



LancasterHistory

For Immediate Release

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LancasterHistory to Host Inaugural Wreath-Laying, Family-Friendly Events Honoring Lydia Hamilton Smith

Remarks, A Visit by 'Edutainer' Darlene Colón to Honor, Educate About Important Lancasterian

LANCASTER, PA — On Saturday, February 8, 2025, **LancasterHistory** will host two events honoring and celebrating **Lydia Hamilton Smith** at **St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery** in Lancaster City and at LancasterHistory's main headquarters at 230 N. President Avenue. Both events take place a week before Lydia Hamilton Smith's birthday and death date (February 14).

Lydia Hamilton Smith (1815-1884) served as **Congressman Thaddeus Stevens'** housekeeper and confidante. She expertly managed access to one of the country's most powerful politicians and played a critical role in supporting his career. Despite the prejudice she faced as a mixed-race woman, she became a successful property owner and accomplished business woman, owning and managing multiple properties in Lancaster, PA and Washington, D.C.

At 11am on February 8, LancasterHistory will host an inaugural wreath-laying ceremony for Smith at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery. The ceremony will feature the laying of fresh flowers at Smith's gravesite and remarks by community leaders: **Robin Sarratt** (President & CEO,

LancasterHistory), **Father Brian Olkowski** (St. Mary's Catholic Church), **Shianne Hargrove** (Vice President, **African American Historical Society of South Central PA**), **Blanding Watson** (President, **Lancaster Branch of the NAACP**), and **Darlene Colón**.

Later that afternoon, the public is invited to LancasterHistory for a reception and family-friendly event, "In The Spirit of Lydia." A reception begins at 2pm, followed by a program featuring an interactive program with Lydia Hamilton Smith, played by 'edutainer' Darlene Colón, who has been interpreting the life of Mrs. Smith for over two decades.

"Lydia Hamilton Smith deserves a prominent place in Lancaster's historical narrative," said Robin Sarratt, LancasterHistory's President & CEO. "LancasterHistory is honored to celebrate the memory of this remarkable woman."

Both events are free and open to the public. For the wreath-laying, LancasterHistory requests that individuals register in advance so that they may contact them in the event of cancellation due to inclement weather. Attendees may register [online](#) or by calling 717.392.4633. Please register with an actively monitored cellphone and email address in the event of cancellations. For the afternoon, "In The Spirit of Lydia" event, individuals can also register [online](#) or by calling 717.392.4633. This event will take place indoors.

For information on accessibility and parking for the wreath-laying at St. Mary's Cemetery, [please click here](#). "In The Spirit of Lydia" will take place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, where there is ample parking onsite.

About LancasterHistory

LancasterHistory is a community-based, not-for-profit organization established to educate the public on the history of Lancaster County and its place in the history of Pennsylvania and the United States, to advance the missions of regional historical organizations, and to promote the acquisition, preservation, and interpretation of resources representing the history of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania within the broader context of state and national history, including the homes of 15th US President James Buchanan and home and law office of Congressman Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith.

About The Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy

The Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy is an interpretive museum and education center being developed by LancasterHistory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Opening in 2026, the Center will examine the life and career of Congressman Stevens and his associate Lydia Hamilton Smith, as well as the long, arduous struggle for freedom and equality in America, through state-of-the-art exhibits, immersive media experiences, and educational programs.

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