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# LancasterHistory

## For Immediate Release

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## LancasterHistory receives state funding for the digitization of Lancaster County's Black History and Thaddeus Stevens Collections

*The grant will digitize over 500 historic documents and make them publicly accessible online.*

Lancaster, PA (March 26, 2021) – On March 3, 2021, LancasterHistory was named a recipient of a 2021 Historical & Archival Records Care (HARC) grant by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC). The \$4,669 award will be used to digitize and make publicly accessible LancasterHistory's collections pertaining to the history of Black Lancasterians and people of color, and Congressman Thaddeus Stevens.

LancasterHistory has a small but rich collection of resources related to the history of Black Lancasterians and Indigenous people since the 18th century. While these items are well-maintained, they have not been digitized and available online, limiting public access to the records to those who can visit in person. Funding from the HARC grant will be used to digitize 425 documents and manuscripts from 24 different historic collections specifically related to people of color in Lancaster County, as well as 138 items from the Thaddeus Stevens Collection. At the end of this project, approximately 4,000 digital scans will be available online in LancasterHistory's collections database for the public to search for free.

The collections items that will be prioritized in this project fall into two principal categories: collection items related to Black history and the history of the Indigenous people in the region, and items related to Congressman Thaddeus Stevens. Among the former are records of enslaved persons in Lancaster County; records of free and freed men and women of color before 1850; bills of sale; correspondence, including letters from abolitionists and Civil War soldiers; apprentice indentures; material related to Crispus Attucks Community Center; Mechanics' Liens; Habeas Corpus records, which include petitions by indentured servants, enslaved people who have fled to Lancaster County, and free African Americans; and, miscellaneous ephemera related to the Black community in Lancaster County.

The second collection to be included in this project contains the papers of Congressman and abolitionist, Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868). The 138 items in this collection include original and reproduced documents related to Stevens, his personal life, and political legacy. Among numerous items are correspondence in personal, political, and business contexts; Stevens' will and legal documents related to his estate; and several contemporary newspaper articles related to Stevens and his legacy (with corresponding letters stemming from an article regarding the presentation of a cane owned by Stevens to W. W. Griest). Other items include miscellaneous materials related to events marking Stevens' 200th birthday, prints and engravings, and miscellaneous legal documents.

The digitization of the historic documents will be completed by Backstage Library Works of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. LancasterHistory previously worked with Backstage Library Works on the digitization of artifacts related to the James Buchanan Online Presidential Library. Connected with the digitization process, LancasterHistory will write, review, and revise new and past database artifact descriptions and finding aids for each item to ensure they are represented with inclusive and bias-free language. Digitized items along with their descriptions and finding aids will then be uploaded to LancasterHistory's collections database, <https://collections.lancasterhistory.org>, which is free for the public to view and search. The project is slated to begin in August 2021 and is anticipated to be completed in May 2022.

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