Benjamin Franklin & the American Philosophical Society

Anyone who lives in, around or has visited Philadelphia knows about its many museums and historical sites. And, anyone who has visited these sites can tell you that they all seem to have something to do with Benjamin Franklin. While Ben Franklin seems to play a game of “Where’s Waldo?” in Philadelphia history, it’s because he really does have connections to many of our most beloved and respected institutions.

In 1743, he founded the American Philosophical Society, which became one of the leading scientific institutions in North America. APS members included men from all professions and the society helped to create a scientific community in the city. The men involved in the APS had their hand in founding the institutions that we still regard as part of Philadelphia’s heart and soul: the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1805), the Academy of Natural Sciences (1812), the Franklin Institute (1824) and Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1824). These institutions played a vital role in shaping Philadelphia and in making it an internationally esteemed city. Examine Ben Franklin and the APS as a turning point in Philadelphia and scientific history in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Recommended Collections:

Sarah Cresson transcriptions of James Parker letters and documents
Collection#Am.0683

Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)
Call# Gf .65

Historical Society of Pennsylvania collection of Benjamin Franklin papers (1628-1951)
Collection# 0215
William Strahan letters (1766-1772)
Collection# Am.162

*Extensive information on Benjamin Franklin is available in the PC1 card catalog.

Other Sources of Information:

Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University - 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia – www.ansp.org

American Philosophical Society - 104 South 5th Street, Philadelphia – www.amphilsoc.org

The Franklin Institute - 222 North 20th Street, Philadelphia – www.fi.edu


Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL) – http://clir.pacscl.org/