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ome Back for

# A Little Look Around



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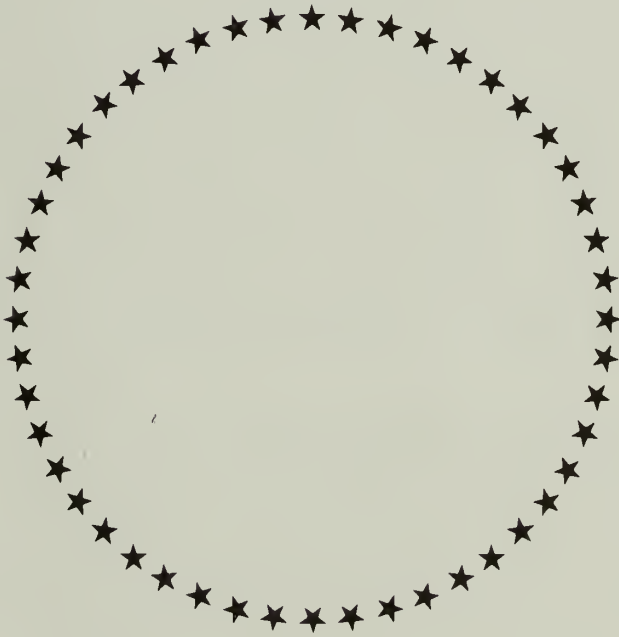
A Play

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We've Come Back for  
A Little Look Around



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

1977

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# Preface

In 1773, Benjamin Franklin, while writing to a fellow scientist in France, expressed a desire to come back in a 100 years or more to see what had become of the American spirit. For the Bicentennial, the National Park Service gave him his wish by commissioning a 35-minute play for indoor and outdoor presentation at park and community sites throughout the country. During the pilot 1975 season and the full 1976 season (with two companies) more than 500 performances of "We've Come Back for a Little Look Around" were given by the three companies at 150 sites from Massachusetts to Hawaii, Minnesota to Texas.

In the play, Benjamin Franklin, together with John Adams, Abraham Lincoln, and Mark Twain (or, in the alternate version, Annie Oakley) appear on the scene with a park ranger and maintenance worker to observe and comment on today's America. The historic figures question and talk with the park attendants and each other about today's values and attitudes, and view, through the prism of their own lives, the changes that have come about. Franklin is of course interested in Science, Adams in Justice, Lincoln in Unity, Twain in Humor, (and Annie Oakley in Equality), and each seeks to find out how well they have fared in the republic. The result is at once history, commentary, and comedy, with a frosting of fantasy.

This portable play was chosen as a vehicle to entertain and educate, and to bring the Bicentennial to American regions that were not directly involved with the events of the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence. The travelling companies were completely self-contained units. They required no special lighting, scenery, or props, and the actors all carried their own costumes as baggage. The nine-person company—six actors, a manager, wardrobe supervisor, and general understudy—travelled between the parks by plane and by car, often playing in six parks in six days, with the seventh usually reserved for rest and the refurbishing of costumes. A typical show day was three separate performances, at sites selected by the host park, and the stage was almost anywhere an audience could comfortably be gathered and seated. In the course of their theatrical barnstorming, the intrepid actors saw this country first hand, from Cape Cod to Hawaii. They performed in parking areas, marinas, campgrounds, visitor centers, school gymnasiums, parade grounds, on the steps of the National Capitol, at the Washington Monument, at the Statue of Liberty, and in front of Old Faithful at Yellowstone National Park. All performances were free.

Newspaper interviews, editorials, and reviews, as well as a host of letters, attest to the popularity and success of the enterprise. An entire second grade class in Boulder City, Nevada, wrote letters addressed to “Mr. Park Ranger” that contained such pearls of praise as “I liked Annie Oakley the best because she showed that men weren’t the only thing in life and she showed

freedom.” Another pupil wrote: “Dear Abraham Lincoln. I like your costume. You are my favorite President. Dear Ben Franklin, I thought your costume was excellent. You almost hit me with your cane.”

The production was conceived and produced by Franklin S. Roberts, a professional theatrical producer, who recruited the talents that made the idea a reality. The actors, both professional and graduate drama students, played their roles with warmth and effectiveness. The National Park Service takes pleasure in publishing the script of the play so that it might be used in schools and elsewhere to put on other versions of “We’ve Come Back for a Little Look Around.”

## A Few Notes from the Producer

“We’ve Come Back for a Little Look Around” was designed as a special feature of the National Park Service’s celebration of the Bicentennial. But its message, with minor script changes, is timeless.

Because the play requires no lighting, amplification or sets, it has also been presented in school auditoriums, meeting rooms, town halls, as well as in outdoor plazas and small theaters (on or off stage). A simple playing area of 20’ by 20’ and seating for audiences for 50 to 500 is all that is required.

If the seating is not fixed, chairs should be set in a semi-circle with a center section and two side sections. The objective is a loose informal setting. At Friday Harbor, in Washington State's San Juan Islands, we performed on the beach with the audience seated on logs washed up from the area's logging operations.

Our technique was to avoid all formalities and introductions at the beginning. Starting times would be announced and posted . . . and that was it. We wanted to surprise the audience and local Park Service staff as much as possible.

The play begins with the maintenance worker's entrance from the rear of the audience. For several minutes the worker has been visible to the audience, carrying a large plastic bag, poking around for trash, calming unruly children and muttering to staff members or officers of the local sponsoring group. At the "go" signal from the Stage Manager, the worker begins ad-libbing, in a friendly conversational tone to audience members in the immediate area, lines like . . . "Hey, young fella, wanta put that gum wrapper in the bag. It's OK. I've been in the bag for years." The jokes are pretty bad but the worker has a great time laughing at them . . . and attracting more and more attention from the general audience.

As the worker moves toward the playing area, the actor begins to work full voice and goes into the opening speech.

For maximum impact, the historical characters should make their entrances from behind natural objects (a clump of trees . . . a monument) or from a balcony, side or rear location.



Action may be played into the aisles and in and around the audience. The worker may, from time to time, take a seat in the audience and join in listening to the stories and concerns of the historical characters. The audience is an integral part of the experience and the NPS and historical characters are always aware of its presence and interest in the action.

The worker and park ranger can be played by either male or female performers. The ranger in the 1976 north company is a Black but can, with minor script changes, be cast for greatest local impact.

The byplay between the worker and the ranger during the opening scenes is the friendly banter of co-workers. As the play and the different points of view develop, it becomes more serious.

(This script is based on the 1976 Northern Tour, June 4 through September 5, 1976.)

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|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Producer         | Franklin S. Roberts |
| Author           | Daniel M. Klein     |
| Director         | Joseph F. Leonardo  |
| Costume Designer | Neil Bierbower      |

# Cast

Park Ranger, Danny, 25 to 30  
Maintenance Worker, Mike, about 35  
Abraham Lincoln, 50's  
Benjamin Franklin, ageless  
John Adams, late 30's or early 40's  
Mark Twain, 50's



# The Play





MAINTENANCE WORKER: Anybody here got any trash they need to get rid of? Just drop it in the bag folks. Any of you people over there got any trash? What! You actually used our trash baskets? Give that lady a medal. Anybody else wanna use the bag? Good. Good. Wonderful, wonderful. Boy, will I eat tomorrow! (*Laughs*) Got some over there, fella? Very nice. (*Worker is now in front of audience. Addresses them formally*) Ya see, one of the reasons we're able to have these little special programs here, is if we promise to keep the area generally spruced up. Now I like to clean up before the program starts, mainly because that's a lot less work for me than waiting 'till they're done. Ya know what I mean? Well, needless to say, I don't do this job for the money. (*Pause*) You don't believe that, right? Well it's true! I do this job cause I'm an ecology nut! (*Pause for reaction*) You see what we do folks . . . is we take all the trash we collect from you people and then it's recycled . . . and then it comes back as nice, plump, juicy hot dogs that you buy in town! (*Breaks up at own joke*) Been wondering where they come from, haven't you? (*Pause*) Just a little humor there folks . . . just a little humor. One of the things I like about this Bicentennial is I fill up three times as many bags as I did last year. Yeah, I'm on piece work. (*Spots litterer in rear of audience*) Hey, don't throw that stuff on the ground fella!

*(The Park Ranger enters up side of audience to join Maintenance Worker)*

WORKER: Well, look who's here folks . . . Smokey the Bear. Here he is, the National Park Service's answer to Muhammed Ali . . . right champ? *(Worker pretends to spar)* Easy . . . easy, don't hurt me.

PARK RANGER: Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd . . .

WORKER: The only difference between my friend Danny here and Muhammed Ali is that *he* . . . is a lightweight *(Pointing to Ranger's head. Laughs at his joke)* Well, go ahead champ.

RANGER: Hi. Don't mind him . . . we let Mike play Santa Claus at the Christmas party and it went to his head . . . wherever that is.

WORKER: Awright, wise guy, just get on with the program. *(To supposed action beyond the audience)* Hey lady! Stop! *(Rushing thru audience)* No diaper changing on government property!

RANGER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the National Park Service, welcome to \_\_\_\_\_ *(Name of Site)* . I'd like to tell you a little bit about *(Here, insert a few remarks from park literature regarding importance of site)*.

*Suddenly, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN appears and approaches ranger in mid-sentence*

FRANKLIN: I beg your pardon, but did you say this was (site name)?

RANGER (*Totally flustered*): Wha? . . . Yes I did . . . that's right . . . ca . . . can I help you sir?

FRANKLIN: I would be indebted, sir . . .

(WORKER *steps toward* FRANKLIN)

WORKER: Okay, buddy . . . all protesters have to register with the super.

FRANKLIN (*Ignoring worker*): This *is* (actual date, 1976), is it not?

RANGER: That's right.

FRANKLIN: Superb! It worked. Exactly the right time and exactly the right place . . . but where are the others?

WORKER (*To audience*): I'm sorry folks. One of the problems with this Bicentennial is we get every nut in the country out here. (*Tries to lead FRANKLIN away*) Come on Pops. We've got a nice cool place . . .

RANGER: Wait Mike. There is something familiar about you . . . aren't you . . .

WORKER: Don't tell me. Let me guess . . . the  
Tooth Fairy?

RANGER: Benjamin Franklin!

FRANKLIN (*Proudly*): They remember!

WORKER (*Mincing*): Yes, and I'm Betsy Ross!  
(*Starts ushering FRANKLIN out thru audience*)  
Come on Buddy . . . Let's take a powder.

(*On the way out, FRANKLIN suddenly spots JOHN  
ADAMS, also in period dress, entering thru the  
audience*)

FRANKLIN (*Warmly*): Why, John Adams, you old  
rebel . . . how wonderful to see you after all  
these years.

ADAMS (*Somewhat coolly*): Hello, Franklin.

WORKER: John Adams! What is this, a lunatics'  
convention?

FRANKLIN (*Laughs*): And why not? We have been  
to just about every other kind of conven-  
tion, eh, John?

ADAMS: Indeed we have, Franklin, indeed we  
have!

WORKER (*To audience*): Boy we've got the kook-a-  
boos at the old park today! . . . Hey, it's  
1976! What do these guys think they're  
doin' here? You're interrupting Bozo's  
special program.





FRANKLIN (*Bowing to RANGER*): So sorry . . . Mr. Bozo.

ADAMS: An excellent question. What *are* we doing here, Franklin?

WORKER (*To RANGER*): See, even Mr. Adams agrees with me . . . (*Does a take*) Did I say "Mr. Adams?" It's catching. I should've stayed at Grant's Tomb.

FRANKLIN: John, I shall explain everything as soon as we are all here. There are two more on the committee (*Checks scroll*). . . . A tall gentleman with a beard and a stovepipe . . .

ADAMS (*Reading over his shoulder*): A stovepipe hat.

FRANKLIN (*To audience*): Oh, has anyone seen such a man?

(*Here, let the audience . . . the children . . . discover LINCOLN*)

WORKER: Hey! Hey hippie, get away from those kids! (*Rushing toward LINCOLN*) Get that hippie out of here.

LINCOLN: Dr. Franklin. And President Adams. This is a great honor. You know I've read just about every word they've written. Oh, I am sorry, my name is Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln. (*To ADAMS*) I was just a school-boy

when your son was President, Sir. He had a powerful influence on me.

(ADAMS, *very pleased, shakes LINCOLN's hand.*)

WORKER: I don't believe it . . . Another screwball!

RANGER: SssssssssssssssssssHHH!

WORKER: Ssssssshhh yourself!

FRANKLIN: So, Mr. Lincoln, you come to us from the 1800's, Tell us, how did your generation (*Proudly*) enjoy the fruits of the Independence we created for you?

LINCOLN: A tasty harvest, Dr. Franklin . . . with one bitter lemon called slavery.

(*And now MARK TWAIN reveals himself*)

TWAIN: He's too modest to tell you himself.

WORKER: Another one!

TWAIN: Gentlemen, may I introduce the 16th President of these United States. And begging your pardon, Mr. Adams, but he was one of the best we ever had . . . if anybody's interested in the opinion of a little ole Missouri boy . . . Me, I'm Sam Clemens . . . but you can call me Twain . . . I was 25 when Mr. Lincoln was elected. Fact is, I know all about you fellers, but you don't know a stitch about me. . . . And I kinda like it that way.



FRANKLIN (*Consults scroll*): Hmmmm. Mark Twain. It says you'd be the last to get here.

TWAIN: I'm surprised to find myself here at all! I guess the rumors of my death *were* exaggerated.

(RANGER *laughs*)

TWAIN: What's so funny, young man?

RANGER: You . . . sir. You see, *I* know who you are. . . . I was practically raised on Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer.

TWAIN: You mean they're still reading that hogswill today?

RANGER: You bet. (*To historical characters*) You've read Huck Finn . . . Tom Sawyer . . .? No, you couldn't have. (*To audience*) You've read them . . . haven't you? Why, you're an American classic, Mr. Twain!

TWAIN: Well that's mighty flatterin' . . . . But if this country can't do better than my poor scribblin', it's in big trouble.

WORKER: You can say that again!

FRANKLIN: And that, gentlemen, is precisely why we are here. To determine just what has become of America in these last 200 years. Now we haven't much time . . . . And (*Clears his throat*) you can't put off until tomorrow the work you should do today, so—

ADAMS: Franklin! Your sanctimonious sayings will not do this time. We have come a long way and we deserve an explanation. How did we get here?

TWAIN: That's true, you can't whitewash that question.

RANGER: (*Laughs*): Whitewash . . . (*When WORKER fails to react*) whitewash, Tom Sawyer. . . . (*WORKER stares at him coldly*)

ADAMS (*Impatient to continue*): Franklin . . . Franklin.

FRANKLIN: All right John, all right. . . . But this is, well, a trifle embarrassing and, hu. . . .

ADAMS: Benjamin, do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

FRANKLIN (*Bows to ADAMS*): A wise . . . and appropriate saying! Well, back in the '70's . . . the 1770's, that is . . . I was working on a little experiment of mine. I was trying to make people live forever by preserving them in fine Madiera wine. . . .

TWAIN: Here it comes.

ADAMS: Oh no! First kite flying . . . and now this?

FRANKLIN: Well, I got it to work with some ordinary house flies, but I could not quite figure out how to preserve humans. So I wrote to a scientist friend in Paris for help. I told him, "I would give *anything* to make the experiment work . . . to make it possible to come back in the future and learn what had become of our new America." Suddenly, from out of nowhere, came this gravely voice . . . (*Lowers voice*) "You would give *anything*, Doctor?"

ADAMS: Oh, Good Lord!

RANGER (*To audience*): I never read that in his Almanac. . . .

WORKER (*Exits*): Don't encourage him!

FRANKLIN: It is not something one boasts about . . . but I did make an . . . er . . . arrangement with this gravely-voiced fellow. In return, he showed me the proper formula and said . . . "Now you can come back in . . . shall we say . . . 200 years!"

ADAMS: You do not expect us to believe that story?

TWAIN: Why not? . . . We're here, aren't we?

LINCOLN: But what of this arrangement you mentioned?

FRANKLIN: Oh, that . . . uh . . . Well, in return for coming back for a little look around, our committee here gets to make a judgment . . . To honestly judge whether the United States is worth continuing for another 200 years.

LINCOLN: And, if we do not find it so, if we should judge in the negative?

FRANKLIN: Well . . . . then I told him . . . uh (*Very embarrassed, he tries to garble the line*) . . . he could have it!

TWAIN: Come again?

ADAMS: You told him what?

FRANKLIN: He could have it.

TWAIN: Have what?

FRANKLIN: This. The country. America.

ADAMS: What? After all we went through in Philadelphia? You risked everything for some ridiculous experiment?

TWAIN: That's the worst deal since the Indians sold Manhattan.

FRANKLIN: Gentlemen, gentlemen, forgive me . . . I had a terrible moment of weakness . . .





TWAIN: You sure did.

FRANKLIN: But it is done! And now . . .

WORKER (*Rushing in from side or audience*):  
And now *I've* had it! Alright pops, get out the tambourines and hit the streets! You'll make a bundle off the tourists! Abe, love that hat! Let's go, Halloween is just around the corner! Alright Smokey, start the program. Come on, you guys. . .

RANGER: Hold it, Mike. We'll learn more from these men than I can possibly tell (*Indicates audience*) our friends out there.

WORKER: Awwww . . . Don't be ridiculous!

FRANKLIN: Do I understand that the two of you are in the history of America business?

WORKER: Of course. What do you think the National Park Service does? (*Snaps to mock salute*) Preserving the history and heritage of the nation!

FRANKLIN: Precisely what we need! You see, my committee must decide . . .

WORKER: Yeh, yeh . . . We heard the whole sad story.

FRANKLIN: Good. So you see, we'll need experts on your America to answer our questions.

WORKER: Experts!!?

FRANKLIN: Experts!

WORKER: Well, I gotta admit, you could have made a worser choice. (*Rubs hands in anticipation*) Okay, what would you like to know?

FRANKLIN: Let's begin then.

ADAMS: One more question, Benjamin. Just how do we judge if America has proved successful? What is our standard?

FRANKLIN: Whatever standard you suggest. (*FRANKLIN points to each of them in quick succession and gets their answers—and his own—on top of one another*)

ADAMS: Justice!

LINCOLN: Unity!

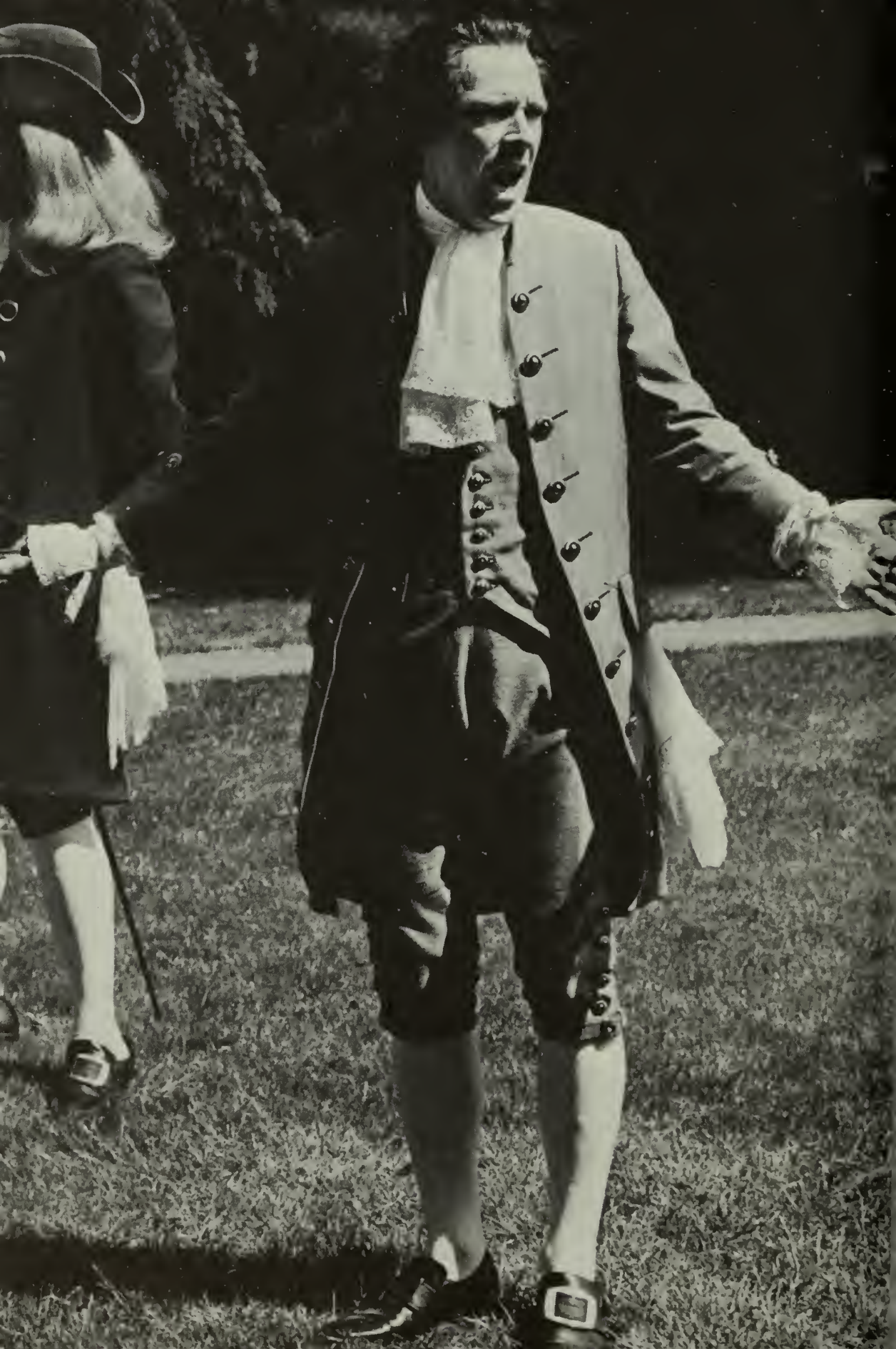
TWAIN: Humor!

FRANKLIN: Science!

WORKER: What was that?

*(They repeat individually)*

FRANKLIN (*To audience*): You never could get fewer than four opinions from a committee of four Americans . . . we had better go



one at a time . . . John, why don't you begin . . . How would you go about judging their (*Indicates the audience*) America?

ADAMS: By its justice, Doctor . . . by the fairness of its laws and the honor of its courts. That is the true test of any country's greatness.

RANGER: Hear, hear!

WORKER: Button it, kid. That's John Adams talking.

FRANKLIN: Well!

WORKER (*Exits*): . . . . I think.

ADAMS: Before we were an independent country I stood for the same principle of justice . . . I remember back in 1770 we had a terrible tragedy in my great hometown. British soldiers fired into an angry mob killing five people. My cousin Sam called it 'The Boston Massacre.' An ugly business. Civilian blood staining the streets. No lawyer would defend the British soldiers. The Tories came to me . . . a liberty man . . . and begged me to serve as defense counsel. I accepted.

RANGER: Fantastic!

WORKER (*From audience or side where he has taken a seat*): Wait a minute! You mean, you defended those Commie Red Coats?

ADAMS: Of course, I defended them. (*WORKER is confounded and turns muttering to nearest audience members*) I defended Captain Preston and all seven of his redcoats. For as I told Cousin Sam, "Counsel ought to be the last thing that an accused person should be in want of in a free country."

LINCOLN: And as I recall, you won that case, did you not, Mr. Adams?

ADAMS: Yes. Indeed I did, sir. And I still maintain that it was one of the most gallant actions of my whole life, and one of the best pieces of service that I rendered my country.

TWAIN: Really? Saving the necks of British soldiers?

ADAMS: Yes! You see, it set a precedent . . . and it proved a principle. No one can deny that I was with Sam and the others when it came to urging independence. But in defending those British soldiers I was fighting for the very same principle of justice which took me to Philadelphia in 1776.

RANGER: Wow! You really are something else, Mr. Adams. Imagine, defending the Red Coats!

WORKER: Still sounds screwy to me.

ADAMS: And so my question to you two gentlemen . . . how has American justice survived these past two hundred years?

RANGER: Terribly!

WORKER: What? Are you kidding? We've got the best laws in the world!

RANGER: But what happens in the courts? We don't have justice in this country, Mr. Adams, we only have privilege. Today, it's how much money you have and who your lawyer is that decides how much so-called justice you get.

ADAMS: Is that a fact?

WORKER: Don't listen to Pinko, there. He don't understand nothing . . . Why we got so much justice in this country it makes me sick. People are getting away with murder, we're so busy being fair with our laws. Everybody gets a fair trail . . .

LINCOLN: And his own lawyer, no matter how poor he is?

WORKER: That's right.

ADAMS (*To* RANGER): Is that true?





RANGER (*Grudgingly*): Aww . . . yes . . . But chances are some poor ghetto kid gets thrown in jail while a big businessman gets his wrist slapped with a fine.

WORKER: Don't listen to him, his brain's gone soft . . . too much college! We got the best courts you can find.

RANGER: If you can find them! Sometimes it takes years just to get to trial.

ADAMS: That is distressing.

WORKER: Aw, come on, guys . . . it's 1976 . . . I mean, how many Americans you have 200 years ago?

ADAMS (*Proudly*): We were over two million!

WORKER: Awright! How many Americans do you think we got today?

FRANKLIN: Don't tell me . . . I once worked out a formula for that . . . Now, if you double every generation . . . and then subtract a total of . . . uh . . . I'd say, fifty! Fifty million!

ADAMS: That many?

FRANKLIN: Certainly John. You see the population doesn't expand arithmetically, it expands geometrically.

WORKER: Sorry, Franky, you're only a 170 million off . . . (*Historical characters are amazed*) Yessir, 220 million here today. You see, we don't just multiply in this country, we got such a good thing going, people keep coming here from all over the world.

LINCOLN: So people continued to emigrate to America.

WORKER: Like flies to honey, Abe . . . But my point is, everything is a little crowded these days, right folks? Not just our courts.

RANGER: But that's no excuse.

TWAIN: Isn't it, son?

RANGER: Not if you're wasting your life away in a cell waiting for a trial . . . No sir, then it's no excuse.

FRANKLIN: Well, John, what is your decision? By your standard, justice, is it Yea or Nay for their America?

ADAMS (*Long pause as they move in to flank him and hear verdict*): Good heavens, Ben, these two do make it too difficult. Besides, I'm a lawyer, not a judge . . . No, sir, I cannot form an opinion . . . I pass my vote to the next man.

(*WORKER spots plant in audience with instant camera*)

WORKER: Hold it a minute there Franky, uh, hey!  
Don't take that picture . . . Give me the camera! Yeh. Let me have that. (*They pull back and forth*) You don't understand. I'll get a better shot than you, I got influence with the boys up there, you know what I mean? Come on, don't worry, I'm insured. There we are. (*He is given camera, returns to stage*)

RANGER: Mike, what are you doing?

WORKER: Listen, I gotta get a picture of this. The guys down at (*Name of local bar or hangout*) will never believe this unless I get a picture.

FRANKLIN: A picture? The future of this nation is at stake and you expect us to stop and pose for a painting?

LINCOLN: Not a painting, Doctor, a photograph. I had mine taken once by Mr. Brady.

FRANKLIN: A photo . . . graph?

WORKER: Yeh, it's easy Franky, just get over there with Mr. Adams; Mr. Twain, Abe, you guys just move up there a bit . . . yeh, that's fine. Abe, you're kinda tall with the hat (*LINCOLN starts to take it off*) No! Leave it on. We don't know who you are without the hat. (*Pause*) Well, that's his trademark, you know what I mean. (*RANGER moves with them, WORKER notices*) Get out of there! I don't want you in there, I see you every

day! (RANGER *sulks away*) I just want the big-shots, know what I mean? Alright now, tighten up there you guys, smile for me now. (*He starts to shoot, stops*) Hey Frankie, if you guys move it over just a couple of feet I can get my bag in the picture (*To audience*) Well, that's my trademark—you know what I mean. Abe's got his hat. I've got my bag. Franky, take that hat off, I'm gettin' a shadow. That's great. O.K. smile! (*Pause*) You guys look like a postcard. (*Motions to RANGER*) Hey Danny, you better get in there, I need somebody who's still alive. I need some proof . . . get in the back. Awright. Now we got it, Smile! Relax! You look like Mount Rushmore! Awright! (*Snaps picture. Historicals remain frozen. WORKER and RANGER walk away arguing over amount of time it will take picture to develop. Become aware of audience reaction to frozen historicals*) Hey you guys, I'm all done taking the picture. You can relax (*As he exits into audience*) Jeez, these guys don't know anything.

LINCOLN (*Amazed*): Mr. Brady took much longer.

FRANKLIN (*Doing a take*): A photo-graph! A box which makes portraits! By George, why didn't I think of that . . . But tell me, we Americans did invent it?

RANGER: Sorry, Doctor . . . It was a Frenchman.



FRANKLIN: Oh, no . . . Anything but a Frenchman! Even an Englishman would have been better . . . How those French used to look down their noses at American science. Primitives, they called us. It was all right for us to be farmers or merchants, but not men of science and invention . . . By Jove, that infuriated me. Because I knew that America's future lay in the sciences, I believed that after our political revolution, there would be another one . . . a scientific revolution. And the grandest prize of all would go to the winner of that one . . . That, gentlemen, is my standard for a successful America: if this country was the winner of that scientific revolution?

WORKER (*Entering from side*): No problem there folks, he's talking about the Industrial Revolution, right! Well, no doubt about it, we were the winners of that one, Franky, hands down.

RANGER: We won, all right . . . and endangered the whole world in the process.

WORKER: Old Doomsday mouth again. What's your beef now? Just look around . . . we've got cars . . . things that go Zoom, Zoom! . . . uh, that's like a horseless carriage guys . . .

ADAMS (*Trying to duplicate worker's gyrations and sounds*): Z . . . o . . . om . . . Zoom?

RANGER: And they kill thousands of people every year.

WORKER: We got flying machines that zip you around the world in hours.

RANGER: If you can get to the airports through the traffic jams.

WORKER: We got rockets that go to Mars.

RANGER: And cost more than we spend educating our kids.

WORKER: We got the world's largest automated factories . . .

RANGER: Poisoning our rivers and our air . . .

WORKER (*Advancing on RANGER until they are nose to nose*): We got x-ray machines taking pictures of people's insides . . . Anything wrong with that one, Meathead? Or is that an invasion of privacy?

RANGER: No . . . But if we made one-tenth of a percent as many x-ray machines as we make guns, I'd feel a lot healthier.

(WORKER and RANGER glare at each other—*long take*)

WORKER (*Leading FRANKLIN away*): Forget him Franky . . . We got radios and tee-vees and electric lights and record players and moving pictures and . . .

RANGER: And atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, wiretaps . . . why we've even got an energy crisis.

TWAIN: An energy crisis? What's that, some sort of disease?

RANGER: If you buy gasoline it is. We've used up energy resources faster than we could develop them . . . We've already started to run out of fuel oil.

FRANKLIN: Hmmmm. I say young man . . . are you familiar with the Franklin Stove?

TWAIN: Ben . . . you know if we'd load up a bunch of your stoves with a batch of my books, we might solve this energy crisis.

LINCOLN: Everything about this modern world moves so fast . . . is so big . . . Is it possible to judge?

FRANKLIN: Indeed . . . it is impressive, and completely beyond me. There was considerable comfort in living back in simpler times.





ADAMS: Things may look simpler 200 years later . . . but breaking with mighty England seemed complicated enough back then.

FRANKLIN: Well spoken, John. There is more surface to these complications today . . . but perhaps they go no deeper than yesterday's. I confess the sciences of this modern America are beginning to enchant me, however, I dare not say whether what we have here is a successful experiment or an impossible disaster . . . I'm afraid I'll have to pass my vote to . . . Mr. Lincoln, it is to you then . . .

WORKER (*Returning with developed photo*): Wait a second Franky. Before you give up your vote, don't you want to see what your science can do?

(WORKER *shows them the photo*)

FRANKLIN: Amazing . . . But not perfect . . . It obviously makes me look much stouter than I actually am.

ADAMS: Yes, yes . . . and me much older.

TWAIN (*Laughing*): Remarkable, isn't it? It captured the rest of us perfectly! (*Laughter*)

WORKER (*Returns camera*): There ya are buddy, all safe and sound.

FRANKLIN (*Ignoring* TWAIN): Mr. Lincoln, Sir . . .  
please continue . . . How would you judge  
this new America?

LINCOLN: By the country's unity, sir . . . By how  
America has held together under duress  
. . .

RANGER: Not by the standards of freedom or  
equality?

LINCOLN: No, my friend . . . I put unity first . . .  
For without a country that is indivisible,  
there can be no foundation for liberty and  
equality . . .

ADAMS: You sound like a man who is talking from  
experience . . .

TWAIN: Oh, he is, all right . . . He certainly is . . .

LINCOLN: Gentlemen, when I came to the Presi-  
dency in 1861, this nation was torn in half  
by a fundamental moral and economic ar-  
gument . . . an argument, incidentally,  
about which I held deep convictions . . .  
but above and beyond those convictions  
was an overriding principle . . . a principle  
which I tried to explain to the people . . .

(LINCOLN *turns, as if to the past, addressing a  
crowd*)

“My paramount object in this struggle is to  
save the union, and it is not to either save



or to destroy slavery . . . If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery . . . I do because it helps save the Union and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it will save the Union.”

ADAMS: That damnable evil again . . . slavery! I was against it in 1776 . . . but the wise old heads, you, Ben, among them, were unwilling to fight the battle then. I warned you future generations would suffer for it.

LINCOLN: Slavery is wrong, that I have never doubted . . . But understand me: I freed them first to save the Union . . . And now my friend, my question is this: Has America, with all its freedom, remained indivisible? Have there been more civil wars?

WORKER: The answer to that question is no, Abe. Your Civil War was the first and the last. (To FRANKLIN) O.K. Franky, tell that gravely-voiced “friend” of yours that’s one vote yes . . . Next . . .

FRANKLIN: Well, that’s encouraging. I . . .

WORKER (*As he crosses*): O.K. Twain there’s one vote yes. It’s up to you now.

**RANGER:** Hold it, everybody . . . No, Mr. Lincoln, we haven't had any big Civil Wars since the one that freed my great-grandfather . . . But let me tell you about our little civil wars. Like the ones that still go on between the Blacks and the Whites. . . between the rich and the poor. . . between native Americans and the foreign born. . . between. . .

**WORKER:** Old bleeding-heart and his automatic mouth again . . . Would you button it, kid? These important guys don't want to hear your bellyaching.

**RANGER:** And the civil war between the young and the old. Between conservatives and liberals . . . Why, there's even one now between men and women.

**FRANKLIN:** Ah! . . . now that one sounds interesting.

**TWAIN:** At least some things haven't changed.

**RANGER:** I'm serious . . . This country is dangerously divided in dozens of ways.

**WORKER:** Don't listen to that you guys, us Americans are all one big happy family.

**RANGER:** Nonsense.

WORKER: Sure we are kid . . . What do I have to do to prove it? Belt you one?

*(They move towards each other, fists up)*

FRANKLIN: Gentlemen, please.

LINCOLN: These little civil wars you speak of . . . is blood ever spilt?

RANGER: It's happened . . . Sometimes . . . on campuses . . . in the ghettos . . . You want the truth, don't you?

ADAMS: That's what we came back for.

RANGER: Well, America is a violent country . . . There is a lot of anger in it . . . and danger too.

ADAMS: But . . . But we conceived it as a place of peace . . .

TWAIN: Begging your pardon? Mr. President . . . maybe America was conceived as a peaceful place, but it certainly was born in violence. Now, I'm not saying it's a good thing, not at all, but it seems to me that violence has always been a part of the American temperament . . . Why, when I was a young man out West it sure didn't pay to be an Indian. But folks back then said, "If we're going to push back the frontier, there's bound to be some violence. Somebody's eggs have to be scrambled."

WORKER: I'm telling you . . . We're all brothers.

RANGER: Brothers! A regular Cain and Abel.

FRANKLIN: Well, Mr. President, what do you say?  
Do these Americans continue with our experiment?

LINCOLN: I'm sorry . . . . I cannot say. I'll pass to Mr. Twain.

WORKER: What's the trouble with you guys? Just because you don't live here any more, don't you care what happens to us?

ADAMS: Of course we care.

FRANKLIN: But we must find the truth. Mr. Twain, your standard for America is humor. We pass the fate of the country to you.

TWAIN: To me? After you, Dr. Franklin . . . President Adams and President Lincoln. How can a silly old storyteller decide what three of America's greatest men cannot? No sir, not I. . . .

FRANKLIN: Mr. Twain, it is your duty. . . .

TWAIN: My duty. (*Shakes head sadly*) . . . Well, I suppose I can try at least. Maybe I'd better start by telling you about a little vice of mine. I'm a gambler. . . . not an ordinary





card-playing gambler like we used to have on our Mississippi steamboats. No sir . . . Never could see gambling on little games of chance. My style was investing in get-rich-quick schemes . . . in gimmicks. All manner of gimmicks. And I want you all to know I had a perfect record. Never put my money in one that worked! Why, for years I poured my savings into a typesettin' machine and I bet they haven't sold one to this day . . . Oh, I was a famous source of investment for every crack-pot inventor in the country. Then, one day, a young fellow comes up to me and says, for \$500 I could own a handsome part of this fancy new doodad of his . . . a machine for talking over wires . . . some theory about sound waves and electricity (*FRANKLIN takes special interest*) . . . Well, that was even too much for old Mark Twain. I said, "Young fellow, I've learned my lesson at last. No more throwing away money on fool gizmos again." . . . I said to him, "Mr. Bell, Mr. Alexander Graham Bell, thanks, but no thanks . . . talking over wires indeed."

RANGER (*Laughing*): Is that a true story?

TWAIN: Just as true as I'm standing here . . . and I'm glad to see you think it's funny.

RANGER: No offense, sir . . . But it is funny . . . you've got to admit . . .

TWAIN: Of course, it's funny . . . That's my point . . . later, when I heard that Bell had invented the telephone, I had two choices: I could take myself a jump off a running horse . . . or I could have a good laugh on myself. I decided to laugh. Because that's the only way to survive. That's the way a country stays healthy too . . . by keeping its sense of humor . . . its sense of proportion. You know, when you come right down to it, if you can't see yourself for what you are . . . you're just not in the real world and you're not enjoying your life. Isn't that part of the "pursuit of happiness?"

ADAMS: Well, to a degree. But how can we tell if American has kept its sense of humor?

WORKER: That's easy.

FRANKLIN AND HISTORICALS: Oh . . . ?

WORKER: Of course, it has. Haven't you ever heard of Bob Hope and Redd Foxx and Johnny Carson?

RANGER: Sure, and where else do you find such wonderful material for jokes as the American economy?

WORKER: Awright, wise guy . . . I'll give you that one.

RANGER: I mean, just try telling a joke to someone on the unemployment line . . . and listen to the laughs!

LINCOLN: They don't make it easy, do they?

TWAIN: They certainly don't. Dr. Franklin, I told you I wasn't any good at this . . . fact is, I never was much good at committee work . . . that's why I always ended up working alone.

FRANKLIN: You aren't trying to pass too, are you, Mr. Twain?

TWAIN: Well. . . .

*(WORKER suddenly jumps in, waving his arms)*

WORKER: Hey! What's with you guys?

FRANKLIN: Are you speaking to us?

WORKER: Yeh . . . to you, Doc . . . and you, John . . . and you, Abe . . . and you . . . Twain . . . Now you guys listen to me . . .

RANGER: Mike, for heaven's sake . . .

WORKER: Now Danny . . . let me handle this. Alright. I'll admit that at first I didn't take you guys seriously . . . I thought you were some Kookies out for a walk or something . . . But then I listened to you . . . to your



stories and . . . I believed your stories and I answered your questions the best I could. I don't know. Maybe I paint too rosy a picture of America because well, I love this place . . . Meathead over there gives you the gloomy side of things because that's the way he looks at the world, through gloomy colored glasses. But we both did the best we could, know what I mean?

LINCOLN: What is your point?

WORKER: My point sirs, with all due respect to you guys, maybe it's not up to you to decide whether we go on with this Great Experiment or not . . . maybe it's not up to you to decide because it's really up to him, and her (*Pointing to individual members of the audience*) and you, and you, and you, and you. . . .

RANGER: You know, Mike . . . For the first time I can remember, I actually agree with you. You're right. It's got to be up to everybody.

(*RANGER and WORKER shake hands and go into audience*)

RANGER *and* WORKER: What do you think? Is our country worth continuing?

WORKER: Think of the alternatives. It could be a pretty lonely night out here.

*(Historical characters huddle. FRANKLIN hurries over and taps WORKER with cane)*

FRANKLIN: Well, goodbye, you two.

WORKER: Hey where you guys going?

FRANKLIN: Ah . . . we must be going. You said there were 220 million people. This is a large country to judge in one year.

ADAMS: Could you tell us when the next stage coach leaves for Brooklyn? *(or insert any local city or site name which will get a laugh)*.

WORKER: Stagecoach? No, I can't. But do you see that young lady over there. That pretty little girl with the *(Describes audience member)*. Well I know for a fact she never goes anywhere without stagecoach schedules. Would you tell the boys how to get there? *(Historicals cross toward her)*—Please . . . would you be so kind?

RANGER *(Interrupts)*: Gentlemen, I have a map right here.

*(Historicals follow him and huddle around map listening to RANGER's directions)*

TWAIN: I don't care. I want to talk to the young lady.

*(Historicals pull him back into huddle)*

WORKER *(To young lady)*: You know, those guys would have been a lot better with you. With him and a map . . . those guys are going to be lucky to get out of the parking lot. Well . . . here's what really matters. Those people gave us plenty to think about. There's more to do than just visit historic places, light fireworks and watch parades this Bicentennial year. I got a feeling these guys may just be back to check up on us again. We gotta get crackin' if we want this country to continue for another 200 years. And I believe there *is* one thing we can *all* do! . . . and that is. . . . *(Long pause, then holds his trash bag forward)* Put the trash in the bag!

*The End*



## 1975 Pilot Tour

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Maintenance Worker   | Pat Cronin            |
| Tour Guide           | Michael Plunkett      |
| Benjamin Franklin    | Ed VanNuys            |
| John Adams           | Doug Wing             |
| Abraham Lincoln      | Kelly McCormick       |
| Mark Twain           | James H. Stobie       |
| General Understudy   | Michael Hayward Jones |
| Company Manager      | Dennis Stafford       |
| Production Assistant | Joe Burke             |
| General Manager      | Rosanne Pickard       |

## 1976 Northern Tour

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Maintenance Worker | Pat Cronin      |
| Park Ranger        | Daniel Whitner  |
| Benjamin Franklin  | Frank Bara      |
| John Adams         | Dan Strickler   |
| Abraham Lincoln    | Kent Borgerson  |
| Mark Twain         | Dennis Stafford |
| General Understudy | Jim Drew        |
| Company Manager    | Jackie Schrock  |
| Technical Manager  | Patti Smith     |
| General Manager    | Wendy Appleton  |

## 1976 Southern Tour

Maintenance Worker  
Park Ranger  
Benjamin Franklin  
Annie Oakley  
Abraham Lincoln  
Mark Twain  
General Understudy

Tracy Rosten  
Gordon Stanley  
Ed VanNuys  
Forbesy Russell  
Kelly McCormick  
Jim Stobie  
Alan Abrams

Company Manager  
Technical Manager  
General Manager

Joel Tropper  
Janet Stobie  
Wendy Appleton

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### Liaison Officers for the National Park Service

Project Supervisor  
Technical Adviser

Gary K. Howe  
William L. Brown III

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

