



WINTER/SPRING

PROGRAMS & EXHIBITIONS

JANUARY - JUNE 2026



These five portraits by Scott Cantrell will be featured prominently in a gallery about abolitionism in Lancaster County at the Stevens & Smith Center. Original works of art by Lancaster artists like Cantrell, Mike Abel, Amy Mozingo, and Keisha Finnie will play a central role in sharing stories throughout the Center.

Educational programming
at LancasterHistory
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Cover Image: Mike Abel's illustration imagines Thaddeus Stevens reading the newspaper in the parlor of his home. Abel's original illustrations will appear throughout the Stevens & Smith Center on a series of "Layers of History" panels in the Center's historic spaces.

It's A Big Year!

Friends of mine have a tradition of planting a tall hand-made sign in the yard when a lot of important things are all happening at once. "It's a big week!" it reads, with colorful swatches listing all the events that rate as "big"—a graduation, milestone birthday, maybe a marathon. That sign describes how I feel about 2026: "It's a big year!"

At the top of my sign would be the opening of the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy on May 1. We've been working tirelessly to bring a new world-class museum and education center to life, and in less than five months, it will be open—open for business, open for community learning, open for thousands of visitors. I am so proud of the work the LancasterHistory team has put into this project, and I know you will all be proud of the Stevens & Smith Center, too.

With this big moment comes big change: new programs, new engagement with students and community members, and new staff, which will lead to an even bigger us: the LancasterHistory team will be growing this year!



And of course, it's also a big year for America. As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we—and history organizations around the County—will be hosting events and programs to celebrate. Stay tuned to our newsletters and our website, lancasterhistory.org, to learn what's happening throughout Lancaster County.

Most of all: we owe each of you **BIG** thanks for your support, now, and every year. It's because of you that our growth continues. So here's to the big year ahead!

Robin

ROBIN SARRATT
PRESIDENT & CEO

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY - JUNE 2026

We're excited to offer a range of great programs for all ages this season! Please note that most events listed require reservations or tickets. To find more information, to purchase tickets, or to register for a program, please visit lancasterhistory.org/events or call 717.392.4633.

JANUARY

Latino History from Lancaster County to the Smithsonian

Thurs, January 29

Reception 5:30pm | Panel 6pm

Special Event at Tec Centro

From food, sports, and the arts to business, politics, and education, Latinos have influenced every aspect of life in America and Lancaster County. In this panel discussion, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino joins LancasterHistory, local scholars, and community partners to explore the importance of including Latino history in museum exhibitions and programs.

FEBRUARY

Lydia Hamilton Smith and the World of Entrepreneurial Black Women in the Nation's Capital

Thurs, February 5

Reception 5pm | Lecture 5:30pm

Regional History Colloquium at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Lydia Hamilton Smith lived a remarkable life as the confidante of Thaddeus Stevens. In the years after his death, she also became an accomplished businesswoman in Washington DC. Dr. Tamika Nunley of Duke University joins us to explore Mrs. Smith and the Black entrepreneurs she circulated among in the 1800s. *Lecture also available via livestream. Free.*



A photo of an unknown woman walking toward the Willard Hotel, Washington DC, 1890. From the 1860s until her death in 1884, Lydia Smith ran a very successful boarding house across the street from the Willard on fashionable "Newspaper Row."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Walter Hallowell (left) photographing Roy McCauley's family for Darmstaetter's Photo Supply House and showing them the camera. From the Darmstaetter Collection, LancasterHistory.

Annual Wreath-Laying Ceremony for Lydia Hamilton Smith

Sat, February 14 | 11am

Special Event at St. Mary's Cemetery

Join LancasterHistory at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery for LancasterHistory's Annual Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the gravesite of Lydia Hamilton Smith. Smith was Thaddeus Stevens' housekeeper, a businesswoman in her own right, and also a devout Roman Catholic who was buried at St. Mary's upon her death in 1884. Taking place on Smith's birthday, the ceremony will feature the laying of flowers at her gravesite and remarks by community leaders. *Free.*

There Is No Candidate Named James Buchanan

Mon, February 16 | Tours 10am-3pm

Sat, April 25 | Tours 1:30 & 2:30pm

Special Subject Tour at President James Buchanan's Wheatland

In 1856, James Buchanan became the Democratic Party's candidate for president, running his campaign from

his Lancaster home. In response to the nomination, Buchanan's colleague and fellow Lancastrian, Thaddeus Stevens, said, "There is no candidate named James Buchanan...Nothing remains but a platform and a bloated mass of political putridity." This winter, join LancasterHistory for a Special Subject Tour to learn about Buchanan, Stevens, and democracy in the 1850s. *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

Picture This: A Historic Photograph Workshop

Sat, February 21 | 10am

Workshop at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Have you inherited a box of family photographs? Cleaned out a closet or your attic and found a few photo albums? Are you the family archivist? If so, this class is for you! In this workshop, you'll learn about various types of photographs and photographic images, methods of dating photographs, and tips and tricks for preserving your family's photographic legacy. We'll include resources found both online and in the Research Center. *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Review Club: Reading Nikole Hannah-Jones

Thurs, February 26

Reception 5:30pm | Discussion 6pm

Special Event at Southern Market

Review Club is a partnership with Crispus Attucks Community Center's Young Professionals of Color Network in which we facilitate safe and meaningful dialogue around the history of the civic and social issues that impact our communities. For Black History Month, we come together to discuss the recent work of journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones on the past, present, and future of civil rights and the law in America. *Free.*

MARCH

Second Founding: A Symphony by D. Michael Wege

Fri, Sat, & Sun, March 13-15

Various Performance Times

*Special Event at the Gardner Theatre,
Lancaster Country Day School*

Celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States and the grand opening of the Stevens & Smith Center with a showcase of classical music exploring the life and times of Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith. *Second Founding*, a powerful new work by local composer D. Michael Wege, will be performed alongside Aaron Copland's 1942 work, *Lincoln Portrait*, and William L. Dawson's piece, *Negro Folk Symphony*, from 1934.

The Varied Faces of James Buchanan

Thurs, March 19

Reception 5pm | Lecture 5:30pm

*Presidential Lecture at the
LancasterHistory Museum &
Research Center*

Patrick Clarke has served as the Director of President James Buchanan's Wheatland for over 20 years. Before he embarks on his retirement, he'll join us once more to share the insights he gained through decades of studying our 15th President. Learn about the many roles Buchanan played in politics and in his personal life through the eyes of someone who knows him best. *Free.* *Lecture also available via livestream.*

Democratic Faith: From Abolitionism to Civil Rights

Tues, March 24 | 7pm

*Stevens & Smith Lecture at
Franklin & Marshall College*

A moral and political vision of democratic faith has guided the struggle for racial justice from the abolitionist movement in the 19th century to the civil rights movement in the 20th century. Dr. Melvin L. Rogers of Brown University joins LancasterHistory and Franklin & Marshall College to examine the figures who have revealed that faith in democracy is not a matter of optimism but of moral courage—the conviction that equality must be enacted in both public institutions and everyday life. *Free.*

Get your tickets to "Second Founding: A Symphony" online at
lancastersymphony.org/stevens-smith.

APRIL

Annual Presidential Wreath-Laying Ceremony

Sat, April 25 | 10am

*Special Event at
Woodward Hill Cemetery*

Join LancasterHistory at Woodward Hill Cemetery for the Annual Wreath-Laying Ceremony for President James Buchanan, the United States' 15th President. Held in honor of his birthday, the ceremony features the laying of flowers at the gravesite of the former president and remarks by the presiding officer of the Pennsylvania National Guard as well as local dignitaries. *Free.*

MAY

Grand Opening Weekend of the Stevens & Smith Center

Fri, May 1 & Sat, May 2

*Special Events at the
Stevens & Smith Center*

It's the moment we've all been waiting for: the Grand Opening of the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy! Join LancasterHistory for a weekend of celebration, including a ribbon cutting, Grand Opening Gala, and family-friendly Block Party. *More information to come!*

Grand Opening Weekend

May 1 & 2, 2026

**REBBIEN CUTTING CEREMONY
GRAND OPENING GALA
COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY**

**Stevens &
Smith** Center for History
and Democracy

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Harriet Lane: America's Fair First Lady of the Land

Sat, May 9 | Tours 10am-3pm

Special Subject Tour at President James Buchanan's Wheatland

Harriet Lane was the first hostess of the White House to be publicly referred to as the "First Lady." Although she was not the wife of the president, she flourished in the role and helped to define it for future First Ladies. On Harriet Lane's 196th birthday, visitors to Wheatland will explore Harriet Lane's life—from her childhood with Uncle Buchanan and her role in the White House to the personal losses she endured and the legacy she left behind. *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

County Founding Day

Thurs, May 14 | 5:30pm

Special Event at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

297 years and Lancaster County is still standing! Come toast the founding of Lancaster County with fun, facts, and a few surprises along the way. At our annual County Founding Day celebration, we'll feature flash talks from local historians, pop-up exhibits, and the return of Lancaster County Cake Wars! *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

Make Sense of Your DNA Matches: A Genealogy Workshop

Sat, May 23 | 10am

Workshop at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

If you've taken a DNA test and want to use it to grow your family tree, this workshop will help you do it. Donna Backus, a genealogist with decades of experience, will teach participants how to identify unknown matches and matches already in their family tree, add matches to their tree, and sort and group DNA matches. Participants should have already taken a DNA test, preferably through Ancestry.com. *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

Thrill Ride: Hersheypark & Its Transformation in the 1970s

Thurs, May 28

Reception 5pm | Lecture 5:30pm

Regional History Colloquium at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Today, Hersheypark is famous for coasters and candy-themed fun, but it wasn't always. It was only in the 1970s that Hersheypark became a Disneyland-like entertainment complex. Dr. John Haddad of Penn State University joins us to share his research into the magic formula that has made Hersheypark so successful. *Free. Lecture also available via livestream.*



The Hershey Company's 'candy characters' gather for a photo with children at Hersheypark. Image courtesy of the Hershey Community Archives.

JUNE

Wheatland At Your Own Pace

Sat, June 13 | Entry 10am-12pm

*Special Event at President James
Buchanan's Wheatland*

Explore President James Buchanan's Wheatland at your own pace. On this self-guided tour, you can explore the President's home and see what you want for as long as you want (within operating hours!). Tour guides will be stationed around the mansion to answer all of your questions about the rooms, furnishings, and people who once called Wheatland home. *LancasterHistory Member Discount.*

Juneteenth Celebration

Fri, June 19

Special Event

On June 19, 1865, two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved people in Texas finally received word: They were free. Join LancasterHistory and the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP for a gathering and celebration of the Juneteenth holiday. *More information to come!*

Coming May 2027

Urban Travels in London and Paris

In 1911, famed Lancaster architect C. Emlen Urban traveled abroad, visiting London and Paris for design inspiration. Using Urban's travel diary, architect Gregg Scott has retraced Urban's journey, from the luxury hotels in which he stayed and the sights he visited to the buildings and scenes that informed his architectural vision. Join LancasterHistory—with Gregg Scott as your guide—as we follow in Urban's footsteps for a 12-day excursion to London and Paris from May 11-22, 2027.

To learn more and register for an information session in early 2026, please visit **lancasterhistory.org/urban-travels**.



Photograph of C. Emlen Urban captured by photographer Otto E. Weber. From the General Collection, LancasterHistory.

THE TANGER ARBORETUM



The Louise Arnold Tanger Arboretum surrounds the historic and contemporary buildings on the Campus of History, providing a lush backdrop and “living collection” for visitors and locals alike to explore. This winter and spring, be sure to check out these events, hosted by the Friends of the Tanger Arboretum, at LancasterHistory. To learn more about the Tanger Arboretum and to become a Friend, please visit lancasterhistory.org/arboretum.



Tickets required for event admission.

Friends of the Tanger Arboretum Members attend most events for free!

Wonderful Woodpeckers

Sat, Jan 24 | 10am

Nature Series at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Join the Friends of the Tanger Arboretum to kick off the 2026 Nature Series with a presentation on “Wonderful Woodpeckers”! Dan Hinnebusch, ornithologist for Wild Birds Unlimited, will discuss these feathery friends, their habitats, and how you can attract woodpeckers to your backyard.

Tree & Shrub Pruning Techniques

Sat, February 28 | 10am

Nature Series at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Pruning is a normal part of garden maintenance, but it can be a source of anxiety if gardeners are afraid of pruning incorrectly. Master Gardener Tom Kopf will share his knowledge of tools and techniques for safely pruning trees and shrubs, while maintaining overall

tree health, promoting growth, and preventing disease. If you’ve ever been afraid to take too much (or too little!) off of a plant, this is the program for you!

Spring Ephemerals of the Susquehanna River Hills

Sat, March 21 | 10am

Nature Series at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Trilliums, wild columbine, Dutchman’s Breeches. These are a few of the delicate spring ephemerals, early season wildflowers, that are the stars of woodlands and meadows for a short window of time. Peggy Eppig, Conservation Education Ranger for the Lancaster Conservancy, will connect the dots between ephemerals, the pollinators who rely on them, the landscapes in which they thrive, and where you can find them in the many Lancaster Conservancy preserves throughout the lower Susquehanna Valley.

Annual Dinner of the Friends of the Tanger Arboretum

Wed, April 8 | 6pm

Special Event at the DoubleTree Resort by Hilton Hotel Lancaster

Celebrate and gather with friends for the Annual Dinner for the Friends of the Tanger Arboretum! Join us for an evening of fellowship and fun, benefitting the care and conservation of the Louise Arnold Tanger Arboretum at LancasterHistory. *More information to come!*

*The Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) is often called a “living fossil,” as the species of tree was thought to be extinct before it was rediscovered in China in the 1940s. The photo below is of the Dawn Redwood in the Tanger Arboretum.*



Leaf & Learn: A Celebration of Arbor Day

Sat, April 18 | 10am-12pm

Nature Series at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Join the Friends of the Tanger Arboretum for a special April Nature Series extravaganza, “Leaf & Learn: A Celebration of Arbor Day!” This new, two-hour event features programs for all ages including a nature Storytime and craft for kids, a tree dedication for America250, and an “all about trees” education program and tree walk of the Tanger Arboretum with Lancaster County Senior Naturalist Lisa Sanchez!

Nature Storytime

Every Thursday in June | 10am

Family-Friendly Program at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Spring has sprung and so has an all new Storytime program focused on the great outdoors! This June, Storytime “goes wild” with educational books and fun crafts about the natural environment and the critters who call it home, including our own Tanger Arboretum. Suggested for ages 5-8 years of age, but all ages welcome.

For the Love of Sunflowers

Sat, June 13 | 10am

Nature Series at the LancasterHistory Museum & Research Center

Everyone loves sunflowers! These sun-following plants have spanned the globe and sprouted up throughout history, capturing our hearts (and gardens) to this day. At this Nature Series program, Master Gardener Emerita Holly List will discuss the history of sunflowers, how to nurture this iconic plant of summer, and how to grow your own “sunflower house.”

MAIN EXHIBITION

EXHIBITIONS

Explore three centuries of history through a series of changing interpretive exhibitions featuring historic art, artifacts, and archival materials. The following exhibition will be on display at LancasterHistory between January - June 2026.



Exhibition admission is included with the purchase of a General Admission or Exhibitions-Only ticket. *Members visit for free!*

THIEVES & VAGABONDS

A HISTORY OF LAW & JUSTICE
IN LANCASTER COUNTY

On Display

LancasterHistory's 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. Take a deep dive into crime and punishment as well as reform and repair in the Lancaster community.



EXHIBIT SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS



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AMERICA250

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!

Celebrating 250 Years

LancasterHistory is marking America's Semiquincentennial with a year of programs that explore 250 years of local and national history. Through exhibitions, talks, and community events, we'll examine how Lancaster has helped shape the nation from the Revolutionary Era to the present. This anniversary is both a celebration and an invitation: to reflect on the stories we tell, to uplift voices often overlooked, and to consider the future we want to build together.

Join us in 2026 as we commemorate the past, engage the present, and imagine the next chapter of American history. In Gerhart Gallery, there will be a special Semiquincentennial exhibit, featuring artifacts from 1776, 1876, and 1976, plus a lock of George Washington's hair! LancasterHistory is also the proud recipient of two America250PA grants to support educational programming centered around themes of democracy, so stay tuned for more information as the year unfolds!

WITH SUPPORT FROM

AMERICA 250 PA
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Photos on left of celebrations from 1926 and 1979 from the Collections of LancasterHistory.



Thaddeus

Lydia Hamilton

Stevens & Smith

Center for History and Democracy



A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY

A Stevens & Smith Center Update

So many tasks are underway as we count down the days to the Stevens & Smith Center's opening in May! December marked a major milestone: final finishings were completed, including trim paint, fresh plaster, and historically inspired wallpapers throughout the house and Stevens's law office. One of the most striking additions is a sweeping 50' x 9' panoramic scrim—printed by Atomic Design in Lititz—featuring dozens of scenes that trace the struggle for freedom, equality, and democracy during

the lifetimes of Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith (photo above). From the tense moments of the Christiana Resistance and the turmoil of the Civil War to the hope embodied in emancipation and the first votes cast by freedmen in the 1870s, this dramatic artwork sets the tone for the experience ahead.

In the coming months, the Center will continue to take shape as exhibition furniture arrives, displays and cases are installed, and hundreds of artifacts move onsite

STEVENS & SMITH CENTER

for placement. Media screens and speakers will be fitted and tested, films and soundscapes refined, and exhibit lighting mounted and calibrated to create the ideal atmosphere. Every day, there is something new unfolding, and as we get closer to May 1, the pace of change to the Stevens & Smith Center will be both dizzying and delightful.

One the most inspiring additions to the Center is the integration of new works by local artists across nearly all sixteen exhibition galleries. Original pieces by Keisha Finnie, Scott Cantrell, Philip Thompson, Amy Mazingo, Michael Abel, Kyle Harris, and Tiffanie Andersen Baldrige will enrich the exhibitions by bringing contemporary artistic perspectives into conversation with the region's history. These commissions not only illuminate key themes but also honor the vibrant creative community that continues to shape Lancaster today.

We've raised \$20,228,217 toward our \$24 million goal and the final stretch is here. Now is the moment to join the Campaign for the Stevens & Smith Center and help bring this landmark to life as a beacon of history, community, and civic purpose. Your partnership will ensure we open our doors in May, ready to inspire generations. Join the campaign today at **stevensandsmithcenter.org**. We look forward to welcoming you on May 1 & 2, 2026!



**Support the Campaign for the
Stevens & Smith Center**

**Make your gift online at
stevensandsmithcenter.org.
Thank you!**

*(left page) Photograph by Brian Nguyen;
(top) Effinger Saloon by Mike Abel;
(middle, left) Lydia Hamilton Smith by Scott Cantrell;
(middle, right) Thaddeus Stevens' Grave by Kyle Harris;
(bottom) The exterior of Thaddeus Stevens' home and law office by Mike Abel*



230 North President Avenue
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603

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