

NHD Resources @ APS



What is the APS?

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 and approximately one million 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 the development of anthropology in America.

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How can we help?

Online Resources:

APS Digital Library: diglib.amphilsoc.org

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

Digital Galleries: www.amphilsoc.org/center-digital-scholarship

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

Past Museum Exhibitions:

www.amphilsoc.org/museum/exhibitions

Examine an archive of past exhibitions from the APS Museum.

In-person research:

Visit our website for help to set up an in-person research appointment and to answer most research questions:

www.amphilsoc.org/library

Search the collections online to know what materials to request: search.amphilsoc.org/collections/search

New to archives? Try our introduction to using archives: amphilsoc.org/intro-archives

Suggested materials for the 2027 NHD Theme: Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change



The first electronic, programmable, general-purpose digital computer was developed here in Philadelphia. It was called the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, or ENIAC. Study the papers of Herman Heine Goldstein to learn more about ENIAC and the women who made it possible. How has this innovation impacted, influenced, and changed modern life?



The APS has most of Benjamin Franklin's surviving handwritten documents, or manuscripts. His innovations include documenting the path of the Gulf Stream, creating the lightning rod to prevent house fires, establishing the first hospital in the country, and developing anti-counterfeit devices for money that are still used today. How has the curiosity of one person impacted, influenced, and shaped our society?

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Explore the papers of Baruch S. Blumberg (blumberg.amphilsoc.org), whose Nobel Prize winning research identified the Hepatitis B virus and developed the vaccine to prevent the disease from spreading. How did his discoveries and innovation impact medicine and influence public health?

