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# LancasterHistory

## For Immediate Release

*All events are camera friendly, and principals will be available for interviews.*

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## LancasterHistory's new Wheatland 360° Virtual Field Trip offers sweeping views, educational videos of presidential mansion

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Lancaster, PA (November 16, 2020) – LancasterHistory is excited to offer a new way for visitors to experience President James Buchanan's Wheatland: the Wheatland 360° Virtual Field Trip. Beginning November 16th, the Virtual Field Trip will be available on [LancasterHistory's website](#), allowing visitors to experience high-resolution, panoramic, 360° images of the interiors of Wheatland, accompanied by information and educational videos about historic events and various historic artifacts within the presidential mansion.

At a time when the home of America's 15th president would normally be welcoming buses full of tourists and students alike, President James Buchanan's Wheatland has remained closed to the public for in-person tours since shutting its doors in March due to COVID-19. Currently the site does offer virtual tours options, such as the Wheatland Virtual Tours and, soon, Yuletide at Wheatland Virtual Tours, both available through the popular teleconferencing tool, Zoom. To provide students with full access to both the home and the history of its inhabitants, LancasterHistory worked with local filmmaker Brad Kenyon and a team from his video production company, Aurora Films, to create a dynamic, self-directed Virtual Field Trip that students and

educators can access online. Aurora Films previously worked with LancasterHistory to create its award-winning 2019 short documentary film, *Buchanan's America: A Nation Divided*.

"With this project, we wanted to create a virtual environment where the staff at LancasterHistory had the most flexibility to tell their stories. We began by stitching together a series of 360 photos of the entire mansion at Wheatland. This allows the viewer to navigate the rooms on their own, encountering different popups about photos and artifacts along the way." says Kenyon. "There are also video hotspots that can be accessed on the tour that act as a continuous collection of workshops and stories about what we continue to learn about Buchanan's life."

Actor, educator, and Alumni Affairs Coordinator for McCaskey High School Jeremiah Miller lent his talents to the project by portraying the President's nephew, James Buchanan Henry. Funding from the Pryor E. & Arlene R. Neuber Charitable Trust helped make the Virtual Field Trip possible.

"The exciting thing about this project," says LancasterHistory Vice President, Robin Sarratt, "is that it fills a void created by the COVID-19 pandemic but has an application that goes way beyond solving one problem at a particular moment. It's challenging under the best of circumstances for schools to undertake off-site field trips these days. Having this virtual option allows teachers and parents to bring the field trip into the classroom or living room. And, it allows us to reach school groups across the country for whom a trip to Lancaster simply isn't possible."

The Wheatland 360° Virtual Field Trip was produced in late summer 2020 and features LancasterHistory volunteers and staff who portray historic characters or facilitate workshops in educational videos sprinkled throughout the tour. The field trip begins with a view of the north-facing front of the Wheatland mansion and an introductory video featuring James Buchanan "Buck" Henry, James Buchanan's nephew, played by Miller, welcoming viewers into the home. From there, viewers can navigate from room to room, floor to floor, to view different educational videos or click on historic artifacts to learn more. Educational videos include workshops on using primary sources, how women dressed in the Victorian era, and how food was gathered and prepared in the 19th-century. Each room features high-resolution, panoramic, 360° images, allowing viewers to click and turn in each space to take in the full room.

The Wheatland 360° Virtual Field Trip is now available online at

<https://www.lancasterhistory.org/360wheatland>. There is no charge to view or explore the

Virtual Field Trip, but donations towards future educational programs and tools are gratefully accepted at <https://www.lancasterhistory.org/donate> or on November 20th during the Extraordinary Give to LancasterHistory at [extragive.org](https://extragive.org).

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