



# LancasterHistory

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Emily Miller  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
717-392-4633 ext. 133  
[emily.miller@lancasterhistory.org](mailto:emily.miller@lancasterhistory.org)

## **LancasterHistory Presents: 'Thieves & Vagabonds: A History of Law & Justice in Lancaster County'**

*New Exhibition Traces Lancaster's Evolving Pursuit of Justice and Equality*

**LANCASTER, Pa.** – LancasterHistory is excited to unveil its newest exhibition, *Thieves & Vagabonds: A History of Law & Justice in Lancaster County*, on Friday, November 17, 2023. The exhibition offers visitors an immersive journey through Lancaster County's tumultuous history of law and justice from the 18th century to the 20th century.

Covering a vast timeline, from the early European settlers' interactions with Indigenous peoples, to the idealism of the civil rights movements of the 20th century, *Thieves & Vagabonds* shines a light on lawmaking, lawbreaking, and the impact of both on the Lancaster community.

"With *Thieves & Vagabonds*, we aim to illuminate the complex history of law and justice in Lancaster County, guiding visitors on a journey through transformative moments – including both failures and successes – in the pursuit of freedom, equality, and fairness for all in our community,"

**Dr. Mabel M. Rosenheck**, Director of Education and Exhibition Planning, said. "This exhibition is not just a narrative of the past, but a lens through which we can better understand our present and foster a more just future."

## **Highlights from the Exhibition Include:**

- Two Lady Justice statue heads from atop the Lancaster County courthouse;
- Books from the colonial law library of Jasper Yeates;
- A jury selection drum used at the Lancaster County courthouse from the early 1800s until the 1970s;
- An 1851 door from a Lancaster County Prison cell;
- Two liquor stills confiscated by police during prohibition;
- The service weapon that belonged to Elwood Gainor, a victim of murder and only Lancaster City police officer to be killed while on duty; and
- The black and pink banner used by the Pink Triangle Coalition during marches for LGBTQ civil rights in the 1990s.

## ***Thieves & Vagabonds***

The title "Thieves & Vagabonds" is derived from the 1728 petition to Governor John Penn which asked for the creation of Lancaster County. The petition highlighted the challenges of policing distant wilderness areas and the aspiration to instill peace, safety, and justice through the government, courts, and prisons that would enforce laws in the new county.

Throughout the exhibition, LancasterHistory invites visitors to think critically about their personal perceptions of law and justice. Why do we have laws? What is justice? Is justice truly blind? The exhibition and future related educational programming aim to promote introspection and community dialogue on the complexities of law and justice.

## **How to Visit**

The exhibition opens to the public on Friday, November 17, coinciding with the ExtraGive. After November 17, the exhibition will be on display during regular operating hours at LancasterHistory, Monday - Saturday, 9:30am - 5pm. Visitors can see the exhibition by purchasing a General Admission (or Yuletide General Admission) ticket or a Museum Exhibitions Only ticket. LancasterHistory Members visit for free.

## **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 Congressman Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith.*

###

**"Thieves & Vagabonds" Badge Seal**

**"Thieves & Vagabonds" Lady Justice**

**"Thieves & Vagabonds" Word Mark**

Artwork above created by Foxduck for LancasterHistory.  
Contact Emily Miller for higher resolution images.