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Contact: Emily Miller
Director of Marketing & Communications
717-392-4633 ext. 133
emily.miller@lancasterhistory.org

LancasterHistory to host virtual reading of play on aftermath of the Civil War, Thaddeus Stevens in honor of Constitution Day

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Lancaster, PA (August 13, 2021) – On Friday, September 17, 2021, in honor of Constitution Day, LancasterHistory will host a virtual, staged reading of "Now's the Time," a historical, political drama written by Jean Parvin Bordewich. Directed by Jennifer Welch and performed by professional actors from across the United States, the drama centers on Thaddeus Stevens, Lydia Hamilton Smith, the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, and the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson during the early years of Reconstruction in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

As the play opens, the Civil War has just ended but the nation is plunged again into crisis with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Andrew Johnson ascends to the presidency determined to restore white supremacy in the South. Congressional radicals led by Thaddeus Stevens are fighting for a different vision. They intend to create a new society of full racial equality, where Black Americans will have real economic and political power, including ownership of land confiscated from the rebels, education, suffrage and election to public office. In the play, this titanic political battle between president and Congress culminates in the first impeachment and trial of a U.S. president, and continuing violence and discrimination against Black Americans

for another 150 years.

“Now’s the Time” was previously presented and read for an event hosted by the United States Capitol Historical Society in Washington, D.C. in 2020. LancasterHistory is the second organization to host a public reading of the play.

“Jean Bordewich’s play [“Now’s the Time”] is a riveting portrayal of post-Civil War politics, presidential impeachment, and the seemingly endless quest for a full measure of freedom for formerly enslaved Black people in America,” says Tom Ryan, President and CEO of LancasterHistory. “LancasterHistory is thrilled to be the next stop on this play’s journey. You won’t want to miss it!”

Following the reading, a panel will convene to discuss themes and topics presented in “Now’s the Time.” Bordewich will be joined on the panel by her spouse, Fergus M. Bordewich, historian and recent author of [*Congress at War*](#), and Dr. Matthew Pinsker, professor of history and Director of the [*“House Divided Project”*](#) at Dickinson College. A discussion between the playwright and these two scholars will be moderated by LancasterHistory’s Tom Ryan. The entire event is estimated to last two hours.

“Now’s the Time,” virtual play reading and panel, will take place on Constitution Day, Friday, September 17, 2021 at 7pm Eastern. The event is free and open to the public, but advance registration is required. Registration is available online at <https://bit.ly/sept17ntt>. Registrants will receive a digital copy of the program a few days in advance of the performance. A link to watch the event will also be emailed to registrants a few days before the performance. The performance and panel will not be recorded or available online to view after the event. Registrants are encouraged to tune in live from the comfort of their own homes for an evening of historical theater. Constitution Day is the anniversary of the day in 1787 when the nation’s Founding Father’s signed the most influential document in American history, the United States’ Constitution.

About the Playwright

Jean Parvin Bordewich (pronounced “bor-de-wick”) explores the intersection of history, politics and the moral choices of people in public life in her plays. Her own political career spans 20 years in senior positions in the Senate and House of Representatives, nine years as a town council member, and her campaign for a seat in Congress. Before “Now’s the Time,” she wrote and produced “Hunt,” a play about the tragic blackmail of U.S. Senator Lester Hunt in the 1950s by

allies of Senator Joseph McCarthy. It had several public readings, including one hosted by Senator Tammy Baldwin in the U.S. Senate. In early 2021, she was commissioned to write two short plays about political conflict for a Washington, D.C. theater series, "Difficult Conversations: Bridging the Divide." Jean and her husband live in San Francisco.

About the Director

Jennifer Welch is the founder and creator of [StoryWorks Theater](#), a documentary theater company that transforms investigative journalism into theater and audio dramas. Since launching StoryWorks in 2013, Welch has developed plays with Reveal and The Center for Investigative Reporting, HuffPost, The Kansas City Star, NJTV, KCPT, The Arizona Daily Star, and Mississippi Today. Each play has reached a different region of the country and helped to drive social change by exposing America's structural inequality and the costs of human injustice. In doing so, her work reveals not only the factual truths, which are verified by deep investigative reporting but the emotional revelations that theater conveys. She is also a contributing producer for *Reveal*, the Peabody Award-winning public radio show and podcast from CIR and PRX. Welch is a 2017 recipient of the Midwest Innocence Project's Sean O'Brien Freedom Award and was named a 2020 *Preserver of Mississippi Culture* by the Mississippi Humanities Council. She is based in San Francisco, California and Clarksdale, Mississippi.

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["Now's the Time" Graphic](#)

[Jean Bordewich \[Photo\]](#)

[Jennifer Welch \[Photo\]](#)