

Scholars and authors Dr. Michael J. Birkner, Dr. Randall M. Miller, and Dr. John W. Quist to speak on October 30

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LancasterHistory

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Celebratory book launch, panel discussion of new Buchanan and Stevens scholarship to be held at LancasterHistory

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Lancaster, PA (October 7, 2019) – Join LancasterHistory on Wednesday, October 30 for a celebratory book launch of *The Worlds of James Buchanan and Thaddeus Stevens: Place, Personality, and Politics in the Civil War Era*. A reception and book signing at 4pm will be followed by a panel discussion featuring three esteemed historians with essays included in the book: Michael J. Birkner, Ph.D.; Randall M. Miller, Ph.D.; and John W. Quist, Ph.D.

This recently-released book examines the political interests, relationships, and practices of two of the era's most prominent politicians, James Buchanan and Thaddeus Stevens, as well as the political landscapes they inhabited and informed. Both men called Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, their home, and both were bachelors. During the 1850s, James Buchanan tried to keep the Democratic Party alive as the slavery debate divided his peers and the political system. Thaddeus Stevens, meanwhile, as Whig turned Republican, invested in the federal government to encourage economic development and social reform, especially antislavery and Republican Reconstruction.

Considering Buchanan and Stevens's divergent lives alongside their political and social worlds reveals the dynamics and directions of American politics, especially northern interests and identities. While focusing on these individuals, the contributors also explore the roles of parties and patronage in informing political loyalties and behavior. They further track personal connections across lines of gender and geography and underline the importance of details like who regularly dined and conversed with whom, the complex social milieu of Washington, the role of rumor in determining political allegiances, and the ways personality and failing relationships mattered in a hothouse of national politics fueled by slavery and expansion.

The essays in *The Worlds of James Buchanan and Thaddeus Stevens* collectively invite further consideration of how parties, personality, place, and private lives influenced the political interests and actions of an age affected by race, religion, region, civil war, and reconstruction. This publication grew out of *The President James Buchanan National Symposium* which took place at LancasterHistory on September 18 and 19, 2015. The symposium was generously supported by The National Endowment for the Humanities, Miss Margaret J. Neff, Mr. and Mrs. Rick Rodgers, The Wilbur S. and Sally J. Smith Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel B. Strickler, Jr.

PANELISTS & AUTHORS

Michael J. Birkner, Ph.D. is Professor of History at Gettysburg College, where he has taught since 1989. Birkner is the author or editor of fourteen books and many articles on 19th and 20th century American political history, including three edited volumes on Pennsylvania's only president, James Buchanan, and three others on Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 2003 and 2006 he served as a member of the history jury for the Pulitzer Prize, chairing the jury in 2006.

Randall M. Miller, Ph.D. is the William Dirk Warren '50 Sesquicentennial Chair and Professor of History at Saint Joseph's University. He is the author, co-author, editor, or co-editor of numerous books that treat a variety of subjects. Among those related to the Civil War are *Religion and the American Civil War* (Oxford University Press); *The Birth of the Grand Old Party: The Republicans' First Generation* (University of Pennsylvania Press); *Lincoln & Leadership: Military, Political, and Religious Decision Making* (Fordham University Press); *The Northern Home Front during the Civil War* (Praeger); and *Women and the American Civil War: North-South Counterpoints* (Kent State University Press). He also is the author of more than 80 articles and essays on a variety of topics including the Civil War era, and he has been a consultant for exhibits and documentaries on

various subjects, including the Civil War, which have aired on PBS and other TV outlets across the country.

John W. Quist, Ph.D. is professor of history at Shippensburg University. He is the author or editor of several books including *Restless Visionaries: The Social Roots of Antebellum Reform in Alabama and Michigan* (Louisiana State University Press, 1998) and *Michigan's War: The Civil War in Documents* (Ohio University Press, 2019).

TICKETS

This event will take place on Wednesday, October 30, 2019 in Ryder Hall at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue in Lancaster. A speaker's reception and book signing by the authors takes place at 4pm, followed by the moderated panel discussion at 4:30pm. The event is free and open to the public, but **advance registration is required to guarantee a seat at the presentation**. Visit www.lancasterhistory.org to register online or call (717) 392-4633. Questions and accessibility requests may be directed to info@lancasterhistory.org or (717) 392-4633.

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