

Franklin Ford Collection

edited by
Dominique Trudel &
Juliette De Maeyer

a
mediastudies.press
public domain
edition



edited by Dominique Trudel & Juliette de Maeyer

FRANKLIN FORD COLLECTION

A MEDIASTUDIES.PRESS PUBLIC DOMAIN EDITION

Franklin Ford Collection contains previously unpublished works and works in the public domain.

Published by MEDIASTUDIES.PRESS in the PUBLIC DOMAIN series

Original formatting, spelling, and citation styles retained throughout, with occasional [*sic*] to indicate an uncorrected error.

mediastudies.press | 414 W. Broad St., Bethlehem, PA 18018, USA

New materials are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 (CC BY-NC 4.0)

COVER DESIGN: Mark McGillivray | Copy-editing & proofing: Emily Alexander

CREDIT FOR LATEX TEMPLATE: Book design inspired by Edward Tufte, by The Tufte-LaTeX Developers

ISBN 978-1-951399-22-1 (print) | ISBN 978-1-951399-19-1 (pdf)

ISBN 978-1-951399-21-4 (epub) | ISBN 978-1-951399-20-7 (html)

DOI 10.32376/3f8575cb.80aee30a

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CONTROL NUMBER 2023939244

Edition 1 published in July 2023

Contents

“He Has Ideas about Everything”: An Introduction to the Franklin Ford Collection *vi*

Acknowledgments *xlvi*

The Larger Life: A Poem Dedicated to Franklin Ford *xlix*

I Reforming the News

Draft of Action *3*

A Newspaper Laboratory *64*

Banding Together the Leading Newspapers *67*

The Press of New York—Its Future *68*

Organization of Intelligence Requires an Organism *71*

In Search of Absolute News, Sensation, and Unity *73*

The News System: A Scientific Basis for Organizing the News *107*

II Interconnected Flows: Money, Information, and Transportation

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Better Credit Reporting</i> | 116 |
| <i>Traffic Associations</i> | 127 |
| <i>The Country Check</i> | 130 |
| <i>The Express Companies and the Bank</i> | 147 |
| <i>The Mercantile Agencies and Credit Reporting</i> | 155 |
| <i>Co-operative Credit Reporting</i> | 163 |

III News is Government

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>City News Office Needed</i> | 166 |
| <i>Municipal Reform: A Scientific Question</i> | 169 |
| <i>Government is the Organization of Intelligence or News</i> | 198 |
| <i>The Simple Idea of Government</i> | 206 |
| <i>A New and Revolutionary Government</i> | 208 |
| <i>News is the Master Element of Social Control</i> | 213 |

Banding Together the Leading Newspapers

FRANKLIN FORD

Letter to Edward Atkinson sent from
New Orleans (doi)

Memorandum

FROM FRANKLIN FORD

CENTRAL OFFICE, NEW YORK

New Orleans, April 13th, 1887

Edward Atkinson Esq.¹
Boston, Mass.

My dear Sir:

I have got thus far in the work of visiting the chief intelligence centres. I have come from Chicago by way of St. Paul, Omaha, Cheyenne, Denver, Leadville, Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis and Nashville. I go from here to Galveston. From there I shall return to New York by way of Birmingham, Atlanta, Savannah and Charleston. I have succeeded in banding together the leading newspapers to receive intelligence from New York. I shall begin by sending out matter for publication which will bear mail transportation. You know I am relying upon you for valuable assistance. I can handle now to a greater advantage than ever before everything that you may write, save at times the more elaborate matters and that too. I shall see you in Boston soon after reaching New York. I expect to be in New York about April 25th at the latest.

Yours, very truly,
Franklin Ford.

¹ [Edward Atkinson (1827–1905) was a cotton manufacturer, economist, political activist, and inventor. When his cotton mills began to fail in the mid-1870s, he entered the railroad industry and later worked as President of the Boston Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Company. Known for his abolitionist involvement with the Free Soil Party and the Boston Vigilance Committee, he also founded the Anti-Imperialist League, which opposed the American annexation of the Philippines in the late 1890s. Based on an in-depth study of cooking (energy consumption costs, food chemistry, nutritional intake, etc.), he designed the “Aladdin Cooker,” a device which prefigures the modern crockpot. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1879. The correspondence of Ford and Atkinson lasted from 1885 to 1889. It covered a crucial period during which Ford quit *Bradstreet’s* (to which Atkinson contributed articles) and tried to initiate practical attempts at reforming the press. Among other topics, they discussed the launch of a specialized trade paper to be titled *Food*.]