Overview of the Collection

Title: Collection of Benjamin Franklin materials

Dates (inclusive): 1750-1787

Collection Number: mssFranklin

Creator: Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790.

Extent: 38 items in 1 box (1.17 linear feet)

Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: This collection consists of various manuscripts and letters by, to, and about American diplomat Benjamin Franklin assembled at the Huntington Library.

Language: English.

Access

RESTRICTED. Available with curatorial approval. Requires extended retrieval and delivery time.

Preferred Citation


Provenance

The collection was assembled from various sources. More information can be found in the item descriptions, when available.

Biographical Note

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Franklin was an author, inventor, diplomat, politician, and scientist.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of various manuscripts and letters by, to, and about American diplomat Benjamin Franklin assembled at the Huntington Library. The materials date from 1750 to 1787. Additional Franklin manuscripts housed separately are listed in the Related Materials section of this finding aid.

Other manuscript material by or addressed to Benjamin Franklin

- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790. Benjamin Franklin autobiography (call number: HM 9999)
- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790. Benjamin Franklin's account books [microform] (call number: MSS MFilm 00722). Microfilm from originals in the American Philosophical Society and the Pennsylvania Historical Society
- 1779 January. [Adams, John, and Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee]. Letter to [Charles Gravier], Comte de Vergennes (Contemporary copy, unsigned) (Call number: HM 41567) in the Edward Davis Townsend papers
- 1779 November. LaVauguyon, Duc de. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. Autograph letter signed (call number: HM 22558) in the John Paul Jones File
- 1783 January 20. Adams, John, and Benjamin Franklin. Declaration for Cessation of Hostilities between Great Britain and America (call number: HM 25767) in Great Britain. Cabinet. Collection of Minutes, letters of Thos. Townshend, & a Declaration of the U.S. Ministers ... (call number: HM 25756-25767, 80765, 80766)
- Pennsylvania. Supreme Executive Council. Deed to Vincent M. Pelose, 1786 May 29. Signed by Benjamin Franklin (call number: HM 49488)

Cooper, Samuel, 1725-1783. Samuel Cooper papers, 1718-1798 (mssCO) includes letters to Franklin:
- Cooper, Samuel. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1777 March 28 (CO 15)
- Cooper, Samuel. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1777 October 25 (CO 17)
• Cooper, Samuel. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1778 November (CO 1)
• Cooper, Samuel. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1782 December 21 (CO 26)
• Adams, John. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1783 September 13 (CO 36)

Loudoun, John Campbell, Earl of, 1705-1782. Loudoun papers: Americana, 1682-1780 (call number: mssLO) contains letters either to Franklin or that mention Franklin:
• Braddock, Edward. Letter to Sir Thomas Robinson that mentions Franklin. 1755 June 5 (LO 581)
• Parsons, William. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1756 June 19 (LO 1225)
• Abercromby, James. Letter to John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun, that mentions Franklin. 1756 July 22 (LO 1237)
• Loudoun, John Campbell, Earl of. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1757 February 20 (LO 2870)

Montagu, Mrs. (Elizabeth), 1718-1800. Elizabeth Montagu papers, 1688-1800 (call number: mssMO) contains copy of a portion of a letter from Franklin:
• Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Madame B. 1778, Sept. 28. Embedded in an incomplete letter to an unidentified addressee (MO 6836)

Letters and manuscripts that mention Franklin
• 1756-1758. Loudoun, John Campbell, Earl of, 1705-1782. Loudoun memorandum books, 1756, January 1-1760, March 31 (call number: HM 1717) contains references to Franklin (see 1756 July 24; 1757 April 25; 1758 January 7)
• 1763-1764. Cash book B, [account book of unidentified Philadelphia merchant, possibly Richard Footman and Peter Footman], 1759-1768 (call number: HM 729) containing single entries for Franklin & Hall (June 11, 1763, p. 37) and Benjamin Franklin (January 17, 1764, p. 41)
• 1778 January 4. Petrie, Samuel. Letter to Edmund Burke (Call number: HM 23309)
• 1778 September 10. Alexander, William. Letter to Sir William Pulteney (call number: PU 34) in the William Pulteney papers
• 1782 May 21. Cowper, William. Letter to John Thornton (Call number: HM 24316)
• 1784 November 4. Adams, John. Letter to Elbridge Gerry (call number: HM 22793)
• 1798 April 2. Murray, William Vans. Letter to Rufus King (call number: RK 330) in Rufus King papers
• 1775 February 6. Strahan, William. Letter to William Hall (call number: HM 44036)
• 1908 November 28. Turner, Frederick Jackson. To Clarence Walworth Alvord (call number: mssTU Box 11) in Frederick Jackson Turner papers
• 1925 June 20. Alvord, Clarence Walworth. To Frederick Jackson Turner (Call number: mssTU Box 34) in Frederick Jackson Turner papers.

Facsimiles of Franklin manuscripts
Max Farrand papers (call numbers: mssFAR) includes photocopies of letters by Franklin:
• FAR Box 19 (5) Franklin, Benjamin. Letters to Catherine Ray Greene. 1755-1778. Photocopies of 8 autograph letters signed.
• FAR Box 19 (10) Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Anna Maria Shipley. 1779 March 25. Passy, France Photocopy of autograph letter signed.
• FAR Box 19 (7) Franklin, Benjamin. Letters to Jan Ingenhauss. 1781-1785. Passy, France. Photocopy of 2 autograph letters signed.
• FAR Box 19 (6) Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to David Hartley. 1782 September 2. Passy, France. Photocopy of autograph letter signed.
• FAC 752 Galloway, Joseph. Letter to William Franklin mentioning Benjamin Franklin [FACSIMILE]. 1773 November 25.
• FAC 751 Franklin, William. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1775 August 14
• FAC 474-477 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Silas Deane. 1776-1777 France Facsimiles of 4 letters
• FAC 753-756 Walpole, Thomas. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1777 February-December Facsimiles.
• FAC 750 Bancroft, Edward. Letter to Benjamin Franklin. 1777 March 4 Facsimile

Arrangement
The collection is arranged chronologically in one box.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Personal Names
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Archives.
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Autobiography.
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Autographs -- Collecting and collectors.
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Correspondence.
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Criticism and interpretation.
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 -- Manuscripts.

Subjects
Seven Years War, 1756-1763 -- Sources.
United States -- History -- 1783-1815 -- Sources.
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775 -- Sources.
United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Sources.

Forms/Genres
Letters (Correspondence) -- United States -- 18th century.
Manuscripts -- United States -- 18th century.

Alternate Authors
Belcher, Jonathan, 1682-1757.
Chaumont, Jacques-Donatien Leray de, 1725-1803.
Cooper, Samuel, 1725-1783, addressee.
Dumas, Charles Guillaume Frédéric, 1721-1796, addressee.
Loudoun, John Campbell, Earl of, 1705-1782, addressee.
Strahan, William, 1715-1785, correspondent.

Box 1
1750 July 26 Belcher, Jonathan. Order to the Treasurers of New Jersey to pay Benjamin Franklin for printing Sundry Acts & Laws ... HM 1472

Burlington, New Jersey. Document signed. 1 page; 19.5 x 16 cm.
Document also signed by Charles Read, Secretary, and endorsed by Benjamin Franklin.
Acquired from the E. N. Crane Library (Smith).

1753 June 6 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to [Joseph Huey]. HM 22613
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Contemporary copy. 4 pages; 23 x 19 cm.
First page incorrectly titled "Copy of Dr. Franklin's letter to Geo. Whitchfield ..."

1753 June 26 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Peter Collinson. HM 21693
Bound.
Purchased from the F. R. Halsey sale (lot 432), February 17-19, 1919. Card lists letter to Collinson and "Deborah Franklin, his wife, L. S., April 30, 1755, to the same; William Franklin, their son, A. ?L. S., June 18, 1764, to William Strahan, with portraits of B. Franklin and Collinson, all inlaid to folio size, and bound in light morocco.

1753 [i.e. 1754] January 1 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to "Gentlemen" [Thomas Darling and Nathan Whiting]. HM 21675
In the margin: two-line note written and signed by Nathan Whiting.
Bixby.

1756 June 22 Franklin, Benjamin. Memorial to James Abercromby on expresses. LO 1239
New York. Autograph document signed. 2 pages; 32 x 20.5 cm.
With postscript on second page signed by Franklin, July 22, 1756.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923. From Loudon Papers.

1756 July 22 [Franklin, Benjamin]. Memorial of the State of the Forces in Pensilvania [i.e. Pennsylvania]. LO 1328
New York. Autograph document. 2 pages; 32 x 20 cm.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby’s and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

[1756 August?] [Franklin, Benjamin]. Extract of letter to Thomas Pownall. LO 1298
Contemporary copy. 1 page; 30 x 18.5 cm.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby’s and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

1756 September 9 Franklin, Benjamin. Extract of letter to Thomas Pownall. LO 1749
Contemporary copy. 1 page; 31.5 x 20 cm.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby’s and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.
1757 January 31 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to William Strahan. HM 22614
The letter is preceded by Franklin's copy of a previous letter from Franklin to Strahan, January 1, 1757.
Anderson 1386.

1757 February 20 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to John Campbell, the Earl of Loudoun. LO 2870
Transcribed in Labaree, ed. Papers, vol. 7: 133.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

1757 March 3 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to [John Campbell, the Earl of Loudoun]. LO 2963
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Autograph letter signed. 1 page; 20 x 16 cm.
Transcribed in Labaree, ed. Papers, vol. 7: 143.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

[1757 March 21] Franklin, Benjamin. Extracts and answers to points proposed to be amended in the bill now before the Governor. LO 3119
Autograph document. 8 pages; 32.5 x 20.5.
Transcribed in Labaree, ed. Papers, vol. 7: 145-152.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

1757 April 21 List of Servants, Belonging to the Inhabitants of Pensilvania and taken into His Majesty's Service, For whom Satisfaction has not been made by the Officers according to Act of Parliament [with an abstract]. LO 3415
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Document. 22 pages; 42 x 33.5 cm, folded.
Table containing claims of 612 servants (listing number, owners names, servants names, term bound for, term serv'd, term of service due, considerations/money paid, due to the owner, and regiment or company enlisted in). The title and a note of 3 lines on page 22 are in the handwriting of Franklin. With loose 1-page abstract: "Casting of the Account of the List of Servants belonging to the Inhabitants of Pensilvania [sic]" and loose note on folded leaf: "This List is not yet compleat; the Claims continuing to come in daily."
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

1757 May 21 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to John Campbell, the Earl of Loudoun. LO 3699
Woodbridge, New Jersey. Autograph letter signed. 2 pages; 23.5 x 19 cm.
Purchased as part of the Loudoun papers from the Campbell family through the agency of Sotheby's and Sir Joseph Duveen, 1923.

1763 May 9 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to William Strahan. HM 22616
Virginia Autograph letter signed. 2 pages; 23 x 19 cm.
Hoe library (Smith)?; And. 13867.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to [Recipient]</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1777 Apr 26</td>
<td>Letter to Jan Ingenhousz</td>
<td>Passy, Paris</td>
<td>Autograph letter signed. 2 pages; 23 x 18.5 cm.</td>
<td>Removed from &quot;Autograph letters of Benjamin Franklin&quot; extra-illustrated collection of portraits&quot; Bixby.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1780 December 2 [Franklin, Benjamin]. Letter to Samuel Cooper. CO 53
Passy (Paris, France) Letter signed. 2 pages; 31.5 x 20.5 cm.
In the handwriting of William Temple Franklin. Signature cut away; autograph subscription and address. With seal. On cover: "To be sunk if in Danger of being taken."

1781 January 18 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Charles Dumas. HM 22770
Passy (Paris, France) Letter signed. 4 pages; 23 x 18 cm.
In the handwriting of Jean L’Air de Lamotte. The postscript is in Franklin's handwriting.
Hoe library (Smith)?

1781 November 26 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to John Trumbull. HM 21678
Passy (Paris, France) Letter signed. 1 page; 23 x 18.5 cm.
In the handwriting of William Temple Franklin.
Transcribed in Cohn, ed. Papers, vol. 36: 118.
Removed from "Autograph letters of Benjamin Franklin" extra-illustrated collection of portraits" Bixby.

1783 May 20 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Samuel Cooper. CO 29
Passy (Paris, France) Letter signed. 2 pages; 23 x 18.5 cm.
In the handwriting of Jean L’Air de Lamotte.

1783 December 15 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to William Carmichael. HR 153
Passy (Paris, France) Letter signed. 3 pages; 25 x 20 cm.
In the handwriting of Jean L’Air de Lamotte.
Possibly Harbeck Collection (HR 153).

1785 July 13 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to Jane Mecom. HM 22771
St. Germain, France. Autograph letter signed. 1 page; 22.5 x 18.5 cm.
Transcribed in Albert Smyth, ed. The Writings of Benjamin Franklin (1905-07), vol. IX: 363-364.
Grove sale.

1786 March 26 Franklin, Benjamin. Letter to William Alexander. HM 22786
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Autograph letter signed. 3 pages; 23 x 19 cm.
G.D. Smith.

1787 April 10 Franklin, Benjamin. Order to the Secretary of the Council. HM 5265
Smith 204.

1787 June 13 Franklin, Benjamin. Order to David Rittenhouse, Treasurer, to pay Samuel Meredith. BR Box 260 (7)
With Meredith's receipt on verso.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Autograph letter signed. 1 page; 23.5 x 19 cm.
   Document signed. 1 page; 34.5 x 40 cm.
   Vellum with seals. Signed by Benjamin Franklin and attested by James Trimble for John Armstrong.
   Smith.

   Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Document signed. 1 page; 30 x 37.5 cm.
   Printed form filled in. Signed by Franklin and attested by Charles Biddle, with recorder’s note and signature of J. Simpson. With seals broken in the folds.
   Purchased from Anderson Galleries Learmont Library sale (lot 310/1325), January 9-11, 1918.

1787 November 21 Franklin, Benjamin. Order to the Secretary of the Council. HM 39940
   Verso has fragment of petition by Saml Judah [Samuel Bernard Judah?].
   Removed from RB 87821.

[Before 1790] [Franklin, Benjamin]. Copy of verses on a Philadelphia Gent. HM 900
   Autograph manuscript. 1 page; 15 x 18.5 cm.
   14 lines beginning "Religion take from ..."
   Removed from "Autograph letters of Benjamin Franklin" extra-illustrated collection of portraits" Bixby.