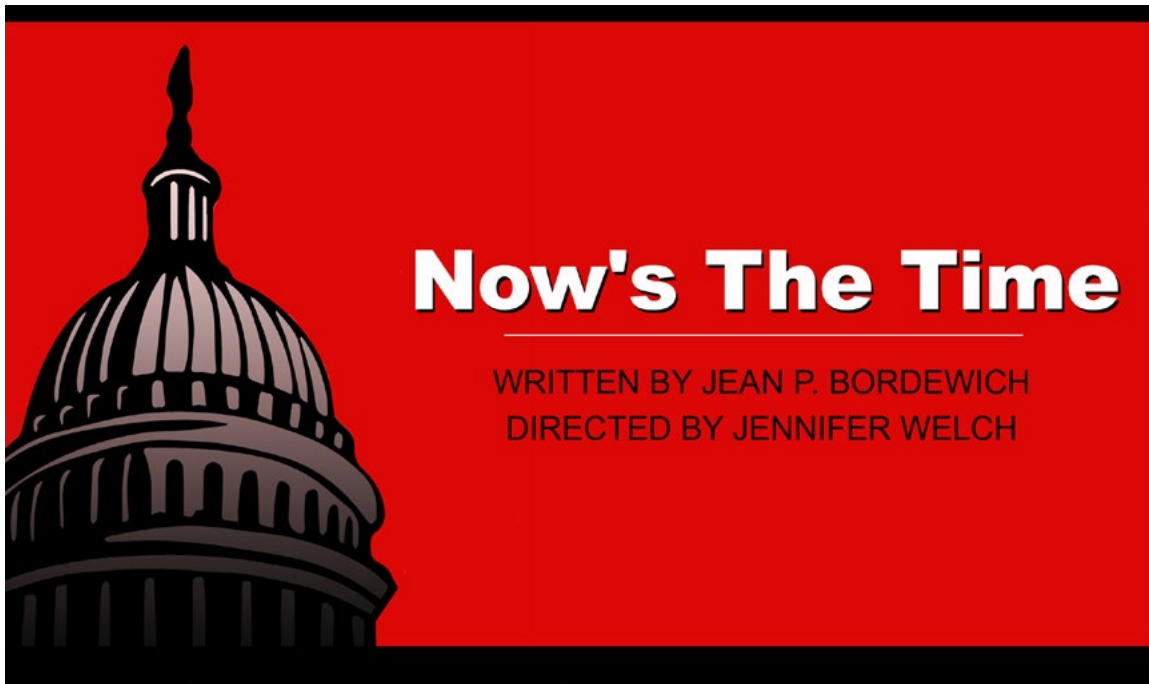




LancasterHistory

PRESENTS



A Staged Reading of the Play

NOW'S THE TIME

Written by Jean Parvin Bordewich

Directed by Jennifer Welch

The nation is in crisis. The president is out of control. Congress is locked in a fierce contest against him and his supporters. Hanging on the outcome are the fate of a president, a race of people, and the future of the country.

After the devastating Civil War and assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, the United States faced a critical decision: Under what terms would former Confederate states return to the Union? Vice President, now President, Andrew Johnson was determined to pardon the rebels, guarantee white supremacy, and readmit the states quickly. Rep. Thaddeus Stevens led "radicals" in Congress who fought relentlessly for a different vision: a new society of full racial equality, where black Americans would have real economic and political power, including ownership of land confiscated from Confederates, education, suffrage, and election to public office. The titanic political battle between them culminated in the first impeachment and acquittal of a president, and to more than 150 years of continued violence and discrimination against black Americans.

CAST

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus Stevens	.....	Scott Sedar
Mrs. Lydia Hamilton Smith	.....	Tristan Cunningham
Mr. George T. Downing	.....	Frank Oakley, III
Irish Soldier (and others)	.....	Ben Lauer
President Andrew Johnson	.....	Lawrence Radecker
Senator William Pitt Fessenden	.....	Robert Parsons
Narrator	.....	Layla Young

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	.....	Jennifer Welch
Playwright	.....	Jean Parvin Bordewich
Stage Manager	.....	Layla Young
Technical Director	.....	Leanna Keyes

SPECIAL THANKS

LancasterHistory’s educational programs are made possible by members and supporters like you. Thank you!

BIOGRAPHIES

JEAN PARVIN BORDEWICH (*Playwright*) 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 for a Washington, DC, theater series, “Difficult Conversations: Bridging the Divide.” Jean lives in San Francisco with her husband, historian and author Fergus M. Bordewich.

JENNIFER (JENNA) WELCH (*Director*) is the founder and creator of StoryWorks, 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.

LEANNA KEYES (*Technical Director*) is a multi-hyphenate theater professional. As a producer, she has pioneered systems for digital live events including performances, galas, and graduations, with clients from Hawaii to Maine. In July 2020, she was the technical director for the all-virtual Bay Area Playwrights Festival, featuring five plays and playwrights from around the world. As a playwright, her plays have been produced in theaters and studied at colleges around the country, including her recent work, *Doctor Voynich and Her Children*, at Uprising Theatre Co. She is a co-editor and contributor for *The Methuen Drama Book of Trans Plays*, due out next year. Just don't ask her to be a dancer. No one wants to see that. Learn more about her plays and digital live events business, Transcend Streaming, at <https://www.leannakeyes.com>.

LAYLA YOUNG (*Stage Manager, Narrator*) is the production manager for the *Hair-Itage Project* a multi-platform civil rights theater project that explores the influential role of Black owned beauty salons and barber shops in the civil rights movement across the Mississippi Delta. As the lead teaching artist for the StoryWorks Youth Theater Company, Layla creates safe spaces for creative expression, personal development and the amplification of youth voices. Layla served as Assistant Director and actor in the StoryWorks production *Wade Through The Waters* and as an actor in *Beautiful Agitators*. An Artist-in-Residence for Delta Arts Alliance, she teaches theatre to students across the MS Delta. She has her Bachelors of Science in Entertainment Industry Studies and is currently pursuing her Masters in Business Administration with an emphasis in Human Resources at Delta State University. She is based in Cleveland, Mississippi.



TRISTAN CUNNINGHAM (*Lydia Hamilton Smith*) is a S.U.N.Y Purchase Theater Arts and Film Conservatory Graduate and a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA. She won the 2016 TBA Outstanding Performance Award and the 2016 BATCC Excellence in Theater Award. She is also a trained acrobat and juggler, and has performed with Circus legends Alberto Zoppe and Marcel Marceau. Most recently she was in Season 1 of *All Rise* on CBS, Season 1 of *The Fugitive* starring Kiefer Sutherland, Season 18 of *NCIS*, and Netflix's comedy show *Family Reunion*.

BEN LAUER (*Irish Soldier, Presidential Aide*) is an actor from Washington, DC. He's excited to be returning to Now's The Time for another reading! Credits include: *The Great Commedia Hotel Murder Mystery*, *Henry V*, *The Merchant of Venice* (Faction of Fools Theatre Company); *The Master and Margarita*, *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Constellation Theatre Company); *Pride and Prejudice*, *Richard III* (NextStop Theatre Company); *Wander* (Goethe-Institut); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Prince George's County Shakespeare in the Parks); *Clover* (Ally Theatre Company); *Sense-Able* (dog&pony dc); *a love story* (Source Festival); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Brave Spirits Theatre); and others.

FRANK OAKLEY, III (*George T. Downing*) is excited to be returning to Storyworks for a really amazing show! Frank was last seen with StoryWorks in the play *Justice in the Embers as Collar* (The Living Room Theatre/Flight Deck Theatre). He is a Kansas City, KS native, earned his BA in Theatre Performance from UMKC, and now resides in Atlanta, GA. While in Kansas City, he had the opportunity to do a lot of amazing plays, films and commercials. Since moving to ATL he has been able to continue to build up his film/TV credits. You may have seen him on Netflix's *Sweet Magnolias* as recurring character Coach Harlan Bixby directed by Norman Buckley, *Deacon* in episode 2 of Amazon Studios' *The Underground Railroad* directed by Barry Jenkins, leading both films *Room Tone* and *Levitation* directed by Morgan Cooper, as well as a few other projects. You will see him returning as Coach Bixby in the much anticipated season 2 of *Sweet Magnolias* coming soon! Frank also creates a fair amount of original content. One of his favorites is a series he created called #ImaBeFrank, which is designed to take moments and experiences from his life and share the lessons learned with anyone willing to listen in hopes of inspiring others! For more info, or to just keep up with Frank, feel free to visit his website at: <http://www.frankoakleythethird.com>



ROBERT PARSONS (*William Pit Fessenden*) credits include work at American Conservatory Theatre (*Rock 'N Roll, The Little Foxes, The Black Rider, Buried Child*), Magic Theatre (*A Lie of the Mind, Pleasure and Pain, The Lonesome West, The American in Me*), Aurora Theatre Company, (*A Bright New Boise, Private Jokes/Public Places*), Shotgun Players (*Blasted, The Three Sisters*), SF Playhouse (*The Effect, Colossal, Slasher, Six Degrees of Separation*) as well as appearances at Berkeley Repertory Theatre., TheatreWorks, Word for Word, Marin Theatre Company, Cutting Ball, and San Jose Stage Company. Regional credits include work at Ford's Theatre, Ahmanson Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Huntington Theatre Company, Alley Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company and The Sydney Festival. Film Credits include: *Freeland* (SXSW World Premier), *Pru/rock* (Pixar), *Delirium* and *Black August*.

LAWRENCE RADECKER (*President Andrew Johnson*) is a resident artist with Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco where he has been in numerous Reorient Festivals as well as productions of *Scenes from 71* Years, Night Over Erzinga*, and *Isfahan Blues*. He has also performed with Crowded Fire Theater, Aurora, San Jose Stage, and Magic Theatre among others.

SCOTT SEDAR (*Thaddeus Stevens*) has performed on most of the Washington DC region's professional stages including 1st Stage Tysons; Arena Stage; Center Stage, Baltimore; Clarice Smith Center for Performing Arts; Ford's; Olney; Open Circle; Rep Stage; Signature; Round House; Washington Stage Guild, and Woolly Mammoth. He did two national tours with the Kennedy Center's Theatre for Young Audiences. His television credits include *Homicide: Life on the Streets* and *House of Cards*, both shot in Baltimore. Beside the role of Thaddeus Stevens, he has portrayed several other historical characters: George Washington, Peter the Great, Thomas Jefferson, Judge Francis Biddle and Abraham Lincoln. A child of the polio epidemic of 1952, he pursues his career assisted by leg braces and forearm crutches.



POST-READING PANEL

After the reading, a panel discussion will take place discussing “Now’s the Time.” Jean Parvin Bordewich (*Playwright*), Jennifer Welch (*Director*), and Dr. Thomas R. Ryan (*Moderator*) will be joined by fellow panelists...

FERGUS M. BORDEWICH is the author of seven nonfiction books, including *The First Congress: How James Madison, George Washington, and a Group of Extraordinary Men Invented the Government*; *America’s Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and the Compromise That Preserved the Union*; and *Washington: The Making of the American Capital*. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, Jean Parvin Bordewich. Fergus was also a 2016 recipient of a LancasterHistory National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship. His latest book is *Congress at War: How Republican Reformers Fought the Civil War, Defied Lincoln, Ended Slavery, and Remade America* (Knopf, 2020).

MATTHEW PINSKER, PH.D. is the Brian Pohanka Chair of Civil War History at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and serves as Director of the [House Divided Project](#), an innovative effort to build digital resources on the Civil War era. Matt has held visiting fellowships at the U.S. Army War College, National Constitution Center, and New America Foundation. He graduated from Harvard College and received a Ph.D. in Modern History from the University of Oxford. Matt is the author of two books: *Abraham Lincoln* (CQ Press, 2002) and *Lincoln’s Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers’ Home* (Oxford University Press, 2003). His next book is forthcoming from W.W. Norton & Co., tentatively entitled, *Boss Lincoln: Understanding Abraham Lincoln’s Partisan Leadership*.

THANK YOU
for joining us this evening!

