supreme control, so that public services might be held even in inclement weather.\textsuperscript{20} Accordingly subscriptions were taken and work was started upon such a building.\textsuperscript{21} Probably the Presbyterian Meeting-house in which Reverend Gilbert Tennent preached in June, 1740, would have been open to him,\textsuperscript{22} but was too small to contain all those who wished to hear Mr. Whitefield. Construction began before or during July, 1740.\textsuperscript{23} That the structure was to be used for both religious and educational purposes is shown in the advertisement dated July, 1740.\textsuperscript{24} The deed for the land and building was not executed till September 15 of that year, when legal representatives of the subscribers who are unknown to us were named, and these made a deed of trust November 14, 1740, agreeing to hold the building for the Trustees of the Uses, nine in number, including Mr. Whitefield.\textsuperscript{25}

The building, one hundred by seventy feet, was hurried on toward completion, but when Mr. Whitefield preached in it Sunday, November 9, 1740, to several thousand people, it had a floor but still lacked a roof.\textsuperscript{26} In a letter dated at Salem on November 20, Mr. White-
field told a friend in New York that the building was to be used for a preaching place for ministers of any and all orthodox denominations and also for a charity school, and that he, as one of the trustees, was to secure a master and mistress for the school.\textsuperscript{27} Dr. Franklin said in his Autobiography that a minister of any denomination might preach there, even a Moham-
medan,\textsuperscript{28} but Mr. Whitefield's statement seems to be the accurate one, judging from the advertisement, July, 1740, which stated that only orthodox Protestant ministers were to have the use of the house.\textsuperscript{29} Nothing more is certainly known about this charity school. Whether or not it was ever opened is not known. However the building erected for Mr. Whitefield is said to be that in which Reverend Gilbert Tennent's Presbyterian Church was organized in 1743.\textsuperscript{30}

Regarding Mr. Whitefield's connection with or knowledge of the educational practices of Reverend Francis Hutcheson, it is possible that some contact was made when Mr. Whitefield preached ten times in the yard of the High Church, Glasgow, about the first of September, 1741,\textsuperscript{31} or again in June, 1742, when he spent at least three days in Glasgow preaching to immense crowds,\textsuperscript{32} or still later when, about the first of October, 1748, he preached several times at Glasgow.\textsuperscript{33} Dr. Doddridge spoke of a well-known man named Hutchinson in a letter dated March 1, 1749.\textsuperscript{34} This was probably not the Francis Hutchinson, a Churchman, named in the life of Francis Hutcheson,\textsuperscript{35} and if it

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Pennsylvania Gazette}, December 4, 1740.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Sparks, op. cit.}, I., 137.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Lippincott, op. cit.}, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, I. 518.
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, II. 5.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, II. 197.
\textsuperscript{34} Humphreys, \textit{op. cit.}, V. 108-09.
\textsuperscript{35} Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 50.
should refer to the Presbyterian Francis Hutcheson, would imply a considerable degree of familiarity with that man's work on the part of Dr. Doddridge.

That Mr. Whitefield had some influence at the University of Glasgow is shown in a letter, almost certainly from Professor Francis Hutcheson, dated November 23, 1743, in which Professor Anderson (Professor of Church History) was said to have "made himself ridiculous to all men of sense by dangling after Whitefield and McCulloch." As Mr. Whitefield's influence reached to the University, perhaps some educational influence from the University reached him. And the first two of his visits to Glasgow were made before Mr. Franklin's first move toward an academy on his own plan.

Further contact between Dr. Doddridge and Mr. Whitefield was made when, in the summer of 1743, the former took part in services in the latter's Tabernacle in London, and early in October of the same year opened his own pulpit to the popular Methodist, to the great indignation and disgust of his dissenter friends. Although Mr. Whitefield made his next voyage to America no earlier than August, 1744, it is probable that in the meantime he corresponded with Mr. Franklin, judging from the letters that are extant which are known to have passed between them at other times.

After the publicity which his newspaper gave to Mr.

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80 Scott, op. cit., p. 90.
81 Humphreys, op. cit., IV. 269-70.
82 Ibid., IV. 274-77, 283-84.
83 Tyerman, op. cit., II. 120.
84 Whitefield to Franklin, November 26, 1740, Ibid., I. 439; Franklin to Whitefield, July 6, 1749, Ibid., II. 228-29; Whitefield to Franklin, February 26, 1750, Ibid., II. 251-52; Whitefield to Franklin, August 17, 1752, Ibid., II. 283-84; Franklin to Whitefield, June 6, 1753, Sparks, op. cit., VII. 74-77; Franklin to Whitefield, July 2, 1756; Tyerman, op. cit., II. 378-79; Franklin to Whitefield, June 19, 1764, Sparks, op. cit., VII. 261; Whitefield to Franklin, January 21, 1768, Tyerman, op. cit., II. 540.
Whitefield's charity school in 1740, Mr. Franklin's next open interest in education was his proposal in 1743 for an academy under the direction of Reverend Richard Peters, a capable man then "out of employ."  

Since Mr. Peters did not accept the responsibility, the idea was permitted to lie dormant till 1749, when Mr. Franklin revived it and presented it to the public in "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," a pamphlet which it seems he wrote in 1743, but published and distributed at his own expense in 1749 to arouse interest in the project.

In 1743, the year in which Mr. Franklin wrote his "Proposals," the Synod of Philadelphia appointed a committee to write to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, representing the state of affairs in America and asking that ministers and support be sent. Furthermore they asked for advice as to how to plan for a school for themselves wherein they might train their own ministers. This letter was answered by Reverend Mr. Hutcheson, and upon his advice, and some time after November 16, 1743, a school was set up under Reverend Francis Alison, who was also instructed to answer Reverend Mr. Hutcheson's letter. Since Mr. Alison was educated at the University of Glasgow, this may have been merely the renewal of former acquaintance, but almost certainly Mr. Franklin did not come in touch with Professor Hutcheson's views on education until later, though they no doubt had great influence in the early years of his academy, after Mr. Alison came there to teach in 1752. But this was some time after his "Proposals" were given to the public.

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41 Sparks, op. cit., I. 143–44.
42 Ibid., I. 158, 569–76.
44 Ibid., pp. 173–74.
The academy in which, according to Mr. Franklin's idea, the English language and the sciences taught through it should receive proper attention, was opened in 1749. The number of students increased so rapidly that the quarters first occupied were soon inadequate, and some time during the early part of that year, a proposition was made that the building erected for Mr. Whitefield's use and that of his charity school should be turned over to the trustees of the academy for their use, for in a letter dated July 6, 1749, Mr. Franklin told Mr. Whitefield that there were no new developments in the matter concerning the building. Evidently he wrote Mr. Whitefield again in the intervening months, for Mr. Whitefield, in a letter dated February 26, 1750, stated that the terms on which the building had been turned over for the use of the academy were exactly such as he would have suggested. This arrangement was expedited by the fact that Mr. Franklin was a member of both boards of trustees, that for the building and also that for the academy. In 1789, Dr. Franklin wrote at some length, explaining the principles on which the plans for the academy were based, in the minds of the founders. The building erected for the use of Mr. Whitefield in 1740 was formally opened for the use of the academy on January 7, 1751, with a sermon by Reverend Richard Peters, who had been offered the direction of the academy proposed in 1743. About the same time Mr. Franklin issued another pamphlet entitled "Sketch of an English School", which further embodied his convictions concerning the

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46 Sparks, op. cit., I. 159.
47 Ibid., I. 160.
48 Ibid., II. 228–29.
49 Ibid., II. 251–52.
50 Sparks, op. cit., I. 160.
51 Ibid., II. 133–59.
53 Sparks, op. cit., I. 143–44.
importance of systematically teaching and using in teaching other subjects the English language. That Mr. Franklin and Mr. Whitefield agreed on educational theory seems clear from Mr. Whitefield's letter of 1750.

In the foregoing pages, reasons have been shown for believing that Mr. Whitefield was instrumental in linking Dr. Doddridge's idea of the great importance of the English language as a vehicle of communication in teaching, with Mr. Franklin's common sense and practical wisdom, which had very great influence in securing the realization of this ideal in America.

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54 Sparks, op. cit., II. 125-32.
55 Tyerman, op. cit., II. 251-52.