

**THE PEABODY INSTITUTE OF THE CITY
OF BALTIMORE. THE FOUNDER'S
LETTERS AND THE PAPERS RELATING
TO ITS DEDICATION AND ITS HISTORY,
UP TO THE 1ST JANUARY, 1868**

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Up to the 1st January, 1868.

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LETTERS FROM GEORGE PEABODY, Esq.

BALTIMORE, *February 12th*, 1857.

GENTLEMEN :

IN pursuance of a purpose long entertained by me, and which I communicated to some of you more than two years ago, I have determined, without further delay, to establish and endow an Institute in this City, which, I hope, may become useful towards the improvement of the moral and intellectual culture of the inhabitants of Baltimore, and collaterally to those of the State; and, also, towards the enlargement and diffusion of a taste for the Fine Arts.

My wishes, in regard to the scope and character of this Institute, are known to some of you through a personal communication of my purpose. In the sequel of this letter I shall further advert to that subject.

In presenting to you the object I propose, I wish you to understand that the details proper to its organization and government and its future control and conduct, I

submit entirely to your judgment and discretion; and the perpetuity of that control I confide to you and your successors, to be appointed in the manner prescribed in this letter.

I request you to accept this trust as my friends, amongst whom, I hope there will ever be found the utmost harmony and concert of action, in all that relates to the achievement of the good which it is my aim to secure to the City.

You and your successors will constitute forever a Board of Trustees, twenty-five in number, to be maintained in perpetual succession, for the accomplishment, preservation and supervision of the purposes for which the Institute is to be established. To you and your successors, therefore, I hereby give full and exclusive power to do whatsoever you may deem most advisable, for the foundation, organization and management of the proposed Institute: and to that end I give to you, and will place at your disposal, to be paid to you as you may require, for the present, three hundred thousand dollars, to be expended by you in such manner as you may determine to be most conducive to the effective and early establishment and future maintenance and support of such an Institute as you may deem best adapted to fulfil my intentions as expressed in this letter.

In the general scheme and organization of the Institute, I wish it to provide—

First.—For an extensive Library, to be well furnished in every department of knowledge, and of the most approved literature; which is to be maintained for the free use of all persons who may desire to consult it, and be supplied with every proper convenience for daily reference and study, within appointed hours of the week days of every year. It should consist of the best works on every subject embraced within the scope of its plan, and as completely adapted, as the means at your command may allow, to satisfy the researches of students who may be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge not ordinarily attainable in the private libraries of the country. It should be guarded and preserved from abuse, and rendered efficient for the purposes I contemplate in its establishment, by such regulations as the judgment and experience of the Trustees may adopt or approve. I recommend, in reference to such regulations, that it shall not be constructed upon the plan of a circulating library; and that the books shall not be allowed to be taken out of the building, except in very special cases, and in accordance with rules adapted to them as exceptional privileges.