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# ECONOMIC HISTORY IN THE PHILADELPHIA REGION

GUIDE TO MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINT RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH *Written by Cathy Matson & Wendy Woloson*

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### The David Library of the American Revolution

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<http://www.dlar.org>

 [Print Friendly Version](#)

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### The Institution:

The David Library was founded in 1959 by Sol Feinstone (1888-1980), a businessman and collector of Revolutionary War manuscripts (and is named after his grandson). Mr. Feinstone began collecting manuscripts in the 1930s, and after his purchase in 1945 of Buckstone Farm, began concentrating the focus of his collection on the period of the Revolutionary war. The present library building was erected in 1974 on an 18th-century farmstead owned by Mr. Feinstone, who supported the library's establishment, donated the land in Washington Crossing, and had his collection catalogued and microfilmed to serve as the core foundation for the library's collections, serving to illuminate the present about how to "survive in freedom" by looking at crucial documents of the past. The Library is free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10 to 5 and has a website: [www.dlar.org](http://www.dlar.org).

### The Collections:

The David Library's collection scope is American history from about 1750 to 1800. But the parameters go beyond that, and the institution intends to eventually expand its scope to encompass the French and Indian War up through the War of 1812. The collection comprises approximately 10,000 reels of microfilm and another 7,500+ books and pamphlets to support the film sources. The books and pamphlets are searchable in a remotely-accessible online catalogue; future plans involve mounting microfilm records as well. The Library continues to acquire reference materials (available on open stacks, arranged by date of acquisition) and historical documents on microfilm. Taken together, the collections support research far beyond research in the Revolutionary war, including such topics as early print culture, genealogy, and women's history.

Mr. Feinstone's collection of approximately 2500 manuscripts (dating from 1605) is available at the DLAR on microfilm; original documents have been placed on deposit at the American

Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. A guide, arranged alphabetically with subject and chronological indexes, accompanies the collection, and is available at the Library and at area repositories. The entries describe type of document, the principals involved (e.g., sender and recipients of letters), number of pages, and an abstract of contents.

The bulk of the microfilm collection consists of primary documents chiefly from American and British institutions. It is richest in items from 1750 to 1800, but does cover some years of the early National period. It is strongest in military history, but many documents also relate to social and economic history. Geographical focus is Atlantic World, with special emphasis on Great Britain, the middle colonies and states, and Canada. The microfilm collections are described on the website, which also includes an online version of a comprehensive subject index for all of the microfilm, prepared by the Library staff. Records of the microfilm will be mounted in the OPAC in the near future. All of the 7500 supportive reference materials (books and pamphlets) are available online.

The microfilm collection is arranged chronologically. Printed indexes exist to some of the collections, and often indexes are included on the first reel of film for a collection. Reader-printers are available in the reading room to view and copy microfilm records.

### **Collection Highlights/Strengths:**

#### **Books and Pamphlets:**

The David Library houses approximately 7500 volumes of books and pamphlets comprising secondary sources relating to the Revolution. These include reprints of key figures' personal papers, monographs on American social and economic life during this era, biographies, family histories, etc. While most of these sources are not unique to the collection, their availability in one location provides great opportunities for researchers to be highly efficient in their work, as relevant source material is readily at hand. The Library also has a collection of approximately 200 rare imprints located adjacent to the reading room (the only "rare" items on the premises), which were part of the original Feinstone collection.

#### **Microfilm:**

Every primary document the David Library has is on microfilm. They have acquired these from various British and American repositories. This collection, which they are continually augmenting, comprises the bulk of the Library's collection. While not unique, these items are important works relating to the Revolutionary era and, taken together, provide an invaluable resource for scholars working in appropriate topics. Collections include: the Papers of the Continental Congress, early-American imprints (on microcard), State Papers, Pennsylvania Archives, and the Robert Morris Papers. Many of these microfilmed documents, from repositories in Great Britain, do not exist anywhere else in the U.S. An online guide can be found at the Library's website and is also available in printed form on site. Particularly noteworthy groups include:

**Great Britain Offices:** important government documents relating to involvement in the war. Almost 600 reels. Relevant microfilm holdings include:

#### **Audit Office and Treasury. Records and Papers of the American Loyalist Claims**

**Commission, misc. documents relating to refugees (1776-1836):** 237 reels. Documents including depositions by claimants, certificates, deeds to property wills, personal correspondence, summaries of Loyalist claims, minute books of commissioners, pensions, and supporting documents. Illuminates social and economic lives of loyalists during the Revolution.

**Colonial Office. America and West Indies:** 25 reels. Original correspondence, Board of Trade, relating to North and South Carolina. Includes papers of provincial governors, Secretary of State's Entry Book, Treasurer accounts, Journal of Proceedings of Board.

**Public Record Office. Customs 16/1, America (1768-1772):** 1 reel. Accounts and records of shipping and trade.

**State Papers, Domestic, George III (1761-1781):** 20 reels. Letters and papers regarding America, including mercantile addresses and minutes of cabinet meetings.

**Treasury. Weekly Immigration Returns (1773-1775):** 3 reels. Records of immigrants from Scotland and England to British North America.

**United States Offices:** Key official documents relating to the Revolution and the founding of the new nation. Over 4600 reels; majority of originals housed at the National Archives. Relevant series, in addition to the various Papers of the Continental Congress and Compiled Military Service Records, include:

**Continental Army. Quartermaster's Department Letters, Returns, Accounts, and Estimates (1776-1783):** 1 reel. Register of letters received by the Superintendent of the Continental Horse Yard, a return of public property, ledger of accounts, misc. letters, memoranda, abstracts, and estimates.

**Central Treasury Records of the Continental and Confederation Governments (1775-1789):** 33 reels. Various financial records relating to the allocation of funds to government and military.

**Copybooks of George Washington's Correspondence with Secretaries of State (1789-1796):** 1 reel. Letterbooks of John Jay and Thomas Jefferson relating to their tenures as Secretary of State.

**Correspondence of the War Department Relating to Indian Affairs (1791-1797):** 1 reel. Letters regarding the frontier, forts and war pensions.

**Impost Books of the Collector of Customs at Philadelphia (1789-1804):** 6 reels. Registries of duties imposed on ships at the port of Philadelphia.

**Journal of Charles Mason (1763-1768):** 1 reel. Journals kept by British surveyor who helped draw the Mason-Dixon line.

**Journal of Hugh Finlay (1773-1774):** 1 reel. Journal and accounts of Surveyor of Post Roads and Post Offices detailing accounts in Philadelphia; also includes "The Ledger of Benjamin Franklin," 1775-1780.

**Letters, Orders for Pay, Accounts, Receipts, misc. Supply Records; miscellaneous numbered records in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records (1775-1801):** 167 reels. Relating to army's supplies, weapons, military stores. Includes letters from Superintendent of Military Stores, ledger of military stores for main army, military operations, pay, accounts, supplies.

**Letters of Tench Coxe (1794-1796):** 1 reel. Military and diplomatic correspondence from Commissioner of the Revenue regarding procurement of military, naval, and Indian supplies.

**Population Schedules for First Census of 1790 and Second Census of 1800:** 64 reels. Original census records.

**Records of the Bureau of Public Debt Relating to the Loan of 1790:** 10 reels. Ledgers and stock records relevant to the loan of 1790 in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

**Records of the Pennsylvania Continental Loan Office:** 3 reels. Registers of Loan Office certificates, liquidated debt certificates, interest certificates, and accounts of interest certificates issued.

**Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files:** 2670 reels. Contains about 80,000 applications to the Federal government for survivors' disability and service pensions, widows' pensions and bounty-land-warrants. Also includes rejected applications and supporting documents. A trove of information about the post-war economic situations of individuals, and women's role in taking up financial matters.

**Revolutionary War Prize Cases (1776-1787):** 15 reels. Records of prize cases heard on appeal by colonial and state courts, committees of the Continental Congress, and the Court of Appeals. Documents include crew lists, bills of lading, invoices, account books, log books, journals, and correspondence.

**Virginia Half-Pay Pension and Related Application Files:** 18 reels. Contains 279 pension application files from Virginia and elsewhere. May contain military records and supporting documents. Separated into groups by status as soldier or sailor.

**Records from the Canadian Archives:** muster rolls and land records of loyalists who emigrated to Canada after the war

**Manuscript Maps Relating to North America and the West Indies: Part 1, the Revolutionary Era (1760-1783).** 4 reels. Accompanied by guide. Ranges from maps on a continental scale down to maps of small areas. Includes small-scale topographical mapping of large areas, route and river maps, intercolonial boundaries, Indian boundaries and purchases, explorations traversing the frontier, plotting of land grants and layouts for new settlements, survey of Loyalist estates, town plans, marine coastal charts and detailed harbor plans, and military maps used in reconnaissance and fortification or to record battles, sieges, or the movement of troops in the Revolution. Many of the maps carry annotations regarding population, quality of land, timber resources, fishing, trade, navigation, and Indians. The maps represent the work of almost 140 different cartographers, and were compiled from the records of the British Colonial, War, and Foreign Offices, and from the Treasury, Admiralty, and other government departments.

**Personal and family papers:** personal papers of prominent British and American Revolutionary figures and their families who played important political and/or military roles. Used in conjunction with official documents, they can help detail the daily exigencies of those living during the war. They include letters, diaries, daybooks, personal accounts, household expenses, etc. Representative collections:

**Baynton, Wharton and Morgan.** Papers, 1757-1787. 10 reels. Accompanied by guide. Letters and documents of a well-known Philadelphia mercantile firm that traded in Europe, the West Indies, and with Native Americans. Includes both public and private materials. Mostly account books and letters from the mid-eighteenth century.

**Burr, Aaron (1756-1836).** Papers, 1756-1836. 27 reels. Accompanied by guide and index. Correspondence, business records, orderly books, journal, legal papers.

**Carroll, Charles (1737-1832).** Papers, 1749-1832. 3 reels. Accompanied by guide.

Correspondence, accounts, and journal. Carroll was a wealthy landowner who served as Maryland delegate to the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence, and was active in Maryland politics.

**Carter Family.** Papers, 1659-1797.4 reels. Accompanied by guide. Land documents, personal, political, and business correspondence, and diaries, chiefly of the prominent Virginia planter and politician, Landon Carter (1710-1778), and of his son, Robert Wormeley Carter (1734-1798).

**Champion, Richard** (1743-1791). Letterbooks, 1760-1775. 2 reels. Accompanied by guide. Manuscript copies of letterbooks of the English merchant from Bristol who was a critic of British policies in the American Revolution.

**Draper, Lyman Copeland** (1815-1891). Draper Manuscripts. 123 reels. Accompanied by guide and calendars. Personal and official correspondence, journals, diaries, muster rolls, pay-rolls, surveyor's notes, business and legal records, and maps relating to the history of the trans-Allegheny West, 1740-1815. Also contains voluminous research notes compiled by Draper that include reminiscences and interviews with frontiersmen, military figures, and others. Draper was a historian, collector, and librarian who spent a good deal of his life compiling this collection.

**Ettwein, John** (1721-1802). Papers, 1721-1802. Accompanied by appendix that catalogues papers in Kenneth Gardinier Hamilton, "John Ettwein and the Moravian Church During the Revolutionary Period" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1940). Includes correspondence, financial records, and journals relevant to the Moravian church. Ettwein was a Moravian missionary who migrated from Germany to Pennsylvania.

**Fitch, John** (1743-1798). Papers, 1743-1798.3 reels. Correspondence, diaries, financial records, surveyor's notes, steamboat sketches, and manuscripts of writings on the steamboat, the Universal Society, and chemicals. Fitch was an inventor who provided the first passenger service on the Delaware river via a steamboat. Also includes small selection of the papers of the architect, William Thornton (1759-1828).

**Floyd, John.** Letters, 1775-1786.1 microfiche. Letters written from Europe during the Revolution by Floyd, a South Carolina planter, to Thomas Farr, Jr., in Charleston. Also includes letters written in the post-war period by Floyd in Charleston to his nephew in England.

**Folliot, George.** Diary. 1 reel. Diary that covers the period 1765-1766, during which Folliot, a New York merchant, visited England.

**Franklin, Benjamin** (1706-1790). Account Books, 1714/15-1787.3 reels. Accompanied by guide. Receipt books, memorandum book, cash books, family expenses, wastebooks, ledgers, shop books, post office ledgers and accounts, expense accounts, journal.

**Hancock Family.** Papers, 1728-1815.2 reels. Accompanied by guide. Letterbooks, receipt books, reports to the Continental Congress, miscellaneous family papers. Chiefly the papers of John Hancock (1736-1793), wealthy Boston merchant, member and president of the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence, politician, governor of Massachusetts. Also includes the papers of John's uncle, Thomas Hancock (1703-1764), a wealthy Boston merchant, and papers of other members of the Hancock family.

**Knox, Henry** (1750-1806). Papers, 1719-1825.55 reels. Accompanied by guide. Personal, business, official correspondence, and ledgers. Also includes papers of Knox's wife, Lucy Flucker, and members of her family. Knox was a brigadier general in the Continental Army. As commander

of artillery, he participated in many important engagements. In 1785, Congress appointed him Secretary of War.

**Laurens, Henry** (1724-1792). Papers, 1747-1882.19 reels. Accompanied by guide. Correspondence, letter books, copy books, journals, and other official business and personal papers chiefly of Henry Laurens (1724-1792), a wealthy South Carolina merchant and planter, Revolutionary leader, member and president of Congress, British prisoner of war, peace commissioner, and elder statesman. Also includes papers of his son, John Laurens (1754-1782), an officer in the Continental Army, aide-de-camp to Washington, and special envoy to France.

**Lee Family.** Papers, 1742-1795.8 reels. Accompanied by guide. Personal, political, commercial, and diplomatic correspondence, pamphlets, and various other documents relating to this wealthy and prominent Virginia family. Chiefly the papers of Arthur Lee (1740-1792), physician, lawyer, diplomat; of Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794), statesman, delegate to the Continental Congress from Virginia, and President of Congress; and of William Lee (1739-1795), merchant, diplomat. Also includes papers of other members of the Lee family.

**Morris, Gouverneur** (1752-1816). Papers, 1771-1834.6 reels. Diary, letterbooks, legal and financial papers, correspondence, and miscellany. Morris was a New York delegate to the Continental Congress, United States Senator, and Minister to France. The diary in the collection covers Morris' tenure as a diplomat in France and describes the Reign of Terror.

**Morris, Robert** (1734-1806). Collection, 1776-1829.12 reels. Diary in the Office of Finance, 1781-1784; official letterbook, 1781-1784; private letterbooks, 1794-1798; Congressional proceedings, 1782-1784; miscellaneous papers, 1776-1829. Morris was a Philadelphia merchant, Superintendent of Finance for the Continental Congress, and U.S. Senator.

**Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union. Washington Family Papers, 1674-1853.** 10 reels. Various Correspondence of George Washington's family.

**Nicholson, John** (d.1800). Papers, 1772-1819.21 reels. Accompanied by guide. General correspondence. Nicholson was a financier, promoter, and land speculator. He served as clerk to the Board of Treasury of the Continental Congress from 1778 to 1781; as an auditor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for settling the accounts of the Pennsylvania Line; and as Comptroller General of Pennsylvania from 1782 to 1794.

**Parker Family.** Papers, 1760-1795.4 reels. Personal, business and family correspondence, memorial, and journal, chiefly of James Parker (1729-1815), a Virginia merchant, Loyalist, officer in the British Army, and American prisoner of war. Includes papers of his sons, James (ca. 1763-1795), who engaged in business in Virginia after the Revolution, and Charles Stewart (1771-1823).

**Pre-Revolutionary Diaries** (1635-1774).13 reels. Accompanied by guide. Colonial era diaries and journals of various early Americans. The collection includes diaries by farmers, businessmen, clergy, soldiers, students, and physicians.

**Price, Ezekiel** (1727-1802). Papers, 1754-1785. 1 reel. Correspondence, official documents, and financial records. Price was a Boston, merchant, selectman, and court official.

**Virginia Gazette Daybooks**, 1750-1752, 1764-1766.1 reel. Accompanied by guide. Records of daily business transactions in the printing office of the *Virginia Gazette*.

**Washington, George** (1732-1799). Papers, 1697-1799.124 reels. Accompanied by guide.

Correspondence, letterbooks, transcripts of correspondence, diaries, surveys, financial papers, and applications for office during Washington's Presidency. The material on the Revolution pertains to nearly every phase of the conflict.

**Washington, George** (1732-1799). Papers, 1775-1799.1 reel. Correspondence of Washington and other documents relating to him extracted from several manuscript collections at Yale.

**Wolcott, Oliver, Jr.** (1760-1833). Papers, 1769-1803. 17 reels. Correspondence of the Connecticut Federalist and Auditor of the Federal Treasury.

**Documents relating to the American Revolution, 1775-1783, in the National Maritime Museum**, Greenwich, England.4 reels. Accompanied by guide. Correspondence, journals, logs, memorials, orders, instructions, out-letter books of British naval officers who served on the North American and West Indian stations and escorted convoys across the Atlantic. Some of the records are official, but most are semi-official or kept for personal use.

**Early American Newspapers:** with some 250 reels of microfilm, this is one of the largest collections of early-American newspapers in the area, with over 140 titles, and more newspapers are always being added. The concentration is on New England and Mid-Atlantic states, but the Library is branching out. Some major titles are *Connecticut Courant*, *Boston Gazette*, *Rivington's Gazette*, *Pennsylvania Packet*, and *Gazette of the United States*. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* is available in CD-ROM format. While collecting first began with primary port cities, the holdings now include newspapers from secondary ports and the back country, showing the dynamic social and commercial relationships among localized areas and larger regions.

footnotes:

1. See: David J. Fowler. *Guide to the Sol Feinstone Collection of the David Library of the American Revolution*. Washington Crossing, PA: The David Library of the American Revolution, 1994; and Joseph J. Felcone. *Abstracts of New Jersey Manuscripts in the Sol Feinstone Collection of the American Revolution*. (Washington Crossing, PA: The David Library of the American Revolution, 1976).

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