



LancasterHistory

OBJECT DONATION FAQ

What does LancasterHistory collect?

LancasterHistory collects a wide variety of materials that represent the history of Lancaster County, the life and legacies of President James Buchanan, Thaddeus Stevens, and Lydia Hamilton Smith, and the decorative arts traditions of Lancaster County, including:

- Historical objects
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Books
- Art
- Maps
- Ephemera
- Oral history
- Audio/visual recordings
- Born-digital images, recordings, manuscripts, etc.

What kinds of materials are you collecting for the Legacies of Reconstruction collection?

The Legacies of Reconstruction Collection is concerned with issues of civil rights, freedom, equality, voting, and democracy throughout American history, on both a local and national level, across all groups of people. The following list is not exhaustive but will offer a sense of the kinds of social movements and events we're exploring. Among other issues and events, the collection covers:

- The civil rights movements of the 1960s
- The Black Power and "Black is Beautiful" movements of the 1970s
- School segregation and integration
- The Black Lives Matter movement and protests or activism concerning police brutality
- The women's liberation movement and the Equal Rights Amendment
- Reproductive Rights
- The #MeToo movement
- Movements for LGBTQ rights and marriage equality
- Movements for the rights of people with disabilities
- The history of citizenship, immigration, asylum, and refugee communities
- Materials related to voting, voting rights, and democracy including voter registration cards, voter education materials, ballots, sample ballots, and campaign materials

Among other materials, the Legacies of Reconstruction Collection will include:

- Posters
- Photographs
- Flyers
- Prints
- Newspapers
- Magazines

- Bumper stickers
- Buttons and Pins
- 3-D Objects

How can I donate an item?

Please complete [this online form](#) or [paper form \[PDF, 192kb\]](#) and a staff member who specializes in the appropriate collecting area will follow up with you to request clear, high-resolution images and/or to meet if LancasterHistory is interested in learning more about the item(s). Donors can also reach out directly to relevant departments.

How does LancasterHistory decide whether to accept a donation?

LancasterHistory considers many factors when reviewing a donation, including, but not limited to, the item's historical or cultural significance; physical condition; whether or not LancasterHistory already owns a similar item or copy; the ability of LancasterHistory to store and care for an item; and the item's ownership and use history.

Potential additions to the permanent collection go through a rigorous review process and are subject to a vote by LancasterHistory's Collections Committee. Other donations may be added to the library collection or education collection for public use and educational programming. If you do not wish to donate your item, we still invite you to discuss it with us for a potential loan now or for a future exhibition.

Are donated items accessible to the public?

Yes. Donated items are accessible to the public for research and through exhibitions. Items in LancasterHistory's collections that are not on exhibit are available for research on-site during regular hours and online on our website. All artifacts are preserved in secure, climate-controlled storage areas when not on display.

Does LancasterHistory ever remove or return objects from its permanent collection?

Donated items are sometimes deaccessioned (permanently removed from the museum's collections) for several reasons, including duplicate items, materials that have deteriorated beyond repair or beyond the reasonable cost of repair, or materials that are considered injurious to health and safety. We do not accept items into the permanent collection if we have a concern that they may need to be deaccessioned.

Items that have been formally accessioned into the collections cannot be returned to the donor or their descendants. At the end of the donation process, donors are asked to sign a Deed of Gift that legally transfers ownership of the materials, as well as all associated rights and interests, to LancasterHistory.

Can I get a tax deduction for my donation?

Donations to LancasterHistory are generally tax deductible. Consult with a tax specialist to determine your eligibility. The staff of LancasterHistory cannot provide a monetary appraisal of your gift, but we may be able to suggest professional appraisers. In most cases, an appraisal of the donated item will be necessary to receive a tax deduction.