



The Library Company OF PHILADELPHIA

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"THE GENIUS OF FREEDOM" AT THE LIBRARY COMPANY OPENS November 11

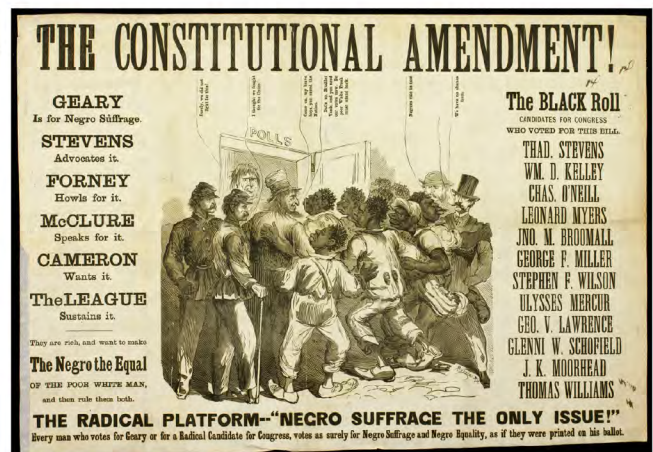
Exhibition on African American Struggles for Citizenship and Civil Rights in the North after the Civil War



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—November 6, 2014—On November 11, the Library Company will open an exhibition documenting African American political and social activism in the North in the decades after Emancipation. "The Genius of Freedom: Northern Black Activism and Uplift after the Civil War," Curator of African History Krystal Appiah's first major exhibition since joining the Library Company in 2012, will run through June 26, 2015. Collection materials on display include rare documents from nineteenth-century Colored Conventions, political activism and civil rights organizing across

the North, and movements to reclaim history and instill racial pride, "Genius of Freedom" turns the spotlight on the relatively less-studied Northern States in the period of Reconstruction.

The end of the Civil War and the subsequent abolition of Southern slavery were a source of jubilation for African Americans throughout the United States. Black activists and their white allies were instrumental in the passage of federal laws that expanded civil rights for African Americans. African Americans in the North, however, learned that local laws and social customs often still left them on the fringes of citizenship and success. As a result, Northern blacks sought to empower their communities through political protest and uplift initiatives that emphasized equality, self-reliance, and pride.





As the 19th century progressed, the domestic parlor became an increasingly important symbol of middle-class respectability in the US. African Americans in the North expressed racial pride and celebrated their new citizenship status by decorating their homes with inspirational pictures and texts of black life and accomplishments. Visit the Library Company to view large-scale lithographs of black political and social leaders and editions of the first histories of the contributions made by Americans of African descent written by black people, among the many other documents of the struggles and triumphs of Reconstruction.

Library Company 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.

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