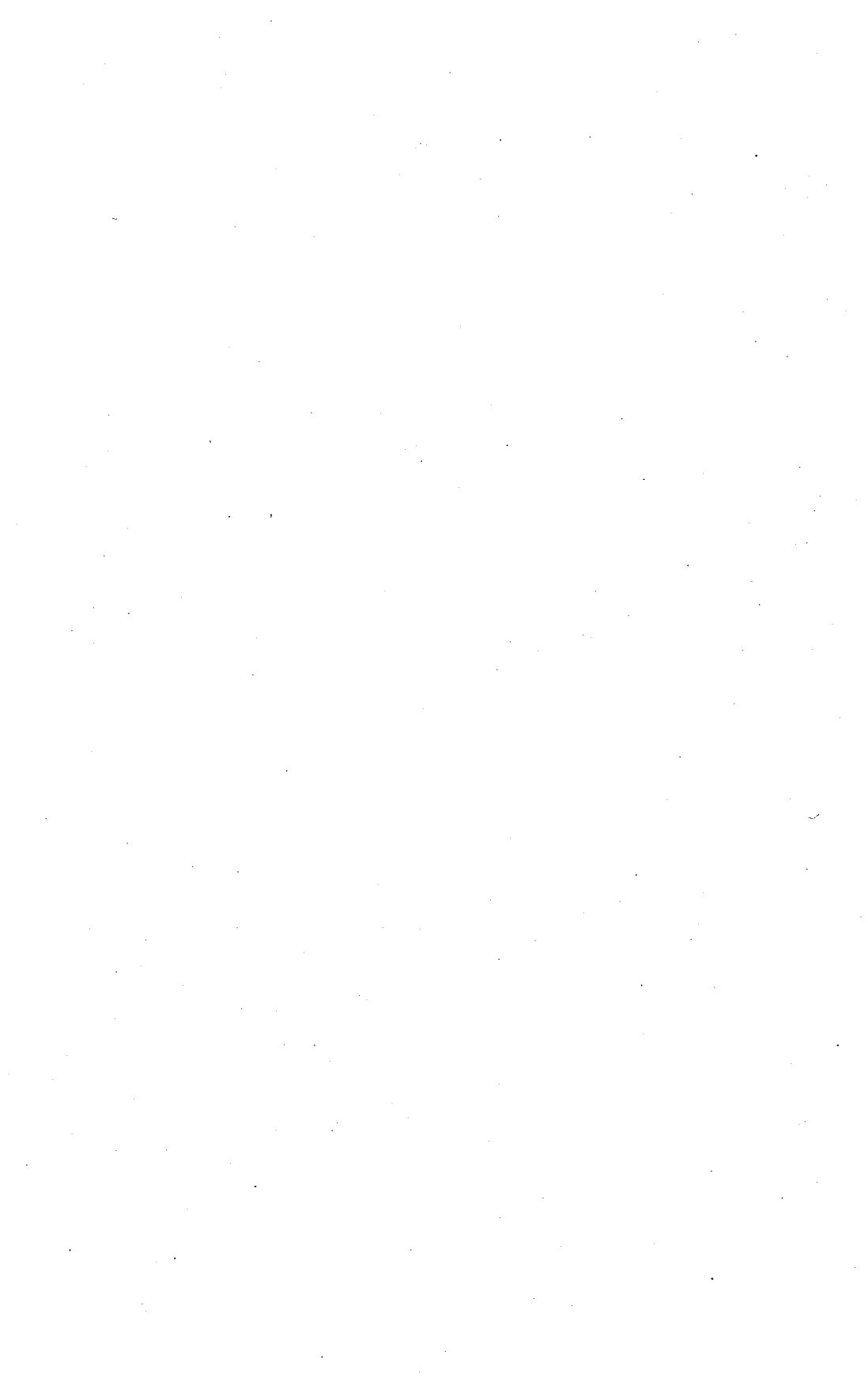
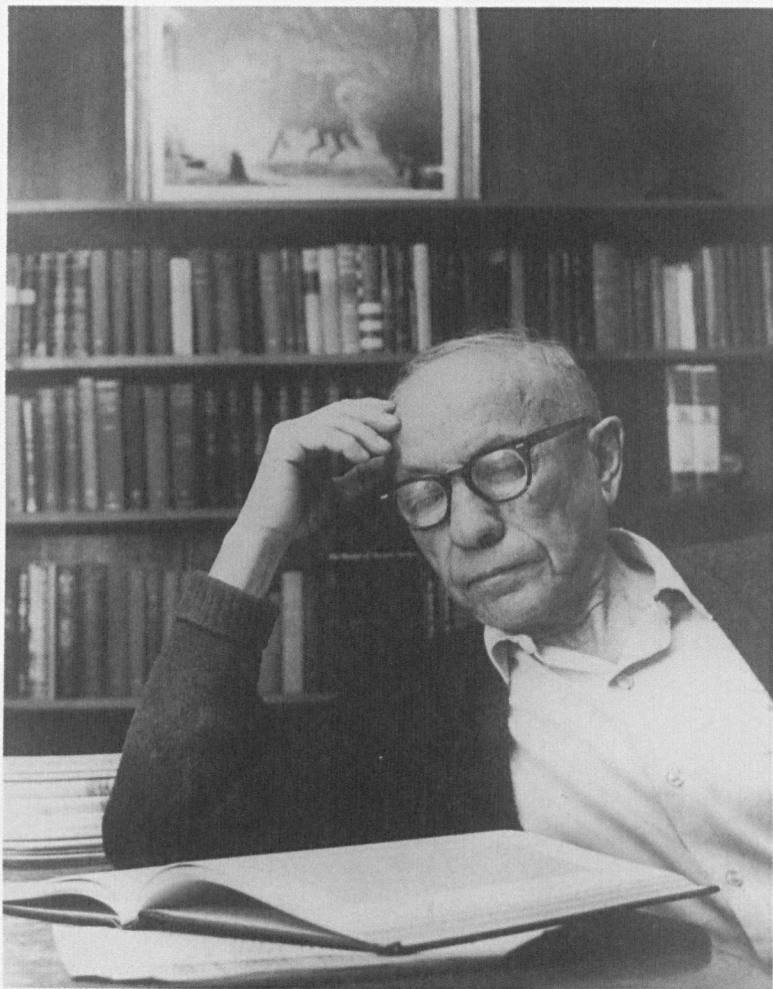


# Guide to the Feinstone Collection







Sol Feinstein (1888–1980), Founder and First Director  
of The David Library of the American Revolution

GUIDE TO THE  
Sol Feinstone Collection  
of  
*The David Library of the  
American Revolution*



David J. Fowler

The David Library of the American Revolution  
Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania

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Dr. Samuel Adams to Sally Preston, March 26, 1776

British Army Notebook, 1776-1778

Broadside regarding a Robbery, 1785

Business Account Book, 1776-1780

Continental Army Quartermaster Department Sales Book, 1782-1784

A Philadelphia Wagon, c. 1779

A New York Wagon, c. 1779

George Washington to Richard Varick, October 2, 1783



## Foreword

[The following by Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., then Librarian and now former Executive Officer of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, originally accompanied the publication of the 1969 microfilm edition of the Sol Feinstone Collection. It is reprinted here in slightly revised form with the kind permission of the author.]

The rich collection of autograph letters and documents published here was assembled in the past forty years by a man whose personal experiences before coming to the United States and whose studies in comparative government since that time have made him uncommonly sensitive to the historical and continuing significance of the American Revolution. Sol Feinstone's collection is thus both a testimony of his devotion to the liberal principles of the Enlightenment and a bibliophilic achievement comparable to William B. Sprague's in the last century and Lloyd Smith's in this.

But Mr. Feinstone has more than a passion for acquiring the rare and precious records of the American past. He has wanted them used. Other collectors have often generously opened their libraries to serious scholars, but Mr. Feinstone is doing more than this. He has had the entire collection catalogued and indexed at his own expense and has allowed it to be filmed, underwriting a substantial part of the cost of that operation. As a result, the remarkable Sol Feinstone Collection of the American Revolution is now accessible to everyone for any purpose. One of the purposes especially dear to Mr. Feinstone is that the very words of the past should be used to instruct the present how to "survive in freedom."

By this wise and generous act Mr. Feinstone has insured that his collection of manuscripts, of such great value for our national history, will always be available for the use and enrichment of the American people. By his labors in assembling this collection, by his generosity in making it available to all, by his insuring that none of its irreplaceable documents will ever be lost to history, Mr. Feinstone has performed the same kind of useful public service that Ebenezer Hazard performed in assembling and publishing our first collection of state papers more than 175 years ago, for which he received Thomas Jefferson's enduring commendation:

I learn with great satisfaction that you are about committing to the press the valuable historical and state-papers you have been so long collecting. Time and accident are committing daily havoc on the originals deposited in our public offices. . . . The lost cannot be recovered;

but let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use, in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident.

(Jefferson to Hazard, February 18, 1791, original located at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.)

November 21, 1969

*Whitfield J. Bell, Jr.*

# Introduction

## BACKGROUND OF THE COLLECTION

This book is a tribute to a man and his vision of freedom. Sol Feinstone was a businessman, conservationist, philanthropist, and collector of Americana who assembled the manuscript collection now owned by The David Library of the American Revolution.<sup>1</sup> During the 1930s, Feinstone began acquiring art objects, rare books, and manuscripts. After 1945, when he and his wife Rose purchased Buckstone Farm in historic Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania, his collecting became more focused on the period of the War for Independence. He had long been interested in the comparative study of the American Revolution and the Russian Revolution, and he regarded George Washington as a personal hero. Consequently, over a span of five decades Feinstone amassed one of the largest privately-held bodies of Washington manuscripts as part of his collection of more than twenty-four hundred manuscripts related to the founding period of the United States.

The Feinstone Collection also includes letters of Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and the marquis de Lafayette, as well as the papers of Francis Rush Clark, the superintendent of the British wagon train during the Revolutionary War. The collection comprises primarily autograph letters of prominent and lesser-known individuals that have significant content pertaining to the American Revolution and early national periods. Also represented are business and financial records, court records, diaries, orderly books, printed forms, and several printed documents. The purpose of this guide is to provide access to the abundant and diverse information in the Sol Feinstone Collection.

It was always important to Feinstone that his manuscript collection be available to researchers. Toward that end, in 1968 he arranged with the American Philosophical Society, a venerable Philadelphia institution founded in 1743, to place his collection on deposit there, where it remains. In cooperation with that organization, in 1969 Feinstone underwrote the publication of a three-reel microfilm edition of his collection; he continued to collect and, in 1975, a two-reel supplement was filmed.<sup>2</sup> Recent additions to the collection include one hundred and fifty-nine items that have not yet been filmed, but are described in this guide.<sup>3</sup>

1. The preferred citation is Sol Feinstone Collection, David Library of the American Revolution, on deposit at the American Philosophical Society. A shortened version using Library of Congress location symbols is Feinstone Collection, PWacD, on deposit PPAmP.

2. The five-reel microfilm edition of the Sol Feinstone Collection is available from Scholarly Resources, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware.

3. Recent acquisitions include items 2324 to 2482, which will be published in a supplementary microform edition.

The present work entirely supersedes the previous writer/recipient guide, whose limitations and errors necessitated the publication of a new, comprehensive research tool.<sup>4</sup> The organization of the new guide conforms to the arrangement of the microfilm edition. Misidentifications in the old guide or on the descriptive microfilm targets are silently corrected in this revision. The Appendix provides a chronological arrangement of item numbers. Since the David Library continues to acquire manuscripts, supplements to this guide will be published.

#### SOL FEINSTONE (1888-1980)

Sol Feinstone was born Solomon Bialagrudsky in 1888 in the town of Lida, Lithuania. The son of a Torah scribe, he initially apprenticed in his father's profession. Although he received only limited formal education, Solomon was a restless child with an inquiring mind. He read widely both the religious and secular books that were loaned or sold in his father's home. He also worked for a time in a large bookstore in the capital city of Vilna. It was no doubt from these early intellectual influences that he derived his lifelong dedication to learning and scholarship.<sup>5</sup>

From his reading during these formative years, the boy was inspired by the idea of America. He also sought to escape the tyranny and oppression he saw in the tsarist-dominated country of his birth. As a result, the fourteen-year-old Solomon was among the nearly six hundred and fifty thousand immigrants to America in 1902. He traveled penniless in steerage class, was processed at Ellis Island, and arrived in New York City, where several relatives had preceded him. In order to better adjust to the new culture, the young émigré was persuaded by an uncle to adopt an anglicized version of his mother's maiden name, and so Solomon Bialagrudsky became Sol Feinstone.

The newcomer worked in the sweatshops of the garment district of New York's Lower East Side, where he earned enough money to attend evening school in order to learn English. Like many others of his generation, Feinstone was influenced by the conservation movement led by individuals such as Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. In 1912, therefore, he decided to study forestry at the University of Missouri at Columbia. After completing his freshman year, he transferred to the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, where in 1915 he

4. This work was also preceded by a specialized guide by Joseph J. Felcone, *Abstracts of New Jersey Manuscripts in the Sol Feinstone Collection of the American Revolution* (Washington Crossing, Pa., 1976). Items abstracted in the latter are included herein.

5. Biographical information about Sol Feinstone is taken from the following sources: Sol Feinstone, *Fellow Passengers: A Letter to My Grandchildren and to All Grandchildren* (New York, 1972); "Sol Feinstone: An Oral History Memoir," The William E. Weiner Oral History Library of the American Jewish Committee, interviews by Milton E. Krents and by Ezra Stone, 1972-73; the David Library archives; and conversations with family members.

graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree; the next year he earned a Master's degree in chemistry at the same school. While enrolled at Syracuse, he married Rose Meadow. They had two children, Ezra and Miriam.

After graduation, Feinstone worked for several years as a chemist, principally at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. In 1920, he entered into partnership in a Philadelphia construction company. Not content with his success in this occupation, in 1925 he enrolled in the graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania in order to better understand the principles of democratic socialism that had long intrigued him. He subsequently returned to the business world as a real estate investor in the Philadelphia area, where he attained financial independence that enabled him to more fully pursue his intellectual interests.

Passionate about the need to educate the public on the origins of the United States, Feinstone over the years lectured and wrote on the subject of freedom, and endowed schools, foundations, and libraries. He also contemplated options for exhibiting his own collection. While in his early eighties, he conceived and embarked upon the idea of constructing a library on his farm in Washington Crossing that would house his book and microfilmed manuscript collections and be dedicated to the study of the American Revolution. In 1974, the facility was completed and named The David Library of the American Revolution as a tribute to his daughter's son, who was born developmentally disabled. Before his death in 1980, Feinstone gave to the David Library, a private non-profit foundation, his book and manuscript collection, his farm, and an endowment to secure the perpetuation of the institution.

## THE DAVID LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Since its inception, the David Library has evolved into a leading research center specializing in American history circa 1750 to 1800. The facilities include the research library, a residence facility for visiting scholars, and a conference center. In pursuit of its mission to collect and disseminate information on late eighteenth-century America, the Library has in recent years significantly developed its collections and programs.

Holdings encompass approximately ten thousand microfilm reels of primary source documentation. Collections from domestic and foreign repositories include the official and private papers of major figures in the French and Indian War, American Revolution, and early national periods; executive, legislative, and constitutional records of the American colonies and the early United States; contemporary newspapers; and relevant doctoral dissertations. In addition, the Library has greatly expanded the nucleus of books originally assembled by Sol Feinstone to include five thousand reference volumes and pamphlets, as well as microcopies of more than thirty-six thousand works printed in America from 1639 through 1800.