

THE CHARTER.

JOHN PENN, THOMAS PENN, and RICHARD PENN, Esquires, true and absolute proprietaries of the province of Pennsylvania, and counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, upon Delaware, to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting: Whereas, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Grace, Anthony Nicholas, Thomas Cadwalader, William Coleman, Thomas Godfrey, Henry Pratt, Benjamin Paschall, Joseph Breintnall, John Jones, jun., Samuel Hale, William Parsons, Nicholas Cassel, Francis Richardson, William Maugridge, David Bush, Thomas Hopkinson, Philip Syng, Jacob Duché, Evan Morgan, Joseph Stretch, John Paschall, Nicholas Scull, Thomas Green, Hugh Roberts, Rees Lloyd, John Roberts, Richard Standley, John Nicholas, John Sober, Charles Read, Daniel Harrison, James Morris, Thomas Shaw, John Read, Joshua Richey, James Hamilton, William Plumsted, John Bard, Samuel Morris, John Stamper, Samuel Norris, John Mifflin, John Langdale, Samuel Coates, Samuel Rhoads, Joseph King, Alexander Graydon, James Merrywether, Anthony Morris, jun., Tobias Griscom, Charles Willing, Isaac Williams, William Allen, Joseph Peters, Richard Peters, Thomas Clay, Phineas Bond, Israel Pemberton, jun., Robert Greenway, William Crosthwaite, William Callender, George Emlen, jun., Isaiah Warner, Tench Francis, James Bingham, Charles Meredith, Samuel McCall, Hugh Davy, Amos Stretzell, Benjamin Shoemaker, Joseph Hatton, Andrew Hamilton, Thomas Bond, and William Peters have, at a great expense, purchased a large and valuable collection of useful books, in order to erect a library for the advancement of knowledge and literature in the city of Philadelphia; Now know ye, That we, being truly sensible of the advantage that may accrue to the people of this province by so useful an undertaking, and being willing to encourage the same, have given and granted, and by these presents do, for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant, that the said Benjamin Franklin, Robert Grace, Anthony Nicholas, Thomas Cadwalader, William Coleman, Thomas Godfrey, Henry Pratt, Benjamin Paschall, Joseph Breintnall, John Jones, jun., Samuel Hale, William Parsons, Nicholas Cassel, Francis Richardson, William Maugridge, David Bush, Thomas Hopkinson, Philip Syng, Jacob Duché, Evan Morgan, Joseph Stretch, John Paschall, Nicholas Scull, Thomas Green, Hugh Roberts, Rees Lloyd, John Roberts, Richard Standley, John Nicholas, John Sober, Charles Read, Daniel Harrison, James Morris, Thomas Shaw, John Read, Joshua Richey, James Hamilton, William Plumsted, John Bard, Samuel Morris, John

Preamble.

Motives to grant.

Names of the grantees.

Stamper, Samuel Norris, John Mifflin, John Langdale, Samuel Coates, Samuel Rhoads, Joseph King, Alexander Graydon, James Merrywether, Anthony Morris, jun., Tobias Griscom, Charles Willing, Isaac Williams, William Allen, Joseph Peters, Richard Peters, Thomas Clay, Phineas Bond, Israel Pemberton, jun., Robert Greenway, William Crosthwaite, William Callender, George Emlen, jun., Isaiah Warner, Tench Francis, James Bingham, Charles Meredith, Samuel McCall, Hugh Davy, Amos Strettell, Benjamin Shoemaker, Joseph Hatton, Andrew Hamilton, Thomas Bond, and William Peters, and such other persons as shall hereafter be admitted or become members of *The Library Company of Philadelphia*, according to the laws and constitutions of the said company, hereafter to be made, be, and forever hereafter shall be, by virtue of these presents, one body corporate and politic in deed, by the name of *The Library Company of Philadelphia*; and them by the name of *The Library Company of Philadelphia*, one body politic and corporate in deed and in name, we do, for us, our heirs and successors, fully create, constitute, and confirm by these presents; and that by the name of *The Library Company of Philadelphia* they shall have perpetual succession; and that they, by the name of *The Library Company of Philadelphia*, be, and at all times hereafter shall be, persons able and capable in law to have, hold, receive, and enjoy lands, tenements, rents, liberties, franchises, and hereditaments, in fee-simple, or for term of life, lives, years, or otherwise; and also goods, chattels, and other things, of what nature, kind, or quality soever. And also to give, grant, let, sell, or assign the same lands, tenements, hereditaments, goods, and chattels; and to do and execute all other things about the same, by the name aforesaid. And also that they and their successors, by the name of *The Library Company of Philadelphia*, be, and shall be, forever hereafter, persons able and capable in law to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered unto, defend and be defended, in all or any of the courts, or other places, and before any judges, justices, and other persons whatsoever, in all manner of actions, suits, complaints, pleas, causes, and matters whatsoever, and of what nature or kind soever. And that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said *Library Company of Philadelphia*, and their successors, forever hereafter, to have one common seal for their use in their affairs, and the same at their will and pleasure to change and alter. And for the well governing and ordering the affairs of the said company, we do, for us, our heirs and successors, further grant that it shall and may be lawful for the said company, and their successors, to assemble and meet together on the first Monday in May, in every year, and at such other times as there shall be occasion, at their library or some other convenient place, due and public notice being given at least twenty days before the times of such meetings, not only of the day, hour, and place of such meeting, but of the cause thereof, and of the matters to be transacted at such meeting. And that they, the said company, or one-fourth part of them at least, being so met, in person, or by proxy duly constituted in writing, shall have full power and

Name of the company.

Power to hold lands, &c.

Power to sue, &c.

To have a common seal.

Power to meet and make laws.

Quorum.

authority, from time to time, to make, constitute, and establish such laws, statutes, orders, and constitutions as shall appear to them, or the major part of them, to be good and useful, honest and necessary, according to the best of their judgment and discretion, for the government, regulation, and direction of the Library Company, and every member thereof; and for the appointing and regulating the election or nomination of Directors, Treasurer, Librarian, Secretary, and such and so many other officers as they shall think fit; and for limiting and appointing their trust and authority; and for the admitting new members; and to do all things concerning the government, estate, goods, lands, revenues, as also all the business and affairs of the said company. All which laws, statutes, orders, and constitutions, so to be made as aforesaid, shall be binding on every member, and be from time to time inviolably observed, according to the tenor and effect of them, provided that they be not repugnant or contrary to the laws of England or this government. *Provided always*, That for the increase and preservation of the said library, every member of the said company shall and do pay into the hands of the said company's Treasurer, for the time being, the sum of ten shillings, on the first Monday in May, in every year, forever; and those who neglect so to do, shall pay such greater sum or sums in lieu thereof, at such times, within twelve months then next following, as by the laws of the said company shall be appointed; and that in default of these payments, every delinquent shall forfeit his share in the books and estate of the said company, and be no longer a member. In testimony whereof we have caused the Great Seal of our said province to be hereunto affixed. Witness GEORGE THOMAS, Esq., lieutenant-governor and commander-in-chief of the said province and counties, at Philadelphia, the twenty-fifth day of March, in the fifteenth year of the reign of our sovereign lord king GEORGE the second, and in the year of our LORD one thousand seven hundred and forty-two, by virtue of certain powers and authorities to him for this purpose (*inter alia*) granted by the said proprietaries.

Laws so
made to be
binding.

Forfeiture
on default.

GEORGE THOMAS.