



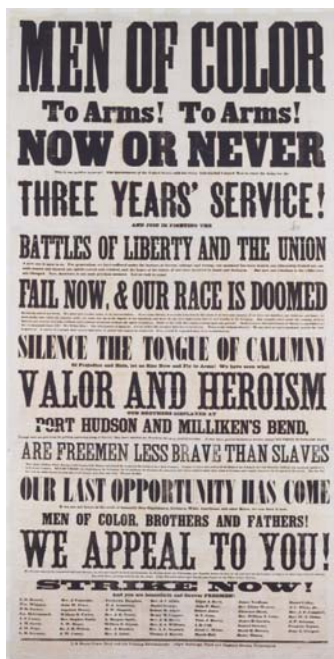
*The Library Company* OF PHILADELPHIA

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## The Library Company of Philadelphia Commemorates the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War

**Philadelphia: June 23, 2011** – The City of Philadelphia is filled with commemorative Civil War events during the 150th anniversary of the war. While you are exploring the city’s rich Civil War-era history, do not forget to stop by 1314 Locust Street to see the Library Company of Philadelphia’s new exhibition *John A. McAllister’s Civil War: The Philadelphia Homefront*.

John A. McAllister (1822-1896) appears as an “optician” in Philadelphia directories and also dabbled in commercial photography, but his true passion was accumulating tens of thousands of pieces of what are today called ephemera -- political broadsides and leaflets, tickets, trade cards, cartoons, patriotic envelopes and stationery, song sheets, recruiting posters, and a complement of ribbons, buttons and other items that together constitute the largest collection documenting the Philadelphia home front during the Civil War.



McAllister was an indefatigable collector, seemingly stationed at the business end of every printing press in town. Other collectors throughout the North also supplied him with material, and soldiers in the field even sent him Confederate ephemera. He gave his vast collection, which numbers about 50,000 pieces, to the Library Company in the 1880’s. Among the treasures on display is a seven-foot-tall broadside recruiting poster imploring *Men of Color to Arms! To Arms! Now or Never*.

The exhibition offers a comprehensive snapshot of Philadelphia that tells an important part of the story of our nation during the Civil War. It touches on military recruitment, political campaigns, balls, benefits, theaters, and social life; support groups such as the Union League, the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon, and the Sanitary Commission and Great Central Fair; hospitals; and other examples of municipal engagement in support of (and sometimes in opposition to) the Union cause.

*John A. McAllister’s Civil War* and related public programming are supported by Independence Foundation and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. Additional support comes from the Albert M. Greenfield Foundation, which funds the Library Company’s Program in African American History for acquisitions, conservation, fellowships, public programming, and educational outreach.

### **Background Information about the Library Company**

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library concentrating on American history and culture from the 17th through 19th centuries. Free and open to the public, the Library Company houses an extensive non-circulating collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera and works of art. The mission of the Library Company is to preserve, interpret, make available, and augment the valuable materials within our care. We serve a diverse constituency throughout Philadelphia and the nation, offering comprehensive reader services, an internationally renowned fellowship program, an online public access catalog, and regular exhibitions and public programs. Located at 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, it is open to the public free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Library Company can be found online at [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org).

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