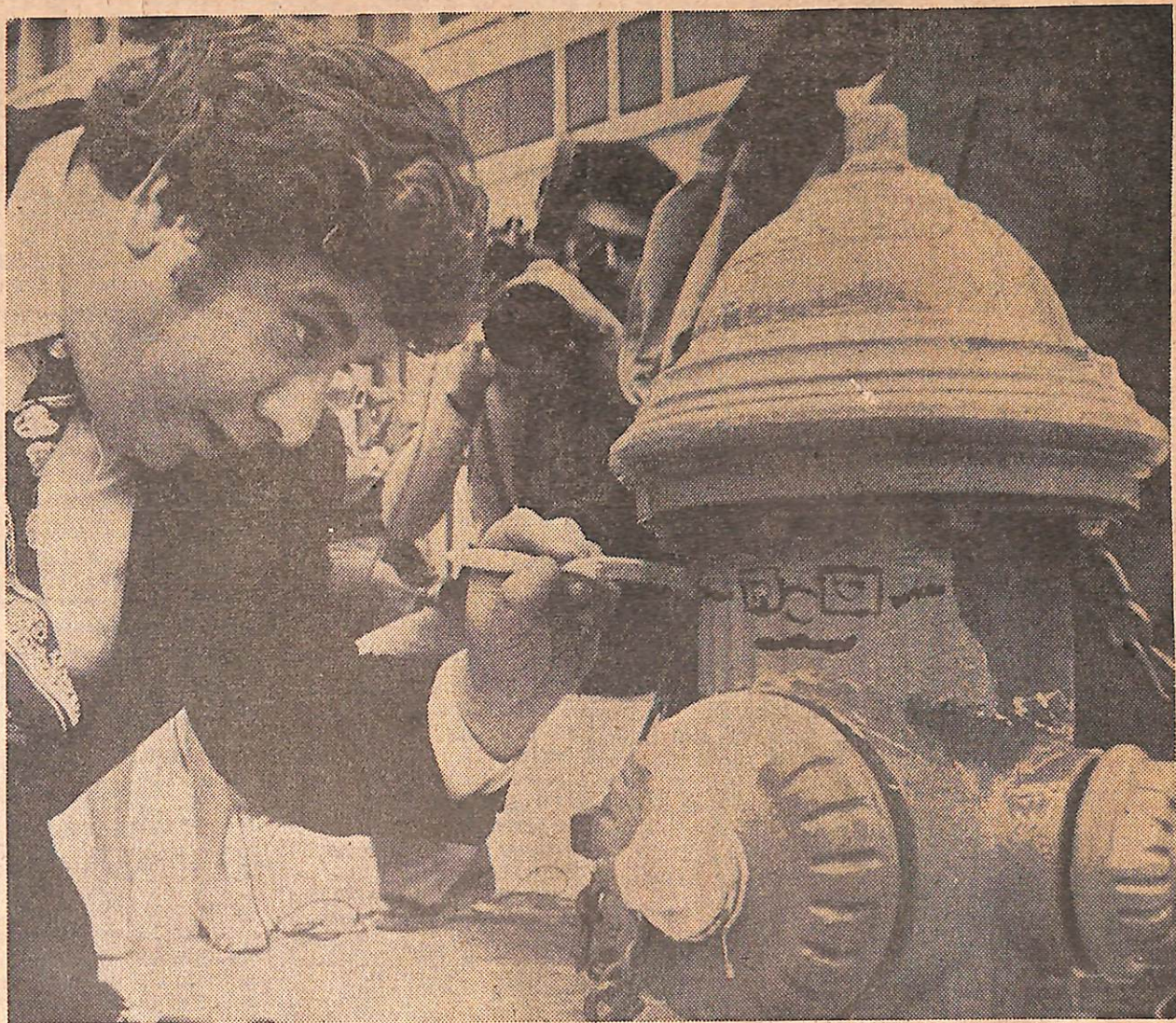




Sunpapers photo—George H. Cook

Walter S. Orlinsky, former housepainter, dabs a moustache-like mouth on "Benjamin Franklin" to launch painted plugs.

Moustache-mouthed Ben Franklin beats out Nathan Hale as 1st historic face on a fire plug

By WELDON WALLACE

The honor of being the first hero painted on a Baltimore fire plug was to have gone to Nathan Hale.

But Benjamin Franklin, standing across the street, needed a mouth, so Walter S. Orlinsky painted one on.

That action at noon yesterday formally began Baltimore's participation in a copyrighted bicentennial gimmick called Paint a Plug for America.

Mr. Orlinsky, president of the City Council and chairman of the Baltimore Bicentennial Committee, executed his assignment at Calvert and Pratt streets. As Rubens once did, he put the finishing touches on after others had laid the groundwork—in this case two students from the Maryland Institute.

The mouth painted on

Franklin by the City Council president could have been a moustache. Mr. Orlinsky apologized: After all, his only previous experience with a brush was as a house painter. With a grin he said, alluding to Adolf Hitler:

"The last guy in my profession who was a house painter didn't turn out so well."

The 15 or 20 spectators were mostly people having some connection with the project, official or peripheral, plus photographers and reporters.

But there was also a delegation of three from the Violetville Elementary School No. 226 on Pine Heights avenue in Southwest Baltimore. Their community has been granted its request to be the first Baltimore neighborhood outside the downtown area to paint its fire plugs.

Representing the school

were the principal, James Sarnecki, and two officials of the Parent-Teacher Club, Patricia Hepding and Beverly Young.

After Mr. Orlinsky had endowed Franklin with a mouth, Mrs. Hepding stepped up to present the painter with a \$25 check from students and the club for bicentennial use. The three were wearing large lapel buttons that said "Super Violetville," with 226 inside a large V.

Mr. Orlinsky was wearing his Violetville button, too.

The two Maryland Institute students who painted most of Franklin and two others who performed a similar service for Nathan Hale across the street were in a quandary.

This was described by Lois Vargas, placement director at the art school, who secured the volunteer services of these

and other students who are going to help with the project.

It's kind of an artsy kind of thing," Miss Vargas said of the plug painting. "It involves art, but it's not their own individual creation."

In other words, the students have to follow copyrighted formulas in colors and designs, throttling whatever urges they might have for. They did not appear to find that too frustrating, though one student admitted to sneaking a little red into the yellow because "the yellow was very cold."

They did not seem sure why they had become involved in the project.

Anthony Serio, 18, of East Haven, Conn., thought it would be useful because "I

See PLUG, C3, Col.1

Ben heats out Nathan on plug

PLUG, from C1

can learn something about what the public likes."

Stephen Arey, 21, of Baltimore, said he regards it as "more of an activity" than an art venture, but "fun."

These two worked on Nathan Hale.

Gene Ward, 23, of Baltimore, giggled when asked what she thinks of the prospective use of the hero figures by dogs.

"I think that's funny," she replied.

David Garrett, 21, of Oakland, Calif., who helped Miss Ward paint Franklin, pondered the problem of dogs for a few moments.

"Uh. . . well. . .," he said, "you can't stop that, can you? Art is not eternal. It just won't last forever. You can't stop the ravages of time—or dogs."