

# From the Archives

## “For Diving &c”

On the advice of Academy member John Prince, Benjamin Franklin Stickney of Salem, Massachusetts, sent a communication to the Academy in March 1800, describing his experiments in “descending and remaining under water.” Stickney, a great-grandnephew of Benjamin Franklin, served as Indian Agent for the United States at Fort Wayne and in the U.S. Army under Andrew Jackson. The Academy’s archives record the receipt of this manuscript communication, one of many sent in hopes of publication in the *Memoirs*.

Stickney’s cover letter begins: “In the spring of 1798 I conceived the means of producing a circulation of air that might be supplied under water, for a person’s furnishing himself with a constant supply of fresh air, in a vessel of proper dimensions, and of sufficient strength to resist the pressure of the ambient water. Not knowing at that time that any other means had been used for descending than the Diving Bell; I was under the necessity of contriving a vessel myself, to which I gave the name of Water Balloon.”

### Illustrations by Benjamin Franklin Stickney for his “Water Balloon,” 1800

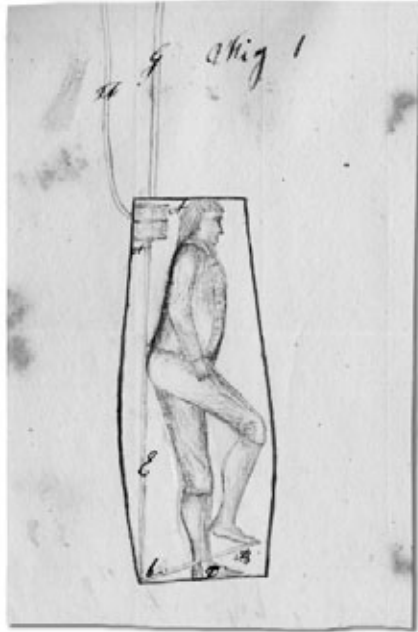


Figure 1: a “profile of the vessel with a person making use of the machinery for producing the circulation of air”

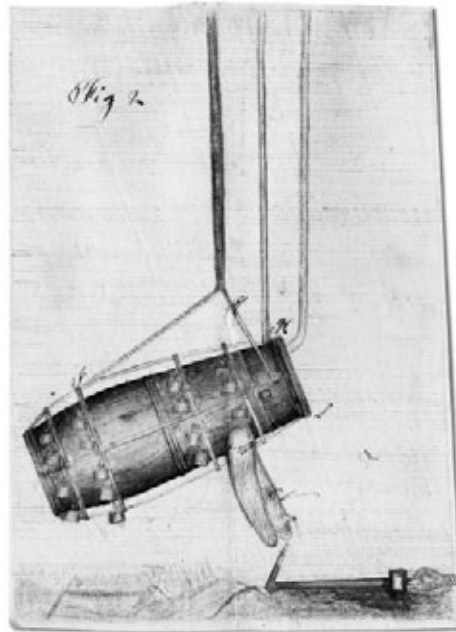


Figure 2: “the machine complete in the act of descending”

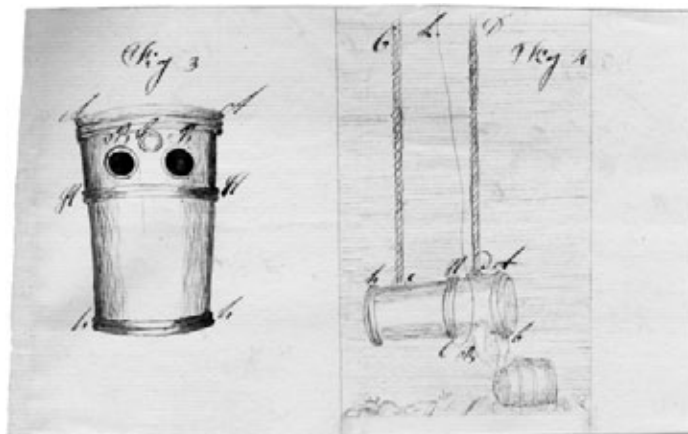


Figure 3: a design by Captain Rowe, of a “tub or truncated cone made in the shape of a tub Snuff-mill, in which the Diver is shut up by a cover AA fortified with hoops, as is also the Body of the Machine”

Figure 4: “the machine let down from a ship”