

NHD Resources @ APS



AMERICAN
PHILOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY Library
& Museum

About

The American Philosophical Society, the oldest scholarly society in the United States, was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin for the purpose of “promoting useful knowledge.” After almost three hundred years of knowledge sharing, the Society’s collections have grown to include 2.5 miles of manuscript pages, as well as rare books, prints, photographs, paintings, scientific instruments, Native American language recordings, and other objects. Topics covered include early American and Revolutionary War history, 18th and 19th century natural history, Native American and Indigenous linguistics and culture, nuclear physics, computer development, medical science, genetics and eugenics, and the development of anthropology in America.

Contact Info:



215-440-3400



www.amphilsoc.org



museumeducation@amphilsoc.org



105 South Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

VISIT THE ARCHIVE

- Visit our website for help to set up a research appointment (required to use archival materials in person) and to answer most questions: www.amphilsoc.org/library.
- Search the collections online: www.amphilsoc.org/library/search-collections
- New to archives? Try our introduction to using archives: www.amphilsoc.org/intro-archives

Explore Online Collections and Exhibitions

APS Digital Library: www.diglib.amphilsoc.org

Investigate many of the APS Library's manuscripts and images which have been digitized.

Online exhibitions: www.amphilsoc.org/center-digital-scholarship

Explore an archive of online exhibitions from the Center for Digital Scholarship at the APS.

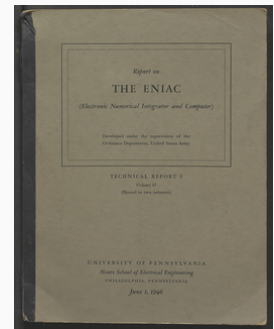
Past Exhibitions: www.amphilsoc.org/museum/exhibitions

Examine an archive of past exhibitions from the APS Museum.

NHD Theme: Revolution, Reform, and Reaction

NHD 2026 participants may be interest in the following:

[Technical Report on the ENIAC by Adele Goldstine, 1946.](#) The ENIAC (Electrical Numerical Integrator and Computer) was the first programmable, general purpose electronic computer and sparked the digital revolution. APS has many documents about its development, including this report by mathematician Adele Goldstine. Consider the role computers now play in our lives, and the reactions and reforms that they have inspired.



The APS collections include [three volumes of admissions records from Eastern State Penitentiary from 1830-1850.](#) When Eastern State opened in 1829 is was seen as a revolutionary reform for the justice system because it focused on rehabilitation rather than punishment. These records include information about how incarcerated persons were treated and how they responded in this new system. Were such reforms truly revolutionary?

[Thomas Jefferson's Second Draft of the Declaration of Independence.](#) The APS houses one of the largest collections of Declarations. How revolutionary were Jefferson's drafted ideas compared to the final version approved by the Continental Congress? How and why does this revolutionary document continue to inspire reform and revolution for the next 250 years?

