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Contact: Kim Rothwell
Alta Communications
215.790.7837
kim@alta247.com

RELEASE OF *THE MAGAZINE ANTIQUES* AND *THE LIBRARY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN* CELEBRATES 275 YEARS OF RESEARCH AND COLLECTING

Philadelphia – August XX, 2006 – In 2006, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the nation’s first lending library, celebrates its 275th anniversary. Today, the Library Company is a world renowned research center concentrating on American history and culture from the 17th through 19th centuries, and serves as a resource for the general public. Two publications have recently been released which attest to the extensiveness of the collections housed in America’s oldest cultural institution.

The Magazine Antiques

The August 2006 edition of *The Magazine Antiques* is dedicated to the history and collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia as the institution celebrates its 275th anniversary year. *The Magazine Antiques* is one of the preeminent magazines for collectors, dealers, museum professionals and others who have an interest in gaining knowledge and insight about fine art and antiques.

Nine articles about the Library’s history spread over sixty-four colorful pages highlight much of what is available within the Library Company’s extensive collection, as well as giving readers a more in-depth look at bindings, colorplate books, paintings and sculpture, clocks, advertising prints, American leisure, Civil War-era ephemera, and the album of George Albert Lewis. The fascinating articles were contributed by Library Company staff and members who are experts in various fields.

The Library of Benjamin Franklin

In the 1950s, Edwin Wolf II, librarian, Library Company of Philadelphia embarked on a quest to reconstruct the library of Benjamin Franklin, which was the largest and best private library in

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The Library Company OF PHILADELPHIA

American at the time of his death in 1790. The contents of Franklin's library had been virtually unknown until Wolf identified the unique shelfmarks that Franklin used to organize his books. Through this marking, Wolf was able to locate approximately 2,700 titles in 1,000 volumes that Franklin actually owned, now on the shelves of the Library Company, the American Philosophical Society, and a score of other libraries.

When Wolf died in 1991, he had not yet finished his work reconstructing Franklin's library, but Kevin J. Hayes took up the project and brought it to fruition. The end product, *The Library of Benjamin Franklin*, has just been published by the Library Company in cooperation with the American Philosophical Society, another Philadelphia Franklin-founded institution. The 900-page tome includes almost 4,000 books known to have been owned by Franklin. His library included a wide variety of subjects representing Franklin's diverse interests, as well as classic literary works. This catalog of the books that influenced one of America's most important historical figures will be studied with great interest by scholars around the world.

The Library Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, is an independent research library encompassing over half a million rare books, prints, and photographs documenting every aspect of American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. It is a research center serving a national and international constituency of scholars and presents exhibitions and programs for the public. The Library Company is located at 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, and is open 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.

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