

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEW USPS STAMP OF RICHARD ALLEN USES LIBRARY COMPANY IMAGE**

### ***Stamp is Available Nationwide Starting February 2***

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – February 2, 2016 – The United States Postal Service officially unveiled a new stamp honoring the celebrated African American leader Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831). The stamp, the 39th in the "Black Heritage" series, uses an image from the Library Company of Philadelphia's African Americana Collection. The stamp's portrait of Allen is taken from an 1876 print entitled *The Bishops of the AME Church*. Crafted well after Allen's death, the print commemorated Allen's role as abolitionist, church leader, civil rights activist and writer. Donated to the Library Company in the 1990s by supporter Roger Stoddard, the print is one of many treasured objects in the Library Company's collection relating to Richard Allen.

Born enslaved, Allen secured his freedom during the American Revolutionary era. He founded both Mother Bethel Church and the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. In addition to his religious work, he helped organize the first black benevolent society in Pennsylvania, co-authored the first copyrighted pamphlet by an African American, and became the first African American writer to eulogize a president when he saluted George Washington's emancipatory will in 1799.

The Library Company holds several important Allen documents, including beautiful editions of his 1794 pamphlet, *A Narrative of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity...in 1793* (his Yellow Fever exposé co-written by Absalom Jones), as well as his 1833 autobiography, *The Life, Experience and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (published posthumously by his family). The collection also includes several prints of Allen cast during the 19th century, including two during his lifetime.

### **The Program in African American History**

The Library Company houses the nation's most important collection of African American literature and history before 1900. Comprising more than 13,000 titles and 1,200 images from the mid-16th to the late-19th centuries, the African Americana holdings include books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, broadsides, and graphics documenting the Western discovery and exploitation of Africa; the rise of both slavery and antislavery movements in the new world; the development of racial thought and racism; descriptions of African American life, slave and free, throughout the Americas; slavery and race in fiction and drama; and the printed works of African American individuals and organizations.

With incomparable collections, a stellar reputation in the world of research libraries, a distinguished network of fellowship alumni and advisors, and institutional relationships with a diverse range of educational and cultural institutions, the Library Company is uniquely placed to advance understanding of the lives of people of African descent living in the Americas from the 17th through the 19th centuries and to open the process to a substantially more diverse and inclusive group of participants.

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

Founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library specializing in American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. The Library Company is America's oldest cultural institution and served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War to 1800. It 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 one of the world's largest holdings 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. The Library Company promotes access to these collections through fellowships, exhibitions, programs, and online resources. To find out more, please visit [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org).

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