

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Awards Academy \$250,000 Grant

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded the Academy a \$250,000 grant to catalog, conserve, and improve access to the Academy's earliest and most historically significant records.

Last year, thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, the Academy completed construction of a modern, state-of-the-art archive facility – including compact storage units, appropriate shelving, and independent climate control – at its headquarters in Cambridge. This new grant will allow the Academy to move into the next phase of its archive project: to organize, catalog, and preserve the Academy's records and to provide scholars with access to some of the institution's earliest documents.

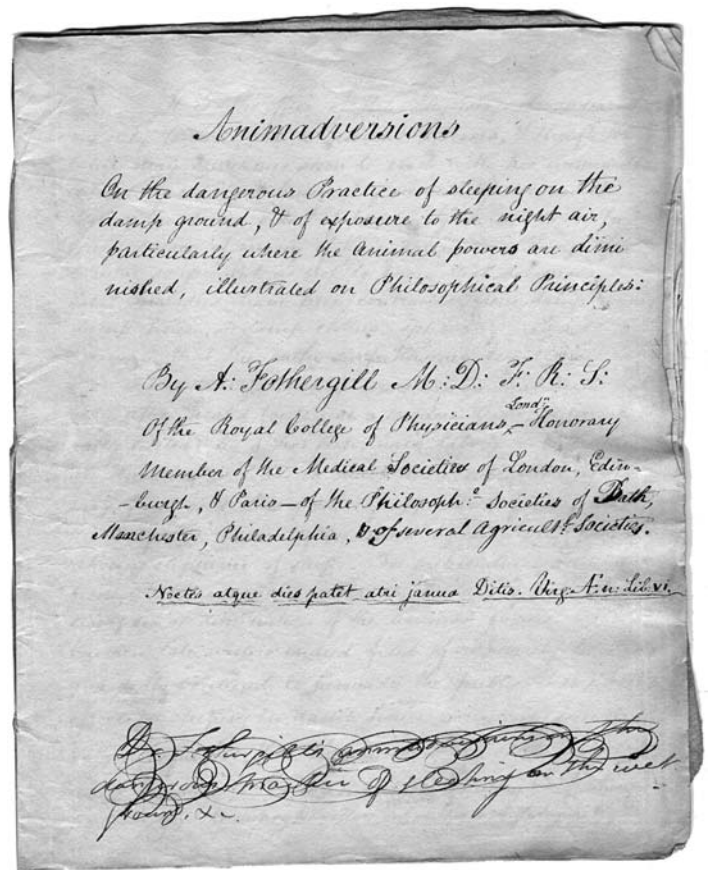
"The Academy's records provide insight into the growth and development of America's intellectual traditions, and document what our nation's scholars and leaders were discussing and thinking during critical historical moments. These valuable resources have never been available to researchers," said Leslie Berlowitz, CEO of the Academy. "The Academy now has a wonderful opportunity to provide scholars access to these collections and to understand better its own rich history as well."

Among the Academy's holdings are 35 volumes of Letter Books, containing communications from such early Fellows as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton, as well as correspondence with other learned societies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; complete runs of all Academy serial publications, including the *Memoirs*, *Proceedings*, and *Daedalus*; 10 volumes of manuscript Minute Books, which document Academy meetings and other governance activities from 1780 to 1944; manuscripts of communications submitted by members and others for possible publication; and reports from both special and standing committees, which detail membership and program activities since the Academy's founding in 1780.

The Mellon award to the Academy will support archival assistants to help with the retrieval, review, and processing of all off-site holdings, as well as allow the Academy to purchase and install specialized records management and cataloging software; select the first series of historical documents and publications for processing; create finding aids and collection-level descriptions for these series; consult with outside technical and conservation experts; and design an archives section of the Academy website, among other things.

An Archives Advisory Committee, overseeing all aspects of the Archives Initiative, includes Fellows Joyce Appleby (University

of California, Los Angeles), Bernard Bailyn (Harvard University), Leslie C. Berlowitz (American Academy), Academy Librarian Robert C. Post (Yale Law School), and Patricia Meyer Spacks (University of Virginia), as well as Ellen Dunlap (American Antiquarian Society), Brenda Lawson (Massachusetts Historical Society), Bernard Margolis (Boston Public Library), and Megan Sniffin-Marinoff (Harvard University Archives). ■



In the Academy's archives: title page of Anthony Fothergill's "Animadversions on the Dangerous Practice of Sleeping on the Damp Ground and of Exposure to the Night Air, Particularly Where the Animal Powers Are Diminished," undated.

Anthony Fothergill (1732–1813) was an Edinburgh-educated physician and natural historian, who submitted several essays to the Academy for discussion and publication.