



Media only: Catherine Fraser (202) 633-2875
Susan Frampton (202) 633-1699

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Public only: (202) 633-1000

**“Science for a New Country: Benjamin Franklin’s Political Arithmetic”
The 2006 Dibner Library Lecture**

**Given by
Dr. Joyce E. Chaplin**

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries will host the 2006 Dibner Library Lecture on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m. in the Commons of the Smithsonian Castle. In commemoration of the anniversary of Benjamin Franklin’s birth, Joyce E. Chaplin, the James Duncan Phillips Professor of Early American History at Harvard University, will be the guest speaker. A specialist in early American history, Chaplin is the author of “The First Scientific American: Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius” (2006).

Franklin, famous for his electrical experiments, also was an innovator in the science of political arithmetic, an early form of demography. If Franklin’s work in electricity showed that definitions of science flowed westward across the Atlantic, his argument that European assumptions about human populations could not accurately analyze a “new Country” such as British America, showed that some forms of science were traveling the other way, back to metropolitan centers of calculation.

The Dibner Library lecture, established in 1992, is held annually and features a distinguished scholar who has made significant contributions to his or her field of study. The Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology is one of the Smithsonian Libraries’ 20 branches. The Dibner’s original collection of 10,000 rare books and 1,600 manuscript groups came to the Smithsonian from the Burndy Library, founded by Bern Dibner in Norwalk, Conn., at the time of America’s bicentennial celebrations. The free, public lecture series and its publication are made possible by the generous support of the Dibner Fund.

A reception for Dr. Chaplin will follow the lecture.

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION MRC 154 PO Box 37012 Washington DC 20013-7012 Telephone 202.633.1522 Fax 202.786.2866