

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Library Company Acquires the Joe Freedman Collection of Philadelphia Ephemera**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—September 27, 2013—The Library Company of Philadelphia has acquired the Joe Freedman Collection of Philadelphia Ephemera, adding to its extensive holdings of historical ephemera. Compiled over many decades by a distinguished collector with a discerning eye for historical significance, the collection includes nearly 100 trade cards dating from the mid-18th to the late-19th century; a portfolio of manuscript maps surveying the early development of South Philadelphia during the 18th century; one of the earliest printed American bills of fare (ca. 1850); and rare bills of lading from the press of Benjamin Franklin (1760 and 1761). These are but a few of the gems in a collection of nearly 900 pieces of ephemera, prints, manuscripts, and books.

The Freedman Collection complements several existing Library Company collection and research strengths, including women's history, African American history, philanthropy, Philadelphia urban history, and, particularly, visual culture and early American economic history. Through a recent ephemera cataloging project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, an exhibition, and conference, the Library Company has positioned itself at the forefront of preserving and providing access to historical ephemera collections.

The Library Company began collecting ephemera in 1785, when it acquired the Pièrre Eugène Du Simitière Collection of Revolutionary War-era pamphlets and broadsides. Today, the institution occupies a leadership role among research libraries with respect to the collection of and research into early American printed ephemera, a powerful but still-underused primary resource for historical inquiry. Highlights of this collection can be viewed in the exhibition *Remnants of Everyday Life: Historical Ephemera in the Workplace, Street, and Home*, on display through December 2013. Whimsical reflections on ephemera by contemporary artists of the Philadelphia Cartoonist Society are also on display in a small accompanying exhibition.

### **Visual Culture Program (VCP) at the Library Company of Philadelphia**

Launched in 2008, VCP at LCP promotes the use of historical images as primary sources for studying the past and fosters research, collection, and interpretation of historic visual material. Scholars and the general public are increasingly aware of the importance of visual images in examining the past. With the proliferation of sophisticated digitization technologies, researchers now have the opportunity to "see" images in new ways. No longer considered secondary to text, visual materials are taking their rightful place as primary evidence documenting the past and influencing our understanding of the present. Through exhibitions, research fellowships, conferences, and public programs, VCP at LCP promotes the creative use of the Library Company's varied collections of visual materials.

### **The Library Company of Philadelphia**

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library specializing in American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, the Library Company is America's oldest cultural institution and served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War to 1800. The Library Company was the largest public library in America until the Civil War and includes the extensive personal libraries of such prominent early American bibliophiles as James Logan. Open to the public free of charge, the Library Company houses an extensive collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art, and the second largest holding of early American imprints. Particular strengths of the collection include economic history, women's history, African American history, history of medicine, history of philanthropy, and visual culture. To find out more, please visit [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org).

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