



Historical Society
of Pennsylvania

Welcome to HSP Video Script

Audio

Welcome to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). Founded in 1824, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania is a world-renowned special collections library and archive. Our collections include nearly 21 million manuscript and graphic items and over 600,000 books spanning more than three centuries of America's history. Our collections include notable items such as the first two handwritten drafts of the Constitution and the first photograph taken in North America. Photographs, maps, diaries, letters, newspapers, and posters are a few examples of the types of documents that are available in our library. More than 8,000 people visit us at 13th and Locust Streets in Philadelphia each year.

HSP is also much more than a library. We also print two publications and host a variety of public programs, teacher workshops and school fieldtrips, and special events throughout the year.

HSP also has a full time Conservation Department responsible for repairing our fragile materials; and we offer a variety of onsite and online services for researchers.

Our library is easily accessible from public transportation, including the New Jersey PATCO high-speed line, SEPTA bus routes, and the orange BROAD STREET subway, which is located just one block away from HSP. If driving to HSP, there are several public parking lots and garages in the neighborhood. The main entrance to the Historical Society is located on Locust Street and our wheelchair accessible entrance is located on 13th Street.

Video

Exterior shots of the building

Showing variety of documents

Photos from events and programs

Behind-the-scenes footage of
Conservation/Archives

Showing entranceways

In 2013, we completed a \$5 million renovation designed to make it easier for researchers to access materials. If this is your first time visiting the library, our staff at the front desk will ask you to complete a brief Research Registration Form listing your contact information and present it with some form of photo identification.

Showing Lobby/ front desk. Researcher checking in for the first time and registering

The library is free for students of all ages and for HSP members. Students should present their student ID and members should show their membership card when signing-in to the Library. Admission for visiting researchers is \$8 for the day. All visitors will receive a blue “researcher” badge to wear at all times while in the library.

Student or member showing ID or their membership card and receiving researcher badge

Due to the delicate nature of our historic collection, there are restrictions on what you can bring into the library. You are welcome to bring in your laptop, charger, notepads, cameras, silenced cell phones, and pencils. No pens are allowed.

Illustrating what materials can be brought inside

Any kind of bag - a backpack, laptop case, camera case, purse - is not permitted in our Library and can be stored in the lockers in the Lobby. The lockers are free and have keys in the door which you keep with you during your stay.

Researcher storing bag in a locker

Food or drink is not allowed in the Library. With our renovation, we now have a Patron Lounge in the Lobby where there’s space to have your lunch and chat with a friend before you head inside or take a break from your research with a cup of coffee from our Keurig machine.

Footage of people using café/lounge

The entrance is to the left of the front desk and the exit is to the right. The turnstiles at the entranceway do not open automatically; please wait for staff to open them for you

Showing turnstiles at front desk

When you enter the library, we recommend stopping at the Reference Desk to speak with one of our Librarians, regardless of your research skill-level or experience. They can help orient you to the library and suggest materials related to your research.

[Researcher talking with Reference Librarian](#)

You may also browse our collection online using our catalog Discover. This catalog allows users to search and browse materials according to title, author, or topic. The Digital Library contains over 90,000 images from our collection and is always growing. Researchers often find it very helpful to browse our collections online before their visit.

[Illustrating how to use Discover and the Digital Library \(screen view\).](#)

The materials in the “open stacks,” which include general reference books, published family histories, and Philadelphia and county histories, line the walls of our library.

[Footage of open stacks and researcher pulling a book off a shelf](#)

Most of our collections are in “closed stacks,” miles of shelving throughout all five floors of the building. To access those materials, you will need to fill out a call slip and our staff will retrieve them for you. You may submit up to three call slips at one time, and examine one box or volume at a time. Requests may be submitted until 45 minutes before the library closes. Due to the size of our collections, a typical wait time is 15-20 minutes, but may take longer during peak research hours.

[Footage of vaults](#)

Researchers are welcome to take photographs of HSP’s materials free of charge. Photos must be taken without flash and may only be used for research purposes. We will require you to place an HSP copyright slip in the margin of your photograph.

[Researcher handing in call slip and receiving materials from librarian](#)

[Demonstrating how to photograph a document with copyright photo-slip](#)

If you'd like photocopies of a document, fill out a photocopy request form and a librarian will make a copy for you for 50 cents per page. You can pick up your completed photocopies at the front desk, or have them mailed to you.

Anytime you exit the library, staff at the front desk will conduct a brief security check of your research materials.

For more information about visiting the Historical Society of Pennsylvania or becoming a member, visit hsp.org or call us at 215-732-6200. Also, be sure to check out our Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram pages.

We hope to see you soon!

Picking up photocopies at the front desk

Researcher checking-out for the day and undergoing security check

Showing website

Photo of staff