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EXPERIENCING THE WORLD OF FRANKLIN:
THE MAKING OF AN IMMERSIVE AND INTERACTIVE HISTORICAL EXHIBIT

by

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B.S. University of Central Florida, 1999

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This thesis involves the creation of a historically-themed museum element. The element, titled “Improving Community,” is a virtual interactive game that allows players to explore certain realities of colonial American life. Within the game, players are presented with a number of civic-related issues that existed throughout the eighteenth century, and they are then given options to improve the situation. Interactivity and immersion are key features of the game, and they have been incorporated so that players may engage with the past and assume a more active role in the process of historical reconstruction.

Research for the games draws mostly upon historical primary sources, including first-hand accounts, letters, diaries, periodicals, pamphlets, meeting minutes, and legal documents. In addition, the process of developing the games was informed by a number of secondary source works, and therefore this study inspects the ways in which “Improving Community” fits within the ongoing scholarly debates. Ultimately this project contributes to the field of public history by demonstrating the usefulness of games as a tool for historical exhibition. “Improving Community” is both entertaining and educational, and as a result, the game provides individuals with a unique outlet for exploring and experiencing the past.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, public historians have increasingly called for historical exhibits to become more hands-on and interactive. While this sentiment is partly due to transformations that have occurred within the field itself, it is also the result of recent technological strides. Technology now affords museums the opportunity to provide their visitors with a wide array of engaging experiences, allowing those visitors to feel a greater connection with the past. As a result, a number of museum professionals have become less concerned with the presentation of objects and artifacts, and instead many are developing exhibits that possess a greater level of interactivity for modern-day audiences.¹

One museum that has adopted such an approach is the soon-to-open Benjamin Franklin Museum. Situated within the confines of Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park, the Benjamin Franklin Museum occupies a site where Franklin once resided and it is located just a few blocks away from Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. The museum is replacing the older, more outdated Franklin Court Museum, and upon opening in 2013, it will present visitors with an engaging interpretation of Franklin's life and the world in which he lived. The exhibit itself is being developed by historical consulting team Remer and Talbott, and it is with Remer and Talbott that the author of this thesis is affiliated. In addition, the consulting team has worked closely with a number of designers and audio-visual technicians to develop an

¹ Kathy Halbreich, "Inventing New Models for the Museum and its Audiences," in *Curating Now: Imaginative Practice / Public Responsibility*, ed. Paula Marincola (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, 2001), 76.

interpretation that implements some of the latest breakthroughs in audio-visual and interactive technology.

While the museum will eventually house a number of intriguing elements, one of the more engaging of these will be the interactive game “Improving Community.” Upon going live, “Improving Community” will situate players within a virtual gaming environment where they will be given options to improve various aspects of eighteenth-century life. The game itself will be grounded in primary source data, and those who choose to play will experience a fun and immersive interpretation that breathes new life into the colonial American experience. And while technology and interactivity will be key factors in achieving this goal, the greatest developmental task will be the implementation of a balanced interpretation that incorporates the “three E’s” of entertainment, education, and experience.² As these elements will be integral to the exhibit’s eventual success, each must play a prominent, yet complementary, role to ensure that visitors leave feeling engaged and also informed. The pages to follow will therefore examine the various components of “Improving Community” to showcase the project’s contribution to the field of public history, as well as its engagement with some of the most recent scholarly debates.

At its core, “Improving Community” is a “choose your own adventure” game. The game will be presented through a large table-top projection, and it will be engineered to allow multi-touch capability. Upon approaching the game, players will view a projected map of colonial Philadelphia that will be positioned in the center of the table-top. Scattered throughout the

² Stephen E. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 66.

map will be words in bold text prompting the user to select their own civic improvement venture. The words in bold text will represent the element's six different gaming options, and will consist of the following: smallpox, health care, books, education, defense, and fire. As the table-top will possess multi-touch capabilities, players will be able to select the game of their choice by clicking on the bold text icon and dragging it over to their own placemat-like station. There will be four of these stations situated in each corner of the table-top, and the table-top will also display basic instructions so that players know how to operate the game.

Once players have selected the game of their choice and dragged it over to their station, the game itself will commence. The user will be told that they are an eighteenth-century Philadelphian, and they will be posed with a problem. They will then be given two choices to confront the problem, and based on their selection, will be presented with a new scenario and set of choices. This pattern will continue throughout each game's entirety until one's gaming experience eventually comes to an end.

Throughout the game, players will be presented with the major civic-related issues of Franklin's own time. Many of the selections will mirror those of Franklin himself, while other options will take users down an alternate path. For those users who choose to emulate Franklin's actions, their gaming experience will most likely result in the establishment of a civic institution. However, unlike many other games, "Improving Community" will not have any winners or losers. Rather, there will be a number of possible outcomes – some that are favorable, some that are not, and some that are neutral. In developing the games this way, the

desired effect is that users better grasp the complex nature of colonial society, and that they also understand the element of chance which factored in largely throughout Franklin's own life.

Naturally, the game's design features will be a crucial element of the exhibit's interpretation. Therefore, the Remer and Talbott consulting team has worked closely with graphic designer Salvatore Raciti to create a visual interpretation that complements the game's historical content. Raciti has, in turn, customized dozens of unique visuals to enhance the script of "Improving Community" so that visitors may feel a greater connection to the game's historical narrative. In addition, Raciti's designs implement some of the latest breakthroughs in visual and interactive technology, ensuring that "Improving Community" will be equipped with features such as multi-touch capability and high-definition resolution.

While there are a host of factors that will affect the design elements of "Improving Community," the focus of this study is to highlight the game's historical interpretation. To that end, the construction of "Improving Community" began with an inspection of the relevant secondary sources. These secondary sources helped provide basic historical context for each of the six games, and they also helped identify some of the most useful primary sources as well. An examination of the primary sources then ensued, at which point data was compiled to determine which historical scenarios were most relevant to the game's narrative thrust. Those scenarios deemed most relevant were then included in a flowchart which laid out the planned progression of each game, and finally, once all of these steps were complete, the gaming scripts were composed.

Throughout this process, there were a number of challenges that surfaced along the way. First there was the challenge of storytelling. Deciding which stories to tell is an invaluable role for any public historian, and, according to authors William Yeingst and Lonnie G. Bunch, it is “part of a curator’s task to choose what artifacts and what interpretations he or she thinks are important for the visitor to experience.”³ In the case of “Improving Community,” it was important that players grasp the collaborative nature of Franklin’s civic improvement ventures, and also that they develop a sense of the individual agency that existed in the eighteenth century. This was accompanied with yet another set of challenges as it meant that many of the scenarios within “Improving Community” would have to be reconstructed from a limited pool of sources. It was thus imperative to incorporate a research methodology that involved a great deal of creative brainstorming and reading between the lines. By adopting such an approach, it was possible to detect some of the various scenarios that were experienced by eighteenth-century colonists so that, in turn, a diverse collection of stories could be represented throughout the game.

Second, there was also the challenge of word selection. Upon its opening, The Benjamin Franklin Museum will receive an influx of visitors that vary in both age and educational level. It was therefore critical that “Improving Community” contain a script that a great majority of the visiting public can easily comprehend. At the same time, it was equally important that the game’s narratives remain historically significant. Therefore, the scripts for “Improving

³ William Yeingst and Lonnie G. Bunch, “Curating the Recent Past: The Woolworth Lunch Counter, Greensboro, North Carolina,” in *Exhibiting Dilemmas: Issues of Representation at the Smithsonian*, eds. Amy Henderson and Adrienne L. Kaepler (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 153.

Community” have undergone a number of revisions to help ensure that each gaming script within “Improving Community” is simple to read and comprehend, yet solidly grounded in the historical record.

Lastly, the collaboration process presented its own unique set of challenges. As many recent scholars have noted, collaboration is a fundamental element of virtually every historical exhibit. Without it, many exhibits (including “Improving Community”) could not exist. For example, since the Benjamin Franklin Museum will be situated within the Independence National Historical Park, the National Park Service must approve all relevant content. This type of collaboration can be quite challenging at times, yet it is still a necessary component of the development process. Furthermore, cooperation between the historical consultants and graphic designer is also a must. Without the incorporation of graphic and media elements, many players would quickly tire of simply reading their way through the game. Therefore, it was crucial that the consulting team work closely with the graphic designer so that together they may create a visual interpretation that enhances the game’s narrative thrust.

Upon its completion, “Improving Community” will broaden the horizons of historical exhibition. Perhaps most importantly, it will provide its players with an immersive historical experience where they may be able to gain a unique perspective of life in the eighteenth century. This perspective will also allow players to grasp the sense of agency, or lack thereof, that colonial Americans had at their disposal, and enable them to comprehend the importance of one’s own individual actions. In addition, “Improving Community” will be historically grounded. Throughout each of the six games, those scenarios which are presented will be

based on sound historical evidence. Some of the choices will mirror Franklin's own actions and therefore are based on his *Autobiography* and personal writings. Those options not related to Franklin are based on a variety of other sources, including newspapers, pamphlets, legal documents, council minutes, and first-hand accounts. Furthermore, "Improving Community" will actively engage the scholarly literature as it relates to both eighteenth-century America and the field of public history. Ultimately, these combined factors will work together to ensure that "Improving Community" is a historically sound and unique contribution to the existing discourse.

The chapters to follow will provide a detailed elaboration of "Improving Community" and its historical relevance. Chapter One details the game's overall design, and it will present the six narrative scripts which make up the individual gaming environments. Chapter Two examines the ways in which the project fits within the scholarly discourse of public history, and finally, Chapter Three explores the project's engagement with the historical literature regarding life in the eighteenth century. In the end, this study showcases how "Improving Community" combines historical record and game design to create an interactive interpretation that furthers the bounds of both public history and the historical profession as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE: THE GAMES

This chapter presents the narrative scripts that make up the six individual games within “Improving Community.”⁴ In addition, the sketch for the smallpox interactive also includes an outline of that game’s design features. Including these design features will allow the reader to gain a better understanding of what the players of “Improving Community” will see and experience, and since each of the games are being designed in a similar fashion, the features within the smallpox game should act as a general guide for the other games’ overall layout.

Upon approaching “Improving Community,” players will encounter a large table-top that is projecting an image of eighteenth-century Philadelphia. The image will be a virtual rendering of a map from 1762, commonly referred to as the “Clarkson and Biddle Map” (see Figure 1), and the map will showcase the town’s layout as it would have existed in the mid-eighteenth century. Scattered throughout the map will be large words that are displayed in a bold, vibrant text. These words represent the six different games that exist within “Improving Community:” smallpox, health care, books, education, defense, and fire. Towards the bottom of the map there will be another, more subtle display of text. The text will prompt users to drag one of the bold text gaming options into one of the table’s four playing stations. The four stations will occupy a space similar to that of a placemat, and they will be located throughout each corner of the table-top. Once players have selected the game of their choosing and drag it over to their respective playing stations, their gaming experience will commence.

⁴ Many of the elements within “Improving Community” are still being developed. Therefore, it is probable that the scripts and graphics contained in this essay will undergo further revisions before the game goes live.

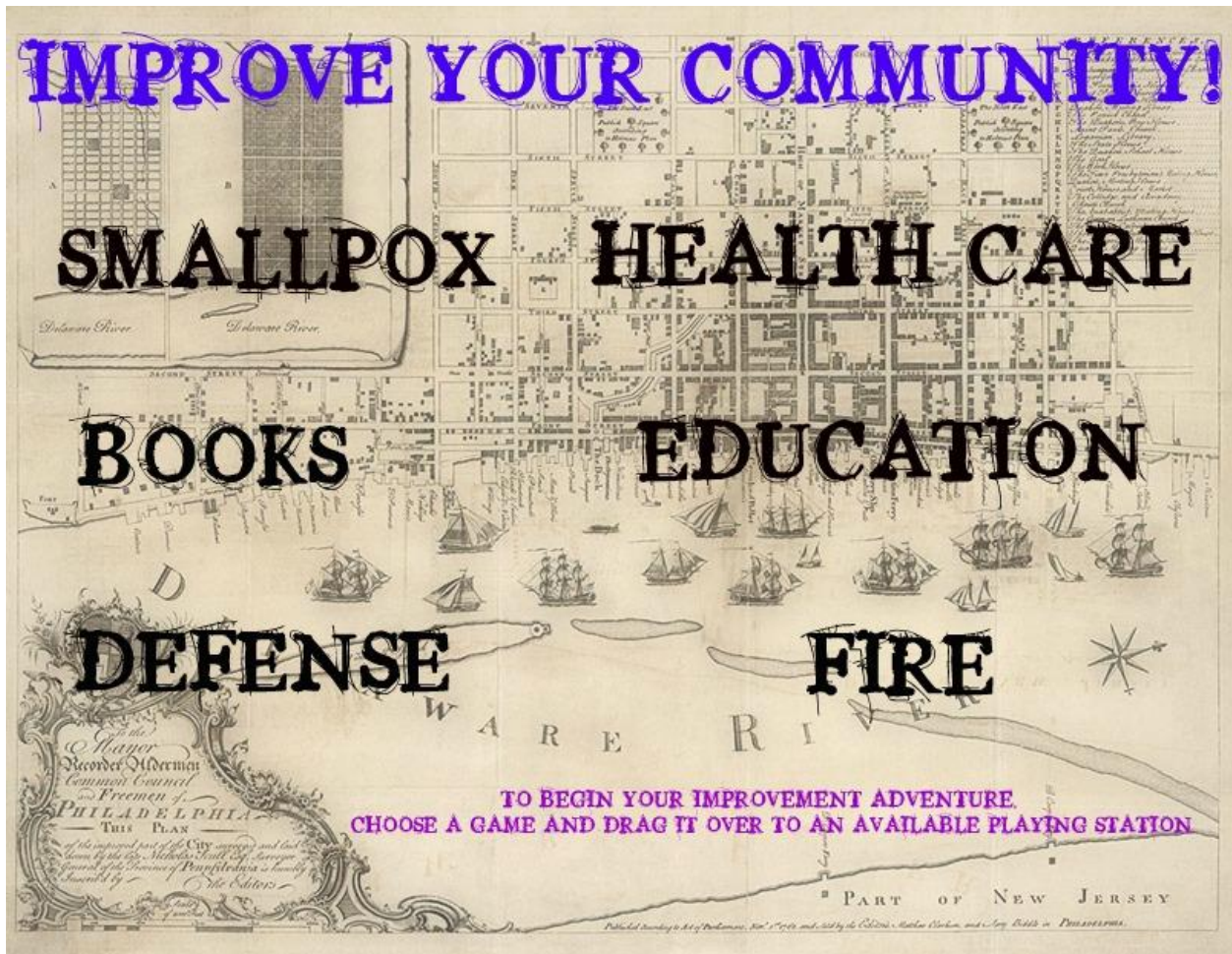


Figure 1: Approach Screen⁵

⁵ Nicholas Scull, *To the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Common Council, and Freemen of Philadelphia, This Plan of the improved part of the City surveyed and laid down by the late Nicholas Scull Esqr., Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania is humbly inscrib'd by the Editors*, Map, Philadelphia: Sold by the Editors Matthew Clarkson and Mary Biddle, 1762, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3824p.ar130800> (accessed January 10, 2011).

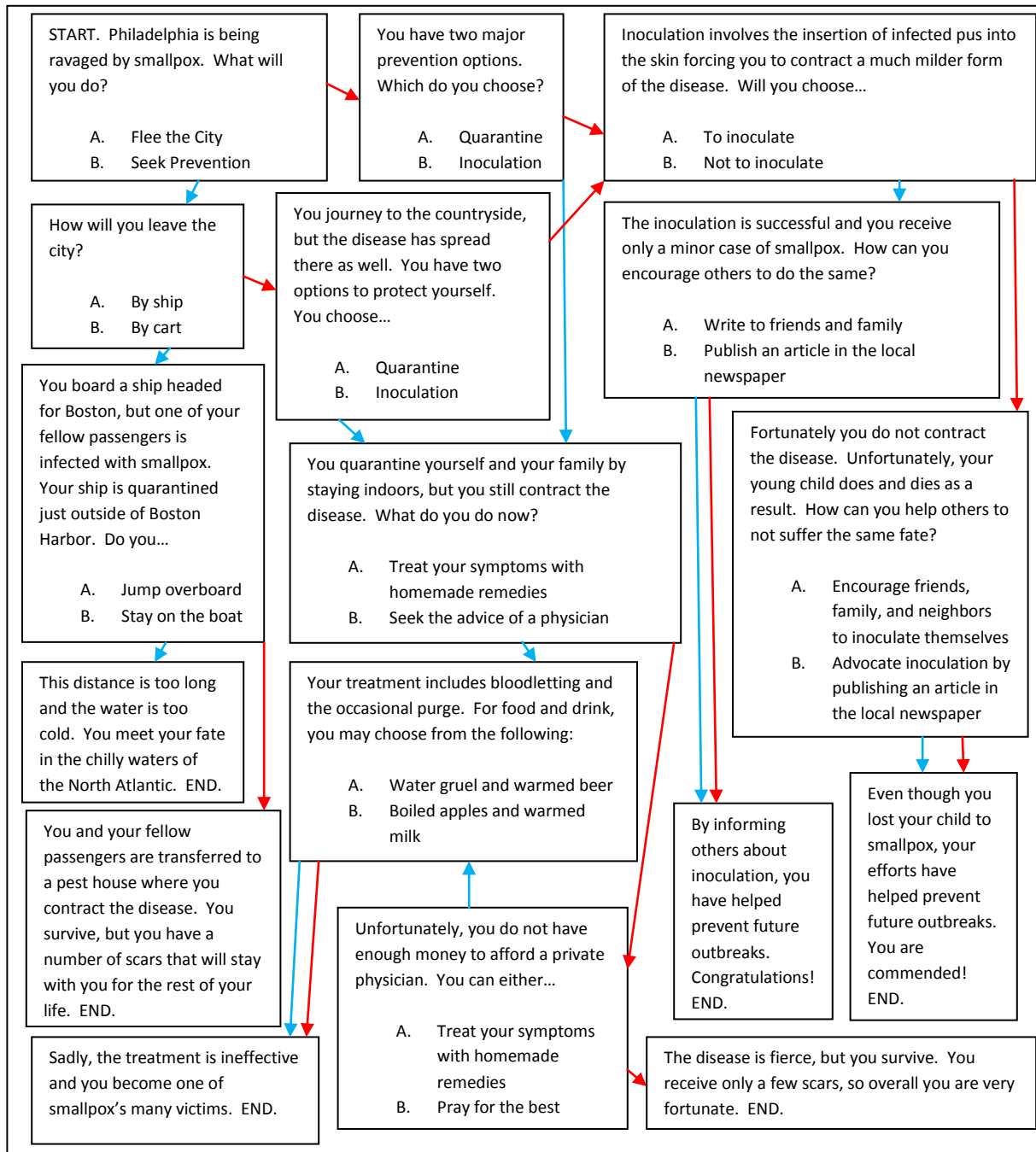


Figure 2: Smallpox Game Flowchart⁶

⁶ A flowchart will be provided for each of the six games. The games' opening scenarios will be displayed in the upper left-hand corner of each flowchart. The blue arrows point to the follow-up scenarios related to the "A" selection choices, while the red arrows point to the follow-up scenarios related to the "B" selection choices.

Game One: Smallpox

Screen 1

The welcome screen within the smallpox game will display an image of the same “Clarkson and Biddle Map” that is used on the table-top centerpiece. This map, however, will be reduced in scale to fit within the placemat-like station, and it will prompt users to touch the screen to begin their gaming experience. Upon doing so, players will view an animated image which correlates to the two options within the script (see Figure 3). To the bottom left of the image, there will be an animation of a skull and crossbones denoting how many lives have already been lost as a result the disease. It should be noted that the skull and crossbones will appear on many of the other screens throughout the game, allowing the player to gage the rate at which the disease is spreading. The script will read as follows:



Figure 3: Smallpox Game “Screen 1” Illustration⁷

⁷ Image provided courtesy of Salvatore Raciti, Memory Collective, Inc.

Philadelphia is being ravaged by smallpox. What will you do?

- Option A – Flee the City⁸ [GO TO SCREEN 2]
- Option B – Seek Prevention [GO TO SCREEN 7]

As Figure 3 illustrates, the words “Option A,” “Option B,” “Go to Screen 2,” and “Go to Screen 7” will not be visible to players. Rather, they are being included within this document so that the reader may trace the flow and progression of the game. For instance, in the aforementioned example, if the player were to choose “Option A,” the next scenario they would be presented with is that which is listed under “Screen 2.” To see a flow chart model of the entire game, please see Figure 2.

Screen 2

The visual for “Screen 2” presents an animated cityscape image which showcases a waterfront that is bustling with activity (see Figure 4). The script will state the following:

How will you leave the city?

- Option A – By Ship [GO TO SCREEN 3]

⁸ One of the ways in which colonial Americans dealt with the threat of smallpox (or any contagious disease) was to flee the area that was presumed to be infected. See Zabdiel Boylston, *A Historical Account of the Small-Pox Inoculation in New England* (Boston: 1730), 1; Matthew Carey, *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, Lately Prevalent in Philadelphia* (1794; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1970), 16-17; John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 52, 54, 88.

- Option B – By Cart [GO TO SCREEN 6]



Figure 4: Smallpox Game “Screen 2” Illustration⁹

Screen 3

“Screen 3” showcases an image of Boston from the viewpoint of the harbor. A number of ships can be seen in the foreground, while the city itself lies in the distance (see Figure 5).

The accompanying script will state the following:

You board a ship headed for Boston, but one of your fellow passengers is infected with smallpox. Your ship is quarantined just outside of Boston Harbor.¹⁰ Do you...

⁹ Image provided courtesy of Salvatore Raciti, Memory Collective, Inc.

¹⁰ Many of the American colonies passed laws forbidding infected ships from entering their harbors. With relation to Boston, the law made it illegal for infected ships to come within a half-mile of land, and it also forbade

- Option A – Jump overboard [GO TO SCREEN 4]
- Option B – Stay on the boat [GO TO SCREEN 5]

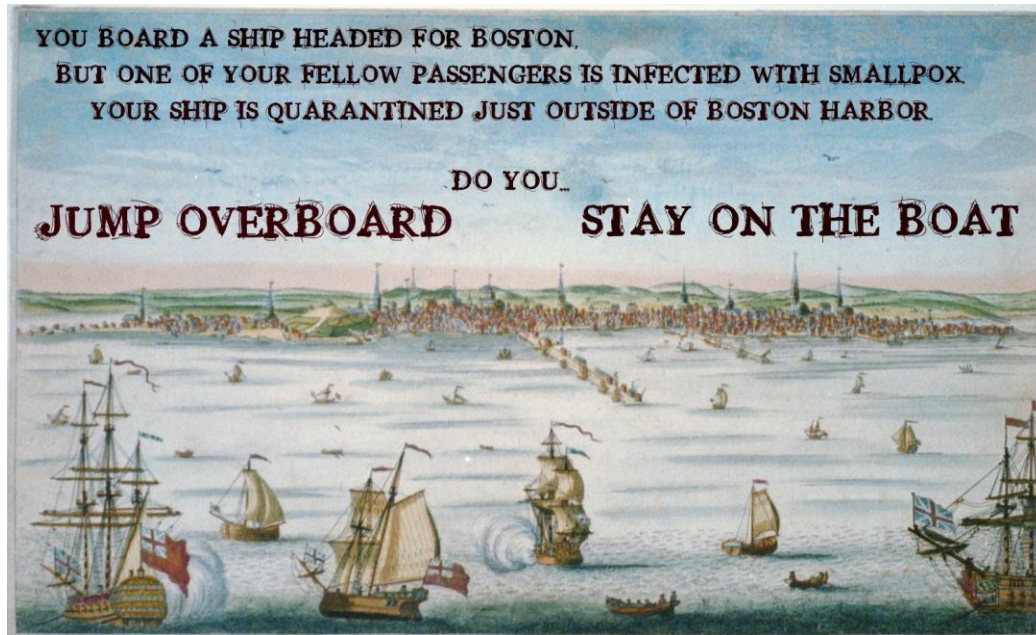


Figure 5: Smallpox Game “Screen 3” Illustration¹¹

Screen 4

“Screen 4” carries over the image that is presented in “Screen 3,” although in “Screen 4,” a skull and crossbones symbol will descend into the frame. The script will read as follows:

The distance is too long and the water is too cold. You meet your fate in the chilly waters of the North Atlantic. [END]

captains from allowing any passengers to come upon land. See *Massachusetts Province Laws 1692-1699* (1699; repr., Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1978), 165-166.

¹¹ J. (John) Carwitham, *A South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England in America*, ca. 1730-1760, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671510/> (accessed January 10, 2012).

It should be noted that at the end of “Screen 5,” players will not see the word “End.” Rather, this is being provided for the benefit of the reader to denote the end of one’s gaming experience. In the live version of the game, the screen will contain the message “Your adventure is over,” and it will return players to the initial approach screen where they play one of the other civic improvement games, or replay the one they have just completed.

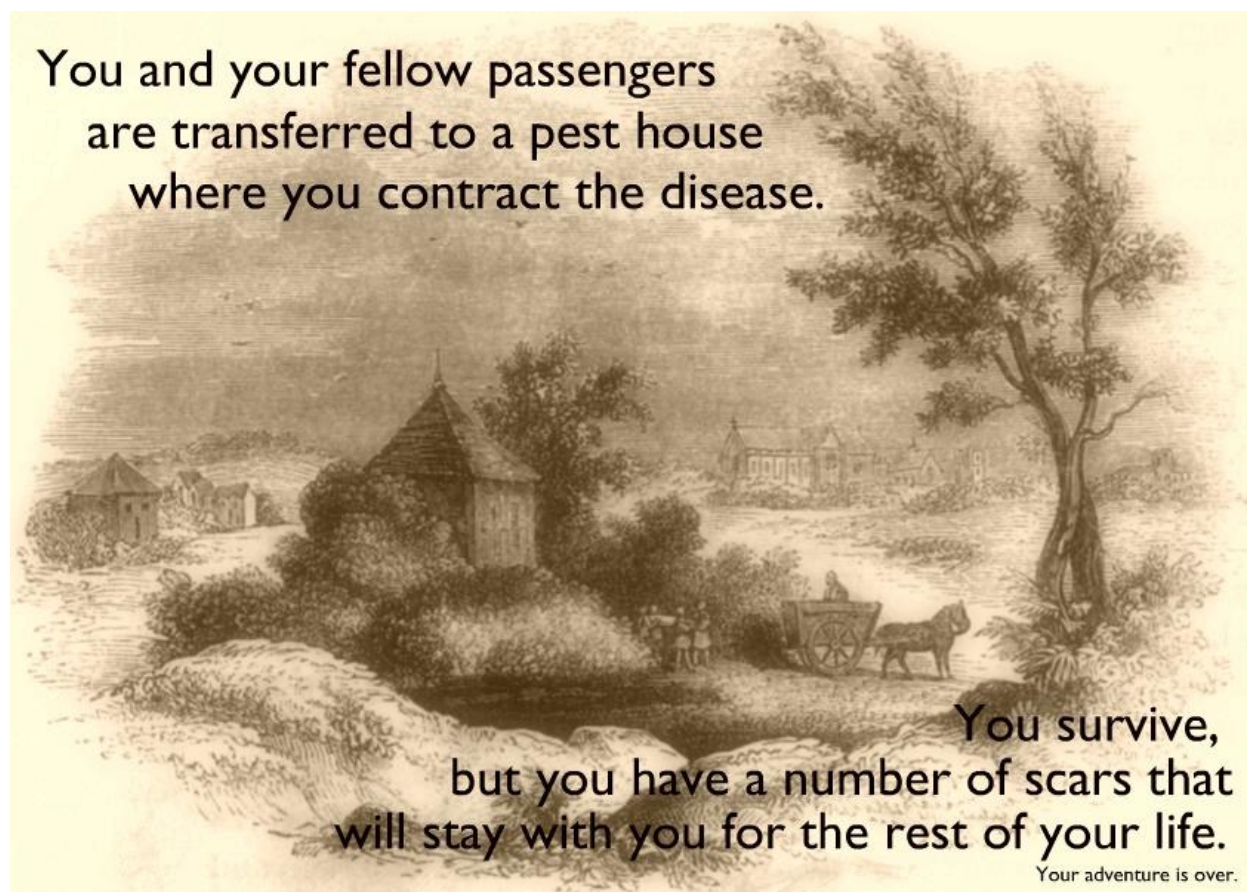


Figure 6: Smallpox Game “Screen 5” Illustration¹²

¹² Frederick William Fairholt, *Pest House in Tothill Fields, Westminster, from a Print by Hollar, 1844*, 1844, Tufts University Digital Collections and Archives, <http://hdl.handle.net/10427/54511> (accessed January 12, 2012).

Screen 5

This screen will display an image of a pest house (see Figure 6). The script will be as follows:

You and your fellow passengers are transferred to a pest house where you contract the disease.¹³ You survive, but you have a number of scars that will stay with you for the rest of your life.¹⁴ [END]

Screen 6

This screen displays a backdrop animation of the countryside. In front of the backdrop there will be two other animations which represent the two options that players have within this scenario. The animation on the left will display an image of a quarantine hospital, and the animation on the right will display an image of an arm and scalpel (see Figure 7). The script will read as follows:

You journey to the countryside, but the disease has spread there as well. You have two options to protect yourself. You choose...

- Option A – Quarantine [GO TO SCREEN 8]

¹³ There is mention of a “convenient house” on Spectacle Island for those “visited with contagious sickness.” See *Acts and Laws, of His Majesty’s Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New-England* (Boston: 1726), 261-262. The term “pesthouse” is used in *Acts and Laws, of His Majesty’s Colony of Rhode-Island* (Newport: 1745), 276.

¹⁴ For sources related to scarring, see Ian Glynn and Jennifer Glynn, *The Life and Death of Smallpox* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4; Donald R. Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 5.

- Option B – Inoculation [GO TO SCREEN 9]

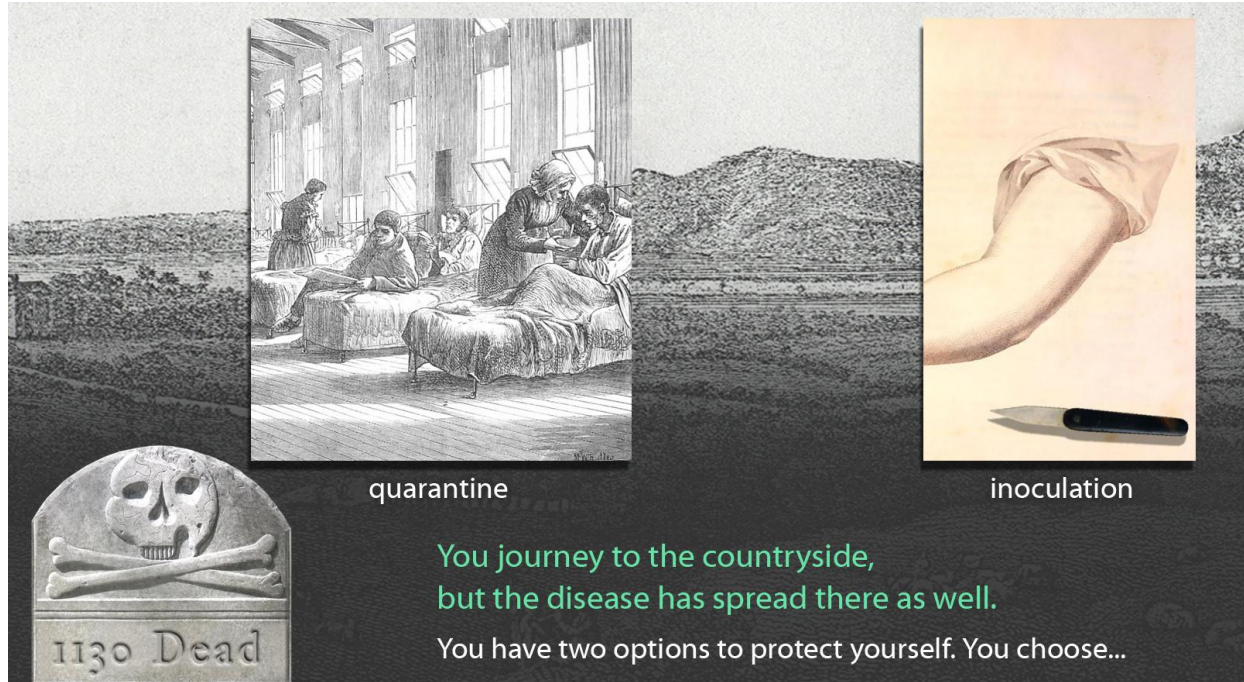


Figure 7: Smallpox Game “Screen 6” Illustration¹⁵

Screen 7

“Screen 7” will be very similar to “Screen 6.” The only real difference between the two is that the backdrop to “Screen 7” will be of a cityscape instead of a landscape. The script will state the following:

You have two major prevention options. Which do you choose?

- Option A – Quarantine [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Inoculation [GO TO SCREEN 9]

¹⁵ Image provided courtesy of Salvatore Raciti, Memory Collective, Inc.

Screen 8

This screen displays an animated image of a family seemingly isolated within their home, in which each family member appears to be distraught. The script will read as follows:

You quarantine yourself and your family by staying indoors, but you still contract the disease.¹⁶

What do you do now?

- Option A – Treat your symptoms with homemade remedies [GO TO SCREEN 10]
- Option B – Seek the advice of a physician [GO TO SCREEN 11]

Screen 9

“Screen 9” showcases two images side by side. The image on the left demonstrates the inoculation process and it shows a scalpel being inserted into an arm that is filled with scabs. The image on the right indicates the option to decline inoculation and it shows both arm and scalpel, although no contact is being made (see Figure 8). The accompanying script will be as follows:

Inoculation involves the insertion of infected pus into the skin forcing you to contract a much milder form of the disease.¹⁷ Will you choose...

¹⁶ Before inoculation became widely accepted, quarantine was the traditional method for preventing the spread of smallpox. See Glynn and Glynn, 36; Duffy, 101-103. One interesting example of quarantine occurred in Boston wherein families that were infected with smallpox were required to hang a pole outside of their house, which was to be adorned with a red cloth so that it would be visible to passers-by. See *At a Meeting of the Select-Men February 21, 1746* (Boston: 1746).

- Option A –To inoculate [GO TO SCREEN 12]
- Option B – Not to inoculate [GO TO SCREEN 13]

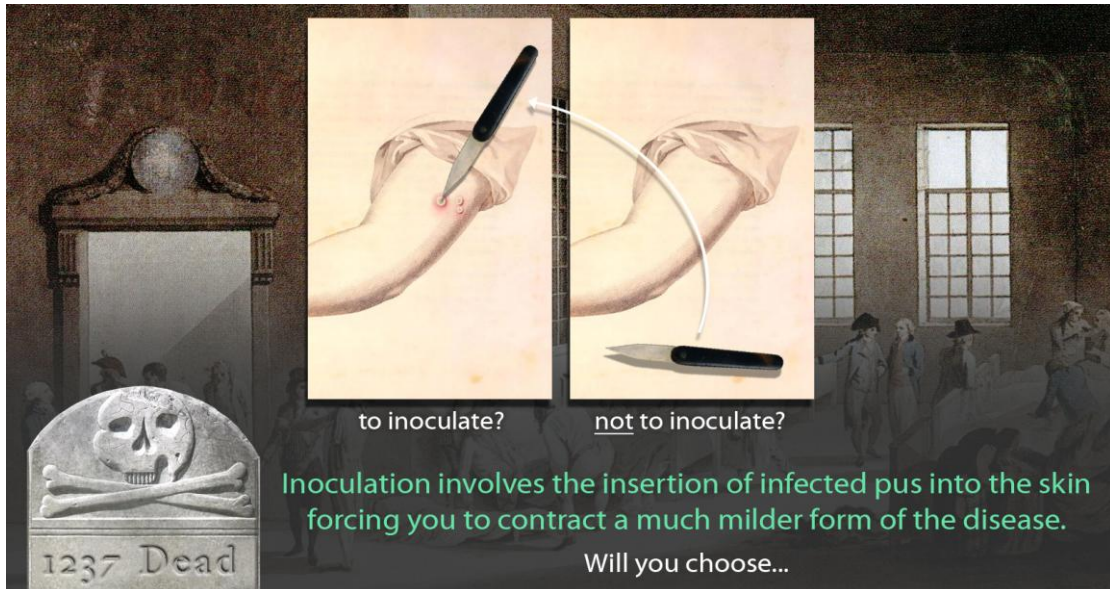


Figure 8: Smallpox Game “Screen 9” Illustration¹⁸

Screen 10

This screen will display a likeness of the broadside *A Brief Rule to Guide the Common People of New-England how to Order Themselves and Theirs in the Small Pocks, and Measels* as both of the options within “Screen 10” come directly from this source (see Figure 9). The likeness will be enhanced to eliminate some of the blemishes that exist in the original, and the

¹⁷ For an eighteenth-century description of the inoculation process, see Zabdiel Boylston, *Some Account of What is Said of Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox* (Boston: 1721), 2-4; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 28, 1730, in David A. Copeland, ed., *Debating the Issues in Colonial Newspapers: Primary Documents on Events of the Period* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 23-24.

¹⁸ Image provided courtesy of Salvatore Raciti, Memory Collective, Inc.



Figure 9: Smallpox Game "Screen 10" Illustration¹⁹

¹⁹ Thomas Thacher, *A Brief Rule to Guide the Common People of New-England how to Order Themselves and Thiers in the Small Pocks, and Measels*, Boston: Printed and Sold by John Foster, 1677, Library of Congress Printed Ephemera Collection, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.03300900> (accessed January 10, 2012).

accompanying script will be presented directly below the broadside image. It will state the following:

Your treatment includes bloodletting and the occasional purge. For food and drink, you may choose from the following:

- Option A – Water Gruel and Warmed Beer [GO TO SCREEN 17]
- Option B – Boiled Apples and Warmed Milk²⁰ [GO TO SCREEN 17]

Screen 11

This screen will showcase two images side by side. The image to the left will display bottles of potions and elixirs, and the image to the right will display a person kneeling in prayer. The accompanying script will state the following:

Unfortunately, you do not have enough money to afford a private physician.²¹ You can either...

- Option A – Treat your symptoms with homemade remedies [GO TO SCREEN 10]
- Option B – Pray for the best²² [GO TO SCREEN 14]

²⁰ All of the self-treatment options listed in “Screen 10” come directly from Thomas Thacher, *A Brief Rule to Guide the Common People of New-England how to Order Themselves and Theirs in the Small Pocks, and Measels* (Boston: 1677).

²¹ In colonial Philadelphia, obtaining care from a doctor was a luxury that only the wealthy could afford. The majority of Philadelphians received medical care from friends and family within the home. See Simon P. Newman, *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 61-63.

²² For examples of prayer and fasting during times of sickness, see Carey, 41-43; see also “Proclamation for a General Fast,” in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959-) (hereafter *Papers*), 3:228-229.

Screen 12

“Screen 12” will display an inoculation animation that shows a scalpel being inserted into an arm that is filled with scabs. The image will be set before a backdrop that reveals colonists going about their everyday business. The accompanying script will be as follows:

The inoculation is successful and you receive only a minor case of smallpox. How can you encourage others to do the same?

- Option A – Write to friends and family [GO TO SCREEN 15]
- Option B – Publish an article in the local newspaper²³ [GO TO SCREEN 15]

Screen 13

“Screen 13” will display the same image as “Screen 8,” wherein a colonial family seems to be isolated and distraught. In front of the image in the upper corners of the frame, there will be two small animations. The one to the left will show two colonists engaged in conversation. The one to the right will show a front page image of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The script will read as follows:

Fortunately you do not contract the disease. Unfortunately, your young child does and dies as a result.²⁴ How can you help others to not suffer the same fate?

²³ On multiple occasions, Franklin published articles in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* advocating the practice of inoculation. He also mentioned it in various letters to friends and family. See *Papers* 1:186-187, 200, 214; *Papers* 2:154. Cotton Mather was also a vocal advocate of inoculation. See Kenneth Silverman, ed., *Selected Papers of Cotton Mather* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 347-349, 360-367.

- Option A – Encourage friends, family, and neighbors to inoculate themselves [GO TO SCREEN 16]
- Option B – Advocate inoculation by publishing an article in the local newspaper [GO TO SCREEN 16]

Screen 14

“Screen 14” will display a street scene image of eighteenth-century Philadelphia, and in the street there can be seen people of diverse backgrounds (see Figure 10). The script is as follows:

The disease is fierce, but you survive. You receive only a few scars, so overall you are very fortunate. [END]

Screen 15

“Screen 15” will showcase a likeness of Franklin that is set before a backdrop of colonial Philadelphia. The script will read as follows:

²⁴ Franklin lost his own son Francis to smallpox. The boy had not been inoculated and as a result, Franklin published an article in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* advocating inoculation as a “safe and beneficial practice.” See *Papers* 2:154; see also Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 82-84.

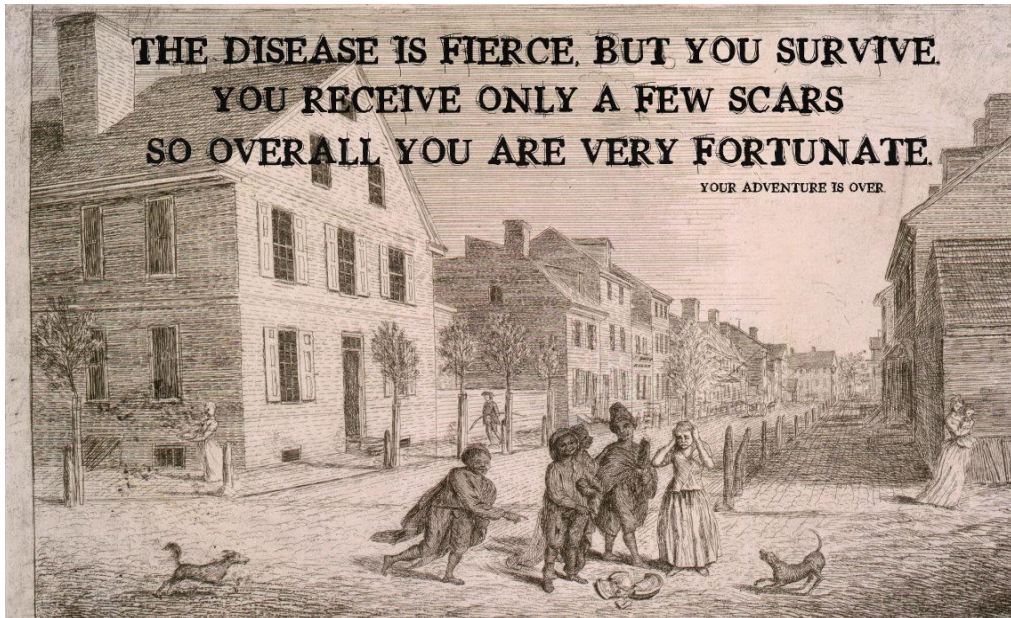


Figure 10: Smallpox Game "Screen 14" Illustration²⁵

By informing others about inoculation, you have helped prevent future outbreaks.²⁶

Congratulations! [END]

Screen 16

"Screen 16" will display the same image as "Screen 15." The script will be as follows:

Even though you lost your child to smallpox, your efforts have helped prevent future outbreaks.

You are commended! [END]

²⁵ Charles Willson Peale, *The Accident in Lombard Street Philada. 1787 design'd and engraved by C.W. Peale*, Philadelphia: 1787, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93508047/> (accessed January 10, 2012)

²⁶ For an insightful analysis of how inoculation was perceived throughout the eighteenth century, see Sara Sidstone Gronim, "Imagining Inoculation: Smallpox, the Body, and the Social Relations of Healing in the Eighteenth Century," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 80, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 247-268.

Screen 17

“Screen 17” will carry over the image from “Screen 10,” which displays *A Brief Rule to Guide the Common People of New-England how to Order Themselves and Theirs in the Small Pocks, and Measels*. In “Screen 17” however, an animated skull and crossbones will descend into the frame. The script will state the following:

Sadly, the treatment is ineffective and you become one of smallpox’s many victims. [END]

Game Two: Health Care²⁷

Screen 1

A contagious disease is spreading through Philadelphia, and there are no medical facilities to house the sick. You would like to help somehow. What do you do first?

- Option A – Learn more about the sick [GO TO SCREEN 2]
- Option B – Learn more about the disease [GO TO SCREEN 3]

Screen 2

Many of the sick are poor, and they cannot afford to see a doctor.²⁸ What should you do?

²⁷ From this point forward, the game descriptions will only contain the narrative scripts. Each game’s design elements, however, will be comparable to that of the smallpox game.

²⁸ The “sick poor” are mentioned at great length throughout Franklin’s *Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital; From its First Rise, to the Beginning of the Fifth Month, called May, 1754* (Philadelphia: 1754). See also Newman, 61-63. For an in-depth analysis of Philadelphia’s lower classes, see Billy G. Smith, *The “Lower Sort”: Philadelphia’s Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

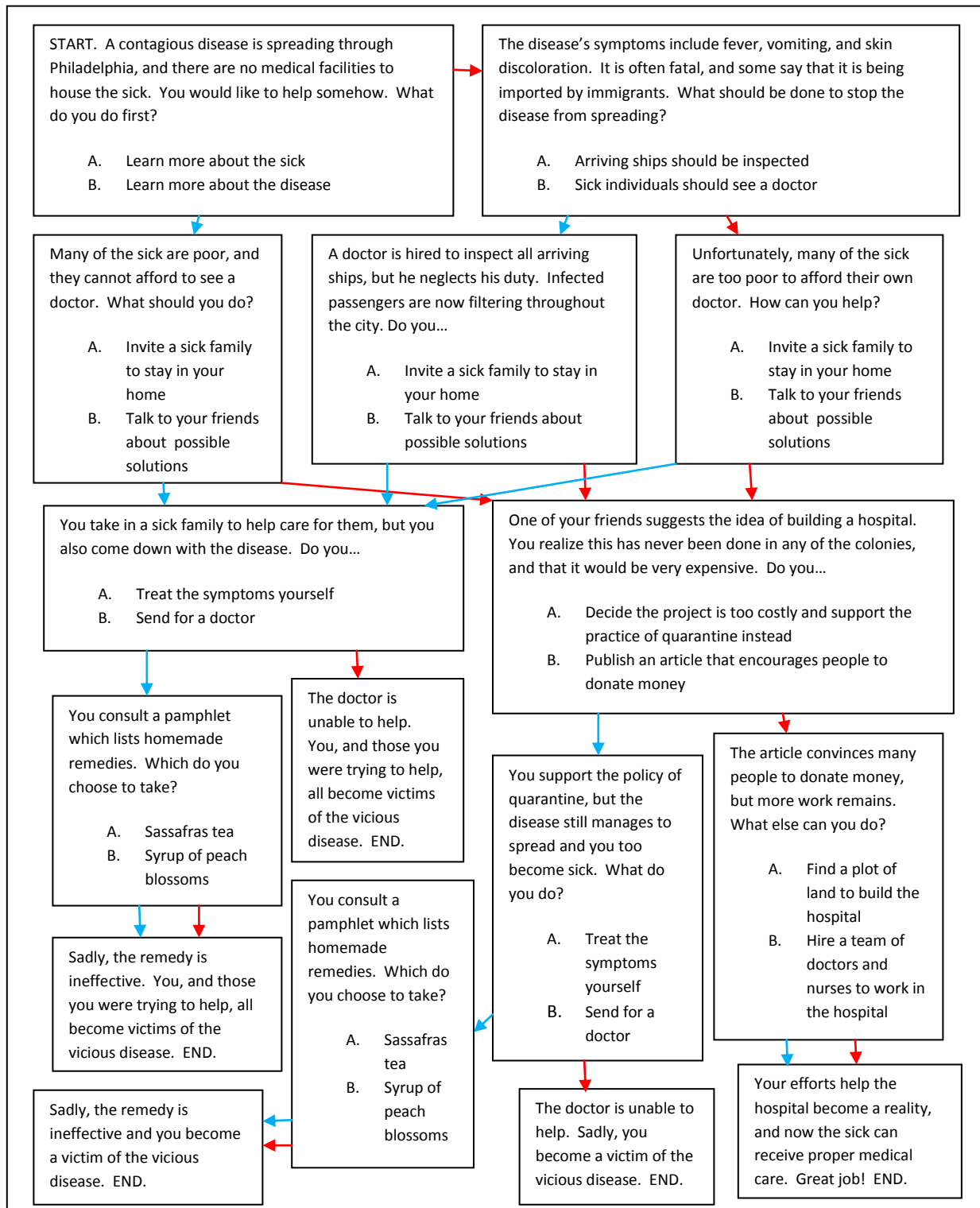


Figure 11: Health Care Game Flowchart

- Option A – Invite a sick family to stay in your home²⁹ [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B – Talk to your friends about possible solutions [GO TO SCREEN 7]

Screen 3

The disease’s symptoms include fever, vomiting, and skin discoloration.³⁰ It is often fatal, and some say that it is being imported by immigrants.³¹ What should be done to stop the disease from spreading?

- Option A – Arriving ships should be inspected [GO TO SCREEN 4]
- Option B – Sick individuals should see a doctor [GO TO SCREEN 5]

Screen 4

A doctor is hired to inspect all arriving ships, but he neglects his duty.³² Infected passengers are now filtering throughout the city. Do you...

- Option A – Invite a sick family to stay in your home [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B – Talk to your friends about possible solutions [GO TO SCREEN 7]

²⁹ In colonial Pennsylvania, one could be fined for harboring illegal immigrants. See *A Compilation of the Poor Laws of the State of Pennsylvania; From the Year 1700 to 1788, Inclusive* (1788; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1971), 16-17.

³⁰ These are symptoms of yellow fever. See Carey, 13. Also, while Philadelphia’s most infamous epidemic of yellow fever occurred in 1793, it was not the town’s first bout with the illness. In 1747, Franklin wrote to his mother Abiah and stated, “We have lost some grown persons, by what we call the Yellow Fever.” See *Papers* 3:179.

³¹ In the eighteenth century, German and Irish immigrants were often blamed for the importation of contagious disease. See Duffy, 153-154; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 27, 1741/2. (Note: Dates containing a slash denote both the “Old Style” Julian calendar and the “New Style” Gregorian calendar. Great Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752.)

³² Doctors were employed by the provincial Assembly to inspect vessels suspected of carrying contagious disease. One doctor, a certain Dr. Graeme, was accused of neglecting his duty. See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 3, 1741/2.

Screen 5

Unfortunately, many of the sick are too poor to afford their own doctor.³³ How can you help?

- Option A – Invite a sick family to stay in your home [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B – Talk to your friends about possible solutions [GO TO SCREEN 7]

Screen 6

You take in a sick family to help care for them, but you also come down with the disease.³⁴ Do you...

- Option A – Treat the symptoms yourself [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Send for a doctor³⁵ [GO TO SCREEN 10]

Screen 7

One of your friends suggests the idea of building a hospital. You realize this has never been done in any of the colonies, and that it would be very expensive.³⁶ Do you...

- Option A – Decide the project is too costly and support the practice of quarantine instead³⁷ [GO TO SCREEN 11]

³³ Newman, 61-63.

³⁴ For a similar example, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 3, 1741/2.

³⁵ Philadelphians of wealthier means had the luxury of affording their own private physician, as can be seen throughout Elaine Forman Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker, Volume 1: 1758-1795* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991).

³⁶ Although Franklin is often given credit, the idea for establishing a hospital in Philadelphia was originally conceived by Dr. Thomas Bond. See *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 199-201.

³⁷ In 1738, the idea for a hospital was brushed aside as it was considered too heavy a cost. See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 3, 1741/2.

- Option B – Publish an article that encourages people to donate money³⁸ [GO TO SCREEN 15]

Screen 8

You consult a pamphlet which lists homemade remedies. Which do you choose to take?

- Option A – Sassafras tea [GO TO SCREEN 9]
- Option B – Syrup of peach blossoms³⁹ [GO TO SCREEN 9]

Screen 9

Sadly, the remedy is ineffective. You, and those you were trying to help, all become victims of the vicious disease. [END]

Screen 10

The doctor is unable to help. You, and those you were trying to help, all become victims of the vicious disease. [END]

³⁸ This option emulates Franklin's actions. See *Autobiography*, 200. For another example of this type of action, see Samuel Bard, *A Discourse Upon the Duties of a Physician, With some Sentiments, on the Usefulness and Necessity of a Public Hospital: Delivered Before the President and Governors of King's College at the Commencement Held on the 16th of May, 1769. As Advice to those Gentlemen who then Received the First Medical Degrees Conferred by that University* (New York: 1769).

³⁹ John Tennent, *Every Man his own Doctor: Or, the Poor Planter's Physician. Prescribing, Plain and Easy Means for Persons to Cure Themselves of all, of Most of the Distempers, Incident to this Climate, and with Very Little Charge, the Medicines being Chiefly of the Growth and Production of this Country* (Philadelphia: 1734), 27-28. *Every Man his own Doctor* was a widely distributed pamphlet that provided colonists with homemade remedies for common eighteenth-century ailments. Sassafras tea is listed as a remedy for "slow fever" while syrup of peach blossoms is listed as a remedy for "continual fever." Yellow fever is not mentioned within the text.

Screen 11

You support the policy of quarantine, but the disease still manages to spread and you too become sick.⁴⁰ What do you do?

- Option A – Treat the symptoms yourself [GO TO SCREEN 12]
- Option B – Send for a doctor [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 12

You consult a pamphlet which lists homemade remedies. Which do you choose to take?

- Option A – Sassafras tea [GO TO SCREEN 13]
- Option B – Syrup of peach blossoms [GO TO SCREEN 13]

Screen 13

Sadly, the remedy is ineffective and you become a victim of the vicious disease. [END]

Screen 14

The doctor is unable to help. Sadly, you become a victim of the vicious disease. [END]

Screen 15

The article convinces many people to donate money, but more work remains. What else can you do?

⁴⁰ *The Earliest Printed Laws of Pennsylvania 1681-1713* (1714; repr., Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1978), 23.

- Option A – Find a plot of land to build the hospital⁴¹ [GO TO SCREEN 16]
- Option B – Hire a team of doctors and nurses to work in the hospital⁴² [GO TO SCREEN 16]

Screen 16

Your efforts help the hospital become a reality, and now the sick can receive proper medical care.⁴³ Great job! [END]

Game Three: Books

Screen 1

You are a young Philadelphian and you love to read. Books are a luxury though, and only the wealthy can afford them.⁴⁴ What can you do to overcome this obstacle?

- Option A – Become a printer’s apprentice⁴⁵ [GO TO SCREEN 2]
- Option B – Become a bookseller’s clerk⁴⁶ [GO TO SCREEN 3]

⁴¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Continuation of the Account of Pennsylvania Hospital; From the First of May 1754, to the Fifth of May 1761* (Philadelphia: 1761), 41-43.

⁴² Franklin, *Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital*, 9.

⁴³ For a revealing look at the hospital’s founding and earliest years of operation, see the Board of Managers Minutes, 1751-1757, Pennsylvania Hospital Archives, Philadelphia, PA. See also Thomas G. Morton and Frank Woodbury, *The History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 1751-1895* (1895; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1973).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Carroll Reilly and David D. Hall, “Practices of Reading: Part Two. Customers and the Market for Books,” in *A History of the Book in America Volume One: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, eds. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 387. For an overview of Philadelphia’s book culture, see Edwin Wolf, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

⁴⁵ Josiah Franklin chose for his son Benjamin to become a printer’s apprentice as a result of the boy’s “bookish inclination.” See *Autobiography*, 58-59.

⁴⁶ When Franklin was a boy growing up in Boston, he became friendly “with the Apprentices of Booksellers,” which gave him the opportunity to borrow a few small books here and there. See *Autobiography*, 59.

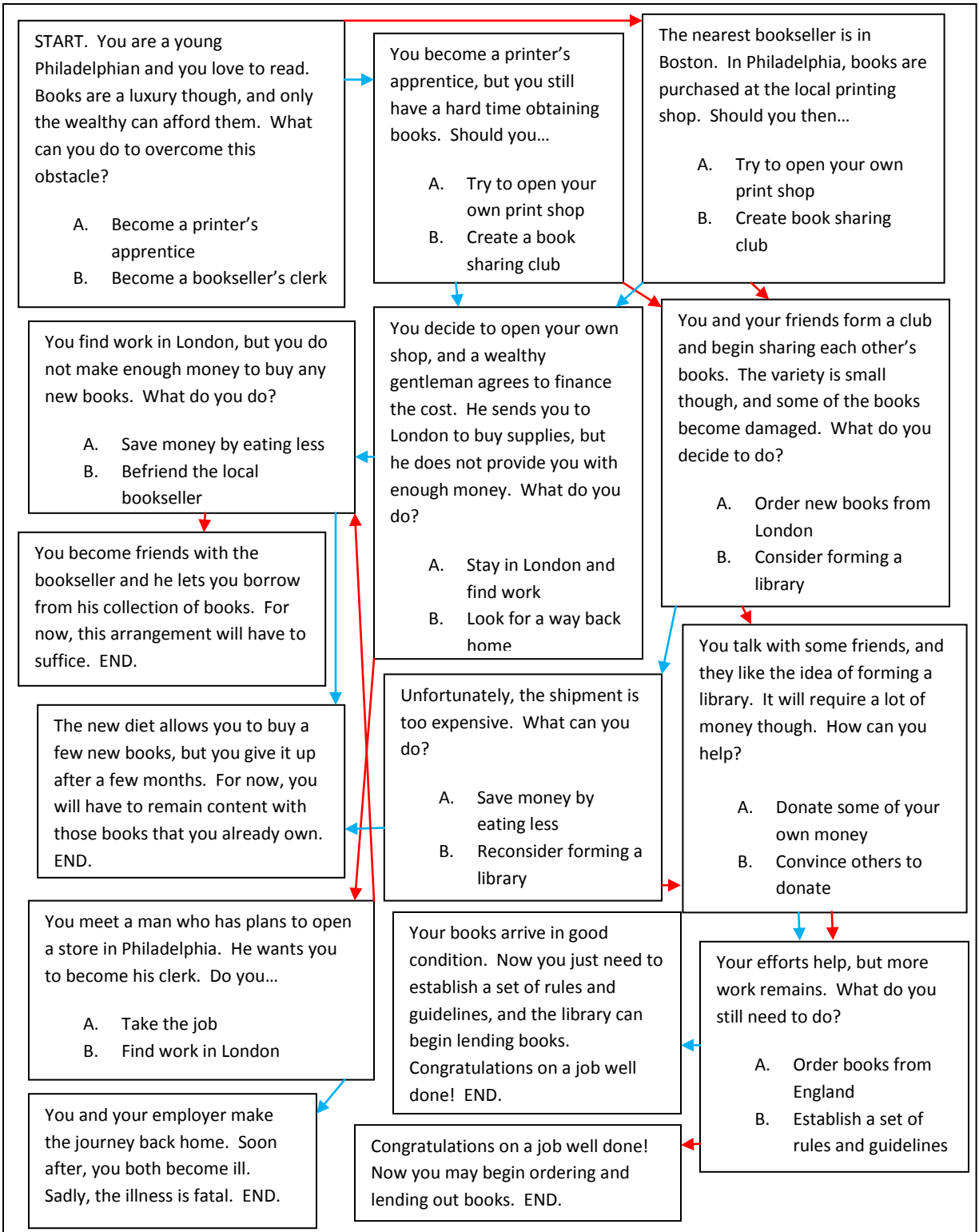


Figure 12: Books Game Flowchart

Screen 2

You become a printer's apprentice, but you still have a hard time obtaining books. Should you...

- Option A – Try to open your own print shop [GO TO SCREEN 4]
- Option B – Create a book sharing club [GO TO SCREEN 9]

Screen 3

The nearest bookseller is in Boston. In Philadelphia, books are purchased at the local printing shop.⁴⁷ Should you then...

- Option A – Try to open your own print shop [GO TO SCREEN 4]
- Option B – Create a book sharing club [GO TO SCREEN9]

Screen 4

You decide to open your own shop, and a wealthy gentleman agrees to finance the cost. He sends you to London to buy supplies, but he does not provide you with enough money.⁴⁸ What do you do?

- Option A – Stay in London and find work [GO TO SCREEN 6]

⁴⁷ In his *Autobiography*, Franklin states: "At the time I establish'd my self in Pensylvania, there was not a good Bookseller's Shop in any of the Colonies to the Southward of Boston." See *Autobiography*, 141. Printers often doubled as booksellers, as Franklin did himself. See James N. Green, "The Middle Colonies, 1720-1790: Part One. English Books and Printing in the Age of Franklin," in *A History of the Book in America Volume One: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, eds. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 261-265. For an example of books being sold at the local print shop, see David Hall, *David Hall, at the New Printing-Office, in Market-Street, Philadelphia, has to Dispose of, Wholesale and Retail, the Following Books, &c* (Philadelphia: 1769).

⁴⁸ In his *Autobiography*, Franklin states that Governor William Keith offered to set him up in business. The governor then sent Franklin to London to acquire provisions, but upon Franklin's arrival there, he realized that the governor had failed to provide him with the necessary letters of credit. See *Autobiography*, 80, 86-87, 92-94.

- Option B – Look for a way back home [GO TO SCREEN 5]

Screen 5

You meet a man who has plans to open a store in Philadelphia. He wants you to become his clerk.⁴⁹ Do you...

- Option A – Take the job [GO TO SCREEN 15]
- Option B – Find work in London [GO TO SCREEN 6]

Screen 6

You find work in London, but you do not make enough money to buy any new books.⁵⁰ What do you do?

- Option A – Save money by eating less [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Befriend the local bookseller [GO TO SCREEN 7]

Screen 7

You become friends with the bookseller and he lets you borrow from his collection of books.⁵¹ For now, this arrangement will have to suffice. [END]

⁴⁹ While in London, a certain Mr. Denham advised Franklin to return to Philadelphia. Denham had plans to open a store there, and he wanted Franklin to become his clerk. Franklin agreed to the terms and the two returned to Philadelphia. See *Autobiography*, 104-105.

⁵⁰ Following the debacle with Governor Keith, Franklin opted to stay in London where he found employment at Palmer's printing house. He later worked for Watt's, which he states was a "greater Printing House." *Autobiography*, 96, 99.

⁵¹ While in London, Franklin befriended a bookseller who was named Mr. Wilcox, and Wilcox allowed Franklin to borrow from his second-hand book collection. See *Autobiography*, 97.

Screen 8

The new diet allows you to buy a few new books, but you give it up after a few months.⁵² For now, you will have to remain content with those books that you already own. [END]

Screen 9

You and your friends form a club and begin sharing each other's books. The variety is small though, and some of the books become damaged.⁵³ What do you decide to do?

- Option A – Order new books from London⁵⁴ [GO TO SCREEN 10]
- Option B – Consider forming a library⁵⁵ [GO TO SCREEN 11]

Screen 10

Unfortunately, the shipment is too expensive. What can you do?

- Option A – Save money by eating less [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Reconsider forming a library [GO TO SCREEN 11]

⁵² While Franklin was serving as his brother's apprentice, he read a book which convinced him to take on a vegetable diet. This allowed him to save money, which he states "was an additional Fund for buying Books." He later states that he gave up it up, "returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable Diet." See *Autobiography*, 63-87-88.

⁵³ Upon forming the Junto, which was a club for mutual improvement, Franklin and his cohort agreed to share their books with each other. There ended up being fewer books than expected however, and the books were in need of proper care. The experiment only lasted for about a year, at which time "each took his Books home again." See *Autobiography*, 130.

⁵⁴ Franklin states that prior to the formation of the Library Company, "those who lov'd Reading were oblig'd to send for their Books from England." *Autobiography*, 141.

⁵⁵ Franklin first proposed the idea for a subscription library to his fellow Junto members. *Autobiography*, 141-142.

Screen 11

You talk with some friends, and they like the idea of forming a library. It will require a lot of money though. How can you help?

- Option A – Donate some of your own money [GO TO SCREEN 12]
- Option B – Convince others to donate⁵⁶ [GO TO SCREEN 12]

Screen 12

Your efforts help, but more work remains. What do you still need to do?

- Option A – Order books from England⁵⁷ [GO TO SCREEN 13]
- Option B – Establish a set of rules and guidelines⁵⁸ [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 13

Your books arrive in good condition. Now you just need to establish a set of rules and guidelines, and the library can begin lending books.⁵⁹ Congratulations on a job well done!

[END]

⁵⁶ To become a member of the library, one had to purchase a subscription. See *Autobiography*, 142.

⁵⁷ *Autobiography*, 142. To view an early catalog from the library, see Library Company of Philadelphia, *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia*. [One Line of Quotation in Latin] (Philadelphia: 1741).

⁵⁸ *Autobiography*, 142. For an in-depth look at some of the Library Company's earliest rules and guidelines, see the Directors' Minutes of the Library Company of Philadelphia, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

⁵⁹ For an in-depth analysis of Franklin's involvement with the Library Company of Philadelphia, see J.A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 2: Printer and Publisher, 1730-1747* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 93-123.

Screen 14

Congratulations on a job well done! Now you may begin ordering and lending out books.

[END]

Screen 15

You and your employer make the journey back home. Soon after, you both become ill. Sadly, the illness is fatal.⁶⁰ [END]

Game Four: Education

Screen 1

You are an eighteenth-century Philadelphian, and the parent of a young...

- Option A – Girl [GO TO SCREEN 2]
- Option B – Boy [GO TO SCREEN 10]

Screen 2

You are concerned about your daughter's education. She likes to learn, but most girls receive very little schooling.⁶¹ What do you do?

- Option A – Explore her educational options [GO TO SCREEN 3]

⁶⁰ In Feb. of 1726/7, both Franklin and his employer, Mr. Denham, became ill. Denham eventually died from the illness. See *Autobiography*, 107.

⁶¹ Carla Mulford, "Benjamin Franklin, Traditions of Liberalism, and Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," in *"The Good Education of Youth": Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin*, ed. John H. Pollack (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2009), 104; Edward Potts Cheyney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), 14-15.

- Option B – Try to improve the system [GO TO SCREEN 4]

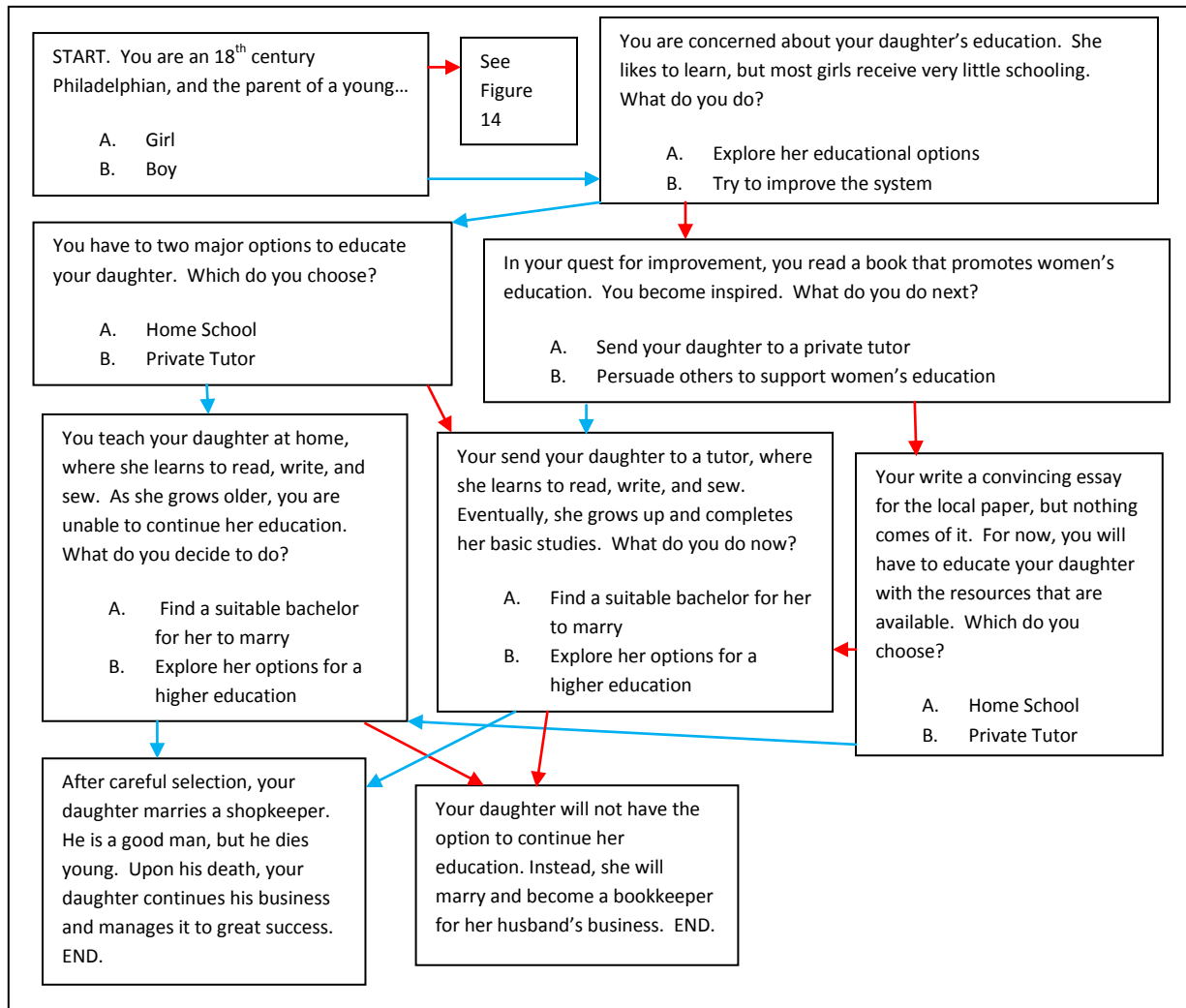


Figure 13: Education Game Flowchart (Part A)

Screen 3

You have two major options to educate your daughter. Which do you choose?

- Option A – Home School [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B – Private Tutor [GO TO SCREEN 7]

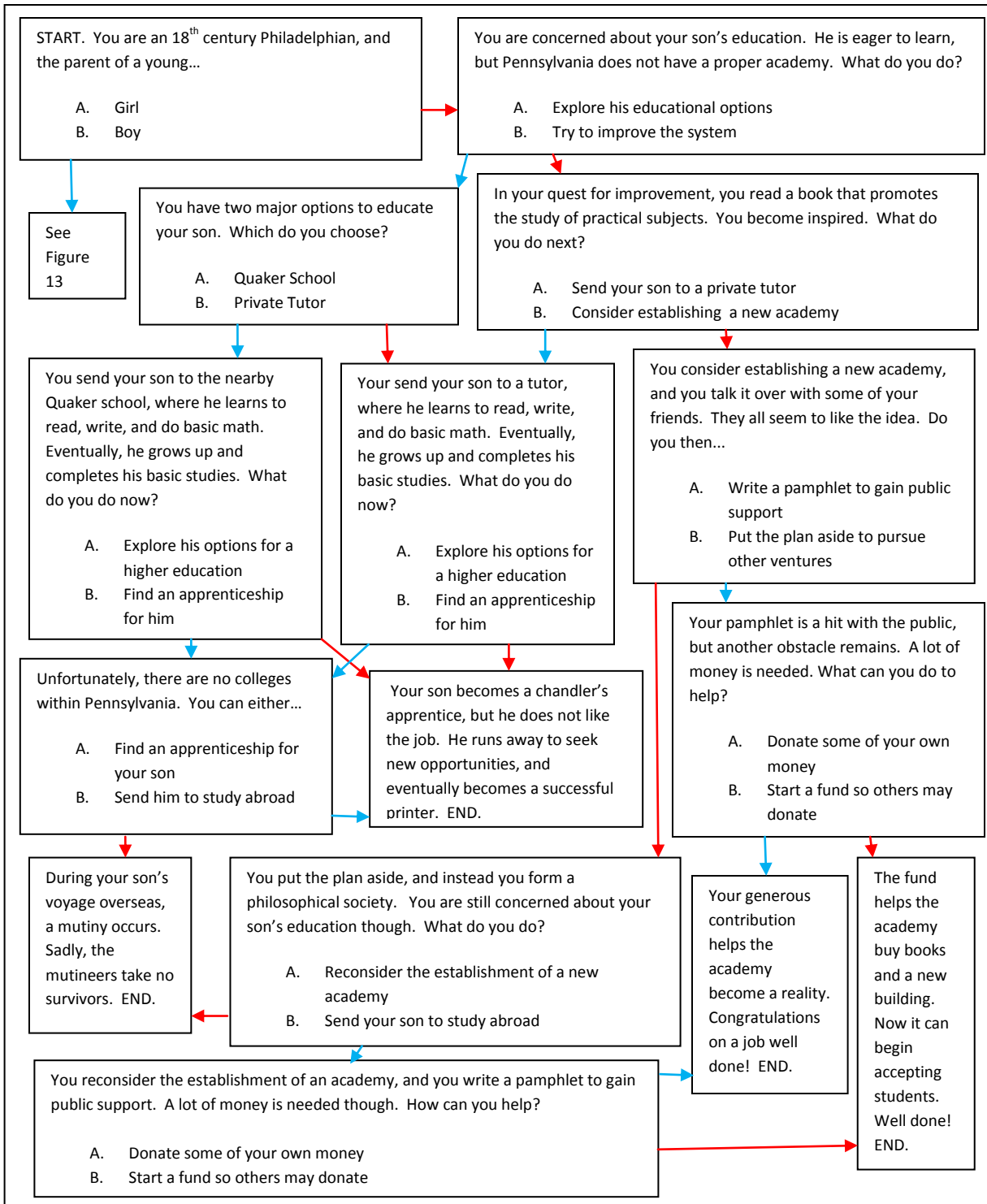


Figure 14: Education Game Flowchart (Part B)

Screen 4

In your quest for improvement, you read a book that promotes women’s education. You become inspired.⁶² What do you do next?

- Option A – Send your daughter to a private tutor [GO TO SCREEN 7]
- Option B – Persuade others to support women’s education [GO TO SCREEN 5]

Screen 5

You write a convincing essay for the local paper, but nothing comes of it.⁶³ For now, you will have to educate your daughter with the resources that are available. Which do you choose?

- Option A – Home School [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B – Private Tutor [GO TO SCREEN 7]

Screen 6

You teach your daughter at home, where she learns to read, write, and sew.⁶⁴ As she grows older, you are unable to continue her education. What do you decide to do?

- Option A – Find a suitable bachelor for her to marry [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Explore her options for a higher education [GO TO SCREEN 9]

⁶² Franklin’s thoughts on educational reform were largely influenced by philosophers such as John Locke, John Milton, and Daniel Defoe. Defoe in particular wrote about the importance of women’s education. See Mulford, 102-111.

⁶³ When he was just a teenager, Franklin wrote an essay under the pseudonym Silence Dogood where he made an argument in support of women’s education. See Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 5,” in *Papers* 1:18-21.

⁶⁴ Lawrence Cremin, *An American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 480-481, 486-490. In this exhaustive study, Cremin acknowledges the importance of familial education throughout the eighteenth century. See also Mulford, 104.

Screen 7

You send your daughter to a tutor, where she learns to read, write, and sew.⁶⁵ Eventually, she grows up and completes her basic studies. What do you do now?

- Option A – Find a suitable bachelor for her to marry [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B – Explore her options for a higher education [GO TO SCREEN 9]

Screen 8

After careful selection, your daughter marries a shopkeeper. He is a good man, but he dies young. Upon his death, your daughter continues his business and manages it to great success.⁶⁶

[END]

Screen 9

Your daughter will not have the option to continue her education. Instead, she will marry and become a bookkeeper for her husband's business. [END]

⁶⁵ Franklin makes mention of his own daughter Sally's education in two different letters that he sent to his mother. In the first, he states that she "is the greatest lover of books and her school" and in the latter, he states that "she goes now to the Dancing School." See Benjamin Franklin to Abiah Franklin, October 16, 1747, April 12, 1750, in *Papers* 3:179-180, 475. Advertisements for private tutoring were often displayed throughout colonial newspapers. See *American Weekly Mercury*, May 23, 1723. Edward Potts Cheyney states that most middle and upper class children were taught by private instructor. See Cheyney, 14.

⁶⁶ In his *Autobiography*, Franklin recounts his memories of a certain widow who upon her husband's death, continued to run his business. He goes on to state that the wife's bookkeeping and managerial skills were superior to those of her husband. See *Autobiography*, 166-167. For Deborah Franklin's involvement in her husband's business affairs, see Mulford, 112.

Screen 10

You are concerned about your son's education.⁶⁷ He is eager to learn, but Pennsylvania does not have a proper academy.⁶⁸ What do you do?

- Option A – Explore his educational options [GO TO SCREEN 16]
- Option B – Try to improve the system [GO TO SCREEN 11]

Screen 11

In your quest for improvement, you read a book that promotes the study of practical subjects. You become inspired.⁶⁹ What do you do next?

- Option A – Send your son to a private tutor [GO TO SCREEN 18]
- Option B – Consider establishing a new academy [GO TO SCREEN 12]

Screen 12

You consider establishing a new academy, and you talk it over with some of your friends. The all seem to like the idea.⁷⁰ Do you then...

- Option A – Write a pamphlet to gain public support [GO TO SCREEN 13]

⁶⁷ Franklin himself received a very limited education. He went to grammar school for less than a year, and was then taught by a private schoolmaster. Finally at the age of the ten, he became an apprentice. *Autobiography*, 52-53.

⁶⁸ *Autobiography*, 181-182; Cheyney, 15-16.

⁶⁹ Franklin's thoughts on educational reform were largely influenced by philosophers such as John Milton and John Locke. Their writings, along with the writings of others, are cited at great length throughout the entirety of Franklin's *Proposals*. See Benjamin Franklin, *Proposals Relating to the Good Education of Youth in Pensilvania* (Philadelphia: 1749).

⁷⁰ Franklin shared his ideas with "a Number of active Friends, of whom the Junto furnished a good Part." *Autobiography*, 192-193.

- Option B – Put the plan aside to pursue other ventures [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 13

Your pamphlet is a hit with the public, but another obstacle remains.⁷¹ A lot of money is needed. What can you do to help?

- Option A – Donate some of your own money⁷² [GO TO SCREEN 22]
- Option B – Start a fund so others may donate⁷³ [GO TO SCREEN 23]

Screen 14

You put the plan aside, and instead you form a philosophical society.⁷⁴ You are still concerned about your son's education though. What do you do?

- Option A – Reconsider the establishment of a new academy [GO TO SCREEN 15]
- Option B – Send your son to study abroad [GO TO SCREEN 21]

⁷¹ To garner public support for the academy, Franklin wrote and published *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*. See *Autobiography*, 193. Many of Franklin's friends and correspondences gave him feedback regarding the pamphlet. See *Papers* 3:430-432, 469-469; *Papers* 4:3-5

⁷² Franklin's own contribution to the academy can be seen in "Subscriptions to the Academy," in *Papers* 3:428-429.

⁷³ *Autobiography*, 193.

⁷⁴ In his *Autobiography*, Franklin states that he first "drew up a Proposal for establishing an Academy" in 1743, but that he "let the Scheme lie a while dormant." As he states, "I succeeded better the next Year, 1744, in proposing and establishing a Philosophical Society." See *Autobiography*, 181-182. Franklin laid out his plan for the American Philosophical Society in Benjamin Franklin, *A Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge among the British Plantations in America*, in *Papers* 3:380-383. For a synopsis of the society's earliest experiments, see *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 1 (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1771).

Screen 15

You reconsider the establishment of an academy, and you write a pamphlet to gain public support. A lot of money is needed though. How can you help?

- Option A – Donate some of your own money [GO TO SCREEN 22]
- Option B – Start a fund so others may donate [GO TO SCREEN 23]

Screen 16

You have two major options to educate your son. Which do you choose?

- Option A – Quaker School [GO TO SCREEN 17]
- Option B – Private Tutor [GO TO SCREEN 18]

Screen 17

You send your son to the nearby Quaker school, where he learns to read, write, and do basic math.⁷⁵ Eventually, he grows up and completes his basic studies. What do you do now?

- Option A – Explore his options for a higher education [GO TO SCREEN 19]
- Option B – Find an apprenticeship for him [GO TO SCREEN 20]

⁷⁵ Pennsylvania's first Frame of Government from 1682 included a provision for schools. See *A Collection of Charters and Other Publick Acts Relating to the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: 1740), 14. The Quakers established a school in 1689, and it was chartered by William Penn in 1701. The full-length charter can be seen in Thomas Woody, *Early Quaker Education in Pennsylvania* (1920; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 49-52. Woody's text also sheds light on the diverse nature of the Quaker school as can be seen in the initial petition for incorporation. Penned in 1697, the petition calls for a "public school," "where all children and servants, male and female" may be "taught and instructed," See Woody, 47-48. For an example of some of the educational projects that pre-dated Franklin's Academy, see John H. Pollack, "Introduction: Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin," in *"The Good Education of Youth": Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin*, ed. John H. Pollack (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2009), 16.

Screen 18

You send your son to a tutor, where he learns to read, write, and do basic math.⁷⁶ Eventually, he grows up and completes his basic studies. What do you do now?

- Option A – Explore his options for a higher education [GO TO SCREEN 19]
- Option B – Find an apprenticeship for him [GO TO SCREEN 20]

Screen 19

Unfortunately, there are no colleges within Pennsylvania. You can either...

- Option A – Find an apprenticeship for your son [GO TO SCREEN 20]
- Option B – Send him to study abroad [GO TO SCREEN 21]

Screen 20

Your son becomes a chandler's apprentice, but he does not like the job. He runs away to seek new opportunities, and eventually becomes a successful printer.⁷⁷ [END]

Screen 21

During your son's voyage overseas, a mutiny occurs. Sadly, the mutineers take no survivors.⁷⁸
[END]

⁷⁶ For an example of tutoring advertisements, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 31, 1741/2, December 30, 1735.

⁷⁷ This scenario is, in short, a summation of Franklin's life. See *Autobiography*, 53-75.

Screen 22

Your generous contribution helps the academy become a reality. Congratulations on a job well done! [END]

Screen 23

The fund helps the academy buy books and a new building.⁷⁹ Now it can begin accepting students. Well done! [END]

Game Five: Defense

Screen 1

You are an eighteenth-century Philadelphian and proud British subject. For a few years now, Great Britain has been at war with both France and Spain and now the fighting has spread to the American continent. Many people fear an attack by sea.⁸⁰ What do you do?

- Option A - Ignore the rumors [GO TO SCREEN 2]

⁷⁸ This example comes from an account in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The account makes mention of a Dutch ship being overtaken by mutineers. It states that the mutineers turned the chief mate “ashoar in a Long Boat with several young Gentlemen passengers from Surranam who had been in Holland for Education.” See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 3, 1735. In his essay “On the Need for an Academy,” Franklin highlights the hazards associated with sending one’s children abroad for an education. See Benjamin Franklin, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 24, 1749, in *Papers* 3:386. For another example of the hazards associated with studying abroad, see “Speeches of Students of the College of William and Mary Delivered May 1, 1699,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Series, Volume 10, no. 4 (October 1930): 326.

⁷⁹ For documents related to the procuring of books and a building, see the following: *Papers* 3:436, 466, 472; *Papers* 4:3-5, 35

⁸⁰ From 1744 to 1748, Great Britain’s North American colonies were at war with both France and Spain in what is known as King George’s War. In 1747, Philadelphia faced an increasing threat of attack as privateers began taking ships and attacking settlements along the Delaware River. See *Autobiography* 182; Sally F. Griffith, “Order, Discipline, and a Few Cannon”: Benjamin Franklin, the Association, and the Rhetoric and Practice of Boosterism,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 116, no. 2 (April 1992): 134; Barbara A. Gannon, “The Lord is a Man of War, The God of Love and Peace: The Association Debate, Philadelphia 1747-1748,” *Pennsylvania History* 65, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 46-47; Isaacson, 123-126.

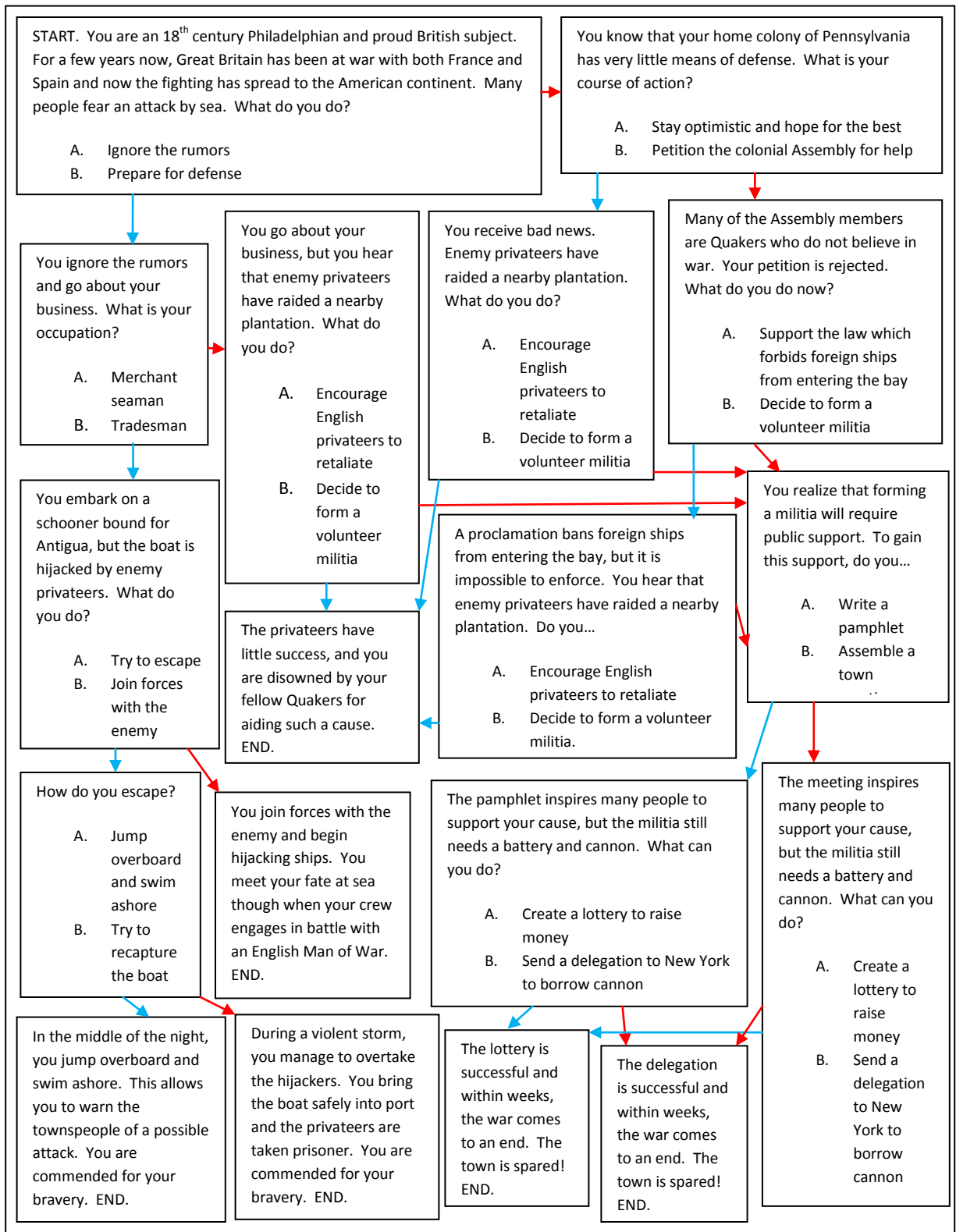


Figure 15: Defense Game Flowchart

- Option B - Prepare for defense [GO TO SCREEN 3]

Screen 2

You ignore the rumors and you go about your business. What is your occupation?

- Option A - Merchant seaman [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B - Tradesman [GO TO SCREEN 7]

Screen 3

You know that your home colony of Pennsylvania has very little means of defense.⁸¹ What is your course of action?

- Option A – Stay optimistic and hope for the best⁸² [GO TO SCREEN 4]
- Option B - Petition the colonial Assembly for help⁸³ [GO TO SCREEN 5]

Screen 4

You receive bad news. Enemy privateers have raided a nearby plantation.⁸⁴ What do you do?

⁸¹ Throughout colonial British North America, Pennsylvania was the only colony that lacked an organized system of militia. This stemmed from the Quaker tradition of pacifism and their strict opposition to warfare. See Benjamin Franklin, *Plain Truth*, in *Papers* 3:191; *Autobiography* 181-191; Gannon, 46; “Form of Association,” in *Papers* 3:206; Alan Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 60-61.

⁸² The option to hope for the best reflects the manner in which the provincial Assembly chose to deal with the threat of attack. In one particular letter written from the Assembly to the Council, it is stated: “As to any Enterprize intended against the City, we hope there is no Danger.” See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* (Harrisburg, PA: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 5:126.

⁸³ On multiple occasions, the provincial Council petitioned the Assembly for defensive aid. The request was repeatedly denied. See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:98-99, 102-103, 124-126, 161. This appeal for aid is also referenced in the “Form of Association,” in *Papers* 3:206.

- Option A - Encourage English privateers to retaliate [GO TO SCREEN 13]
- Option B – Decide to form a volunteer militia [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 5

Many of the Assembly members are Quakers who do not believe in war. Your petition is rejected. What do you do now?

- Option A – Support the law which forbids foreign ships from entering the bay [GO TO SCREEN 12]
- Option B – Decide to form a volunteer militia [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 6

You embark on a schooner bound for Antigua, but the boat is hijacked by enemy privateers.⁸⁵

What do you do?

- Option A - Try to escape [GO TO SCREEN 8]
- Option B - Join forces with the enemy [GO TO SCREEN 11]

⁸⁴ In July 1747, a party of French and Spanish privateers raided and plundered two plantations in New Castle County (now Delaware). For an account of the raid, see *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:117, and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 16, 1747.

⁸⁵ Throughout the spring and summer of 1747, a number of English ships were hijacked by enemy privateers. Many of these ships were bound to the West Indies. The most descriptive of these accounts can be seen in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 27, 1747, and *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:113-119, 233-234, 245-246, 253-254.

Screen 7

You go about your business, but you hear that enemy privateers have raided a nearby plantation. What do you do?

- Option A - Encourage English privateers to retaliate [GO TO SCREEN 13]
- Option B – Decide to form a volunteer militia [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 8

How do you escape?

- Option A - Jump overboard and swim ashore [GO TO SCREEN 9]
- Option B - Try to recapture the boat [GO TO SCREEN 10]

Screen 9

In the middle of the night, you jump overboard and swim ashore. This allows you to warn the townspeople of a possible attack.⁸⁶ You are commended for your bravery. [END]

Screen 10

During a violent storm, you manage to overtake the hijackers. You bring the boat safely into port and the privateers are taken prisoner.⁸⁷ You are commended for your bravery. [END]

⁸⁶ Spanish privateers attempted to burn the town of New Castle, but the plan was foiled when “an Englishman swam on shore in the Night and alarmed the Inhabitants.” See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:270. For another example of swimming ashore to warn the local inhabitants, see *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:253-254.

⁸⁷ In certain instances, English prisoners were able to take repossession of their hijacked boats. See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:233, 245-246, 253-254.

Screen 11

You join forces with the enemy and begin hijacking ships.⁸⁸ You meet your fate at sea though when your crew engages in battle with an English Man of War.⁸⁹ [END]

Screen 12

A proclamation bans foreign ships from entering the bay, but it is impossible to enforce. You hear that enemy privateers have raided a nearby plantation.⁹⁰ Do you...

- Option A – Encourage English privateers to retaliate [GO TO SCREEN 13]
- Option B – Decide to form a volunteer militia [GO TO SCREEN 14]

Screen 13

The privateers have little success, and you are disowned by your fellow Quakers for aiding such a cause.⁹¹ [END]

Screen 14

You realize that forming a militia will require public support.⁹² To gain this support, do you...

⁸⁸ There are accounts of Englishmen who joined forces with and served alongside French and Spanish privateers. See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:98, 113, 115, 116, 118.

⁸⁹ For an account of privateers engaging in battle, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 16, 1747.

⁹⁰ In July 1747, the Council passed a proclamation forbidding foreign vessels from entering the Delaware. The proclamation was ineffective however, as New Jersey did not impose a similar restriction. See *Minutes of the Provincial Council* 5:80-82, 111-112.

⁹¹ The *Warren* was a privateer that was “fitted out by a subscription among the merchants of this city.” In May 1747, she “set sail on a month’s cruise to guard our trade from the enemies’ privateers.” Those who helped equip the privateer were met with censure. See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 21, 1747; *Papers* 3:215, 314.

- Option A - Write a pamphlet [GO TO SCREEN 15]
- Option B - Assemble a town meeting [GO TO SCREEN 16]

Screen 15

The pamphlet inspires many people to support your cause, but the militia still needs a battery and cannon. What can you do?

- Option A - Create a lottery to raise money [GO TO SCREEN 17]
- Option B - Send a delegation to New York to borrow cannon [GO TO SCREEN 18]

Screen 16

The meeting inspires many people to support your cause, but the militia still needs a battery and cannon. What can you do?

- Option A - Create a lottery to raise money [GO TO SCREEN 17]
- Option B - Send a delegation to New York to borrow cannon [GO TO SCREEN 18]

Screen 17

The lottery is successful and within weeks, the war soon comes to an end.⁹² The town is spared! [END]

⁹² The scenarios from “Screen 14 through 18” mirror actions that Franklin took himself. See *Autobiography* 182-185; Gannon, 46.

⁹³ The Association never engaged in battle as King George’s War came to a close in August 1748, less than a year after the militia was formed. See Houston, 98-99; Gannon, 51.

Screen 18

The delegation is successful and within weeks, the war comes to an end. The town is spared!

[END]

Game Six: Fire

Screen 1

You live in colonial Philadelphia where fire is a constant threat. What can you do to help?

- Option A - Prevent fires [GO TO SCREEN 2]
- Option B - Fight fires [GO TO SCREEN 8]

Screen 2

What do you decide to do first?

- Option A - Have your chimney cleaned [GO TO SCREEN 3]
- Option B - Use caution around hot objects⁹⁴ [GO TO SCREEN 4]

Screen 3

You hire a chimney sweeper, but he neglects his duty and your house catches on fire. You manage to escape unharmed, but your house burns to the ground.⁹⁵ What do you do now?

⁹⁴ Both preventative actions listed within this scenario are mentioned in Franklin's "On Protection of Towns from Fire." See *Papers* 2:12-13.

⁹⁵ In his essay "On Protection of Towns from Fire," Franklin argues that chimney fires often result from a neglectful or careless sweeper. See *Papers* 2:12. For an example of a fire started by a chimney, see Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* 1:196.

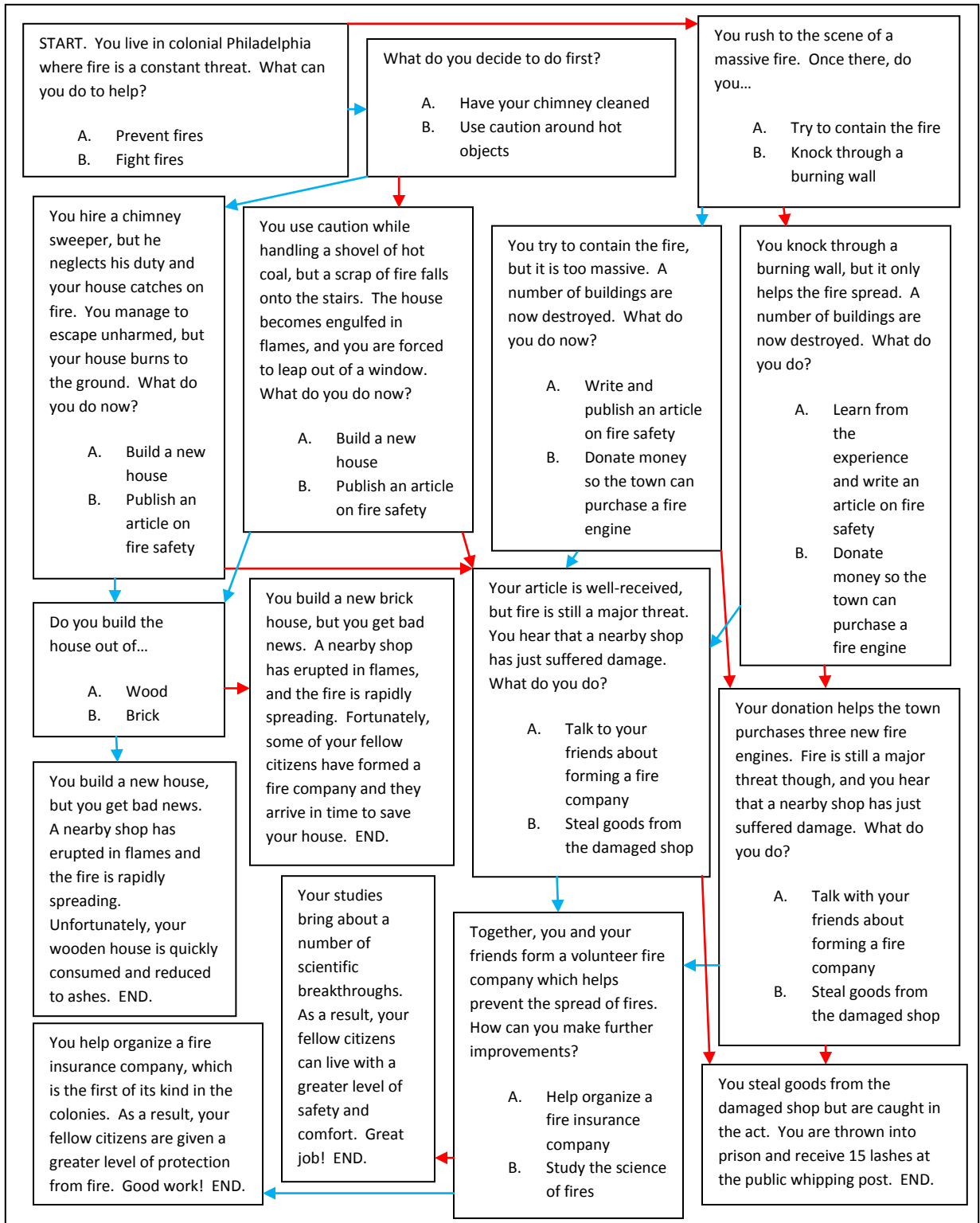


Figure 16: Fire Game Flowchart

- Option A - Build a new house [GO TO SCREEN 5]
- Option B - Publish an article on fire safety⁹⁶ [GO TO SCREEN 11]

Screen 4

You use caution while handling a shovel of hot coal, but a scrap of fire falls onto the stairs. The house becomes engulfed in flames, and you are forced to leap out of a window.⁹⁷ What do you do now?

- Option A - Build a new house [GO TO SCREEN 5]
- Option B - Publish an article on fire safety [GO TO SCREEN 11]

Screen 5

Do you build the house out of...

- Option A - Wood⁹⁸ [GO TO SCREEN 6]
- Option B - Brick [GO TO SCREEN 7]

⁹⁶ The option to write and publish an essay on fire safety mirrors Franklin's own actions. See *Autobiography*, 174.

⁹⁷ In Franklin's essay "On Protection of Towns from Fire," he advises the reader to "take Care" when carrying transporting hot coals. He warns that "Scraps of Fire may fall into Chinks, and make no Appearance till Midnight; when your Stairs being in Flames, you may be forced, (as I once was) to leap out of your windows, and hazard your Necks to avoid being over-roasted." See *Papers* 2:12.

⁹⁸ The erection of wooden buildings was not forbidden in Philadelphia until 1794. See J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1:482-483.

Screen 6

You build a new house, but you get bad news. A nearby shop has erupted in flames and the fire is rapidly spreading. Unfortunately, your wooden house is quickly consumed and reduced to ashes.⁹⁹ [END]

Screen 7

You build a new brick house, but you get bad news. A nearby shop has erupted in flames, and the fire is rapidly spreading. Fortunately, some of your fellow citizens have formed a fire company and they arrive in time to save your house.¹⁰⁰ [END]

Screen 8

You rush to the scene of a massive fire.¹⁰¹ Once there, do you...

- Option A - Try to contain the fire [GO TO SCREEN 9]
- Option B – Knock through a burning wall¹⁰² [GO TO SCREEN 10]

⁹⁹ This example comes directly from an account in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The account makes mention a fire that originated at a blockmaker's shop. According to the account, the fire destroyed a number of dwelling houses, and it was able to spread since many of the buildings were made of wood. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 13, 1742/3, in *Papers* 2:389.

¹⁰⁰ The account of the blockmaker's shop fire notes the industry of the fire company and the saving of "Mr. Till's new House." See *Papers* 2:389.

¹⁰¹ In April of 1730, a massive and devastating fire broke out on Fishbourn's Wharf. For an account of the fire, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 30, 1730, in *Papers* 1:186. For another insightful account of fire, see *An Account of Two Terrible Fires. Which Happened in the City of Brotherly-Love, on Friday, the 26th of October. From Fire, Lightning, and Tempest Good Lord Deliver Us* (Philadelphia: 1744).

¹⁰² Both options within "Screen 8" are mentioned in "Observations on the Means of Extinguishing a Fire." This essay was published in 1787 in Matthew Carey's *American Museum*, and Barbara Oberg suggests that the piece was written by Franklin in his later life. For Oberg's argument and "Observations," see Barbara Oberg, "Benjamin Franklin's 'Observations on the Means of Extinguishing a Fire': An Addition to the Franklin Canon," in

Screen 9

You try to contain the fire, but it is too massive. A number of buildings are now destroyed.

What do you do now?

- Option A - Write and publish an article on fire safety [GO TO SCREEN 11]
- Option B - Donate money so the town can purchase a fire engine¹⁰³ [GO TO SCREEN 12]

Screen 10

You knock through a burning wall, but it only helps the fire spread.¹⁰⁴ A number of buildings are now destroyed. What do you do?

- Option A - Learn from the experience and write an article on fire safety [GO TO SCREEN 11]
- Option B - Donate money so the town can purchase a fire engine [GO TO SCREEN 12]

Screen 11

Your article is well-received, but fire is still a major threat. You hear that a nearby shop has just suffered damage. What do you do?

- Option A – Talk to your friends about forming a fire company [GO TO SCREEN 14]
- Option B - Steal goods from the damaged shop [GO TO SCREEN 13]

Finding Colonial Americas: Essays Honoring J.A. Leo Lemay, eds. Carla Mulford and David S. Shields (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 331-342.

¹⁰³ Within days of the fire at Fishbourn's Wharf, a subscription was set on foot so that the town could purchase suitable fire engines." See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 30, 1730, in *Papers* 1:186. See also Harrold E. Gillingham, "Philadelphia's First Fire Defences," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 4 (1932): 361.

¹⁰⁴ Benjamin Franklin, "Observations on the Means of Extinguishing a Fire," in Mulford and Shields, 335.

Screen 12

Your donation helps the town purchase three new fire engines.¹⁰⁵ Fire is still a major threat though, and you hear that a nearby shop has just suffered damage. What do you do?

- Option A – Talk to your friends about forming a fire company [GO TO SCREEN 14]
- Option B - Steal goods from the damaged shop [GO TO SCREEN 13]

Screen 13

You steal goods from the damaged shop but are caught in the act. You are thrown into prison and receive 15 lashes at the public whipping post.¹⁰⁶ [END]

Screen 14

Together, you and your friends form a volunteer fire company which helps prevent the spread of fires.¹⁰⁷ How can you make further improvements?

- Option A - Help organize a fire insurance company [GO TO SCREEN 15]
- Option B - Study the science of fires [GO TO SCREEN 16]

¹⁰⁵ In late April 1730, a few days after the fire at Fishbourn's Wharf, the Common Council met and decided to purchase three new fire engines. They also agreed to create a subscription to secure the needed funds. See *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, 1704 to 1776* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1847), 296-297.

¹⁰⁶ In the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of both April 30, 1730, and July 16, 1730, there is mention of "thieving" at the fire. In the issue from April, it is mentioned that "several ill Persons are now in Prison on that Account." In the July issue, there is an account of one of the thieves receiving fifteen lashes at the "publick Whipping-post." *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 30, 1730, and July 16, 1730.

¹⁰⁷ The option to form a volunteer fire company mirrors Franklin's own actions. See *Autobiography*, 174-175.

Screen 15

You help organize a fire insurance company, which is the first of its kind in the colonies. As a result, your fellow citizens are given a greater level of protection from fire.¹⁰⁸ Good work!

[END]

Screen 16

Your studies bring about a number of scientific breakthroughs. As a result, your fellow citizens can live with a greater level of safety and comfort.¹⁰⁹ Great job! [END]

¹⁰⁸ In 1752, Franklin collaborated to found the Philadelphia Contributionship which helped to insure houses from loss by fire. The Contributionship's "Deed of Settlement" can be found in *Papers* 4:283-295. To examine some of the Contributionship's earliest activities, see the Board of Directors Minutes, 1752-1769, Philadelphia Contributionship, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁰⁹ For a synopsis of Franklin's many scientific endeavors, see Isaacson, 129-145.

CHAPTER TWO: ENGAGING THE PUBLIC HISTORY DEBATES

This chapter examines the ways in which “Improving Community” fits within the larger realm of public history, and therefore it focuses on the project’s engagement with the professional scholarship. In recent decades, public historians have written a number of works that have addressed some of the major concerns within the field. These works represent the latest breakthroughs in recent thought, and as a whole they have greatly added to the scholarly discourse. Although there are a number of themes that appear throughout this body of literature, the four that are the most pronounced include: the process of story selection, maintaining historical integrity, the creation of meaningful experiences, and achieving balance. This chapter explores these themes to showcase how “Improving Community” engages the most recent scholarly debates, and builds upon them so that the game may eventually stand on its own as a valid work of public history.

Story Selection

To some degree, virtually all public historians are storytellers. Storytelling is a fundamental element of the historical experience, and thus it is a topic that receives a place of prominence throughout the scholarly discourse. In their essay “Curating the Recent Past: The Woolworth Lunch Counter, Greensboro, North Carolina,” William Yeingst and Lonnie G. Bunch explore the process of story selection by recounting their involvement with the Smithsonian’s “Sitting for Justice” exhibit. The authors specifically expound on their decision to display the infamous lunch counter from the Greensboro sit-in of 1960, and they note that the counter

possessed an enormous amount of depth, symbolizing not only the struggle for civil rights, but also various aspects of southern history and economy.¹¹⁰ Yeingst and Bunch go on to state that “Part of a curator’s task is to choose what artifacts and what interpretations he or she thinks are important for the visitor to experience.”¹¹¹ In the case of “Sitting for Justice,” the lunch counter was chosen to represent a moment of great historical significance, and to position that moment within a larger social and cultural context.

While the interpretive message of “Improving Community” may be inherently less controversial than that of “Sitting for Justice,” it is by no means less complex. The mid-eighteenth century was a world filled with a wide range of social and cultural realities, and thus it was important that “Improving Community” contain the element of diversity. In addition, as “Improving Community” is just one of many elements to be included within the Benjamin Franklin Museum, it was crucial that its message fit within the museum’s larger interpretive efforts and overall layout. In fact, the museum’s layout is one of its most intriguing features as it is not being structured around a chronological narrative. The story of one’s life does not always follow a nice linear trajectory, and Franklin’s own life was no exception. At any given time, Franklin was actively involved in a number of ventures that would be hard to grasp within a traditional, chronological narrative.

Therefore, consultants Remer and Talbott opted to implement an interpretive plan based around five of Franklin’s personality traits: “ardent and dutiful,” “ambitious and rebellious,” “motivated to improve,” “curious and full of wonder,” and “prudent and

¹¹⁰ Yeingst and Bunch, 148.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

persuasive.”¹¹² Within this plan, “Improving Community” will be located in the section themed around the trait “motivated to improve.” This section will contain displays that elaborate on Franklin’s involvement in civic improvement ventures, and it will specifically highlight Franklin’s penchant for collaboration.¹¹³ Collaboration was a practice that Franklin learned to employ early on in his life, and it was one that he used to great effect throughout his distinguished career.¹¹⁴ It is within this context that “Improving Community” first came to life as consultants Remer and Talbott felt that collaboration was a key theme in Franklin’s success and therefore it was a story that was important for visitors to experience.

Agreeing on the game’s concept, however, simply brought about more questions. How should the game be fashioned? Should players pretend they are recreating Benjamin Franklin’s actions, or should they imagine something different? Will there be winners and losers, or will the game have an array of outcomes? And finally, what kinds of scenarios and stories will be told? After a great deal of internal deliberating, the Remer and Talbott consulting team decided to adopt a gaming style where players imagined themselves as anonymous eighteenth-century Philadelphians facing a joint, communal problem. In this regard, they could pretend to emulate their actions after those of Franklin, or they could choose to create their own individual path. In developing such a format, the idea was that users gain an appreciation of the choices that were available to the ordinary colonial citizen. In addition, Remer and Talbott also decided that “Improving Community” would not have any winners or losers, but rather

¹¹² Remer and Talbott, “Benjamin Franklin Museum Exhibit Outline,” last updated November 7, 2011.

¹¹³ Remer and Talbott, “Benjamin Franklin Museum Exhibit Outline,” last updated November 7, 2011.

¹¹⁴ Billy Smith, “Benjamin Franklin, Civic Improver,” in *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*, ed. Page Talbott (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 99.

one's eventual outcome in the game would be determined by a combination of individual choices and sheer luck, much like life itself.

After these elements of the game had been agreed upon, it became necessary to decide which stories to tell. Yet again, it was back to the drawing board where a new round of questioning presented itself. What kinds of scenarios would players be confronted with, and how would they work around them? How many selection choices should players have within a specific gaming environment? And what kinds of stories should be told? After further deliberation, the consulting team was able to reach a general agreement. Each game would contain an opening sequence that presented players with a specific problem, and from there, players would be given two options to deal with the situation. Based on their selection, players would then be presented with a new problem and resolution, and this pattern would continue until one's gaming experience came to an end. Furthermore, the games would each be fashioned so that they provided players with an average of four to six choices. This decision was made to prevent players from occupying a game too long or becoming bored or disinterested with it. Lastly, the team of consultants decided that the narratives themselves should cover a wide array of possibilities, and that they should also be grounded in historical evidence.

Achieving such an end required a specific approach to the topics at large, and therefore, the research process for each game began with an examination of eighteenth-century civic life. Next, it was determined how colonists dealt with the major issues of the time, and whether their actions were accompanied by any consequences. Connecting these various actions and

consequences proved to be immensely challenging at times, especially because the process involved unearthing a multiplicity of outcomes instead of focusing on one singular event. To confront this issue, the sources were examined to determine which situations and scenarios were most closely related, and oftentimes this required searching for those stories which lay just beneath the surface. While this aspect of the research process was indeed tedious, it allowed a number of scenarios to become more easily detected, and consequently, it helped forge the game's disparate story elements into a cohesive, historically-based narrative.

While "Improving Community" has presented a number of storytelling challenges, this is by no means unique. In her text *The Museum in Transition*, Hilda S. Hein acknowledges the fact that each exhibit represents a new challenge and opportunity for effective storytelling. She assesses the role that objects and artifacts play in this storytelling process, and she contends that they should not be considered as "ends in themselves," but rather a means to an end.¹¹⁵ Thus, she argues that artifacts should be valued as tools that help visitors realize a broader understanding of the past. The Benjamin Franklin Museum will echo this sentiment by providing its visitors with an interpretation that is based on historical content rather than artifacts alone. Implementing such a strategy poses its own set of challenges however, and as Hein also states, "There is no guarantee that a message sent is identical with the message delivered."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Hilde S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 32.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

Hein's remark is poignant as it points out one of the primary obstacles in historical exhibition – the construction of meaning. In his work *Making Museums Matter*, Stephen E. Weil contends that museums construct meaning, even though that meaning is likely to differ from one visitor to another. He refers to an earlier study to assert that meaning is often “forged from the visitor’s own personal identity.”¹¹⁷ In the case of “Improving Community,” the desired outcome is that visitors gain a sense of the everyday problems that existed throughout the eighteenth century, including the options that were available to combat them. There is no guarantee however, that this is the same message that will be received by the museum’s visitors. To that end, the games have been structured so that they allow visitors to take away what they can, whether that is a deeper understanding of the past or something entirely different.

Maintaining Historical Integrity

Maintaining historical integrity is a challenge that confronts virtually all public historians. As Michael Kammen notes in his seminal work *Mystic Chords of Memory*, the past is often manipulated to fit within the ideals of the present, and many times the unpleasant aspects of history are ignored altogether.¹¹⁸ Similarly, Lonnie G. Bunch III states that self-censoring, specifically the smoothing away of the rough edges of history, is the greatest danger currently

¹¹⁷ Weil, 68-69.

¹¹⁸ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 3, 626.

facing historical museums.¹¹⁹ These examples represent just a small handful of the obstacles that public historians face on a regular basis, and they also demonstrate some of the challenges that have accompanied the process of developing “Improving Community.” Since “Improving Community” is a game, it is vitally important that players find it to be fun and engaging. At the same time, it is just as imperative that the game’s historical message remain sound and factual.

In reality, accomplishing such a feat can be quite a challenging task, and it is a point which Michael Wallace notes in his essay, “Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World.” In this essay, Wallace takes aim at those exhibition practices which he deems to be historically flawed. He uses Disney World as a case study to shed light on the many ways in which selected histories are often distorted and sanitized, and he specifically finds fault with Disney’s tendency to focus solely on the pleasant aspects of history.¹²⁰ His essay is insightful, and not only does it highlight the public historian’s dilemma of choosing between entertainment value and historical significance, it also reveals an opportunity for public historians to develop their own thought-provoking narratives of a more truthful and all-encompassing nature.¹²¹

Although the Benjamin Franklin Museum will be positioned well outside the reaches of Walt Disney World, it nonetheless faces many of the same hurdles that are mentioned

¹¹⁹ Lonnie G. Bunch III, “In Museums at the National Level: Fighting the Good Fight,” in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, eds. James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1999), 351.

¹²⁰ Michael Wallace, “Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World,” in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, eds. Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 173.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

throughout Wallace's essay. The museum itself is replacing the outdated Franklin Court Museum, and great lengths are underway to ensure that the updated exhibit will be technologically advanced. A majority of the museum's elements will contain a virtual component, and many will also use sound. Given that such attention is being paid to these sensory components, it has become a struggle to ensure that the historical message remains grounded.

Perhaps the best example of this struggle involves the museum element which displays Franklin's view of slavery and how it differed at various points throughout his life. Although Franklin became an ardent abolitionist in his later life, he was still prone to thoughts and ideologies that in our own time would be considered racist. Therefore, his ideas on slavery did not progress in a linear fashion, but rather they were as complex as the man himself. Keeping these considerations in mind, consultants Remer and Talbott decided that the slavery display should not attempt to showcase how Franklin became more enlightened and pro-abolitionist with age. Instead the display is being developed to highlight the conflicts and complexities that accompanied him throughout his life. This will allow visitors to receive a more honest portrayal of Franklin's views, and in the end, it will empower them to formulate their own opinions regarding his true motives, convictions, and internal conflicts.¹²²

Empowering individuals to arrive at their own conclusions is yet another dominant sub-topic within the literature, and according to Richard Grele, "the task of the public historian, broadly defined, should be to help members of the public do their own history and to aid them

¹²² This elaboration of the slavery element is based on a meeting that took place with Remer and Talbott in Philadelphia, June 2010.

in understanding their role in shaping and interpreting events.”¹²³ Similarly, Alan Brinkley claims that history influences how individuals and societies view themselves, and “historians have, therefore, if not an obligation, then at least an opportunity to help society use that power responsibly.”¹²⁴ According to these scholars, historical museums should encourage individuals to assume a more active role in the past’s construction, so that in turn they may understand how their own involvement is a continuing part of the historical process.¹²⁵

One way in which “Improving Community” does this is by situating its players within a unique first-person gaming experience. As each game includes a variety of different outcomes, players have the opportunity to envision themselves in a host of different circumstances. In one scenario, individuals might find themselves in the midst of a devastating fire, and in another, they may be able to save lives by encouraging the practice of inoculation. By employing such tactics, the aim is to provide players with a diverse selection of historical scenarios so that in return, they may be able to achieve their own broader understanding of the past and perhaps even understand how the past has relevance today. According to Cathy Stanton, this should be the goal of public history – “to seize such small opportunities and compound them into larger visions of the processes we are all a part of.”¹²⁶ In her text *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City*, Stanton makes a case study out of the

¹²³ Richard Grele, “Whose Public? Whose History? What is the Goal of a Public Historian?,” *Public Historian* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 47-48.

¹²⁴ Alan Brinkley, “Historians and Their Publics,” *Journal of American History* 81, no. 3 (December 1994): 1029.

¹²⁵ Edward T. Linenthal, “Committing History in Public,” *Journal of American History* 81, no. 3 (December 1994): 987.

¹²⁶ Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 62.

Lowell National Historical Park to generate her own conclusions about the public history profession as a whole. Stanton states that by shying away from controversy, the Lowell NHP missed an important opportunity to spark insights regarding the ways in which past social and economic imbalances still exist.¹²⁷

While the subject matter contained within “Improving Community” is not what one would necessarily consider controversial, there are moments where the interpretative message is more than simple fun and games. Take for instance the game on education. In the opening script, the player is informed that they are concerned about their child’s educational opportunities. They are then given the choice to either learn about the opportunities that are available to a son or a daughter. If the player chooses to explore the opportunities that are available to a son, they may eventually have the option to establish an academy for higher learning. This same option, however, does not exist in the scenarios regarding the education of a daughter. While initially this may seem unfair or even sexist, there is a very good reason for it. Stated plainly, the scenario of creating a women’s institution for higher learning would not have been realistic in the mid-eighteenth century. Rather, women, if they were educated at all, were generally provided a very basic education that focused on the fundamentals of reading, writing, and “ornamental subjects” such as sewing and dancing. As adults, women were generally not expected to work outside the home and therefore their educational opportunities were extremely limited.¹²⁸ While such an outlook may not be politically correct in our own day

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹²⁸ Mulford, 104, 111-112.

and age, it was very real during Franklin's own time and therefore it was important that it remain intact for the sake of the game's historical integrity.

Another moment within "Improving Community" that might prove slightly unsettling to players occurs in the game on health care. Within that game, there is a particular scenario stating that Philadelphia is being plagued by a contagious disease, and that some say it is being imported by immigrants (see Game 2, Screen 3). Given the intense debate that has surrounded the policy of immigration within the United States, this is a scenario that may make some feel uncomfortable. On one side of the spectrum, there are those who may see this as an attempt to perpetuate immigrant stereotypes, whereas others may interpret it as a way of taking pity on the prejudices that immigrants face in our own day and time. Viewpoints aside, historical documents firmly evidence the fact that eighteenth-century immigrants were often blamed for inciting mass epidemics.¹²⁹ Although this particular scenario may cause certain visitors to feel a bit of unease, it is nonetheless an important component of the game as it will give players the opportunity to make a greater connection between the events of the past and the realities of the present.

Creating Meaningful Experiences

If there is one word that could sum up what it is public historians strive to create, in all probability that word would be "experience." In her book *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, Hilda Hein states that "today's museums are engaged in an entirely

¹²⁹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1741/2, Feb. 3, 1741/2; Duffy, 153-154.

new enterprise aimed at eliciting thoughts and experiences in people.”¹³⁰ She goes on to state that “Experiences, unlike things, are not collectibles but rather are quintessentially transient and elusive, strictly located in neither time nor in space.”¹³¹ Edward P. and Mary Alexander echo this sentiment in their text *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museum*. According to the authors, “museums have begun providing visitors with ‘experiences,’” partly by incorporating various media elements into their interpretive thrusts.¹³² They argue that the use of multimedia allows visitors to assume a greater degree of control, which in turn helps them place exhibits within a larger context.¹³³ They also contend that these types of “interpretative experiences reflect a shift in museum emphasis from collections to audiences.”¹³⁴

Upon opening, The Benjamin Franklin Museum will become a living example of this trend as the museum will house very few artifacts. Instead, many of the museum’s displays will employ the use of virtual technology. Some of these displays will allow visitors to view animations of events that happened throughout Franklin’s life – one being the element that makes use of a passage from Franklin’s *Autobiography* to depict Franklin decision to forego beer in favor of water. This particular animation portrays Franklin as a young printer living in London, and it also features his less-than-sober co-workers. The animation is amusing, and it

¹³⁰ Hein, 8.

¹³¹ Ibid., 8.

¹³² Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008), 238.

¹³³ Ibid., 245-246.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 264.

also includes the element of sound, which ultimately helps enliven the story and bring it to life.¹³⁵

Other displays within the museum will have the feature of interaction, thus allowing visitors to become actively engaged in the interpretative message. This is the case with “Improving Community,” and it is this interactive component that is the game’s greatest strength. Those who choose to play it will not only be provided with an engaging historical narrative, but they will also be granted the opportunity to experience a unique first-hand perspective of life as it would have existed in the eighteenth century. This represents a drastic departure from exhibits in the past wherein one simply gazed at an object or artifact and learned of its historical significance. In contrast, “Improving Community” will situate players within a controlled gaming environment where they may explore different realities from America’s colonial past. In addition, the game’s interactive nature will also allow players to examine the scenarios of “Improving Community” within a larger social, cultural, and even political context.

An example of this can be seen in the game themed around the formation of a militia. In this game, players do not simply read about Pennsylvania’s lack of defenses, but rather they experience it by being presented with historically grounded scenarios. For instance, in one scenario, players are given the opportunity to supply an English privateer in an act of retaliation. If they choose this option, they are told that the privateer sets out on a cruise to search for enemy vessels, but the search is unsuccessful. Furthermore, the players are told that

¹³⁵ Remer and Talbott, “Benjamin Franklin Museum Exhibit Outline,” last updated November 7, 2011.

they have been disowned by the Quakers for aiding such a cause (see Game 5, Screen 13). In this one example alone, players are given a glimpse of the multiple contexts that surrounded matters of defense. Defense was not simply a political matter, but rather it was something that individuals often had to support through their own efforts. There were also social implications as well since the Quakers were opposed to all types of warfare. By allowing players to see multiple contexts, they may be able to make certain connections that may otherwise go undetected.

Yet another central feature of the interactive experience is the opportunity it affords for visitors to immerse themselves in the past. Cary Carson touches upon this aspect of exhibition in “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?” In this essay, Carson makes the argument that younger generations “acquire and process information very differently than previous generations did,” and historians should therefore try to adjust their methods of communication accordingly.¹³⁶ He argues that today’s museum visitors are only fully satisfied when they feel like they have “experienced” the past, and therefore he calls for museums to develop interpretations that are engaging yet also affordable. He acknowledges the many challenges this presents, but he also recognizes the opportunity it allows for museum professionals to develop new and exciting interpretations of historical significance.¹³⁷

Once it has opened to the public, the Benjamin Franklin Museum will bring Carson’s words to life as the museum will provide its visitors with a wide array of opportunities to

¹³⁶ Cary Carson, “The End of History Museums: What’s Plan B?,” *Public Historian* 30, no. 4 (November 2008): 17.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-24.

experience the past. Specifically, “Improving Community” will give players the chance to immerse themselves in a virtual, eighteenth-century environment where they will be presented with historically grounded scenarios. In addition, those who choose to play will be stimulated by a number of animated, virtual images. This will add yet another exciting dimension to the game’s interactive features and it will allow guests to visualize the historical narrative, making the experience all the more meaningful.

Creating such an interactive meaningful experience has by no means come easy, and it has required an examination of the latest trends in gaming theory. One of the most recent and comprehensive of these works is Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman’s *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. In this text, authors Salen and Zimmerman make the argument that “games are contexts which provide players with the ability to make meaningful decisions.”¹³⁸ They state that “the goal of successful game design is the creation of meaningful play,” and they define meaningful play as the relationship between player action and system outcome.¹³⁹ They also note that each game must incorporate choice and a level uncertainty, and they go on to argue that a player’s choice must have meaning.¹⁴⁰

While this project is more invested in historical content than fundamentals of game design, it is still important to acknowledge and adhere to these fundamentals. “Improving Community” has therefore been developed to incorporate the basic guidelines of game design theory. The game grants players the ability to make choices themselves, and each choice a

¹³⁸ Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 194.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 61, 174.

player makes in the game leads them one step closer to their eventual outcome. This outcome remains uncertain however, to the very end of the game, wherein the player is finally informed of their ultimate end result. In addition, Salen and Zimmerman's definition of games as contexts where players can make meaningful decisions has become a mantra of sorts throughout the development process of "Improving Community." The game does not strive to simply entertain players with a fun, yet mindless, activity. On the contrary, it aims to provide them with an avenue for exploring the past, and also experiencing that past, by becoming immersed in a creative and meaningful environment.

Achieving Balance

In his book *Making Museums Matter*, Stephen Weil argues that a core function of any museum should be to provide its visitors with "the three E's": entertainment, education, and experience.¹⁴¹ While this assessment might seem overly simplistic, it captures quite ably the ways in which modern museums must balance their own interpretative efforts. In the case of "Improving Community," achieving a healthy balance of the three E's has become a primary objective and motivating principle. The game's entertainment quality is vitally important as it is the element that is most likely to catch people's attention and keep them intrigued. At the same time, "Improving Community" has a historical message that is meant to educate players and provide them with multiple contexts to examine events of the past. Finally, it is the experience factor which molds the entertainment and education elements together, and

¹⁴¹ Weil, 66.

ultimately brings the game to life. In an effort to achieve these three E's of entertainment, education, and experience, "Improving Community" will implement a game design that is stimulating to the senses, yet grounded in historical data. This has required a great deal of research and creative brainstorming, but by developing "Improving Community" in such a manner, the central aim is that players leave the game stimulated by the game's innovative design, and enlightened by its historical content.

Of course the need for balance is not strictly limited to the three E's, but rather there are numerous exhibition elements that also require a great deal of balance. One of the most crucial of these elements involves the creation of a narrative and historical interpretation. William W. Fitzhugh touches upon this aspect of balance in his contribution to *Exhibiting Dilemmas*. In this essay, Fitzhugh takes aim at exhibition standards by examining the Smithsonian's Eskimo exhibit, referring to it as "stereotyped" and arguing that it shows only one dimension of Eskimo culture.¹⁴² Fitzhugh contends that in actuality, Eskimo society is very diverse and that it has modernized along with the rest of the world, rendering certain elements of the exhibit obsolete. Fitzhugh therefore calls for a more balanced portrayal of Eskimos that celebrates not only their past, but also their present, and he advocates a more balanced positioning of Eskimo culture within a larger American experience so, in turn, "Native cultures can be seen in their fullest form."¹⁴³

¹⁴² William W. Fitzhugh, "Ambassadors in Sealskins: Exhibiting Eskimos at the Smithsonian," in Henderson and Kaeppler, 229-230.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 239-241.

Achieving balance within “Improving Community” has prompted similar challenges. One of the foremost of these has involved the struggle to include a diverse selection of narratives. As Benjamin Franklin was a man of means and significant influence, his life experience was atypical to that of most eighteenth-century Philadelphians. At the same time, Franklin was not born into wealth and for that reason he was very much a self-made man. In an effort to capture this intriguing aspect of Franklin’s life, it was important to develop “Improving Community” in such a way so that each player gains the sense that he or she is an average eighteenth-century Philadelphian. This was achieved by presenting certain scenarios wherein players are reminded that they either do not have the means to afford something, or that their improvement venture will require them to collaborate with other like-minded individuals (see Game 1, Screen 11, or Game 3, Screen 11). This way, players are given the liberty to assume their own unique identity, yet they will face specific limitations as to what they can achieve on their own.

Considering the fact that collaboration is a dominant theme within the interpretative thrust of “Improving Community,” it is slightly ironic that it also played a key role throughout the game’s development as well. This stems from the fact that there are multiple parties who have an invested interest in the success not only of the game, but of the entire Benjamin Franklin Museum. First, there is the Independence National Historical Park, who has ownership over the museum, and therefore will operate and maintain it once it has opened to the general public. In addition, the park has employed consulting team of Remer and Talbott to develop the exhibit’s historical interpretation, and it is the team’s responsibility to ensure that the

various museum elements form a cohesive and meaningful narrative. Third, the park service and historical consultants have partnered with a number of graphic and media designers, who are creating the exhibit's audio-visual and interactive features, thus helping to bring the museum elements to life. Last, there are various professionals such as architects and technicians who have the arduous task of ensuring that all systems within the exhibit space are functional so that the museum can indeed become a reality. In short, the museum's very existence relies on the careful collaboration of numerous parties, in which each party plays an invaluable role.

The topic of collaboration also plays a prominent role throughout much of the scholarly literature. As is stated by Edward P. and Mary Alexander, "The days of the single curator conceiving and installing an exhibition are past."¹⁴⁴ Specifically, a number of scholars have argued for public historians to become more active in their collaborations with visual entertainment specialists. Nina Gilden Seavey makes such a case in her essay "Film and Media Producers: Taking History off the Page and Putting it on the Screen." In the essay, Seavey argues that historians should become more active in the production of historical documentaries. She states that there is a natural tension between the disciplines of history and film, and that in the case of the latter, historical materials are often used "to create a window into past places, times, events, and characters that may or may not illuminate a broader historical construct."¹⁴⁵ She therefore contends that "historians and filmmakers must

¹⁴⁴ Alexander and Alexander, 241.

¹⁴⁵ Nina Gilden Seavey, "Film Media Producers: Taking History off the Page and Putting it on the Screen," in Gardner and LaPaglia, 119.

collaborate to ensure that history is represented in as honest and compelling a way as possible.”¹⁴⁶

Shelley Bookspan makes a similar argument in “History, Historians, and Visual Entertainment Media: Toward a Rapprochement.” In this essay, Bookspan calls for historians to embrace visual media as a means for expanding the possibilities of historical expression. She warns that if historians fail to become more actively involved in this aspect of historical construction, that they will “risk the continuing loss of influence over history.”¹⁴⁷ Gerald Herman goes even further by calling for graduate-level history programs to show greater attention to the art of media production. Otherwise, he states that historians “will continue to play only supporting roles in the construction of popular understanding.”¹⁴⁸

Throughout the Benjamin Franklin Museum’s development, these authors’ words have been heeded and put into action. To that end, the Remer and Talbott consulting team has been involved in every step of the exhibit’s production. They have undertaken the task of researching historical data, and they have assembled the results from that data to produce an interpretive script. Finally, they have formed a close partnership with the exhibit’s media designers to ensure that the audio-visual elements serve to complement the exhibit’s historical interpretation. As a result of these collaborations, the various elements within the museum

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴⁷ Shelley Bookspan, “History, Historians, and Visual Entertainment Media: Toward a Rapprochement,” *Public Historian* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 13.

¹⁴⁸ Gerald Herman, “Creating the Twenty-First-Century ‘Historian for All Seasons,’” *Public Historian* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 102.

contain a healthy balance of historical relevance and innovative intrigue which will serve to further the overall experience of the visiting public.

Of course along with collaboration also comes compromise. Since the Benjamin Franklin Museum is situated within the confines of Independence National Historical Park, the park has final say on what each exhibition element can and should contain. At times, this has been challenging as the park has interests that differ from those of the historical consultants. Sometimes these conflicts in interest have arisen as a result of monetary concerns, and other times it has arisen out of functional or logistical concerns. In each case however, a compromise had to be reached, and it was usually on the part of the consultants. In certain cases, entire displays were rejected and had to be either retooled or done away with altogether.

This is by no means a unique phenomenon as many other historical museums have faced similar challenges. Patricia Mooney-Melvin sheds light on many of these instances in her essay "Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism, and History." In the essay, Mooney-Melvin argues that historians should infiltrate the tourism industry to ensure that historical sites incorporate stories that are based on sound historical research.¹⁴⁹ She also notes the fact that perfection is not attained throughout historical preservation, but rather, she states that historians "must grow adept at knowing where and when to compromise and where and when to draw the line."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Patricia Mooney-Melvin, "Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism, and History," *Public Historian* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 45.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

Throughout the development of “Improving Community,” there were numerous occasions where compromise had to be reached. In most cases, it revolved around the script. As the game’s interactive features will likely attract many of the museum’s younger visitors, its script had to be simple enough so that a majority of school age children could grasp the contents being displayed to them. At the same time, it was essential that the game’s narratives remain historically sound. As a result, each script underwent a number of revisions. For instance, in the case of the militia-themed game, the opening scenario had to be retooled numerous times so that King George’s War and the threat of privateering could be described simply, yet accurately (see Game 5, Screen 1). This would happen time and again throughout the development of each game, and although the revision process proved to be immensely challenging, in the end the revisions helped to ensure that game’s interpretive message remained short and simple, yet factual and informative.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the ways in which “Improving Community’ engages the public history scholarship, and builds upon that scholarship to contribute something new and useful to the field. The game situates players in a virtual environment, where they are presented with a unique historical narrative. It then allows players to envision themselves as eighteenth-century colonists, and it presents them with options for improving various aspects of civic life. Furthermore, the game empowers players to make their own decisions, and by doing so, it opens the door for contingency and the possibilities for multiple outcomes. In addition, the game’s interactive features construct an environment whereby players receive their own immersive, historical experience. And finally, “Improving

Community” achieves a healthy sense of balance by incorporating an interpretation that is collaborative in nature, and one that leaves visitors feeling like they have been both entertained and educated by the events of the past.

CHAPTER THREE: ENGAGING THE HISTORICAL SOURCES

This chapter examines the research process that accompanied the development of “Improving Community.” First and foremost, it recognizes the primary sources that helped piece together the game’s unique, historical environment. It also explores some of the major debates and methodologies employed by scholars of early American history, positioning “Improving Community” within a larger historical framework. Finally, as “Improving Community” is based on Benjamin Franklin’s civic improvement ventures, this chapter looks at those historical works that have interpreted various aspects of eighteenth-century civic life. By arranging these topics in such a fashion, this chapter highlights the ways in which “Improving Community” utilizes both the primary and secondary sources to devise something unique, yet still historically significant.

Primary Sources

At its most fundamental core, “Improving Community” is a game rooted in historical, primary source data. Therefore, throughout the game’s research and development process, a number of source materials were consulted; these included first-hand accounts, letters and correspondence, diaries, periodicals, pamphlets, meeting minutes, legal documents, and a number of Franklin’s own writings. Including such a wide range of sources was a critical aspect of the research endeavor as it was important for “Improving Community” cover an equally wide range of outcomes and possibilities. To that end, a number of sources were scrutinized in an effort to determine their relevance to the project at large.

Perhaps the most invaluable of these sources was Franklin's *Autobiography*. For years, Franklin's *Autobiography* has intrigued and even baffled historians and biographers alike. Many scholars have utilized the *Autobiography* as a means to dissect the inner workings of Franklin's own psyche, while others have used it to shed light on Franklin's carefully crafted portrayal of self.¹⁵¹ Aside from its inherent complexities and contradictions, Franklin's *Autobiography* is an immensely rich historical source. It gives us an insightful glimpse into the world in which Franklin lived, and it evidences certain realities of eighteenth-century life. Throughout the process of developing "Improving Community," the *Autobiography* was most instrumental as it provided an account of Franklin's civic improvement ventures. Within it, Franklin recounts his earliest memories of Philadelphia as well as his motivations for organizing institutions like the Library Company, the Union Fire Company, the Association, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Hospital. His account is specifically useful as it identifies some of the major civic-related issues that existed in the mid-eighteenth century, including the options for working around such issues.¹⁵²

In addition, the *Autobiography* showcases some of the everyday options that were available to eighteenth-century Americans. An example of such options can be seen within the book-themed interactive. In this game, players can choose to either open a print shop of their own or create a book-sharing club amongst their friends. If they choose to open a print shop, they are told that a wealthy gentleman has agreed to finance the cost, and they are also

¹⁵¹ For an analysis of Franklin's writings, see Edward Cahill, "Benjamin Franklin's Interiors," *Early American Studies* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 27-58; Isaacson, 254-258, 476-491; Ormond Seavey, *Becoming Benjamin Franklin: The "Autobiography" and the Life* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 3-96.

¹⁵² *Autobiography*, 141-142, 174-175, 182-185, 192-193, 199-201.

informed that they will be sent to acquire provisions in London. Eventually, the player finds themselves stranded overseas at which point they can decide to either find employment in London or seek a way of returning home (see Game 3, Screens 2, 4-8). What makes these options so compelling is the fact that each of them represent decisions that Franklin made himself.

As Franklin notes in his *Autobiography*, when he was still just a teenager, he became acquainted with Pennsylvania's governor, William Keith, and within months of their meeting, the governor offered to set him up in business. Franklin accepted the offer, and shortly after, he was sent to London to acquire provisions. Upon arriving there however, Franklin quickly realized that the governor had failed to provide him with the necessary letters of credit, and having little money, he decided to stay in London and find employment at a local printing house. It was during this stint abroad that Franklin befriended a local bookseller who subsequently allowed him to borrow from his second-hand book collection. Eventually, Franklin was persuaded to return to Philadelphia to be the clerk of a Mr. Denham, and upon his return, he quickly became one of the town's most respected and well-known citizens.¹⁵³ This passage from Franklin's *Autobiography* is colorful, and at the same time it is informative. Therefore, many of the story's individual elements have been listed within the book-themed interactive where each option and scenario takes players down their own unique path.

Of course the *Autobiography* is not the only written record that Franklin left, and in actuality an even greater anthology of his writing can be found in *The Papers of Benjamin*

¹⁵³ *Autobiography*, 80-107.

Franklin. This multi-volume collection contains numerous letters, articles, advertisements, pamphlets, and documents that Franklin penned throughout his life, and it also includes some of the personal correspondence that he shared with friends, family, and acquaintances. The first four volumes are the most relevant to this project as they cover the years in which Franklin was most actively involved in civic improvement ventures. These volumes contain such notable documents as *Plain Truth, Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*, “On Protection of Towns from Fire,” as well as the Silence Dogood essays which Franklin composed when he was just a teenager.

Throughout the process of researching and developing “Improving Community,” Franklin’s *Papers* have been a fundamental asset. They shed important light on Franklin’s multi-faceted character, and they allow us to glimpse the issues of Franklin’s own time. As a result, the *Papers* have informed each of the interactive games. One particular example can be seen in the game on education, in which players have the option to publish an essay in an effort to garner support for women’s education. Upon selecting this option, players are told that the essay is convincing yet a little ahead of its time (see Game 4, Screens 4 & 5). The scenario is specifically based on one of Franklin’s Silence Dogood essays wherein a teenage Franklin makes an argument in support of women’s education.¹⁵⁴ In the game, as in the early eighteenth century, the essay does little to sway popular opinion. Nonetheless it is still an important scenario to include within the game as it allows players to grasp some of the gender imbalances

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 5,” in *Papers* 1:18-21.

that existed in the eighteenth century, and it also highlights how such imbalances could have been confronted.

The *Papers* also contain various articles that Franklin wrote for the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. These articles cover a wide range of topics, but for the purposes of this project, the most relevant were those dealing with the topic of fire. Throughout the eighteenth century, fire was a constant threat to public safety and therefore it was a topic that often appeared in colonial newspapers. One of the largest and most devastating fires occurred on Philadelphia's Fishbourn's Wharf in April of 1730. A descriptive account from the *Pennsylvania Gazette* makes mention of the fire, and the article notes the town's lack of a fire engine and "other suitable instruments."¹⁵⁵ Another account from the *Gazette*, this one from 1743, reports a fire that originated at a blockmaker's shop. According to the account, the fire destroyed a number of buildings, and since many of the buildings were made of wood, the fire spread quickly and caused a great deal of destruction.¹⁵⁶ By examining articles such as these, it is possible to discern how fires affected everyday life throughout colonial cities, and how they could have inspired someone like Franklin to take action and organize a fire company as a means of defense.

Furthermore, the *Papers* also include a number of Franklin's personal correspondence. Some of these letters provide specific insights about health issues, such as the letter that Franklin wrote to his mother Abiah in 1747 where he mentions that several "grown people"

¹⁵⁵ *Papers* 1:186.

¹⁵⁶ *Papers* 2:389.

have succumbed to the effects of yellow fever.¹⁵⁷ While this may seem like an insignificant fact, it is quite informative. Franklin's comments about yellow fever suggest that it was an epidemic that affected people around the same time that he began plans to establish the Pennsylvania Hospital. For that reason, the symptoms for yellow fever are listed within the health care interactive (see Game 2, Screen 3). This allows players to be presented with a gaming scenario that is scientifically intriguing, yet also historically relevant to the time period being displayed.

While so far the sources mentioned have been specifically related to Franklin, they are not the only primary sources that contributed to the scripts of "Improving Community." Since the game allows players to assume their own unique identity, it was also important to explore sources that were unrelated to Franklin so that players could be given a more diverse selection of choices throughout the game. In many ways, this aspect of the research process proved to be quite challenging as there are few sources which allow us to gauge the everyday experiences of eighteenth-century colonists. Meeting this challenge required an inspection of a wide variety of sources that contextualized the lives of ordinary people and allowed for the creation of multiple potential scenarios to fit within the game's interpretation.

Throughout this reconstructive process, one source that was beneficial was the *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*. The *Minutes* were especially useful in developing the defense game as the collection's fifth volume contains a wealth of information regarding Pennsylvania's response to King George's War. Specifically, the *Minutes* contain correspondence between the Council and the provincial Assembly, which demonstrates the

¹⁵⁷ *Papers* 3:179.

Council's repeated requests for aid and the Assembly's strict opposition to warfare.¹⁵⁸ The *Minutes* also provide accounts of the raiding and commandeering efforts of French and Spanish privateers. One insightful account tells of a Spanish privateer whose plans to burn the town of New Castle were foiled when an English prisoner managed to swim ashore and warn the local inhabitants.¹⁵⁹ Other accounts make mention of prisoners taking repossession of their hijacked boats, and there is even evidence that certain Englishmen opted to join and serve alongside enemy forces.¹⁶⁰ These finds are enlightening, and they have helped to ensure that the constructed gaming environment of "Improving Community" is engaging to audiences, yet still historically grounded.

Another source that has been of great value is the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. While it is true that various articles and advertisements from the *Gazette* are listed throughout the *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, they represent only a small fraction of the *Gazette's* content and thus it was necessary to examine the periodical at greater length. Ultimately, the *Gazette* proved to be an invaluable source as its pages contained a number of intriguing finds. In the issues dated January 27, 1741/2, and February 3, 1741/2, there are articles which evidence the fact that German and Irish immigrants were often blamed for the importation and spread of contagious disease. These same issues also reveal how the provincial Assembly employed doctors to inspect vessels known to be transporting immigrants.¹⁶¹ As both of these examples are telling, they have been included in the health care interactive so that players may gage some of the

¹⁵⁸ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* 5:98 -99, 102-103, 124-126, 161.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 270.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 98, 113, 115, 116, 118, 233, 245-246, 253-254.

¹⁶¹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 27, 1741/2, February 3, 1741/2.

social elements that surrounded the issue of health care in the eighteenth century (see Game 2, Screens 3 & 4).

In addition, the *Gazette* has provided certain alternative perspectives of colonial life. For instance, the periodical often listed advertisements for private tutoring, which helped to inform the script for the education based interactive (see Game 4, Screens 7 & 18).¹⁶² Other issues helped reveal realities of a different nature, such as the issue from July 3, 1735, which contains an account of a Dutch ship being seized by mutineers. The account states that the mutineers turned ashore “several young Gentlemen passengers” who had been receiving their education in Holland.¹⁶³ Within “Improving Community,” a similar scenario is presented within the education interactive (see Game 4, Screen 21), and by including such a scenario within the narrative script, the aim is for players to gain a better understanding of the many dangers that often accompanied life in the colonial Atlantic world.

Perhaps the interactive that employs the widest array of sources is the one based on the topic of smallpox. Within this game, players are presented with the challenges that confronted colonial Americans in their fight against smallpox, and to deal with the situation, they are then given options such as quarantine and inoculation. To reconstruct this particular historical environment, a variety of sources were consulted. For example, Zabdiel Boylston’s *A Historical Account of the Small-Pox Inoculation in New England* shed light on the fact that many colonists fled the cities during times of epidemics.¹⁶⁴ Another of Boylston’s works, *Some Account of*

¹⁶² *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 31, 1741/2, December 30, 1735.

¹⁶³ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 3, 1735.

¹⁶⁴ Boylston, *A Historical Account of the Small-Pox Inoculation*, 1.

What is Said of Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox, presents us with a general overview of how inoculation was practiced in the early to mid-eighteenth century.¹⁶⁵

A number of legal documents were also consulted throughout this process, and these documents were especially useful in highlighting the practice of quarantine. For instance, in the colony of Massachusetts, there was a law which prohibited vessels “visited with the Small Pox” from coming within a half-mile of any pier, wharf, or landing.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, another Massachusetts law makes mention of a “Convenient House” that had been designed to receive those individuals visited with “Contagious Sickness, to keep them from Infecting Others.”¹⁶⁷ Yet another proclamation required households “visited with the Small Pox” to hang a red pole outside of their homes so that others would know to stay away.¹⁶⁸ These laws from Massachusetts are especially relevant to “Improving Community” as some of the scenarios within the smallpox game leave players quarantined just outside of Boston Harbor. Furthermore, these documents paint a clearer picture of the process of quarantine as it would have existed in Franklin’s own time. They also demonstrate the duplicitous nature of smallpox as the disease was not simply a health-related issue, but rather, it was often a legal issue as well (see Game 1, Screens 3, 5, & 8).

While other primary sources were employed throughout the creation of “Improving Community,” those discussed here were the most significant in developing the element’s

¹⁶⁵ Boylston, *Some Account of What is Said of Inoculating*, 2-4.

¹⁶⁶ *Massachusetts Province Laws 1692-1699*, 165-166. The province of Pennsylvania also had a similar law. See *The Earliest Printed Laws of Pennsylvania 1681-1713*, 23.

¹⁶⁷ *Acts and Laws, of His Majesty’s Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New-England*, 261-262.

¹⁶⁸ *At a Meeting of the Select-Men February 21, 1746*.

historical narrative. Some of the sources were employed so that players could mirror their actions after those of Franklin himself, whereas other sources were used so that players could choose to explore alternate pathways towards improvement. Still other sources were valued for their ability to relay historical context. Together, these sources have helped create a unique environment wherein individuals may become directly involved in the creation of their own historical adventure. In essence, it is this creative usage of evidence that allows “Improving Community” to stand out from those histories that are written solely for an academic audience. The game does not employ the historical sources to interpret a singular historical narrative, but rather, it makes different use of the sources by illustrating agency and the possibility for multiple possible outcomes.

Early American Overviews

Although “Improving Community” is inherently based on primary source data, it has also been informed by numerous studies of early American history. In recent decades, a number of leading scholars have approached the study of early American history by employing a host of methodologies, and their efforts have helped create a historiography that is rich in content, and also in style. For the purposes of this project, the secondary source literature has been largely employed as a contextualizing agent, infusing the game’s historical narrative with additional layers of focus and meaning. These secondary sources have been an instrumental part of the research process, and by exploring some of the ongoing scholarly debates, it is possible to

demonstrate how “Improving Community” makes use of the historiography to present museum visitors with an intriguing interpretation of the past.

Within this historiography, one of the most seminal works is Gary B. Nash’s *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726*. Published in 1968, *Quakers and Politics* explores the connection between the political and social elements within Quaker Pennsylvania. Central to its thesis is the notion that the colony was a place of shifting political values, and author Nash argues that religious and political pluralism consistently threatened the unity of the colony. Nash goes on to state that “the Quakers’ attempt to accommodate their ideals and institutions within a new environment was a defining feature of the American colonial experience.”¹⁶⁹ Given the fact that *Quakers and Politics* is heavily focused on the experience of the ruling elite, it largely resembles many of the traditional, consensus histories that enjoyed widespread popularity throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Many of these studies tended to focus on “great men” and their accomplishments, and this can be detected throughout *Quakers and Politics* as Nash pays specific attention to prominent men such as William Penn and James Logan.¹⁷⁰

Similar in approach is Alan Tully’s *William Penn’s Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in Provincial Pennsylvania, 1726-1755*. Written in 1977, this text picks up where Nash’s leaves off to argue that this subsequent period of Pennsylvania politics was mostly characterized by

¹⁶⁹ Gary B. Nash, *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), vii-viii, 237.

¹⁷⁰ Another early inspection of colonial Pennsylvania can be seen in Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1948).

stability and order. Tully claims that Pennsylvania's "peculiar economic and social structure" allowed it to satisfy the needs of most citizens, and that this largely stemmed from the Quaker tradition of tolerance.¹⁷¹ Like Nash before him, Tully's research efforts focused mostly on the elite, although Tully's work does acknowledge the lower classes and the ways in which they were affected by politics. By including this point of view, Tully's argument was infused with some of the social interests that, throughout the 1970s, had begun to influence how historians conducted research.

This interest in social history would become even more evident with the release of Gary B. Nash's *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution*. Published in 1979, *The Urban Crucible* positioned the political events of the eighteenth-century within a broader social and economic context. In it, Nash examines the communities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, to argue that throughout the eighteenth century, a distinctive urban class consciousness was born. He asserts that this consciousness resulted from a changing social and economic landscape, and that by analyzing class frictions, we can more fully understand how many urban colonists would grow to embrace revolutionary sentiment in the years leading up to war with Great Britain.¹⁷² What makes *The Urban Crucible* stand out from other works is its unique approach. Not only does it effectively blend together elements of social, economic, and political history, it does so by incorporating a comparative

¹⁷¹ Alan Tully, *William Penn's Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in Provincial Pennsylvania, 1726-1755* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), xvi, 62, 162.

¹⁷² Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), x-xi, 325.

method. Nash juxtaposes the histories of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and, as result, he is able to offer insights on a much larger scale.

To date, these three works are still valued as seminal works on early Pennsylvania history. Each employs an exhaustive amount of primary source data to make assertions regarding life during the colonial period, and because of their existence, succeeding historians have been given a head start in their own research endeavors. These works have also greatly influenced “Improving Community” as they have provided each of the six games with background context. In other words, while the games themselves may highlight the civic aspects of colonial life, there are moments within each of the games where the players receive glimpses of a larger overall picture.

One case where these larger contexts can be detected is in the game themed around the topic of defense. Within this game, there is a particular scenario where players have the option to petition the provincial Assembly for a means of defense. If the player chooses this option, he or she is told that the petition is rejected since many of the Assembly members are Quakers who strictly oppose warfare (see Game 5, Screen 5).¹⁷³ By including such a scenario within the game, the aim is for players to attain a better grasp of the political climate that would have existed throughout mid-eighteenth century Pennsylvania.

Similarly, certain scenarios throughout “Improving Community” allude to Philadelphia’s reliance on the sea. This can be seen in the smallpox game where players can decide to flee to Boston (see Game 1, Screen 3), and also in the militia game where users can choose to go about

¹⁷³ Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 229-232.

their business as a merchant seaman (Game 5, Screen 6). In both instances, the context is subtle but it is present nonetheless, and by incorporating scenarios such as these, the narrative of “Improving Community” is infused with an important and intriguing element of Philadelphia’s colonial past – its dependence upon the sea.¹⁷⁴

Of course Philadelphia was not alone in its dependence upon the sea, and in fact all of Britain’s North American colonies were heavily reliant upon maritime trade and transportation. In recent decades, a number of historians have honed in on this aspect of colonial life, and their efforts ultimately helped to create a new field of study – Atlantic history. Atlantic history first emerged as a school of thought in the 1980s, and it did so by blending together aspects of European, African, and American histories and by focusing on the networks that bound the continents together. This new line of thought allowed scholars to position early American events within a larger, global framework, which ultimately helped showcase the importance of maritime communication. One work that demonstrates this type of approach is *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760*. In this text from 1997, Ned Landsman argues that throughout the period from 1680 to 1760, American colonists increasingly came to view themselves as valued and contributing members within the British Empire. He states that this largely resulted from an increase in trade and transatlantic consumption, which enabled the American colonies to become an integral factor in Britain’s commercial success.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ned C. Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 3, 6-7, 178.

Sarah Fatherly takes a similar approach in her text from 2008, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*. In this text, Fatherly examines the ways in which colonial women created and also maintained elite social status.¹⁷⁶ She does this by placing Philadelphia's female elite within a trans-Atlantic context, which demonstrates how these women were influenced by global networks of communication. Marianne Wokeck also highlights such networks of communication in her essay, "German and Irish Immigration to Colonial Philadelphia." In it, Wokeck argues that Germans often migrated to colonial Philadelphia as a result of the recruiting and transportation networks that made it all possible.¹⁷⁷

Within "Improving Community," this Atlantic approach is most obviously displayed throughout the library-themed game. In this game, there are numerous instances where players can gain a sense of the communication and trade networks that existed between Britain and her colonies. There are two scenarios where players may choose to import books from London (see Game 3, Screens 9 & 12), and there is also a scenario where players are sent to London to acquire provisions (see Game 3, Screen 4). Furthermore, the education-themed game grants users the option to send their son to study abroad (see Game 4, Screen 21), which once again displays the transatlantic connections that would have existed throughout the eighteenth century.

¹⁷⁶ Sarah Fatherly, *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: Women and Elite Formation in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2008), x.

¹⁷⁷ Marianne S. Wokeck, "German and Irish Immigration to Colonial Philadelphia," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, no. 2 (June 1989): 128.

It is within this context that “Improving Community” engages the historiography of early American life. The game does not seek to explain how political and socioeconomic realities of the eighteenth century came to be, but rather it utilizes these realities to position the game within a larger historical framework. By employing such a tactic, the aim is for players to grasp how circumstances from the past were affected by a host of factors, and that those factors most often determined one’s options throughout life. Therefore, the scholarship does not directly affect the game’s historical narrative, but rather it contextualizes that narrative so that the game’s historical content may be more fully digested by those who choose to play.

Eighteenth-Century Civic Life

In contrast to the secondary sources so far mentioned, the texts related to eighteenth-century civic life are much more specialized in nature. This stems from the fact that civic life is just one of many sub-topics situated under the umbrella of early American studies, and also because the word “civic” on its own denotes a wide range of possibilities. Just look at “Improving Community” itself. Within this one museum element, there will be six different gaming environments that explore topics ranging from health care to education to defense. Naturally, the historians who have studied these topics have taken a number of divergent approaches. Still, it is important to recognize these approaches so that the efforts of this project may be better situated within the secondary source literature.

Health

Within “Improving Community,” there will be two games themed around the topic of health. One presents players with the issue of health care, and the other presents them with the threat of smallpox. In both instances, players are given options to work through these problems and, depending on the choices they make, there are a wide range of outcomes which are possible. For example, within the smallpox game, certain pathways could culminate with a congratulatory message informing the player that his or her efforts to encourage inoculation have helped prevent future outbreaks of the disease. On the other hand, a different string of choices could lead to an outcome where the player is told that he or she has become a victim of the vicious disease. Given the fact that so many outcomes are possible within each of the six games, it was imperative to conduct a great deal of research to ensure that all outcomes remained historically viable.

Therefore, the research process for each game began with an inspection of the major secondary source material as it related to that topic. In the case of the health-related games, some sources explored general histories of disease and epidemics, while others took a more scientific approach to the subject at hand. Methodologies aside, each source played an invaluable role in identifying the different options and scenarios that existed throughout the eighteenth century. In the case of the smallpox interactive, Donald Hopkins’ *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in History* helped to shed light on the disease’s symptoms and effects, such as the scarring that many survivors carried with them the remainder of their lives (see Game 1,

Screens 5 & 14).¹⁷⁸ Other sources focused more on individual outbreaks, such as John Duffy's *Epidemics in Colonial America*. In this text, Duffy highlights the ways in which colonial Americans dealt with the disease by citing numerous examples of quarantine and homemade remedies, including a serum made from tar.¹⁷⁹ Roslyn Stone Wolman makes a similar investigation in "A Tale of Two Colonial Cities: Inoculation Against Smallpox in Philadelphia and in Boston." However, Wolman's study is more of a comparative analysis which accentuates the differences that existed between Philadelphia and Boston. She notes that in Philadelphia, Franklin's embrace of inoculation as a safe and beneficial practice helped many citizens overcome the reservations that they initially held.¹⁸⁰ As a whole, these types of sources were useful in determining the conditions that existed in the eighteenth century. They highlighted the different options that colonial Americans had at their disposal, such as quarantine, inoculation, and self-treatment, and at the same time, they also provided examples of the outcomes that came about as a result of these choices.

In certain cases, the source's contribution lay just beneath the surface – in what it did not say. For example, in Sarah Blank Dine's essay "Diaries and Doctors: Elizabeth Drinker and Philadelphia Medical Practice, 1760-1810," Dine assesses medical practice within Philadelphia by employing *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* as a source. One intriguing aspect of Dine's work is her acknowledgement that Drinker was a member of the Quaker elite and that she had her own

¹⁷⁸ Hopkins, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Duffy, 52, 56-57, 82.

¹⁸⁰ Roslyn Stone Wolman, "A Tale of Two Colonial Cities: Inoculation Against Smallpox in Philadelphia and Boston," *Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* 45, no. 6 (October 1978): 344-345.

private physician.¹⁸¹ Dine does not openly state that Drinker’s privileged status is what enables her to afford her own physician, but it is implied. On the other hand, in *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia*, Simon P. Newman states that “Only the wealthy could see or call for doctors on a regular basis, and thus the poor were generally unfamiliar with professional medicine.”¹⁸² In this particular example, Newman’s statement helped to solidify that which Dine had only inferred.

Moments like these became very useful throughout the development of “Improving Community.” Since the games were structured so that players could imagine themselves as ordinary eighteenth-century Philadelphians, it was important that they be presented with scenarios and opportunities that would have been available to average Philadelphians, not just the elite. Therefore, there are certain instances where players are reminded of their financial status, or lack thereof (see Game 1, Screen 11), so that they may gain a better sense of the social inequalities that would have existed in Franklin’s own time.

Knowledge

In addition to health, knowledge is another interpretative theme within “Improving Community,” and there are two games which are based on knowledge-related topics. One game allows players to explore how books were accessed in colonial Philadelphia, and the other allows them to view the educational options that existed throughout the eighteenth century.

¹⁸¹ Sarah Blank Dine, “Diaries and Doctors: Elizabeth Drinker and Philadelphia Medical Practice, 1760-1810,” *Pennsylvania History* 68, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 414.

¹⁸² Newman, 61.

As both of these games examine broad and complex topics, a number of sources contributed to the formation of each game's narrative script. Certain of these sources offered comprehensive histories, such as Edward Potts Cheyney's *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940*. In this text, Cheyney evaluates the circumstances that shaped the university's founding. He explores the colony's earliest educational efforts, acknowledges that most colonial children were taught at home, and recognizes that, in many ways, Franklin had to compromise his vision of the academy so that he could garner the support of the elite.¹⁸³ Similarly, Lawrence Cremin's *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* examines the different types of schooling options that were available to colonial subjects, including home school, instruction by private tutor, religious schools, apprenticeships, collegiate education, and self-education.¹⁸⁴

While works such as Cheyney's and Cremin's provided the basic historical context for the knowledge themed games, other sources helped to cultivate that context and give it meaning. For instance, in "'Done By a Tradesman': Franklin's Educational Proposals and the Culture of Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania," author George W. Boudreau argues that Franklin drew up a plan for a new academy that appealed to both the city's middling families and also the elite, ultimately garnering the support of each. Boudreau maintains that by becoming involved in such civic improvement ventures, Franklin and his fellow middling Philadelphians "redefined their class and their role within the city."¹⁸⁵ Boudreau's inclusion of class dynamics adds to the university's historical narrative, and this social aspect of eighteenth-century life also

¹⁸³ Cheyney, 14, 27-40.

¹⁸⁴ Cremin, 479-516.

¹⁸⁵ George W. Boudreau, "'Done By a Tradesman': Franklin's Educational Proposals and the Culture of Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History* 69, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 531, 544-546.

plays a subtle yet important role throughout the various environments of “Improving Community.” As Franklin was not born into wealth and was by no means a member of Philadelphia’s Quaker elite, his civic improvement efforts were designed “for the benefit of the middling people and the community as a whole.”¹⁸⁶ To communicate this larger message throughout “Improving Community,” the gaming scripts have been devised so that players are continuously reminded of their middling, or ordinary, status.

The scholarly works have also contributed to “Improving Community” by providing layers of historical context. Carla Mulford does just this in her contribution to *The Good Education of Youth*: *Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin*. In this piece, Mulford argues that Franklin’s thoughts on women’s education were fashioned by seventeenth-century intellectuals such as John Locke, John Milton, and Daniel Defoe. To support her assertions, Mulford brings attention to the fact that Franklin cites all three of them throughout his *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*, and she goes on to point out those instances where Franklin’s writing was clearly influenced by their earlier works.¹⁸⁷ For that reason, the education interactive includes two different scenarios where players become inspired by works of philosophy (see Game 4, Screens 4 & 11). Including this perspective is important as it will demonstrate to players how Franklin’s innovative ideas were often built upon existing theories and arguments.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 546.

¹⁸⁷ Mulford, 102-111.

Public Safety

Public safety is the third interpretive theme within “Improving Community,” and it is demonstrated by the fire and defense interactives. Considering the fact that these two topics are wildly different, the sources related to each are also markedly different. In the case of the fire interactive, the primary source records contained a wealth of information as fires were frequently mentioned throughout various first-hand accounts, such as diaries and newspapers of the time; therefore, the secondary sources were primarily used to provide general background information. One example of this is the instance where Scharf and Westcott are cited to support the fact that in the mid-eighteenth century, building a wooden house was still a viable and legal option.¹⁸⁸

The defense interactive makes different use of the secondary source literature, since recently a number of historians have begun to reassess the importance of Franklin’s volunteer militia, known as the Association. In her essay “The Lord is a Man of War, The God of Love and Peace: The Association Debate, Philadelphia 1747-1748,” Barbara Gannon states that “The unique aspect of the Association was the extent to which private citizens managed to organize and train a significant military force.”¹⁸⁹ Gannon specifically showcases the conflict that existed between the provincial Council and the provincial Assembly, and she also notes that there was a lack of executive leadership which inhibited Pennsylvania’s response to the threat of attack.

¹⁸⁸ Scharf and Westcott, 1:482-483.

¹⁸⁹ Barbara A. Gannon, “The Lord is a Man of War, the God of Love and Peace: The Association Debate, Philadelphia 1747-1748, *Pennsylvania History* 65, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 51.

She also sheds light on the Association's acquisition of cannon, and contends that this was one of the militia's most important accomplishments.¹⁹⁰

Sally F. Griffith makes her own contribution to the Association debate in "'Order, Discipline, and a Few Cannon': Benjamin Franklin, the Association, and the Rhetoric and Practice of Boosterism," where she positions Franklin's formation of the Association within a much larger social and cultural context. She takes a cue from Nash's *Urban Crucible* to argue that in forming the Association, Franklin was appealing to a "nascent class consciousness."¹⁹¹ She goes on to state that "Franklin demonstrated how to persuade a large number of people from all classes that they shared a common interest and should act in concert."¹⁹²

Arguments such as these have not only added to the scholarly debate, but they have also helped to inform the historical narrative of "Improving Community." As a result, the defense interactive gaming script has been peppered with various statements to subtly remind guests that the Association was a true landmark achievement. An example of this can be seen in the scenario where players contemplate the formation of a volunteer militia, only to be informed that such a feat has never been done (see Game 5, Screen 14).¹⁹³ In a similar fashion, other scenarios imply the importance of collaboration (see Game 5, Screens 14 through 18). By acknowledging these various components of Franklin's militia, the aim is for players to understand the progressive nature of the Association itself, and that its realization depended upon the support and involvement of many.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 47-51.

¹⁹¹ Griffith, 144.

¹⁹² Ibid., 155.

¹⁹³ Gannon, 46.

While it may be impossible to completely infuse “Improving Community” with some of the more rigorous scholarly debates that currently exist, the six interactive games do possess an intellectual focus. Throughout the development process of each game, great lengths were taken to ensure that all of the games were based on primary sources, and that the gaming environments were informed by the latest scholarly debates. The various scripts have thus been fashioned in a way that they might spark subtle, yet significant insights regarding life in eighteenth-century America. To that end, “Improving Community” speaks to a broader historical context so that ultimately, players may walk away having achieved a greater understanding of the past.

CONCLUSION

In their text *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*, authors Salen and Zimmerman make the simple but poignant statement, “People love Pong.” They attribute the game’s popularity to a number of factors, but they specifically highlight the following: the game is simple, it is unique, and it is fun.¹⁹⁴ While these characteristics may seem a bit elementary, they are vital components in measuring a game’s success. For that reason, “Improving Community” has been developed with them in mind, so that once the game goes live, those who choose to play it will receive a fun and memorable experience. First, the concept of “Improving Community” is simple. It presents players with basic historical scenarios, and within each scenario players are given two different options to further themselves in the game. Then, based on their selections, players are taken down a path of multiple possible outcomes, which makes virtually every gaming experience unique. In addition, the game will feature a number of stimulating graphics so that players may become more engaged in the game’s historical interpretation and find it fun and enjoyable.

Of course “Improving Community” is not a game that is solely meant to entertain, but rather the game possesses a narrative that is historically significant. The game demonstrates some of the everyday options that colonial Americans had at their disposal, and it also demonstrates the consequences that often ensued. In addition, the game’s immersive environment allows players to experience some of the past’s many complexities. The game hints at broader historical contexts, and it sheds light on some of the social, cultural, and

¹⁹⁴ Salen and Zimmerman, xiii-xiv.

gender imbalances that existed throughout the eighteenth century. More importantly, the game presents the past through a multi-dimensional lens. It demonstrates contingencies that are often taken for granted, and it showcases the past as a place where one's actions have meaning and where the future has yet to be determined. Presenting such a version of the past will ultimately allow museum visitors to experience a more truthful version of history, where the characters they embody do not know the effects of their choices, and where each decision is accompanied by another obstacle and opportunity down the road of life.

With said features in mind, "Improving Community" is set to become one of the latest contributions to the field of public history. The game takes factual historical data and then enhances that data by presenting players with an interactive interpretation of America's colonial past. Furthermore, the game's unique environment will allow players to role play and become more actively involved in the creation of their own historical experiences. These experiences are likely to vary from one player to another, and in all probability, they will depend on a host of independent factors. Thus, it is the game itself that makes the experience possible, yet it is the individual's involvement in the game that determines what that experience will become.

Ultimately, it is this experience factor that is the game's greatest strength. In contrast to many other historically based exhibits, "Improving Community" will not be centered on the presentation of objects. Instead, the game will invite players to explore an alternate reality that is based on grounded historical findings and imagery. This type of environment will allow players to become active participants in the events of the past, in which their own set of

choices lead them to distinct outcomes. In developing such an environment, the central aim is to present players with a more multi-dimensional view of the past. This way, players may better grasp that history is more than useless facts and dates, but rather it is a series of choices and consequences made by individual people. To transmit this aspect of human agency, players of “Improving Community” will be immersed in a virtual historical setting where their own choices will make a difference. Whether the player’s ultimate outcome in the game is favorable, not favorable, or neutral all depends on the player’s own choices, and it is this interactive feature that makes the game’s historical interpretation so compelling as it allows players to see the past as a place filled with life and meaning.

Perhaps most importantly, “Improving Community” enables individuals to become historians in their own right. It does so by situating players within an environment where they are given the freedom to make their own decisions and arrive at their own conclusions, and it teaches them to link cause and effect by demonstrating how various choices lead to distinct outcomes. In addition, the game provides players with the historical contexts they need to make sound decisions and embark on their own historical quests. In the end, it is this aspect of “Improving Community” that makes the game such an important contribution to the field of public history. It makes history accessible, and it challenges players to begin asking their own historical questions so that, in turn, they may become a greater part of the historical process.

It is within this context that “Improving Community” builds upon the most recent scholarly debates to showcase gaming as an effective tool for historical exhibition. It presents a number of historical scenarios that are insightful and complex, and it exhibits them in a non-

teleological way where there are multiple possible outcomes. It also encourages visitors to actively engage with the historical narrative by situating them within an interactive gaming environment where they may role play and assume their own unique identity. Finally, by achieving a healthy balance of entertainment and education, the game allows individuals to create their own meaningful experiences where they may gauge how truly exciting and unpredictable history can be.

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