



# LancasterHistory

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## September 2025 Upcoming Events

*from LancasterHistory*

*Please scroll to the bottom for updates on hours and current exhibitions.*

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### September First Friday

**Friday, September 5**

**4-8pm** | 45 S. Queen St., Lancaster (Outside the Stevens & Smith Center)

On Friday, September 5, join LancasterHistory and [Strong Towns Lancaster](#) for Park(ing) Day at the Stevens & Smith Center! Park(ing) Day is a global, public, participatory project where people from across the world temporarily repurpose curbside parking spaces into communal spaces for parks, artwork, conversation, and more. With LancasterHistory's expansion into Lancaster City, we're excited to be a bigger part of the downtown community both inside and outside the building that was once Thaddeus Stevens' home and law office!

On First Friday, LancasterHistory staff will be outside on South Queen Street talking about the Stevens & Smith Center and giving you a preview of the new programs we're developing for the new site. Visitors will get hands on with history as they try on costumes from LancasterHistory's education collection and recite key speeches that explore the meaning of freedom in America. It's an evening designed for community connection, historical reflection, and creative expression as we transform a simple parking space into a place for meaningful dialogue about our past, present, and future.

September First Friday is a free event and open to the public. No registration required. The Stevens & Smith Center will not be open that evening for public visitation. All activities will take place outdoors.

*This event takes place at 45 South Queen Street, Lancaster, PA, outside the Stevens & Smith Center.*

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## "Cursed Are The Peacemakers" Buchanan Biography Book Launch

**Saturday, September 6**

**10-11:30am** | LancasterHistory

On Saturday, September 6, join LancasterHistory for the long-awaited book launch of *"Cursed Are The Peacemakers:" President James Buchanan, A Biography* by Philip Shriver Klein with an introduction by Dr. Michael J. Birkner. The book launch will feature a brief, 20-minute talk about the republication of the book and Dr. Klein, plus a book signing of *"Cursed Are The Peacemakers"* by Dr. Birkner.

Dr. Philip Shriver Klein's biography on James Buchanan is considered to be one of the most thorough biographies on the 15th President, and the most remarkable for Klein's unique perspective on Buchanan as a strict "constitutionalist." Since the book left publication and Dr. Klein passed away in 1993, LancasterHistory connected with Dr. Klein's family to republish the biography with Klein's original title and a new cover, layout, and interior photographs. In particular, the book features a new, insightful introduction by Dr. Michael Birkner about Buchanan, Klein, and the historiography involved in the construction of presidential biographies and how their writing influences our assessment of presidents today.

The book launch event of *"Cursed Are The Peacemakers:" President James Buchanan, A Biography* will take place on Saturday, September 6, from 10 – 11:30am at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster. The event will begin at 10am with a book signing by Dr. Birkner, followed by a brief talk at 10:30am. Dr. Birkner will resume book signings after his talk at 11am.

The event is free and open to the public. Advance registration is requested. [Click here to register online](#) or call (717) 392-4633 to register over the phone. Copies of *"Cursed Are The Peacemakers"* will be available for purchase in the Museum Store at \$32, plus sales tax. LancasterHistory members save 20%! Unsigned copies of the book will also be available for purchase online at [lancastrhistory.org/shop](http://lancastrhistory.org/shop) after September 8.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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# Mr. Buchanan's Coachman

**Saturday, September 6**

**Tours On The Hour from 10am - 3pm** | LancasterHistory

Learn about James Buchanan's coachmen: the men who represented him in public and transported him from place to place in his horse-drawn carriage. In addition to learning about who these people were, visitors will also explore the social and practical importance of coachmen in a time before automobiles.

*Mr. Buchanan's Coachman*, a special guided tour of Wheatland, will be held on Saturday, September 6. Tours will be available on the hour, beginning at 10am and continuing until the last tour at 3pm. **Please Note: These tours are not our regular General Admission tours and will be more focused on a particular topic than a general history of Buchanan and the home.**

Tickets are available for purchase [online](#) or over the phone by calling (717) 392-4633. Advance reservations are highly recommended as tours may sell out and walk-in tickets may not be available. Members receive complimentary admission, but should reserve their tickets in advance to guarantee the tour time of their choice.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## Rethinking Fall Gardening & Cleanup

**Saturday, September 13**

**10-11am** | LancasterHistory

Cutting back stems and raking out flower beds may feel therapeutic after summer, but the stems, sticks, and leaves we take away are vital to the wildlife and insects that call our gardens home. Join Master Gardener Adam Barkafski for our September Nature Series program, "Rethinking Fall Gardening and Cleanup" and discover new ways to tackle your fall gardening that have positive effects on the health and survival of pollinators, wildlife, and even the soil itself!

**Adam Barkafski** has been a Penn State Extension Master Gardener in Lancaster County since 2018. A web designer and former public school teacher, Adam is a home gardener by hobby. His gardening interests began with perennials and later focused on native plants. Adam now gardens with an intention to preserve and create pollinator and wildlife habitats, and observing pollinators interacting with plants are some of his favorite gardening joys.

### HOW TO REGISTER

The event, "Rethinking Fall Gardening & Cleanup" will take place on Saturday, September 13 at 10am at LancasterHistory. The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$10/Adults and \$5/Children (17 & Under). Friends of the Tanger Arboretum members receive complimentary

admission, but should still register for the program. Tickets may be purchased [online](#) or by calling (717) 392-4633. Advance tickets recommended as walk-in tickets are not guaranteed.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## Research Center Book Sale

**Saturday, September 13**

**10am-4pm** | LancasterHistory

Support LancasterHistory's Research Center at this once-in-a-generation book sale! A comprehensive review of the library resulted in the removal of many books from the collection. These books include duplicates, outdated editions, or those that are unrelated to the history of Lancaster County. This is your chance to browse and buy them! Books from the personal collections of LancasterHistory's staff will also be on sale, so expect to find offerings from all genres, for all ages.

The Research Center Book Sale will take place on Saturday, September 13 from 10am – 4pm at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Ave., Lancaster. The sale will take place indoors in the Research Center and there is no entry fee to browse the sale. Cash or card is accepted for purchases; card is preferred. Final sale of all items. No returns or exchanges.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## Music on the Lawn, ft. Denison Witmer & The Vulcans

**Saturday, September 13**

**5-7pm** | LancasterHistory

Music on the Lawn concludes its 2025 Season with a two band special in one final fantastic concert in James Buchanan's backyard! **The Vulcans**, an award-winning three-piece Americana/folk-rock band from Mechanicsburg, PA will open the September concert, followed by headliner **Denison Witmer**. Witmer is a Lancaster-based singer-songwriter with multiple records to his name. His style is often described as "neo-folk" with similarities reminiscent of 70s singer-songwriters Cat Stevens and Nick Drake.

Tickets are free for LancasterHistory Members, \$10/Adult (18+) Non-Members, and free for Children 17 & Under. Tickets may be purchased [online](#) or by calling (717) 392-4633. Tickets are also available at-the-door with cash or card (cash preferred).

Attendees are encouraged to bring their own blankets, foldable chairs, and picnics. Well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome. If you require any special accommodations to attend, please notify

Erin Sell at (717) 392-4633, ext. 141 or at [erin.sell@lancastrhistory.org](mailto:erin.sell@lancastrhistory.org) in advance. Restrooms available onsite.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## From Blacksmith To Inventor: The William Chester Ruth Legacy

**Thursday, September 18**

**5pm Reception | 5:30pm Lecture**

Held at LancasterHistory and Livestreamed

Blessed with inherent mechanical genius and a family environment conducive to success, African American metalsmith William Chester Ruth evolved his forge in Gap, Pennsylvania from farm machinery repair into a workshop of mechanical creation. Gwendolyn Dickenson, Ruth's granddaughter, and Bruce Bomberger of the William Chester Ruth Legacy Project join LancasterHistory to tell Ruth's story.

**Gwen Ruth Dickinson**, raised in Gap, Pennsylvania is the granddaughter of William Chester Ruth, and she carries his legacy as an inventor and entrepreneur close to her heart. Graduating from Hahnemann University's College of Allied Sciences, she dedicated over 30 years to healthcare as a Primary Care Physician Assistant. In 2021, after her retirement, she founded the William Chester Ruth Project to honor her grandfather's memory and his accomplishments as an inventor.

**Bruce D. Bomberger** has degrees in history from Lebanon Valley College, Penn State University, and Lehigh University as well as graduate credits in museum studies from the University of Delaware. He has worked for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for 35 years and is currently an archivist with Lebanon County Historical Society.

### EVENT DETAILS & HOW TO REGISTER

This event will take place in person at LancasterHistory on **Thursday, September 18, 2025**. Doors open and a reception begins at 5pm. The lecture will begin at 5:30pm. The lecture will also be livestreamed to Zoom at 5:30pm for those who wish to join us virtually.

This program is free and open to the public. In-person attendance requires advance registration in order to guarantee a seat. Due to capacity restrictions, tickets may not be available at the door. Virtual attendance requires advance registration in order to receive the Zoom link. The Zoom link will be emailed to registrants before the event. Register online by clicking the appropriate link below or by calling (717) 392-4633. The online version of this program will also be recorded and uploaded to [LancasterHistory's YouTube channel](#) after the event.

**[REGISTER TO ATTEND IN PERSON](#)**

## [REGISTER TO ATTEND ONLINE](#)

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## Capital Day Pet Parade

**Saturday, September 27**

**10-11am** | LancasterHistory

On Saturday, September 27, at 10am, join LancasterHistory in honoring Lancaster's day as the nation's capital with fun for the whole family: **a parade of pets!** Owners and furry friends alike are encouraged to dress in colonial, revolutionary, or patriotic attire, and get ready to strut their fluff!

Parade participants will gather outside the museum for brief, bark-sized remarks on the history of Capital Day and then parade around the square just like the Continental Congress's march into Lancaster.

While this event is free and open to the public, there is a suggested donation of \$10, which can be made on-site or in the cart during checkout. A pet bandana is included with registration, along with free sniffs and water.

**To register**, please click here to [register online](#) or call (717) 392-4633 to register over the phone. Registration is required.

**We want to make the Pet Parade fun for everyone, including our 4-legged (or more!) friends!** All pets and children under 17 must be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older. All pets should also be appropriately leashed or contained at all times and under control of the owner, up to date on all required veterinary immunizations, and be friendly with crowds, children, and other animals. Failure to meet any of these requirements may result in owners being asked to leave the event with their animals.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

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## Capital Day Celebration

**Saturday, September 27**

**5:30-7:30pm** | LancasterHistory

Celebrate the one day in 1777 that Lancaster was the capital of the United States! Join LancasterHistory around cozy firepits, enjoy a signature Capital Day cocktail, light bites, and a healthy dose of quirky history!

This family-friendly event encourages all to dress in a “capital way,” whether donning the tricorne hat that’s been collecting dust in the closet, sporting red, white, and blue, or borrowing your neighbor’s powdered wig! Kids will enjoy an activity station, and of course, s’mores around the campfires. Discover the (brief) history of Capital Day with Stephanie Townrow, and test your Lancaster knowledge with Lancaster Quiztory.

## Events Schedule

- **5:30pm:** Light bites by Commonwealth Kitchen & bar, featuring a special Capital Day cocktail and apple butterscotch dessert by County Founding Cake contest winner, Jessica Zielinski
- **6pm:** *The History (Happy Hour) of Capital Day* by LancasterHistory’s Stephanie Townrow and surprise special guests.
- **6:45pm:** Lancaster Quiztory, a Lancaster County-themed game of trivia. (Register for trivia at the event.)

Tickets are \$35/Adults (18+) and \$10 for Children (17 & Under). Advance tickets are strongly recommended as tickets may not be available at the door. Purchase tickets [online](#) or by calling 717.392.4633.

*This event takes place at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue, Lancaster, PA.*

## EXHIBITIONS ON DISPLAY

### Main Exhibition - ***Thieves & Vagabonds: A History of Law and Justice in Lancaster County***

LancasterHistory’s newest major exhibition, *Thieves & Vagabonds*, chronicles key moments in the history of law and justice in Lancaster County from the 18th century to the 20th century. From prisons to prohibition, *Thieves & Vagabonds* explores the making, breaking, and remaking of laws over 300 years of Lancaster County’s history. Visit LancasterHistory’s newest exhibition for a deep dive into crime and punishment as well as reform and repair in the Lancaster community.

### Special Exhibition -

### ***Building Bridges: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States***

Coming September 15, 2025

In 1858, Japan entered into a treaty with the United States and Europe, ending the

centuries-long Tokugawa Shogunate that had minimized Western influence. In 1860, a group of samurai traveled to the United States for the first time. There, they met President James Buchanan, First Lady Harriet Lane, and countless American citizens. In *Building Bridges*, we explore the bridge between the two nations through the gifts that they exchanged.

*Building Bridges* will be on display at LancasterHistory in Gerhart Gallery from September 15 through December 30, 2025 Admission to the exhibit is included with the purchase of a General Admission ticket or Exhibitions-Only ticket. LancasterHistory Members receive complimentary admission.

## LANCASTERHISTORY HOURS OF OPERATION

### HOURS OF OPERATION

LancasterHistory is open Mondays through Saturdays from 9:30am to 5pm to the public. Tours of President James Buchanan's Wheatland are available from 10am to 3pm. The Research Center is open Wednesdays - Fridays and the first Saturday of the month from 9:30am to 2pm for appointments.



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