



1768 chart of the Gulf Stream by Benjamin Franklin and Timothy Folger. Franklin traveled several times between the newly independent American colonies and Europe. At that time sailing ships were the only means of trans-Atlantic travel. Franklin detected the ships' crossings of the warm waters of the Gulf Stream by the temperature of the wine served at table on the ship. The wine bottles were stored below the waterline against the hull of the ship, causing the wine to be warmer when the ship was in the Gulf Stream, and cooler elsewhere. Franklin also compiled many meticulous temperature measurements that helped delineate the Gulf Stream. (Map image courtesy Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.)