The Charter of the Library Company of Burlington

George the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc. To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting.

Whereas Charles Read, Joseph Noble, Samuel Smith, Colin Campbell, Thomas Scattergood, Daniel Smith sen., Joshua Rapes, Daniel Doughty, John James Kinsey, Thomas Wetherill sen., William Foster, Hugh Hartshorne, Edward Cattrell, William Skeels, James Smith, Thomas Wetherill jun., Ennion Williams, William Buckley, Thomas Marriot, Robert Smith, John Lawrence, William Hawkins, John Bacon, William Smith, Jonathan Smith, Samuel Rodman, Samuel How, Joseph Imlay, Patrick, O'Hanlon, Asher Woodman, Henry Paxson, Aarent Schuyler, Scarmon Rodman, William Black, Thomas Shaw, Peter Harvey, John Oskin, Daniel Smith jun., Richard Smith, Samuel Black, Samuel Peart, John Shaw, Daniel Ellis, John Carty, Joseph Allinson, Samuel Allinson, Isaac Hewlings, John Tyler, William Lyndell, Thomas Robinson, Paul Saunders, James Collum, John Ewing and Preserve Brown, have agreed to Purchase a Collection of Useful Books, in order to erect a Library for the Advancement of Knowledge and Literature in the City of Burlington: And Whereas several public-spirited persons, have already aforesaid, Now Know Ye, That we being truly sensible of the Advantage that may accrue to the People of this Province, by so useful an Undertaking, and Presents, Do, for Us, our Heirs and Successors, give and grant that the said persons (as above) and such other Persons, as shall be admitted, or become Members of the Library Company of Burlington, according to the Laws and Constitution of the said Company, hereafter to be made, be, and forever hereafter shall be, by Virtue of these Presents, one Body Corporate and Politic in Deed, by the name of The Library Company of Burlington; and them by the Name of the Library Company of Burlington, One Body, Politic and Corporate, in Deed and in Name, We Do for Us, Our Heirs, and Successors, fully create, constitute and confirm by these Presents; and that by the name of The Library Company of Burlington, they shall have perpetual Succession; and that they, by the name of The Library Company of Burlington, be, and at all Times hereafter shall be, Persons able and capable in Law to Have, Hold, Receive and enjoy Lanes, Tenements, Rents, Liberties, Franchises and Hereditaments in Fee simple, or for the Term of Life, Lives, Years or otherwise, not exceeding the Yearly Value of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling Money; and also Goods, Chattels and Other Things, of what Nature, Kind or Quality, several. And also to Give, Grant, Let, Sell or Assign, the same Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, Goods and Chattels; and to do and Execute all other Things about the same by the name aforesaid; And Also, that they and their Successors, by the Name of The Library Company of Burlington, be, and shall be, forever hereafter, Persons able and capable in Law, to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered unto, defend and be defended; in all or any of the Courts, or other Places, and before any Judges, Justices, and other Persons whatsoever,
in all Manner of Actions, Suits, Complaints, Pleas, Causes and Matters whatsoever. And that it shall and may be lawful, to and for the said Library Company of Burlington, and their Successors forever, to have one common Seal for their Use, in their Affairs; and the same at their Will and Pleasure to alter. And for the well-governing, and Ordering the Affairs of the said Company, We do, for Us, Our Heirs, and Successors, further grant, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Company, and their Successors, to assemble and meet together on the first Saturday in May in every Year, and at such other Times as there shall be occasion, at their Library, or some other convenient Place, due and public Notice being given at least twenty days before the time of such meetings; not only of the Day, Hour, and Place of such meeting, but of the cause thereof, and of the matters to be transacted at such meeting. And that then the said Company, or one Fourth Part of them at least, being so met in Person or by Proxy duly constituted in writing, shall have full Power and Authority, from Time to Time to make, constitute and establish such Laws, Statutes, Orders and Constitutions, as shall appear to them or the major Part of them, to be good and Useful, Honest, and Necessary, according to the best of their Judgment and Discretion, for the Government, Regulation and Direction of the Library Company, and every Member thereof; and for the Appointing and Regulating the Election of Nomination of Directors, Treasurer, Librarian, Secretary, and such and so many other Officers, as they shall think fit; and for Limiting and Appointing their Trust and Authority; and for the Admitting new Members; and to all Things concerning the Government, Estate, Goods, Lands Revenues, and also the Benefits and Affairs of the said Company. All which Laws, Statutes, Orders and Constitutions, so to be made as aforesaid, shall be binding on every Member, and be from Time to Time invioably observed, according to the Tenor and Effect of them, provided that they be not repugnant to the Laws of England, or our government of New Jersey. Provided always, That for the Increase and Preservation of the said Library, every Member of the said Company shall and do pay into the Hands of the said Company’s Treasurer, for the Time being, the sum of Ten Shillings, on the first Saturday in May in every Year forever; and those who Neglect to do so, shall pay such greater Sum or Sums in Lieu thereof, not exceeding Twenty Shillings, Sterling Money, at such Times, within Twelve Months then next following as by the Laws of the said Company shall be appointed. And that in default of these Payments, every Delinquent, being a resident in this Colony, of same mind and full age, shall forfeit his Share in the Books and Estate of the said Company and be no longer a Member. In Testimony whereof, We have caused these our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of our said Province of New Jersey to be hereunto affixed. Witness our truly and well-beloved John Reading, Esq., President of our Council, and Commander in Chief of our Colony of New Jersey, at Burlington, the First Day of January, in the Thirty-first Year of our Reign, and in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-eight.

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