



MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE

July-December 2012

Newsletter of the Bucks County Historical Society

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Preservation Alliance Recognizes Fonthill's Anniversary



Photo by Scott Spitzer/Photography.

L to r: Edward Reidell, Fonthill Site Administrator; Doug Dolan, BCHS Executive Director, and Bill Maeglin, Chair, BCHS Board of Directors, receive the 2012 Preservation Achievement Award recognizing Fonthill's 100th anniversary at the Preservation Alliance's awards ceremony in Philadelphia.

The Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia presented its 2012 Preservation Achievement Awards in May. The Alliance gave an award to the Bucks County Historical Society for its outstanding service in preserving and protecting one of the region's most

significant cultural assets, Fonthill Castle. The Special 100th Anniversary Recognition Award recognized the occasion of Fonthill's 100th anniversary. The Preservation Alliance is a non-profit organization which promotes the appreciation, protection

and revitalization of the Philadelphia region's historic buildings, communities and landscapes. The Alliance notes that Fonthill Castle "is one of the Philadelphia region's most distinguished historic properties."

"We are extremely appreciative of the Preservation Alliance's recognition of our stewardship of Fonthill Castle," notes Bucks County Historical Society Executive Director, Douglas Dolan. "It is gratifying to be acknowledged by our colleagues in historic preservation who understand the challenges we face in preserving our National Historic Landmarks and sharing their stories with the public."

Fonthill is offering a series of programs this year to mark its 100th Anniversary. The new *Building Henry's Castle Tour* continues through September 3, 2012 and is offered daily in addition to the regular guided tour. ■

Hunt for Treasure at Mercer



The Hunt for Treasure. Visitors enjoy a previous installation of this engaging traveling exhibit, on view at the Mercer through September 21.

Currently on view at the Mercer Museum is the traveling exhibit, *The Hunt for Treasure!* Developed by NRG! Exhibits, this highly engaging and interactive family exhibit features four themed areas: sunken treasure, buried treasure, detecting treasure and the modern treasure hunt. Through video and hands-on components, visitors will experiment with metal detectors, take part in a treasure hunt game, learn how underwater remote operated vehicles (ROVs) operate, try their hands at safe-cracking, and hoist a pirate flag.

To complement the exhibit, the Museum has added numerous artifacts to the show, both from its own holdings as well as private collections in the area. Among the borrowed objects on view are a silver ingot from a Spanish treasure ship lost off of Grand Bahamas Island about 1525; coins from the *Atocha*, another galleon

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"Apron Archaeologist" EllynAnne Geisel to Appear at Mercer

In conjunction with the opening of the exhibit, *The Apron Chronicles: A Patchwork of American Recollections*, the show's originator and curator, EllynAnne Geisel, will appear at the Mercer Museum this fall. Although her precise itinerary is still being developed, Geisel is expected to be in the Doylestown area for several days for media interviews, appearances and special program presentations.

Opening the weekend of October 6-7, *The Apron Chronicles* explores the American experience as seen and read through nearly 50 images, text in story

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Steve Bigley/APS Photography

"Apron Archaeologist" Ellyn Anne Geisel in One of Her Apron Creations.

“Making History” Donor Recognition Celebration



Enjoying the evening are from l to r: Jay Belding, BCHS Trustee, John Mauro & BCHS Trustee, Grover Friend.

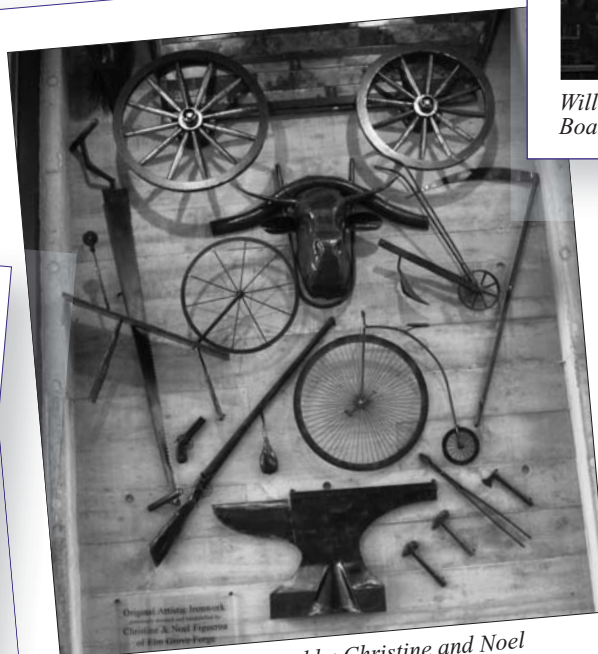
On May 17, a celebration was held in the Great Hall of the Mercer Museum to honor the donors to the “Making History” campaign. Bill Maeglin, Chair, Board of Directors, announced the official end to the campaign, stating that the original fundraising goal of \$10M was surpassed by \$2M, to make the total funds raised \$12M.



William D. Maeglin, BCHS Board Chair thanks donors.



Donor Elizabeth H. Gemmill, Esq. with, BCHS Executive Director, Doug Dolan.



Artistic ironwork donated by Christine and Noel Figueroa of Elm Grove Forge evokes the experience within the Mercer Museum.

Cocktails at the Castle serves tradition with a twist!

On Friday, October 12, join us as the Mercer Museum unveils our new fall gala – *Cocktails at the Castle: A Savory Exploration to Benefit the Mercer Museum*. In keeping with the tradition of our Savory Sampler, the evening includes food and beverages prepared by our area’s finest restaurants, wineries, and breweries. But now as you wind your way through the castle, you will experience the museum’s collection in a whole new way! In addition, you will be able to bid on unique experiences and spectacular items at silent and live auctions. So save the date and look for your invitation this summer! For information, call 215-345-0210, ext. 132.



Please remember the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle in your estate plans. Call our Development Office for information at 215-345-0210, ext. 129.



The Building Of “Fonthill” At Doylestown, Pennsylvania, In 1908, 1909 And 1910

Copy of a typewritten description found among the papers of the late Dr. Henry Chapman Mercer (Continued from previous newsletter)

CEILINGS AND ROOFS—For the flat ceilings in the cellar, platforms of boards sawed to fit were placed between the beam troughs and these levels covered with earth. Later, for upper rooms, the platforms were made very roughly of rails covered with grass under the earth layer, and then about two inches of yellow Bucks County sand was spread over the earth. The roof terraces and flatter roofs were also so treated, but on the very steep roofs of the tower and east gable carpets only were spread over the boards except on the east room ceiling, where, in spite of the steep slope, the earth and sand layer was used as described.

The vault forms were made of heaps of earth spread over piles of boxes and overlaid as before with sand, producing a series of carefully graded mounds resting on the platforms as before. This process began in the crypt of the tower where no sand layer was used. In the Library the earth mounds were raked into semi-circles or ellipses and the sand overlay carefully smoothed. All worked well notwithstanding the difficulty of scalloping the wall forms to meet the slopes of these mounds, and cleaning or washing out the column forms from down-fallen earth and sand. Having heard of serious condensation of moisture in a recently built house in Canada we decided to cast a very porous undercrust on all further ceilings. This consisted of Portland cement 1 part and fine sifted cinder 6 parts. Three inches of this was spread wet over all the ceilings under the re-enforcing irons and then about five inches of regular concrete was superposed. No waterproofing



CEILINGS:YELLOW ROOM

compound was used for the roofs or walls except Dyckerhof's imported waterproof cement for the large west terrace. Otherwise, on the advice of Mr. Robert W. Lesley, based on experiments then made with lime, we used ten per cent. (to the volume of dry cement) of powdered slacked lime used by plasterers and called “Limoid” to waterproof the five-inch concrete layer on all roofs and terraces. This was very successful. Only one roof, namely, that in the Smoking Room, ever leaked, and that cured itself probably by crystallization in about two years. The large water tank, resting directly on the ceiling of the Wind Room was thus waterproofed, notwithstanding warnings from one of the builders of the swimming pool at the Racquet Club in Philadelphia, then recently built and lined with tar paper. This Fonthill tank, however, sprang a slight leak several years later, but again cured itself in a year or two. The same thing happened with the tank at the pottery. No cracks have thus far appeared in any of the roofs or ceilings. The roof tiles on the tower and

steeple were not necessary as the surfaces under them were already waterproofed.

DECORATIONS—In the hall and Saloon clay troughs for groins and borders and clay impressions of stoveplates were used in casting the ceilings. Otherwise tiles were pushed face downwards into the sand crust so as to project about a quarter of an inch on the backs. The tile and cement pavements were set after construction. A method of casting designs or pictures upon ceilings in colored cements was twice dried successfully in the cellar of the Saloon, but not attempted later. The ceiling tile work pictures, inscriptions, designs, etc., cast as described directly during construction tried first in the crypt and next in the Library, was very successful. The elaborate and probably overworked pictures in the Columbus and Bow Rooms, which may be called adaptations of our mosaics with patterns modeled in relief and no background were designed in August and burnt and set before frost. The tiles were laid first with much difficulty, owing to the

wind, on large drawings and then turned upside down and pushed into the sand. We feared sagging of vault forms and the falling of heavy tiles set in this manner, but no such bad results followed. When we pulled out the platform props, the platforms collapsed and tons of earth and sand fell, exposing the tiles, after which the loose sand was washed off with a hose and when dry brushed and shellaced between the tiles.

INTERIOR FINISHING—The interior walls were not furred. Sometimes they were plastered with lime and sand mortar or with cement and then shellaced with yellow shellac or tinted with a clay wash colored with dry paints. The panels in the Pine Room, Dormer Room, etc., were adapted from those at Haddon Hall, the Library panels were original and colored with water color paint sprayed with shellac. The Morning Room was paneled with old Doylestown doors of varying dates and styles between 1760 and 1850.

The painted door in the Library was made by outlining the pattern with a cautery and was copied from Froissart's Chronicle and taken from my old room at Aldie. The iron balcony railings were patterned after those seen in an old second-class hotel in Genoa, those of cement in the Saloon and outer terraces were taken from the porch of San Marco at Venice. The rhymed English mottoes on the staircases are original. Several in Latin are from old house doorways in Genoa. “Non Omnia sed bona et bene” from No. 15 (black numbers), Via del Campo, “Non domo dominus

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Recent Acquisitions – The Hinkel & Biehn Shoe Store

In 2003, the Mercer Museum received the gift of a mammoth c. 1909 electric cash register that once served the owners and patrons of the Hinkel & Biehn Shoe Store in Quakertown, Bucks County. In continuous use until the store closed in 1966, the register is a security behemoth that once even frustrated a heavy-handed robbery attempt.

Recently, the grandson of the proprietor who originally acquired the cash register for his shoe store – and the great-grandson of 19th-century shoemaker Tobias Hinkel who founded the firm – donated additional artifacts to the museum documenting the history of one of Quakertown's landmark businesses. Harry T. Hinkel, and his wife Peg of Doylestown, contributed a number of advertising items, shoemaker's tools, photographs and postcards, and even one of the chairs in which early 20th-century customers once sat to have their feet sized and shoes fitted.

Tobias Hinkel launched the original shoemaking business in Rich Hill, Bucks County



HINKEL & BIEHN SHOE STORE INTERIOR, WEST BROAD STREET, QUAKERTOWN. *Faintly visible in the center of this image are the chairs used to seat customers while trying on shoes. One of these chairs is among the objects donated to the Mercer Museum recently by Harry and Peg Hinkel, along with many other items documenting the history of the Hinkel & Biehn firm.*

about 1858. His original trade sign hangs in the shoemaking exhibit at the Mercer Museum. In 1870 he moved into Quakertown, continuing to manufacture his own boots and shoes, but also supplementing his own production with commercially-made

footwear for retail sale. In 1885 Hinkel entered a partnership with his brother-in-law, Milton A. Biehn, selling shoes in a shop built by Biehn on West Broad Street in Quakertown.

In 1909, Tobias Hinkel's son, Harry W. Hinkel, con-

structed a new, much expanded store on the same West Broad Street site, in order to accommodate a growing business. This building still stands today. Harry W. Hinkel operated the establishment until he died in 1932, when his son, H. Tobias Hinkel, took over the store. H. Tobias Hinkel's offspring, Harry T. Hinkel – the donor – recalls working at the store in his youth. The business ceased operation in 1966.

Due to the meticulous descriptions that the donor has provided of the shoe store's operations, and the detailed identifications of photographs and artifacts, the Hinkel & Biehn establishment is probably one of the best documented businesses in the County! The Museum is very pleased to be the custodian of this piece of Bucks County history.

In addition to the Hinkel & Biehn materials, the Mercer is also strongly indebted to donor David Long for contributing another large group of artifacts, images and documentary materials related to local history. While Mr. Long's gift is extremely diverse, and too extensive to list in detail here, among the items are a set of 1950s-60s photos of the Vargo Dragway in Bedminster, Bucks County; a set of molds from the mid-20th century Pennsbury Pottery Company in Morrisville; and photographs from the early years of the Fairless Works/U.S. Steel Corporation plant in Falls Township.

One final recent acquisition of note is a *Notenbuchlein* – a manuscript tune book – with a fraktur bookplate inscribed to Samuel Landes, a singing student in the Bedminster School, and dated 1816. The tune book was given by Barbara Althouse in memory of Esther Landes Althouse, and joins two other items of family fraktur given in 2010 by the same donor. ■



MANUSCRIPT TUNE BOOK AND BOOKPLATE OF SAMUEL LANDES, Bedminster School, 1816. *Gift of Barbara Althouse in memory of Esther Landes Althouse, 2011.*



Nature Club Donates Tree to Fonthill

In honor of Fonthill's 100th Anniversary celebration, the Doylestown Nature Club has donated a cherry tree to be planted on the grounds. But why choose a cherry tree when there are so many native varieties to choose from? Perhaps it is not too surprising that the answer comes to us from Henry Mercer's papers.

When Henry Mercer began to purchase the various pieces of property that make up the grounds of Fonthill one of the sections had been a farm. In addition to the farmhouse, barn and various outbuildings, there were also fruit trees on the property. Of these fruit trees it was a cherry tree that was destined to be the setting for an important, if sad, event in Henry Mercer's life.

In the spring of 1916, Mercer wrote, "Dear old Rollo died under the cherry tree in front of Fonthill... The cherry blossoms were not yet out on that sad day. May I meet you again where they are in full bloom, dear Old Boy!" Mercer even penned a map of the cherry tree under which his beloved dog died.

But before and after Rollo's death, his devoted owner enjoyed the presence

of these old cherry trees. In his booklet, "The Trees of Doylestown," Mercer describes the Sweet Cherry (*Prunus avium*) as "best known in the forms of the "Pie," "Ox-heart" and "Black" Cherry." Mercer goes on to describe the trees beauty, "the magnificence of its white bloom, which gladdening the road-side when the Meadow Lark sings his spring song, only yields to those blossoms which the Japanese wonder at on April 7th." He even took advantage of the delicious fruit of the trees. In one of Laura Swain's house bills is the entry, "boys picked cherries 2 afternoons."

The cherry trees in front of Fonthill did not last long after Henry Mercer passed away. In September 1930, Frank Swain wrote to Dr. B.F. Fackenthal, "The cyclone that passed over here this evening completely snapped off two feet from the ground, one of the ancient ox-heart cherry trees on the circle." Only three years later he wrote again to Dr. Fackenthal, "On Saturday night May 20 one of the worse storms since 1911 passed over Fonthill & as usual did enormous damage to the trees, especially the largest & oldest and on that part where the lawn is mowed around the house - Many of these trees were planted by Mrs Haller Gross for Dr Mercer & many by Dr. Mercer as his favorite trees and for these I am very sorry. 3 of the Balm of Gillead [sic], several very fine Carolina Poplars a huge Silver poplar & the largest wild cherry around here and two of the largest very old Ox heart Cherry Trees on the circle." (italics added)

Unfortunately, Ox-heart cherry trees are a difficult heirloom variety to find these days. After much searching and discussion between the staff of Fonthill and the Doylestown Nature Club, it has been decided to plant a Black Cherry tree (*Prunus serotina*) near the site of the tree that Rollo died under. While not a fruit tree, the Black Cherry is a native tree to this area and a favorite of birds. We think Henry Mercer would approve. ■



Shown here is one of Henry Mercer's original "Everlasting Tree Labels," originally designed for the arboretum that was being established on the grounds of Fonthill, for a sweet cherry tree (*Prunus avium*). It is interesting to note he uses the common name of "crab cherry" instead of "sweet cherry" or "ox-heart cherry" to describe this fruit tree. It was under one of these trees in front of the house that Rollo died.



L to r: Margarite Quinn with "Henry Mercer" (C. Jameson Bradley) and Fonthill Site Administrator, Ed Reidell.

On Memorial Day, during Fonthill's "Construction Day" program, State Representative Margarite Quinn presented a Citation on behalf of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Fonthill Castle congratulating the site on its 100th anniversary. Additional citations and proclamations in honor of Fonthill's centennial and Henry Mercer's castle-like home have come from the Senate of Pennsylvania sponsored by Senator Chuck McIlhinney, the Bucks County Commissioners, and the Borough of Doylestown by Mayor Libby White.

It's a Dog's Life!



"SHELLBARK" ON HIS TRICYCLE
Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania
Late 19th-century
Gift of Walter Corson, 1916

A visit to the general store of Walter Corson on State Street in Doylestown in the 1880s or 1890s might have included a glimpse of the Corson family's celebrated dog, "Shellbark." Not only did Shellbark work the treadmill to grind coffee in the Corson store, he also performed tricks on the tricycle. Walter Corson donated the treadmill and tricycle to the Mercer Museum in 1916 and 1919 respectively. Affixed to the treadmill (built by Corson about 1876) was a picture of Shellbark astride his "trike." ■

The Story of the Long White Baby Dress

By Carol Jones



From the Mercer Museum's collection, 98.00.318, circa 1850-1860. This dress is an example of Ayrshire embroidery.

For approximately 150 years, from around 1790 to 1940, long white cotton dresses were everyday and special occasion garments for both male and female infants of middle and upper class families. The gender-neutral dresses were indeed the “small white uniform” of their time. These dresses, whether lovingly handmade or expensively bought, were treasured and often handed down to later generations.

During the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, gender distinctions were obscured in clothing for infants. Long dresses signified infancy for both boys and girls. Perhaps males and females wore dresses because women were chiefly responsible for childcare, or because of the ease in changing diapers. Still another explanation refers to an ancient custom of dressing boys and girls alike to deceive evil spirits that were thought to harm male children.

Infants wore long dresses for several reasons. They were necessary to keep the baby warm at a time when central heating was nonexistent in most homes. Another functional aspect of the long dresses was that they hindered a crawling baby from getting too far from the watchful eyes of the caregiver. Dress length also provided an expression of status, both for the display of needlework skill by the creator and as a symbol of Victorian affluence.

White was regarded as the traditional color of babyhood because of its association with purity and innocence. Easily stained and soiled, white clothing made it obvious which conscientious mothers kept their children clean. White garments were also considered easiest to wash since they could be

sterilized by boiling, and fading or bleeding colors could be avoided. Whites were also considered to be safer for infants because dyes were thought to be potentially poisonous.

The baby's mother often created dresses for her newborn. Dresses were also often made and given as a gift by a family member or friend. Museum donor documentation reveals that creators included mothers, grandmothers, aunts, dressmakers, and even fathers of the infant. Towards the end of the 1800s, ready-made dresses became available.

A home sewer could purchase fabric and ornamentation from dry goods stores or mail order catalogs. Long white baby dresses were sometimes made up from parts of adult clothes, such as women's lace or embroidered petticoats. Some creators of the dresses used their wedding gown and veil. Home sewers could create patterns from purchased garments by copying existing garments. By the end of the nineteenth century, an abundance of periodicals, pattern



drafting methods and commercial patterns were available to the home sewer.

Most of the white embroidery work was done as a cottage industry. The earnings were extremely low, and conditions were unhealthy. Frequently, the workers would strain their eyes working in dim light. Some of the workers would bathe their eyes with whiskey for the relief and the temporary sharpness it gave to their vision.

Ayrshire work, or white embroidery worked on white cotton, was popular from around 1820 to 1870. It was named after Ayr, Scotland, where it originated. Ayrshire work was done on the bodice, the center front skirt panel, and the short sleeves of infants' dresses. In addition to completed dresses, kits could be purchased to be embroidered by the home sewer. Ayrshire work declined by the 1860s, when the hand embroidery machine was invented.

The idea that all long white infant dresses were christening/baptismal gowns is a myth. Infants wore long white dresses as everyday

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“The North Star” Crew Visit the Mercer Museum



3rd from Left: Thomas Phillips (writer & director of “The North Star”) Melissa Jay, (Mercer Museum Education Coordinator), and Clifton Powell (lead actor) pose with the rest of “The North Star” movie entourage and Benjamin Jones' shoe. “The North Star” is a film being produced in Bucks County based on the story of Ben Jones and Moses Hopkins and the Underground Railroad. Research for the film was done in the Mercer Museum's Library. For more information on the movie, visit: <http://thenorthstarmovie.com/home/>.

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apparel and nightgowns. It cannot be assumed that a long white baby dress is a christening gown unless documentation states that it was used in this way. While it is likely that the most ornate dresses were worn as christening gowns, many of these fancy dresses were worn as everyday clothing. Evidence of this is shown in elaborate dresses with significant signs of wear, including patches and repairs. Conversely, many of the plainer dresses were in fact created and worn as christening gowns. In addition, a dress that was created for every day use may have been used as a christening gown by later generations.

The demise of the long

white baby dress occurred in the twentieth century, as attitudes toward children paralleled changes in their clothing. Dress reformers and social and economic changes were strong contributing in-

fluences to the changing styles of infants' dress. Beginning around the end of World War I children's clothing became more practical and comfortable. Further, the twentieth century experienced a democratization of clothing due to mass produced ready-to-wear.

Fashion expresses the spirit of a society and is a mirror of

the times. The analysis of nineteenth century infants' dresses helps uncover the nature of the everyday lives of children and their parents' perceptions of them. Freedom of movement and comfort in children's gar-

housework. The difficulty of caring for the dresses was not an issue for Victorian society.

Just as the study of the objects that Henry Mercer collected gives us insights into pre-Industrial Revolution

The idea that all long white infant dresses were christening/baptismal gowns is a myth.

ments were not priorities.

Nineteenth century baby dresses also communicate something about the makers' lives because the dresses reveal much about Victorian attitudes. The long white infants' dress was a reflection of the female's status in the nineteenth century. Victorian women were not as yet "emancipated" from

times, the study of long white baby dresses gives us insights into the lives of nineteenth century women and children.

Carol Jones is the Mercer Museum's curatorial assistant. She studied hundreds of nineteenth century long white baby dresses for the subject of her master's thesis. ■

Questers Group Makes Gift to Adopt-an-Artifact Campaign

The Mercer Museum continues to raise funds for the much-needed conservation treatment of eighty or more Civil War artifacts and artworks in the collections. These materials will be incorporated into a 2013 exhibit focused on the Civil War as experienced here in Bucks County and the Delaware Valley. Recently, the Fonthill Questers presented the Museum with two checks totaling \$1500 to support the conservation of a Civil War officer's frock coat in the Mercer collection. The contribution includes a \$750 Pennsylvania State Questers grant, matched by an additional \$750 from the local chapter. The Museum and Historical Society are extremely grateful for this gift.

The coat to be conserved belonged originally to Mahlon Yardley, a local attorney who served first as a lieutenant in the 104th Pennsylvania Infantry and later as Provost Marshal of Pennsylvania's 5th District, based in what is now the Frankford section of Philadelphia. Yardley fell ill with Typhoid Fever during the Peninsular Campaign in 1862 and was soon after assigned to the recruiting service while he recuperated. In April 1863 he was promoted Captain and took on the duties of Provost Marshal, which included rounding up deserters, overseeing the draft, and mustering new recruits. Yardley never returned to the field, and never fully recovered from his illness. Serving as an internal revenue service collector after the War, he died just shy of his fiftieth birthday in 1873.

The Museum and Library maintain several other objects in the collections related to Yardley, whose importance lies largely in the role he played locally in his recruitment efforts and in enforcing the Civil War draft. Following its conservation treatment, Yardley's coat and other artifacts will be featured in the planned 2013 exhibit.

More support for the Adopt-an-Artifact program is still needed, and many objects, documents and works of art



Fonthill Questers officers Pam Lahr (right) and Barbara Burnett present Mercer Museum V.P. for Collections Cory Amsler with a check in support of the Museum's Adopt-an-Artifact Campaign.

continue to await adoption. A gift entitles the donor to a "certificate of adoption," plus recognition in museum catalog records and in label copy for the 2013 exhibition. Gifts can be made in the name of the donor, on the part of a group or organization, or in memory of a loved one – or even a Civil War ancestor. Can you help?

This is an opportunity to help preserve key pieces of local and regional history. For more information on objects in need of adoption, go to the Mercer Museum website, www.mercermuseum.org under Join and Support. Or, contact the Museum's Vice President for Collections and Interpretation, Cory Amsler, at 215-345-0210 ext. 127, or camsler@mercermuseum.org.

Collections on the Road!

The Mercer Museum's loan program continues to be strong and a great source of pride, traveling to prestigious institutions and educating audiences young and old. Visit our artifacts at the following institution:

National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA.

"The Story of We, the People," July 2012 – January 2013

This exhibit explores the voting process at local and national levels, and the history of democracy in the United States. The Mercer Museum is lending two artifacts to this exhibit; an early 20th century metal ballot box used in Northampton Township and a ca. 1980 Voting Machine Demo, also used in Bucks County elections.

For more information on these two artifacts, please visit our on-line catalog RolloPAC and search accession numbers MM2007.02.001.1-2 and MM2009.07.002



Women's Baseball Exhibit Coming to Mercer



AGNES ("GINGER") ROBINSON. Growing up in Lower Bucks County, Robinson punted for the men's football team at St. Ann's Parish in Bristol, ran track at Morrisville High School, played baseball in Trenton, and went on to catch and play third base for the New York Bloomer Girls in the early 1930s.

The traveling exhibit, *Line Drives and Lipstick: The Untold Story of Women's Baseball*, will be making its final stop on a five year tour at the Mercer Museum over the coming winter. The exhibit's title and subject matter may immediately conjure up images of the 1940s-era All American Girls Professional Baseball League – the subject of the popular 1992 film, *A League of Their Own*. However, women's baseball actually began with the creation of a Vassar College team in 1866. Less than a decade later, women were being paid to play ball, and a surprising number of women were included on 20th-century men's teams.

Line Drives and Lipstick documents this lesser known side of America's baseball history, and features both images and artifacts drawn from one of the nation's largest collections of women's baseball memorabilia. The show was curated by Saint Mary's College Archivist John Kovatch, and features additional commentary by Barbara Gregorich, author of *Women at Play: The Story of Women in Baseball*. In the years since the exhibit first began to travel, even more women's baseball

history has been made and discovered. Curator Kovatch is considering adding some additional materials to the show for its final venue at the Mercer Museum.

Of course, Bucks County and the Delaware Valley have their own regional baseball history – including women's baseball. Delving into materials acquired when the Mercer Museum conducted research for a sports history exhibit in the early 1990s, several pictures of Agnes ("Aggie" or "Ginger") Robinson re-surfaced. Robinson, who grew up in Edgely and Morrisville, Bucks County, went on to play baseball in the early 1930s with the New York Bloomer Girls, a barnstorming women's baseball team that traveled across the country challenging both men's and women's teams alike.

In conjunction with hosting the traveling exhibit, the Mercer Museum will be unearthing more local baseball history – both men's and women's baseball – and will mount a companion exhibit. So next winter, when everyone is getting anxious for spring training to begin, visitors can get a good early dose of America's national pastime at the Mercer. ■

Exhibit

Stitches in Time: Exploring Embroidered Samplers

September 8 – November 15, 2012

When we look at samplers several questions come to mind...

Where did the patterns come from? Is there symbolism behind the design elements?

Who made it and where did she live? How did she learn to stitch?

We can sometimes answer these questions with a casual glance at the sampler, as some will include the maker's name and the year stitched on it. Sometimes, more information can be learned such as the names of her parents and siblings, the school she attended, or the name of her teacher. However, to learn where the patterns originated and the



Alphabet Sampler made by Susanna Twining 1809

symbolism, one must examine a group of samplers from the same general location and time period, and similarities will begin to emerge.

Stitches in Time will examine over 50 samplers from the Mercer Museum's permanent collection, many of which have never been exhibited, as well as borrowed pieces from premiere private collections and prestigious local museums. We will compare 18th and 19th century Quaker samplers, exploring how they were influenced by the English, and comparing these pieces with Pennsylvania German communities and their methodology of teaching and transference of style and design.

The Wild World of Wizing School at the Mercer Museum: On Film!

If you are familiar with the Harry Potter book series and the now famous Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, then you will find the tale behind the premier American School of Wizardry, The Wild World of Wizing School at the Mercer Museum, absolutely fascinating! It was founded almost 100 years ago by an American wizard you may all recognize: Henry Chapman Mercer. It is a little known story to most Doylestown residents that Mercer spent his life traveling the world collecting many ancient, dangerous, and magical artifacts. To secure these arti-



The Wild World of Wizing Camp

facts, he built a concrete castle in the Muggle community of Doylestown to protect them. The castle is well-protected with a core of reinforced concrete serving as a protective charm against faeries and other

supernatural creatures....

This is the beginning of the mythology that Melissa Jay and Heather Hicks of the museum's Education Department have created to enhance the magical quality of The Wild World of Wizing School Camp which takes place in July. For the past three summers, this popular camp has been tuning into the imaginations of children, ages 8-12, utilizing the Harry Potter series as inspiration. This winter, the Mercer Museum collaborated with Central Bucks South High School to create a short film about our wizarding school. The film helps

recreate the mythology that has been written to construct an in-depth background for the entertainment of our dedicated campers. The film will premiere on CBTv (Central Bucks Television, a station for the schools in the Central Bucks School District). In the future, this film will be uploaded onto our new Mercer and Fonthill YouTube site and Facebook pages. We wish to thank Nick Madson, student at CB South for working with us on this project. It is yet another creative step to help bring visitors to our museums through new promotional media. ■

Three Letters from the Civil War

The following are excerpts from three letters written by Ellen Hart to her husband Samuel in July 1863. A member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), Samuel Hart nonetheless enrolled in the 31st Pennsylvania Emergency Troops, a militia unit called out during the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania that culminated in the Battle of Gettysburg. Although Hart's militia regiment was only in service for a couple of months, and saw no actual fighting, Ellen had no way of knowing at the time whether her husband would come back safely. Her anxieties, and the responsibilities she was forced to take on in Samuel's absence, are readily apparent in her writing. She often references the couple's children, George and Lizzie. Her Quaker faith did not prevent her from including some rather militant language about what she would like to do to local "traitors" and "Jeff Davisites." To enhance readability, punctuation and capitalization have been added.

7 mo. 2nd [July 2]1863

My Dear Husband,

I was very much pleased to receive thy letter last evening. It hardly seems as though they could be soldier letters we get them so quickly after they are started. The weather continues very dull for hay making though it has not rained to wet it, the men put it up day before yesterday but it was so damp they could not haul it yesterday. This morning early seemed very dull and misty, but the wind commenced blowing and they have now gone for their third load. It is quite dinner time but they are not ready for it. We all staid quietly at home first day thinking very much about you. I believe I nerve myself to hear any thing and think it will not affect, but second day morning I took the cream out to the gate the first salute from J. Lovett was, "Well I supposed they were fighting at Harrisburg yesterday, a dispatch came to Doylestown to that effect last night at five o'clock." I did not go in the parlor and scream loud enough for the neighbors to hear me but I felt very uncomfortable. I tried to think such a thing could not be, but at the same time I knew it very easily might after all that has happened of late.

I went up town after dinner and before I started home they pretended to say the last dispatch reported not fighting at four o'clock. Our reports here are the rebs are retreating but it is only to get you from the entrenchments I guess to kill the more of you in an open field...I wish Governor Curtin's next order would give the women power to deal as they would like to with the traitors we have here. The bullets they would get in the army would be as goose feathers compared to the battering they would get here. You would see a general skedadling to the ranks for safety. An army so imposing never before has been seen as we would drive out; it would strike terror to the hearts of all Jeff Davisites who would lay down their arms instanter. This is what the women would do. Mrs. Smith I hear will give rope enough to hang her cedar tree full and thinks she would sleep better at nights...

I am very much obliged to thee for sitting for thy Photograph... I am going to send a note [to] Silas Fries to see if the butter cannot come in the morning. It is so inconvenient to send it in the afternoon and now it is so warm I think it must get soft before it gets to the city. With much love to thee as ever thy loving wife, E. E. Hart

7 mo. 5th [July 5]1863

My Dear Husband,

Thy last came to hand last evening, just such a letter as does a wife's heart good, and makes her feel that whatever

enjoyments her husband has he would like to share with her. I was very glad to hear you are so comfortably fixed and hope it may continue so though it is a different direction. One would suppose your services would long be needed...

I am writing at the back window in our room. George is standing on the same chair amusing himself with scratching the fly screen and occasionally giving my spectacles, inkstand pen, or paper a grasp which puts them considerably askew so if the[e] has some difficulty in understanding this thee may guess the cause. Poor little fellow. I often think his papa would like to have him at camp a little while at a time. There are so many of you with babies at home you can sympathize with one another. Lizzie is tolerably well behaved, does not mind as well as she might but children will be children. She sometimes says "I do wish I could see my papa." When thee first went she slept with me and George in the little bed, but when he was sick I had to take him in too, she loves little brother in bed with us, but I think it would suit her better if she could be next to mother, and if he finds she is touching me anywhere she gets a pretty good scratching from him...

I feel very anxious about you sometimes but do not let it prey upon me as it did when you were gone two years ago. A soldier's wife is quite an ordinary affair now, not the curiosity she was then. Thy photograph's came yesterday. They are very good indeed, equal to Gutekunst I think. The style of dress shows very distinctly. I cannot say I fancy it exactly. I am willing for my husband to be [a] soldier when necessary, but I do not want it to be a profession with him....

July 25th 1863

My Dear Husband,

Thy letter of the 11th was received today. I told Sarah it was quite like bread that had been baked a week. We have heard many stories of that march of yours from Carlisle. It will do to talk to the children and grandchildren for many years to come. I hope you are more comfortably fixed and better supplied with provisions than some of the men report though thee says nothing about that, perhaps thee is more accustomed to soldier life than some.

The New York riot seems to claim the particular attention of the loyal ones at this time. I hope the Government officials may succeed in quelling it; according to the papers it raged fearfully yesterday. It is feared by many their success may incite the Copperheads of Philada. to the same behaviour. The result is yet to be known. You I suppose will see the papers. I cannot give an account of their doings in this sheet with two children shaking and one or the other screaming about half the time, literary matters get wonderfully interfered with when two or three children are in the programme. I know thee wants to see them...

We are doing quite as comfortably as we could expect without thee; everyday we see how much thee is needed here but will be quite content if thee gets home sometime safely...I wish thee could see me trying to write a letter. I think thee would willingly excuse all mistakes. I do not know what will become of thy boy if thee never comes back. He is rather more than I can manage with his grandmother to humor as she does...Thee can

...continued on page 11

Now Where in the World is Henry?

That's right, where has Henry been lately? Traveling Henry has been traveling all over the globe this past year. His travels outside of the U.S. have taken him to Machu Picchu, Malta, Kenya, Beijing, Malaysia, Barcelona and Prague. Henry has also been trekking about the U.S. in Oregon, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Minnesota, and New York City. If you would like to take a Traveling Henry with you on one of your upcoming excursions please contact us at mmeduc@mercermuseum.org. We will be happy to prepare Henry for a new adventure. Just make sure you take a photo of Henry on the trip. Join our Facebook page to get access to rarely seen photos, event updates, interesting and intriguing museum information AND to keep up with Henry's many world explorations.



Traveling Henry in Malaysia

Congratulations to the Bucks and Montgomery Counties' Regional History Day Winners!



First Place Winners of the Senior Group Documentary category, Ziya Morris and Maddie Hearn, from Pennridge High School.

continued from page 10

imagine thy son looking more like a drowned chicken than anything else as he is eating or rather breaking an egg shell with his teeth and has been running between home and grandmothers through a pouring rain without anything on his head, he has not had any nap today but I shall put him to the land of dreams pretty soon.

Our corn looks quite as well as others this early planted next the fence looks very fine. Josiah's is reported to be the finest between Doylestown and Philada. Everyone gives the opinion our wheat is very fine and none of it has spoiled yet they hauled what they cut this morning. The remainder is standing if it is clear tomorrow with the force they had today they think they can finish....

Lee is reported to have crossed the river again. Some of the hopeful ones think you will soon be home. Port Hudson is also reported to have surrendered. I believe it is not confirmed though many believe it. The draft commenced in Philada. yesterday. All passed off quietly I believe. I have not heard anything to the contrary and I hope there will not be such a riot as they have had in New York. Last night or near morning I was awakened by the locomotive screaming to the full capacity of steam power. I wondered if the riot has commenced in the city and the women and children were sent up here. But the cause of it was a broken engine in the afternoon and they sent another up in the night to take the train this morning. I wish thee was home. I must say farewell the man is waiting to take [the letter] to the office. We are well as of old thy affectionate wife, Ellen E. Hart. ■

On Saturday, March 31, 2012 the Bucks and Montgomery Counties' Regional History Day competition took place at Ursinus College in Collegeville, PA. Over 502 students, in grades 6 through 12, from schools in both counties, conducted extensive research on subjects related directly to this year's designated theme, *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*. Students from twenty-two schools came together to present their History Day projects in the forms of exhibits, websites, documentaries, historical papers, and performances. On April 25, the Mercer Museum & Library celebrated the winners of the regional competition at a reception and open house. Students who placed in all categories of the History Day competition had the opportunity to show off their remarkable projects to family members, teachers, principals, BCHS staff and board members, and many more. Visitors to this congratulatory event enjoyed refreshments and light fare while watching students present their performances and documentaries and viewing a display of exhibits, papers, and websites. Samantha Barrett, Holicong Middle School (8th Grade), won in her category, Junior Individual Performance at the Pennsylvania State History Day Competition in May of this year. Her performance was titled, "The Underground Railroad: A Perilous Journey to Freedom." Samantha went on to perform at the national History Day contest at the University of Maryland in June. She had a wonderful experience and looks forward to next year! If you wish to view a full list of all of the winners of this year's regional competition visit, www.mercermuseum.org/learn-and-do/national-history-day.org. ■



Brian Selznik at the Mercer Museum.

Booktenders Donates Proceeds to Mercer Museum

Last September, Ellen Mager, owner of Booktenders' Children's Bookstore and Secret Garden, selected the Mercer Museum to benefit from the release of award-winning author Brian Selznik's *Wonderstruck!* Mr. Selznik wowed the audience in the museum's Great Hall, before answering questions and signing copies of his book. Mr. Selznik previously won the Caldecott Award for *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, which was the basis for Martin Scorsese's film, *Hugo*. The Mercer Museum was "wonderstruck" by the fantastic event, which raised over \$1,000 to support children's programs at the museum. ■

THE BUILDING OF "FONTHILL" AT DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, IN 1908, 1909 AND 1910 *continued from page 3*

sed domino domus," Via Pontaldi, No. 6 (black numbers).

All the tiles on the wall-faces were set in the usual way and not cast in during construction. The heavy outer doors are made of oak planks from the old covered bridge at Chalfont and adapted from doors at Hornby Castle, Yorkshire. The interior doors of the same construction are backed with cross battens from doors seen by me in 1886, at Durenstein in upper Austria and elsewhere on the Danube in Austria. The door nails were made in Doylestown by a blacksmith and the hinges and hinge hooks from old Bucks County barns were found in neighboring scrap iron heaps. The hook prongs were extra forked for casting into the walls. A few late paneled doors of about 1850 were bought at a Philadelphia wreckage yard.

The staircases were all plastered with round treads over wire netting placed upon the original casting.

The Columbus Room was dedicated to my aunt, Mrs. T. B. Lawrence, nee Mary Chapman, to whom I owe my education and travels, and all the rhymed tile inscriptions on the columns and corbels are original and refer to her, in gratitude for her incessant encouragement and help in things good and worthy that I have tried to do since my early youth.

The tapestry woven curtains,



INTERIOR FINISHING: DOOR DETAIL

etc., in the house are of modern French make and have greatly faded. Most of the prints (engravings) were obtained from George H. Rigby, the bookseller in Philadelphia. The picture frames were generally adapted from old mirror frames of about 1840, and they and the furniture painted to give color to the room. The floors were polished with damp white pine sawdust slightly oiled with boiled linseed oil.

OUTSIDE APPEARANCE—In general the house, like old barns, anthracite coal breakers, old houses in the country before 1800, and, as I believe, like many European castles, was built from the inside, that is to be used first and looked at afterwards, therefore with only a secondary regard for outside construction. The establishment

remained in doubt and some fear as to the final result till the forms were removed. The flat towered roof and "Jersey Terrace" were afterthoughts. When the covering of woodwork finally disappeared the general outlines from the east seemed disappointing and out of proportion, but seen from the west the building realized the literary and artistic dreams and memories of travel which had inspired its construction.

Large numbers of sight-seers visited the house in 1909 and 1910, since then as a few visitors continue to come, leaflets were written to describe the tile work and interior decoration for their benefit. Referring to these more minute descriptions I conclude with a motto, from the door of an old house, (Vico dentro il coro della vigne, Genoa, No. 43, red.) "*Intro spice et judica.*" ■

of the height of walls, shape of windows, roof-lines, steeples, chimneys, etc., were finishing touches. The construction was nowhere concealed. From first to last I tried to follow the precept of the architect Pugin. "Decorate construction but never construct decoration."

So little was outside appearance considered that we

HUNT FOR TREASURE AT MERCER *continued from page 1*

sunk in a Hurricane off of Key West in 1622; samples of cargo from sunken 18th-century Dutch and English merchant ships; and armaments from British and French warships. Artifacts featured from the Museum's collection include mining tools, a c. 1900 deep sea diver's helmet, iron safes and other security devices, and a gold mining pan and Bowie

knife once belonging to a prospector at the Dutch Flat Mining Camp during the 1849 California Gold Rush.

The Hunt for Treasure! will be on view through September 21. See page 14 for information about the *Hunt for Treasure Appraisal Day*. Check the museum's Calendar of Events for other programs associated with the exhibit. ■

“Architectural Hardware” at Fonthill

Edited and reprinted from the Mercer Mosaic-Winter 1989, Vol. 6, No. 1

Linda F. Dyke, former Assistant Curator, Fonthill

When we speak of the architectural hardware of old houses, generally it is the hardware of their doors which we have in mind. But houses may have many other functional metal parts as well, such as railings and radiators, light switches and call bells, dampers and dumbwaiters. Shouldn't these be considered too? ¹

This is especially true of Fonthill, where the components of the heating and electrical systems, the drapery holders and railings play such important visual roles. Prominent and oddly assorted, they demand our attention on every side. Railings made of common iron pipe, bent, pinched and bolted together, rub elbows with beautifully cross-battened doors, fitted with enormous hand wrought strap hinges and wrought, clinched spikes. Vintage 1912 cast iron radiators, tinted various soft hues, are surrounded by 17th century Spanish tiles on one wall, and the front door's huge antique lock of European manufacture contrasts strangely with the standard-issue rim locks of the other doors around it.

Henry Mercer was responsible for assembling these hardware elements which seem to the modern eye so eccentrically selected. His writings and the records of the building's construction begin to suggest an underlying rationale for their assemblage, shedding further light on Mercer and the contrast between his sentimental nostalgia and functionalist practicality.

First, the exhaustively complete house bills for Fonthill, carefully preserved and meticulously entered into a ledger by Frank Swain, Mercer's assistant, reveal the people who created or sold the building's hardware. ² Four different



This railing in the Gallery is fabricated from 3/4" iron pipe that Mercer used throughout Fonthill.

blacksmiths were responsible for the wrought-iron work: Elmer E. Barnes, Clarence H. Davis, J.W. Rapp, and Harry Fluck. The most notable contributions of Barnes, whose billhead describes him as a “general blacksmith,” and “ornamental iron worker,” were a weathervane, many of the andirons, and the massive-headed wrought “spikes” for the doors, for which Mercer paid a nickel apiece. ³

To Davis, whose shop was located to the rear of 34 West Oakland Street, was given the lion's share of the commissioned smith work for the house. He made the building's second weathervane, many of



Henry Mercer secured the front door of his castle with this massive rim lock from Munich.

the strap hinges, the door pulls, and all the 3/4" iron pipe railings for the stairways and balconies. ⁴

Rapp fashioned the curved, iron “hangers” in which the curtain rods rest (the rods themselves are iron pipe); and Fluck furnished certain of the component parts for the two dumbwaiters, installed in early 1911. ⁵

Mass-produced hardware items were purchased in two local stores: Charles Shive's, at Main and State and James Barrett's, at Main and Ashland. Among other items, the bills revealed that the two-inch brass curtain rings (to fit over the pipe rods) came from Shive's, the rim locks used on most of the doors from Barrett's. ⁶ Mercer called upon these dealers, with the four smiths mentioned above, for most of the metal furnishings of his house.

His choice of material and design often seems whimsical. He attempted to explain the choice of some of these items in notes written around 1924. He explained that the designs for two of the most striking features—the railings and the doors—were drawn from memories of similar ones seen abroad. Of the former he wrote:

The iron balcony railings were patterned after those seen in an old second-class hotel in Genoa, those of cement in the Saloon and outer terraces were taken from the porch of San Marco in Venice. ⁷

Thus, Mercer's selection of 3/4" iron pipe as the basic fabric of his railings, with its simple bent, pinched and bolted construction, is not only an instance of his ability to convert a material produced for one use to another, but also represents an attempt to recreate the appearance of similar railings seen abroad.

Similarly, the designs for his wooden doors were based on nostalgic memories:

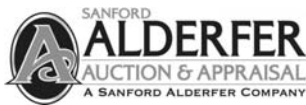
The heavy outer doors are made of oak planks from the old covered bridge at Chalfont and adapted from doors at Hornby Castle, Yorkshire. The interior doors of the same construction are backed with cross battens from doors seen by me in 1886 at Durenstein in upper Austria and elsewhere on the Danube in Austria. ⁸

Like Janus, Mercer's doors have two “faces.” Mercer copied the raised, vertical molding strips with the large-headed wrought nails to hold them fast from the Hornby door. The moldings of yellow pine were locally milled and Elmer Barnes' 5-cent iron spikes used to attach them to yellow pine planks. The long, strap hinges forged by Clarence Davis were tunneled through the moldings of the “Hornsby” side of each door, while the Austrian-inspired cross-battens of the opposing side were constructed in a wide variety of pleasing, geometric patterns, also secured by Barnes' nails, driven through and clinched on the other side. Especially formal doors, such as the pair between the entry hall and the Saloon, received Davis' hand-crafted iron door pulls, rounded like a Suffolk latch.

The juxtaposition of the large antique lock on the front door and the common rim locks used inside is easily

...continued on page 14

“Hunt for Treasure” Appraisal Day!



Saturday,
September 15
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.,
Mercer Museum

Ever wonder what your family heirloom or flea market discovery is worth? Experts from Alderfer's Auction & Appraisal will be on hand to talk with you about your treasure and provide verbal appraisals. Don't like waiting in lines? Avoid the wait and reserve a time-slot with pre-registration, please call 215-348-9461 ext 210. Cost is \$15 per item, limit of 5 (\$12 for Museum members). The program benefits Mercer Museum collecting and conservation initiatives. *Exclusions: firearms, stamps, coins and oversized items.*

“ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE” AT FONTHILL *continued from page 13*

explained. Mercer's Bavarian brother-in-law, Baron Hubert Fidler von Isarborn, selected the former in Munich, in the shop of a German “schlossermeister” (locksmith). He sent it along to grace the new home.⁹ The design of the common rim locks, purchased at Barrett's, made them easy to install on the other doors. While they were not elegant, they were functional and practical, their square, boxy shape seeming to echo the square quarry tiles which so often were their neighbors.

Color is a surprising feature of some of the hardware in Mercer's house. The iron railings are usually painted a rich yellow, occasionally red (as in the Library balcony), and the radiators, too, have been tinted various shades. The coloring of the latter is particularly note-

worthy in the Conservatory, where the six linked units which span the north wall at eye level have been painted in an alternating color scheme of ivory, rose and gold. These colors were selected to echo and complement the colors of the tiles which surround them, one of many instances in Fonthill of Mercer's sensitivity to harmonizing colors.

The best example of his practice of integrating all of a room's features into a planned color scheme is the Library, where the pink and blue of the tiles is repeated on the wall-paneling and on the case of the grandfather's clock; and where the red of the balcony railing blends with the terra cotta and the tawny color of the brocade tiles and concrete vaults above it.

In his desire to integrate the elements of the rooms into an

overall color scheme, Mercer shows his links to the Arts and Crafts Movement of his day. William Morris, in England, established a company of artists and artisans, which included fabric, wallpaper and tile designers, so that there could be homogeneity to the decoration of a room. Mercer was his own Morris & Co., designing his own tiles and paneling, choosing his own draperies, tinting his hardware and his built-in wooden elements to match.

In his description of the design of his house, he quoted a precept of the previous century's English architectural reformer, A.W. Pugin, “Decorate construction but never construct decoration.”¹⁰ Mercer carried this concept to lengths probably undreamed of by Pugin, as Fonthill's hardware demonstrates again and again. ■

Notes:

1. A preservationist, Richard Pieper also suggested the broadening of the category in 1988, at the Interiors Conference, Philadelphia, Pa.
2. See Fonthill unbound mss. series 17, vols. 27-40, for the individual bills themselves, and Fonthill bound mss. series 3, v. 4, for the ledger into which they were all entered by Frank Swain (BCHS Library).
3. All itemized in Barnes' bill of May 11, 1910.
4. See s. 3, v. 4, p. 155, 119.
5. J.W. Rapp, bill of Dec. 20, 1911. The dumbwaiter bills are dated January 3, 1911, by the Energy Elevator Company of Philadelphia; Jan. 7 and 14 by Buckman & Co.; and Jan. 7 and 15, by Harry Fluck for “irons, rods and bolts for waiter.”
6. See bills dated April 8 and May 4, 1911, and July 31, 1912, from Barrett's, and March 8, 1912 from Shive's.
7. Henry C. Mercer, “The Building of ‘Fonthill,’ at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, in 1908, 1909, and 1910,” *A Collection of Papers Read Before the Bucks County Historical Society*, v.6 (1932), p.328.
8. *ibid.*, p.39. See “Hornby Castle, Yorkshire, the Seat of the Duke of Leeds,” *Country Life*, July 14, 1906, p. 54 ff. and Fonthill bound mss. series 3, v. 1, p. 175, 189-191, for HCM's working out of the Hornby and Austrian door designs.
9. The baron paid 140 marks for the lock, on April 9, 1912 (series 17, bills; see also s. 4, v. 3, p. 122).
10. Mercer, “Building of ‘Fonthill,’” p. 329.

“APRON ARCHAEOLOGIST” ELLYNANNE GEISEL TO APPEAR AT MERCER *continued from page 1*

form, and 155 vintage aprons. The exhibit arose from a collaboration between self-described “apron curator” or “apron archaeologist” Geisel, and award-winning documentary photographer Kristina Loggia. The apron storytellers featured in the show include a 111-year-old mother and her only child, a Holocaust survivor, a biology professor from Mali, Africa, and a pre-teen and her grandmother. Their stories explore the people behind the aprons and give life to both the fabric and the exhibit.

EllynAnne Geisel attests that she “first tried on domestic armor” in 1999 while writing an article about aprons, and

was struck by the colorful and revealing history woven into the fabric of these vintage icons. Since then she has gathered more than 600 aprons and apron memories from across America. Many of these are included in *The Apron Chronicles* exhibit, and in the accompanying catalog of the same name.

In addition to the exhibit publication, Geisel is also the award-winning author of, *The Apron Book: Making, Wearing and Sharing a Bit of Cloth and Comfort*, *The Kitchen Linens Book: Using, Sharing and Cherishing the Fabrics of Our Daily Lives*, and a small companion gift book,

Apronisms: Pocket Wisdom for Everyday. She also creates vintage designs for her company, Apron Memories®. Her aprons have been featured in *Vogue*, and even worn by actress Marcia Cross in her role as Bree Van de Camp on the ABC series, *Desperate Housewives*.

Geisel is the creator of National Tie One on Day™, now celebrated annually on Thanksgiving eve as an opportunity to put the “give” back in Thanksgiving through an act of kindness. The Mercer Museum expects to aide Geisel in promoting this event locally during the run of the *Apron Chronicles*

exhibit this fall.

The Apron Chronicles has received much national recognition, with the work of Geisel and Loggia featured in *Time* magazine, *The New York Times*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and NPR's *Weekend Edition*, among other media. Described variously as the “Prima Apronista,” “Empress of Apronology,” or just as a hardcore Elvis Fan, Geisel resides in Pueblo, Colorado and blogs for *The Huffington Post* when she is not traveling with the exhibit or promoting her products. She is looking forward to her visit to Doylestown and the Delaware Valley this October. ■

2012 Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle Partial Calendar

Visit our website at: www.mercermuseum.org for complete program information.

Programs at the Mercer Museum

Exhibit: *Bold Patterns, Bright Colors: Graphic Pennsylvania Quilts, 1850-1915*

Through July 29

Exhibit: *The Hunt for Treasure!*

Through September 21

**Treasure! in Family History:
A Beginning Genealogy Workshop**

Sunday, July 15
1-5 p.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—Basics—
Monday-Friday, July 16-20**
Sold Out
8:30-11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics
Workshop-Intermediate**
Monday-Friday, July 16-20
12:30- 3:30 p.m.

Treasure! in Family Stories:

A Folklore Workshop
Saturday, July 21, 1- 4 p.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—Basics—
Monday-Friday, July 23-27**
Sold Out
8:30-11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—
Advanced I RCX**
Monday-Friday, July 23- 27
8:30- 11:30 a.m.

Stories in the Mercer Park
Wednesday, July 25, noon- 1 p.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—
Advanced II NXT**

Monday-Friday, August 6- 10
8:30- 11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics
Workshop-Intermediate**
Sold Out
Monday-Friday, August 6-10
12:30-3:30 p.m.

**Caring for Family Treasures:
A Preservation Workshop**
Saturday, August 11, 1- 3 p.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—
Advanced III NXT- Quest**
Monday-Friday, August 13-17
8:30- 11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshop—Basics—
Monday-Friday, August 13-17**
Sold Out
12:30-3:30 p.m.

Stories in the Mercer Park
Wednesday, August 15,
Noon - 1 p.m.

**A Town Full of Treasures:
Doylestown Family Walking Tour**
Saturday, August 25 - 6 p.m. & 8 p.m.

**Exhibit: *Stitches in Time: Bucks
County Needlework Samplers***
September 8 - November 15

**The Hunt for Treasure!
Appraisal Day Event**
Saturday, September 15, 10 - 2 p.m.

**Friends of BCHS
Quarterly Meeting**

Monday, September 17, 12:30 p.m.

**Exhibit: *The Apron Chronicles:
A Patchwork of American
Recollections***

October 6 - January 13

Cocktails at the Castle
Friday, October 12

Mercer By Moonlight Tours
Friday, October 26
7 p.m. & 8 p.m.

**Friends of BCHS
Quarterly Meeting**
Monday, November 19, 12:30 p.m.

**Exhibit: *Under the Tree:
A Century of Holiday Toys***
December 1- January 31

**Mercer Museum
Holiday Open House**
Tuesday, December 11
7-9 p.m.

Programs at Fonthill

Archaeology Camp
Monday - Friday
July 23 - 27, 9 a.m. - Noon

Medieval Camp
Monday - Friday
August 6 -10, 9 a.m. - Noon

A Summertime Meander

Saturday, August 11
1- 4 p.m. (last start time at 3 p.m.)

**Annual Beer Event:
A World of Beer**
Friday, August 17 - 7-10 p.m.

Fonthill Park Walk
Saturday, September 22
1 p.m.

**A Fashionable Feast
with Mr. Mercer**
Saturday, November 10 & Saturday,
November 24
5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Behind the Scenes Tours
Saturday, October 27 & Saturday,
November 3
6:30 - 9 p.m.

**Winter Wonderland
Holiday Decorations at Fonthill**
December 1- December 31

Holiday Festivities for the Family
Sunday, December 9
Noon - 4 p.m.

Fonthill Holiday Lights Meander
Saturday, December 15
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
(last start time at 8:30 p.m.)

Candlelight Holiday Tours
Saturday, December 29
6:30-9 p.m.

General Information

Check out our new website at
www.mercermuseum.org

Mercer Museum & Museum Shop

84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901-4930

PHONE: 215-345-0210 FAX: 215-230-0823

HOURS: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, noon-5 p.m.

Also at the Mercer Museum: **Research Library**

HOURS: Tuesday-Thursday, 1-5 p.m.

Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Fonthill Castle

East Court Street & Route 313,

Doylestown, PA 18901-4930

PHONE: 215-348-9461 FAX: 215-348-9462

HOURS: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, noon-5 p.m.

(Guided tours only; reservations suggested)

Members receive unlimited free admission to
Mercer Museum and Library & Fonthill Castle.

Penny Lots

Gayle Shupack, Editor

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Penny Lots is a benefit of membership.

Permission must be obtained to reprint any material.

The Mercer Museum and Library & Fonthill Castle are
administered by the Bucks County Historical Society.

National History Day Volunteer Needed!

The Education Department of the Mercer Museum & Library is in need of a National History Day Volunteer to assist with the planning, preparation, and implementation of our Bucks and Montgomery Counties' Regional History Day competition. The Mercer Museum coordinates the regional competition which hosts over 350 students each year. History Day is a competition where students from area schools research and create projects in the forms of exhibits, websites, documentaries, historical papers, and performances based on an annual theme. The theme for 2013 is *Turning Points in History*. An event of this size needs intense organization so help is essential! This position would include assisting with History Day mailings, correspondence, judge recruitment, competition preparation, and assisting on the day of the competition at Ursinus College in March. This position requires three hours per week from September through November and five hours per week from January to February. The hours through March and April will vary as needed. If you are interested in working with students and have a love for history education, please contact Melissa Jay, Coordinator of Education, at 215-345-0120, ext. 125 or at mmeduc@mercermuseum.org. For more information about National History Day please visit www.nhd.org. ■



**MERCER
MUSEUM
& FONTHILL
CASTLE**

84 S. Pine Street
Doylestown, PA 18901



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of Museums

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View online tours of the castles
on the newly revised website at
www.mercermuseum.org or follow
us on Facebook & Twitter.

New Mercer Exhibits

The Hunt for Treasure!

Through September 21
Organized by NRG! Exhibits.



**Bold Patterns,
Bright Colors:
Graphic
Pennsylvania
Quilts;
1850-1915
through
July 29**

Members visit Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle
for FREE all year long!

Plan your Holiday Party in Our New Spaces
www.mercermuseum.org/visit-us/facility-use.org



Fonthill Castle celebrating 100 years in 2012

Photo by Jeffrey Totaro