



MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE

Summer-Fall 2015

Newsletter of the Bucks County Historical Society

Vol. 29 Number 2

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- AND MORE!

“Volunteer Firefighting” Members Preview Event on April 23.



(L-R): Philadelphia Fire Commissioner, Derrick Sawyer with BCHS Board Chair, Bill Maeglin.



The Tilley Family L to R: Elizabeth, Doug, Sam, Nancy, Jack, Michael and Barbara.



BCHS donors Tina and Jim Greenwood



(L-R): Trustee Gus Perea, Pete Van Dine and Linda Goodwin representing exhibit sponsor, Bucks County Foundation with BCHS Executive Director, Doug Dolan

Donor and Volunteer Recognition Celebration on May 12



Volunteers receive awards from left: Trustee Brian McLeod with Volunteer Coordinator, Frances Boffa; Trustees, Maureen B. Carlton and Michael Raphael; Jesse Crooks and Tim German.



(L-R): Joan and Frank Whalon with Darlene and Dan Dean.



(L-R): Doris Carr and Amy Parenti.



Delaware Valley Saxophone Quartet L to R: Mike Seifried, Don Kline, William R. Schutt and Brian Freer.



Charles Yeske, Manager Moravian Pottery & Tile Works pours drinks for guests.

**SEE THE ARTICLE ABOUT THE
RECOGNITION EVENT ON PAGE 15.**

Firefighting Exhibit Opens



THE NEW ORLEANS EXCURSIONISTS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA. Rile and Company, Philadelphia, 1888. This photo shows VFA members in front of the Union League just before their departure for New Orleans. Gift of the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Philadelphia, 1919.

On April 25, the Mercer Museum opened its latest exhibit, *To Save Our Fellow Citizens: Volunteer Firefighting, 1800-1875*. The fascinating exhibit tells the story of Philadelphia's early volunteer fire companies as the city grew and expanded over the course of the nineteenth century. A small companion exhibit features photographs and artifacts related to volunteer firefighting here in Bucks County.

Among the objects on display in the main exhibit is a carved wooden figure of a firefighter emerging from rubble with a baby in his arms, flames licking at his feet. This statue actually did not originate in Philadelphia but rather was produced by figure carver John C. May in New Orleans, Louisiana, probably sometime in the 1860s. May's carving is intended to represent Irad Ferry, a well-respected citizen and firefighter who died tragically battling a blaze on Camp Street in New Orleans on New Year's Day, 1837. Ferry, foreman of

Mississippi Engine Company No. 2, was the first member of the New Orleans Volunteer Fire Department to perish in the line of duty. An impressive stone monument to Ferry was erected later in the city's Cypress Grove Cemetery. But how did a carving made half a continent away in Louisiana wind up in Philadelphia, and later at the Mercer Museum?

When Philadelphia transitioned from a volunteer department to a paid firefighting force in 1871, the surviving volunteers formed their own veterans' organization. To commemorate their earlier service, and provide assistance to aging former firemen and their families, they established the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Philadelphia (VFA) in 1875. The VFA eventually created its own museum collection, housed in a former hose house on Buttonwood Street. Its members gathered regularly to reminisce, and to honor and keep alive the memory of the

volunteer era. The group also carried on a number of long-established traditions among firemen, including assembling for elaborate parades and visiting fire companies and other veterans' organizations in cities across the country. Firemen from these cities returned the favor, and were received and entertained in lavish fashion by Philadelphia's volunteers.

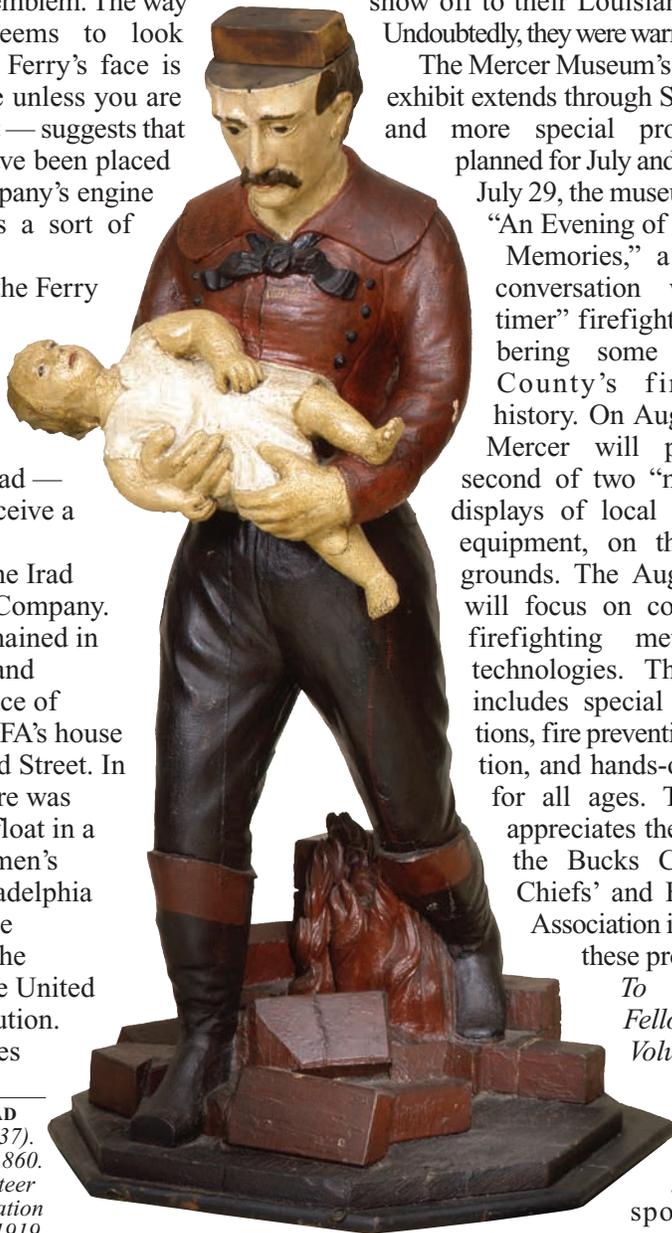
In hosting visiting firemen, and on their own excursions, the volunteers often displayed their older hand-drawn apparatus, and donned elegant uniforms and parade attire. The VFA acquired an old hand-drawn engine and hose carriage, lovingly restoring each so that members could pull these vehicles proudly through the streets of Philadelphia and other cities. The hand-drawn engine was painted with the dates of the VFA's organization and incorporation, while the ornamented hose carriage displayed the nostalgic motto of the group, "Many Happy Days."

In 1885, a contingent of volunteer firemen from New Orleans visited Philadelphia. As custom dictated, Philadelphia's veteran volunteers extended a warm and festive reception to their brethren from the Crescent City. On the occasion of their visit and as a token of thanks, the New Orleans firemen apparently presented the VFA with the carved figure of Irad Ferry. More than just a Louisiana fireman, Ferry represented the heroism and sacrifice of volunteers everywhere.

In fact, twenty-three years after Ferry's death in 1860, a new steam fire engine company had formed in New Orleans. The company took its name from the hero of the 1837 Camp Street fire, and became the Irad Ferry Steam Fire Engine Co. No. 12. It is likely that the wooden figure was carved at that time, or a few years afterwards, to serve as a company emblem. The way the figure seems to look downward — Ferry's face is difficult to see unless you are looking up at it — suggests that it may even have been placed above the company's engine house door as a sort of figurehead.

The top of the Ferry figure was never finished. Only a plain wooden block sits atop its head — probably to receive a fire helmet representing the Irad Ferry Engine Company. The statue remained in Philadelphia, and occupied a place of honor in the VFA's house on Buttonwood Street. In 1887, the figure was featured on a float in a volunteer firemen's parade in Philadelphia that marked the centennial of the adoption of the United States Constitution. A set of plaques

FIGURE OF IRAD FERRY (1801-1837).
John C. May, c. 1860.
Gift of the Volunteer Firemen's Association of Philadelphia, 1919.



were painted to accompany the figure while on display or in parades. Both the plaques and the figure of Ferry eventually entered the Mercer collection in 1919, as the gift of the Volunteer Firemen's Association. The text on the plaques is drawn from the inscription on the Ferry monument in New Orleans' Cypress Grove Cemetery: "Irad Ferry/ Born in Wilton, Connecticut/ 13 December 1801/ Died 4 January 1837/ The sacrifice of your life for the safety of others/ shall not be forgotten by your grateful survivors."

In 1888, the Volunteer Firemen's Association embarked on an excursion to New Orleans, giving the Crescent City's volunteers the opportunity to return the kindnesses shown them when they made their 1885 visit to Philadelphia. More than forty VFA members made the trip, taking with them a special parade carriage to show off to their Louisiana brethren. Undoubtedly, they were warmly received.

The Mercer Museum's firefighting exhibit extends through September 7, and more special programs are planned for July and August. On July 29, the museum will host "An Evening of Firefighting Memories," a roundtable conversation with "old-timer" firefighters remembering some of Bucks County's firefighting history. On August 16, the Mercer will present the second of two "musters," or displays of local firefighting equipment, on the museum grounds. The August muster will focus on contemporary firefighting methods and technologies. The program includes special demonstrations, fire prevention information, and hands-on activities for all ages. The Mercer appreciates the support of the Bucks County Fire Chiefs' and Firefighters' Association in presenting these programs.

To Save Our Fellow Citizens: Volunteer Firefighting, 1800-1875 is generously sponsored by

Visit Bucks County, Tilley Family & Tilley Fire Equipment Company, In Memory of Don Tilley's Commitment to Volunteer Firefighting, Bucks County Foundation, William & Laurie Schutt, Susan E. Kane, Brian & Louise McLeod, Mission Appeal Donors-2014 Cocktails at the Castle Gala and Adopt-An Artifact Campaign Contributors. ■

Doylestown Walking Tour of 2015: Firefighting History



Doylestown Fire Company, Shewell Avenue, Doylestown, built in 1902

On August 14, enjoy taking a step back in time while on an evening stroll exploring Doylestown's firefighting history. This tour will feature stops dedicated to Doylestown's early fire companies and apparatus, as well as structures that have been "lost to the flames." This family-friendly walking tour concludes with an indoor visit to Doylestown Fire Company's Shewell Avenue fire station, designed by architect Oscar Martin and built in 1902. Our tours will begin at the Mercer Museum's front entrance. Tour times are at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Adults: \$11/\$9 members; Children (6-12): \$6/\$4 members. Call 215-348-9461 to register and reserve your space.

Early Plane, Firefighting Artifacts Highlight Recent Museum Acquisitions

In the early spring of 1768, a destructive fire raced through the building housing the Buckingham Meeting of Friends (Quakers) in Lahaska, Bucks County. Bystanders noticed smoke and flames coming from the structure, and alerted members of the meeting who were, at the time, engaged in worship. All escaped safely.

Fortunately, even as fire destroyed their meetinghouse, plans were already underway for the construction of a new, larger structure. Later that same year, the structure was completed. The new two-story stone building — which still stands along Route 202 — represented a collaboration between master builder, mason, and plasterer, Matthias Hutchinson of Solebury Township, and carpenter Edward Good of Plumstead. Both men were members of Buckingham Meeting.

Today, the Buckingham Friends Meetinghouse is recognized as a National Historic Landmark. Its Georgian architecture and interior appointments are remarkably unchanged from their 1768 appearance. What is more, the building's interior design — which allocated equal space to both men and women — became a model for Quaker meetinghouse architecture in the years that followed. Just a few short years after its construction, the structure served as a hospital for American, British, and Hessian soldiers during the American Revolution. In fact, a number of soldiers who died at the Meetinghouse from wounds and disease were buried on the grounds.

The early history of the 1768 Meetinghouse is remembered in a recent acquisition to the Mercer Museum's collection. A wooden molding plane with the stamped name, "E. Good," almost certainly that of Edward Good, the Meetinghouse carpenter, was given to the Museum this past spring by collector Kenneth Hopfel, a long-time member of the Early American Industries Association.



LACEY PARK FIRE COMPANY HELMET.
Cairns and Brother, Clifton, New Jersey, 1950s.
Gift of Joseph Faust Jr., President, Warminster Fire Department.

On Pennsylvania hand planes, it is typical for the maker's name to be found on the front edge, or toe, while a user's name might be stamped, branded or

otherwise imprinted on the side of the tool. However, on this plane, only the stamped name on the toe is evident.

To help confirm the attribution to Edward Good, another wooden molding plane in the Museum's collection was examined. In 1909, Henry Mercer donated a plane featuring the stamped name, "N. Good," on the toe, and the brand, "Nathan Good" on the side.

This plane, which produced a series of "reeds," or decorative grooves, on woodwork, was found at an auction in Carversville, Bucks County. The plane once belonged to Nathan Good, son of Edward, who also worked as a carpenter in Buckingham and Solebury Townships. With the exception of the first initial, both the "E. Good" and the "N. Good" stamps are virtually identical, sharing the same saw tooth border and lettering style.

We had long surmised that Nathan Good made the plane that bears his stamp, perhaps as a project to complete an apprenticeship with his father. Since the plane also features Nathan's brand, it was likely part of his own personal toolkit.

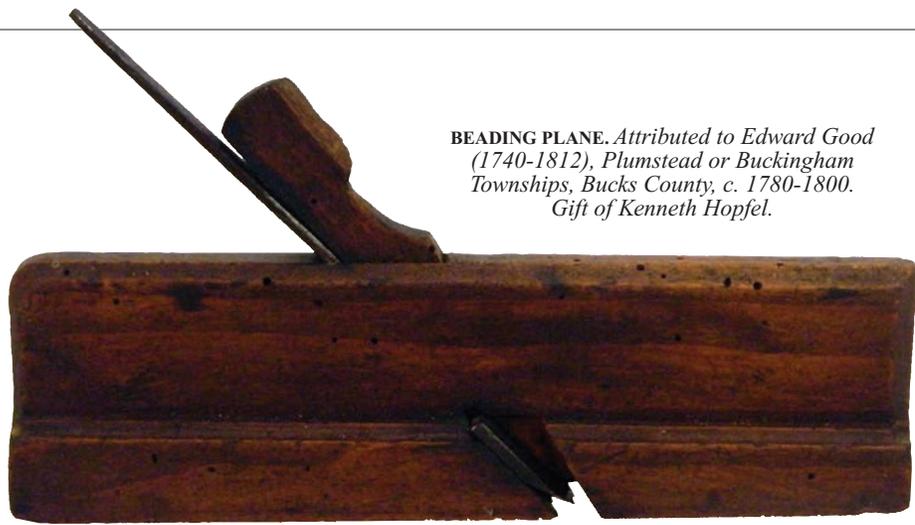
With the discovery of the "E. Good" plane, it now appears that both father and son made at least some of their own tools.

Edward Good's molding plane is of eighteenth century form, and was used to run a "bead," or decorative edging, along a board. Though it may not be as early as the date of the 1768 Meetinghouse construction, Good likely used it at some point in his carpentry work, perhaps even up to the time of his death in 1812. His son Nathan lived on until 1874, and is buried in the graveyard at the Meetinghouse.

Another recent acquisition takes us nearly 200 years forward in time to the World War II era, and relates to our current exhibit on firefighting. The Lacey Park Volunteer Fire Company was organized in 1944 to help protect a housing development of the same name in Warminster



WATERCOLOR: RETURN FROM THE DRESS PARADE.
William B.T. Trego, c. 1885. Gift of Debra Anderson.



BEADING PLANE. *Attributed to Edward Good (1740-1812), Plumstead or Buckingham Townships, Bucks County, c. 1780-1800. Gift of Kenneth Hopfel.*



BEADING PLANE — DETAIL OF MAKER'S STAMP.

Township, Bucks County. The development provided shelter for workers at the nearby Brewster Aeronautical Corporation (later the Naval Air Development Center). The community took its name from Revolutionary War General John Lacey, commander of forces at the Battle of Crooked Billet, which occurred not far from the neighborhood.

The Lacey Park community suffered a long decline in the post-war era, eventually gaining a reputation as a suburban slum with unhealthy living conditions and a high crime rate. Like the community it served, the Lacey Park Fire Company also went into decline, losing membership and funding until it was no longer able to provide effective aid to the neighborhood (which had been renamed Warminster Heights in the 1960s). In 1975, Warminster Township suspended operation of the Lacey Park Company, and the Warminster Fire Department took responsibility for fire protection in the Warminster Heights community.

We are indebted to James Krueger, former Warminster Township Fire Marshall, for helping to secure several objects documenting the history of the Lacey Park Fire Company including a c. 1950s helmet, a company banner, two

badges, an engine bell, and several documents. The materials are the gift of the Warminster Fire Department, Joseph Faust Jr., President.

In addition to these two gifts, the museum also recently acquired two watercolor paintings. The first, the gift of Debra Anderson, is a rare watercolor work by the Bucks and Montgomery County artist William B.T. Trego (1858-1909). The picture, titled "Return from the Dress Parade," depicts American cavalymen of the 1880s. Historian and Trego scholar Joseph Eckhardt was instrumental in helping the Mercer Museum secure this gift.

The second watercolor, by the local artist Jeanetta Beauvais (1928-1978), is a portrait of Nelson Derry, an African-American gardener employed by the Darlington Florists in Doylestown in the early 1900s. The portrait was painted in 1947, when the subject was 84 years old — still working and in his overalls. The Darlington's greenhouses were once located in the vicinity of today's Mt. Carmel Catholic Church in Doylestown, and provided some of the fresh cut flowers ordered by Henry Mercer to brighten his residence, Fonthill. The painting is a gift of Joanne Zecca-Veater, a former Doylestown resident. ■

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.

Of recent note, the Mercer Museum & Library was pleased to provide several images that were included in Brandywine River Museum of Art's exhibit "Plus Ultra: Moravian Tiles of the New World," May 23 – August 16, 2015. Reproductions of Mercer's sketches of the "New World" tiles were used to illustrate the beginning of his artistic process in the development of this epic tile series.

We are also pleased to be included in the National Canal Museum's inaugural exhibit "Where America Was Built." This exhibit explores the impact that Pennsylvanian furnaces had on the American Industrial Revolution as they transitioned from charcoal-fired iron furnaces to the use of anthracite in iron production. To emphasize this important time in history, the Canal Museum borrowed a 1756 Durham stove plate from the Mercer Museum's collection. For more information about this artifact, please visit our online catalog RolloPAC and keyword search "Durham Furnace Stove plate."

One Hundred Years of the Mercer Museum, 1915-2015



WORKMEN AT MUSEUM FRONT DOOR, *probably spring or summer 1915. In September, Mercer had the Bucks County Seal set decoratively in tile in the space just above the door.*

In this article, we continue to follow the Mercer Museum's construction, as the building takes on its final form in the summer and fall of 1915. Construction activity through the spring of that year had focused on completing the upper walls, window sashes and various concrete book cases. Mercer even had his handprint and the date, "1915," cast into three locations on the nearly finished building.

In September, Mercer noted that the casting of the innumerable window sashes was continuing and work was beginning on sections of the concrete roof. Roof features like the dormers and chimney stacks were being added. Workmen also set the county seal in tile above the museum's front door, facing the Bucks County prison on Pine Street.

Though generally pleased with progress, Mercer suffered some setbacks. On September 26, he recorded in his notebook that the belt on the concrete

mixer had been stolen. Digressing to discuss briefly the business of the Tile Works, he also lamented that the pottery business was slow and profits were down substantially.

By mid-November, however, Mercer announced happily that his workmen had virtually completed construction. The only exception was the highest point on the structure — the steeple that was to receive an iron weathervane of Mercer's own design. Later that month, the "Rainmaker" vane was finally installed, capping the steeple.

On November 13, Mercer reported a "remarkable occurrence" in his construction notebook. While on the museum grounds to check on progress with the nearly completed building, he was chatting with Historical Society librarian Warren Ely when he noticed a German band at a house just across Green Street. The band, apparently serenading

the owner of the house at 196 Green, was playing a tune Mercer recognized. He described the encounter:

"[The] tune done I ran 'round the building and saw one last musician with a bugle coming out of the gate...[I] shouted to him to come back and play the tune again — giving the name in German — but he hurried away and did not answer. The band did not come back but played another tune down the cross street near Main Street. A bonfire was burning at the top of [the] hill on Ashland St. and the sun was setting in splendid colors."

Mercer translated the lyrics to the tune he heard emanating from the band: "We have built a stately house, and dedicated it to God against rain, storm and disaster." He viewed the occurrence, together with the beautiful sunset, as a perfect benediction to the completion of his museum, and as a good omen for the future. Eventually he located the music to the tune and along

with a photograph of the museum building and a typed description of the event, had the entire composition framed for posterity.

Towards the end of November, Mercer's workmen began the arduous task of glazing all of the museum's windows. One final job was the construction of the balustrade, or railing,

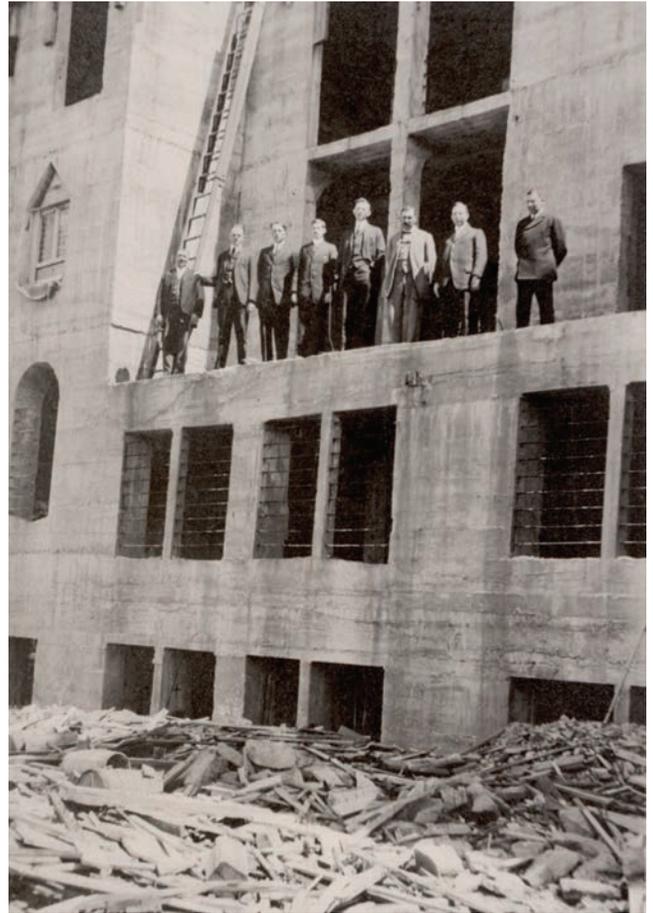


"REMARKABLE OCCURRENCE." Framed photographic and typescript composition by Henry C. Mercer, c. 1915-1916.

along the west terrace of the building, which was completed on November 24. Pressing to continue the work before the onset of colder weather, Mercer asked his crew to return the following day — Thanksgiving. All complied, and they began the process of dismantling the derrick and extensive wooden scaffolding around the building.

Earlier that August, Mercer provided a glimpse of the quantity of materials necessary to complete the museum project. Taking August 17 as an example, he recorded that 43 bags of cement, and 185 wheelbarrows full of concrete, had gone into the building's construction that day. Later, he would estimate that a total of about 6,000 tons of concrete had been mixed and poured during the entire construction project.

With the exterior of the building finished, Mercer turned his attention to installing the collections, a process that would continue through the winter and into 1916. The next issue of the



WORKMEN ON MUSEUM WEST TERRACE
probably spring or summer 1915.

newsletter will wrap up our chronicle of the building's progress, as we prepare to celebrate the museum's centennial in 2016. ■



Fonthill Tile Study Concludes

Concerns for the long-term preservation of Moravian Tile installations at Fonthill were addressed this winter through a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors. Led by staff from the firm Materials Conservation, the project explored methods of stabilizing and restoring tile installations in locations throughout the house.

Over the years, many Moravian tiles have come loose, and in some cases fallen, from Mercer's original installations. Often, the losses have been due to moisture penetration of the concrete building envelope, or from thermal variations (heating and cooling) in areas where chimneys, stoves, or fireplaces were embellished with tile. In other cases, poor original adhesion of the mortar securing the tiles caused the losses.

Tiles that have lost their integrity have been removed, or in some cases fallen, from their locations in rooms around the house. Where the original tiles could be saved, staff carefully gathered the pieces or fragments and labeled them so that they could be matched and re-installed at a future date. However, in many locations the losses occurred in the more distant past. In such cases, the original tiles may no longer be in existence.

In the course of the grant project, the museum planned to document some of the various conditions that led to the losses and to develop a replicable and sound methodology for securing, re-adhering and replacing original Mercer tiles. Furthermore, it was hoped that staff or volunteers could be trained to perform some of this work on a small-scale basis, rather than requiring more extensive and expensive projects conducted by outside contractors or conservation professionals.

After a period of experimentation, Materials Conservation staff developed a series of relatively simple techniques for securing and re-attaching the tiles. First, there are many sites at Fonthill where tile installations remain intact, but where tiles are loose or in danger of falling. In these areas, timely injections of a conservation-quality adhesive behind the tiles can help ensure that the installations will remain stable and in place.

Where tiles have become completely detached, but still survive, methods for consolidating and re-adhering the pieces

were also developed. These techniques will enable staff and volunteers to begin the process of re-attaching all of the tile pieces that have been "bagged" over the past several years.

A more difficult condition exists where tiles have been lost completely, and where the originals no longer survive. Museum staff intend to work with personnel from Bucks County's Moravian Pottery and Tile

Works to see if reproductions can be fabricated to match the profile of the originals. If so, they can be installed using the same materials and methods used to re-attach surviving tiles.

To wrap up its role in the project, Materials Conservation produced a final report and manual, to guide future tile re-installations. The report details both the methods and the materials necessary for the project. Materials Conservation staff members Andrew Fearon and Natalie Karas conducted workshops for staff, volunteers, guides, and members of the general public, describing the current conditions and demonstrating restoration techniques. In addition to willing volunteers, the museum also hopes to enlist the help of qualified summer interns to assist with tile restoration. An initial task for an intern this summer will be to inventory all of the original tiles still in existence and capable of being re-installed, and to develop a system for tracking and documenting future restoration work.

Fonthill is indebted to the National Trust for providing \$5,150 toward the tile project, and to the Philadelphia Stewardship Program of the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, funded by the William Penn Foundation, for providing matching support. The Friends of the Bucks County Historical Society also contributed a portion of the match for the grant project. ■



CONSERVATOR ANDREW FEARON works with Fonthill volunteer Hugh Downing to demonstrate the proper technique for injecting adhesive behind loose and endangered tiles in the Breakfast Room at Fonthill.



CONSERVATOR NATALIE KARAS describes tile conservation strategies for staff and volunteers at the Fonthill training session.

Memoriam for the Mercer Family Pets

By Janeen White, Fonthill Guide

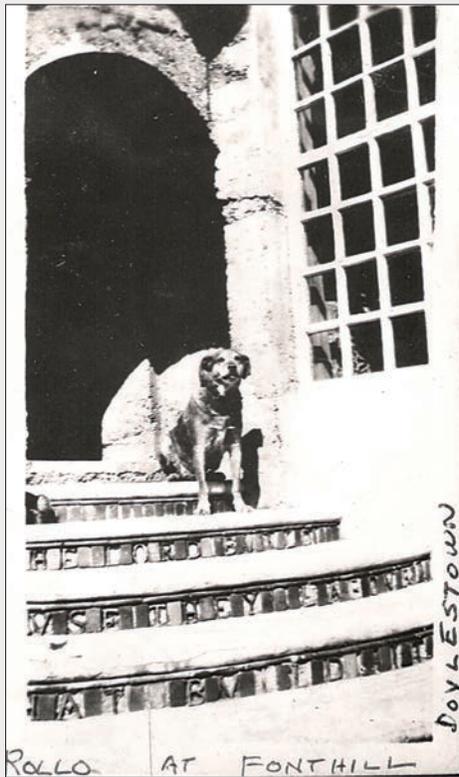
Henry Mercer loved his pets. This fact is evident in his home Fonthill, where photographs of his dogs adorn the walls and paw prints are embedded in concrete in memory of his canine companions. Puppy prints on the steps to the “Crypt,” along with “Rollo’s Staircase” in the Columbus Room, testify to the deep affection that Mercer held for these animals. Rollo also left his mark at the Mercer Museum, on a winding staircase marked with tile, as did a second dog “Larry” on the tower steps high above.

This love for animals was apparently shared by Henry Mercer’s family, who maintained a small pet cemetery on the grounds of their Doylestown home, “Aldie.” Constructed for the family by Mercer’s Aunt Elizabeth in 1870, the building no longer exists. It was here that Henry Mercer spent his years from age fourteen, until setting out in 1908 to build himself a new residence across town, called Fonthill.

The Mercer family pet cemetery can be found today on the north side of the second Aldie, built in 1927 for Henry’s younger brother, William Robert Mercer, Jr., and his wife Martha Dana Mercer. William — known to many as “Willie” — was a talented artist in his own right. His concrete works of art decorate the gardens of the Aldie estate, which is now owned and administered by the Heritage Conservancy. Markers designed by Willie Mercer denote the graves of each beloved Mercer family pet.

A sign posted in the cemetery reads: “A pony and parrot are buried here, along with seven dogs. The earliest tombstone is dated 1883.” An examination of the plot reveals that there are as many as seventeen animals memorialized at the site, although some of the headstones are quite worn and therefore difficult to read. One has been broken off almost entirely, with only a portion of the base remaining. Small sculpted figures atop many of the concrete markers indicate the type of animal buried below.

Following is a partial list of the pets buried there, including the name of each, a description of the animal, and



the year of its death when available.

1. Larry, Bay Horse, 1883
2. Milo, Newfoundland, 1889
3. Dingle, Water Spaniel, 1898
4. Derry, Water Spaniel, 1899
5. Barney, Terrier, 1904
6. Kate, Bay Mare, 1905
7. Hunter, Sorrel Horse, 1907
8. Cockey, Rose-breasted Cockatoo, 1913
9. Fairy Boy, Angora Kitten, 1913
10. Blue Boy, Persian Cat, 1929

There are several other dogs, including two Dachshunds, a Terrier, and an Airedale, plus a pony interred within the tiny cemetery. Clearly, each animal was a cherished member of the Mercer family while living at Aldie.

During his own lifetime, it appears that Henry Mercer had many pets. Records including notes, diaries and correspondence reveal the names Janet, Jack, Sailor, Boatswain, Randso, Larry, Dachs, Rory, Lady, Dick, Sport, Captain, and Rollo.

In his *Reminiscences of Henry*

Chapman Mercer (May 1930), Harvard classmate, J. T. Coolidge wrote of Mercer: “His dogs were friends to him and he treated them with tenderness. ‘Sailor’ could wipe his feet upon the mat and unlatch the door, and was proud of it, and so was his master.” In a letter to a friend, Mercer writes of how dogs had made “so great a difference in my life ... their intelligence and affection which has repaid me a hundred fold for my trouble ...”

It is obvious that Mercer derived affection, as well as companionship, from his furry friends. Upon their deaths, he mourned their passing. “Farewell Sport 6:30 p.m. 4/19/1913” is a notation found in one of his guest books.

Benny Barnes, an employee at the Tileworks, recalled being summoned once by Mercer to come immediately with horse and wagon. “One of Mercer’s pet dogs, a Chesapeake Bay retriever, had died and he wanted the animal buried in the field near East Street at Fonthill. Harvey Crouthamel dug the grave and we buried the dog. Dr. Mercer got me to find a big stone which was put up for a head stone, and told me to gather a bouquet of dandelions — for it was the spring of the year — and it was placed on the grave.”

When Rollo died in 1916, he was buried along the southern wall of the Tileworks, “under the wisteria vine.” According to Benny, the wisteria grew quickly from a small twig brought to the pottery by Frank Swain from Arthur Selner’s property, where Frank had once roomed. The lush vine did so well, Mercer would say, because his beloved dog Rollo was buried beneath its roots.

Although no tombstones mark the final resting place of Rollo or any other pet that died at Fonthill, we can be assured that their memories remained steadfast in the heart and mind of their master, Henry Mercer. For Mercer wrote in one moving tribute:

“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!” ■



Shannon Taylor, Central Bucks South High School, First Place Winner, Senior Individual Exhibit, *A Study in Fiction: Doyle's Character as a Forensic Pioneer.*

Congratulations to History Day Students!

The Regional History Day Competition for Bucks and Montgomery Counties took place at Ursinus College on March 28, 2015. Congratulations to all student participants! Winners of this regional event moved on to the Pennsylvania State competition at Millersville University in May. To view a list of this year's Bucks Mont regional winners, please visit: www.nhdbucksmont.org.

Save the Date: The Bucks and Montgomery Counties' Regional Competition will take place on Saturday, March 26 in 2016!

Mercer Museum Expedition Backpacks Unveiled



A young museum visitor tries out one of the Mercer's new Expedition Backpacks.

A Dolls' Day Out Collaboration



Nancy Inglin, Bux Mont Doll Lovers Club member, and her granddaughter at Dolls' Day Out.

Our annual Dolls' Day Out event took place on Saturday, March 7. The highlight of the day is the seated tea party with a doll fashion show. The theme for this year was *There's No Place Like Home*. The fashion show featured dolls partaking in activities that reminded the audience of home, such as gardening, baking, and playing with toys. The sold-out event hosted an audience of over 400 children and their families.

Dolls' Day Out could not take place without the assistance and generosity of the Bux Mont Doll Lovers Club. The Doll Lovers Club has been a large part of Dolls' Day Out since 2007. Club members loan the Mercer Museum dolls from their collections to be a part of the doll fashion show. In addition to loaning dolls, the Bux Mont

Doll Lovers Club members assist with our tea seatings, make hand-crafted door prizes, and work with our child volunteers.

If you are interested in learning more about the Bux Mont Doll Lovers Club, please contact Arlene Coleman at arlene.m.coleman@gmail.com.

Last year, Mercer Museum intern Kaitlyn (Katie) Gross worked with museum staff member, Cory Amsler to develop a new interactive resource for children and families visiting the museum. On selected weekends this summer, our younger visitors now will be able to check out "Mercer Expedition Backpacks," created to make their journeys around the museum even more engaging and meaningful.

The bright green, child-size packs contain a variety of activities connected to various exhibits and objects that kids may encounter during their visit. Included are touch-it objects, riddles, things to try on, and toys and games to try out. All of the activities were kid-tested and parent approved — part of Katie's process for developing the packs in the summer of 2014.

The museum plans to make the backpacks available to visitors in the museum's Central Court during the summer months, and whenever volunteers are available to staff our portable Expedition Cart. Anyone interested in joining our volunteer staff as an "Expedition Guide" is invited to contact the Mercer Museum's Volunteer Coordinator, Frances Boffa (fboffa@mercermuseum.org). ■

Coming Attraction: LEGO® Castle Adventure!

“Castles! Castles! Castles! Where do their stories begin or end?” exclaimed Henry Mercer in 1921. Of course, the very idea of a castle could trigger Mercer’s incredibly fertile and romantic imagination, whether as a boy or later as an adult. That same passion and excitement will be aroused among the many children and families expected to enjoy a new exhibit coming to the Mercer Museum this fall.

On October 3, the museum will open the 3,000 square-foot traveling exhibit, *LEGO® Castle Adventure*. This fun and educational experience immerses visitors in castle life, and encourages everyone to become master castle builders themselves! Designed especially for families with children ages 6-12, the exhibit also includes many activities appropriate for toddlers and pre-schoolers.

As they go about exploring the exhibit, visitors enter a giant LEGO Castle, check out the throne and treasure rooms, climb a tower and battlements, dress up as princes, princesses, knights or dragons, and even engage in a rousing joust! Of course there are many opportunities to “build, build, build” using LEGO® and Duplo® bricks, two of the most popular toy construction systems ever invented.



“We are very excited to be hosting this exhibit,” says Cory Amsler, Vice-President for Collections and Interpretation. “The unique experience offers a tremendous opportunity for children and families to discover and learn through play. Of course, presenting the exhibit in Henry Mercer’s own extraordinary castle is an added bonus!”

Speaking of Mercer, a companion display of prints, drawings, and other artwork related to his well-known love of castles and castle landscapes will also be featured. Special programming to accompany *LEGO® Castle Adventure* is currently being planned.

After they have learned more about castle construction, and viewed several remarkable LEGO models of real-world castles, children and families can use a 3-D computer program to design, build and test the strength of their own castle. Will it survive a virtual assault by a giant LEGO catapult?

The exhibit is produced and traveled by the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis in cooperation with LEGO Systems, Inc.

While the exhibit is on view, the museum will have special Members only hours on Sunday mornings, from 10 a.m. to noon. The museum’s Education Department is also planning to offer special *LEGO® Castle Adventure* birthday party packages and will work to integrate the exhibit experience into school field trips. Contact our scheduling office at 215-348-9461 for more information. ■

Special thanks to LEGO® Castle Adventure sponsors:



Give that special person in your life a whole year of history exploration and discovery!

Give the gift of membership today and...

- Nurture and expand a child’s love of history with unique educational programs and camps.
- Offer a parent or grandparent unlimited admission to the extraordinary castles with unique collections, changing exhibitions, programs, and lectures.
- Support a teacher’s commitment to learning by introducing students to the creative genius of Henry Chapman Mercer.

Our members receive many benefits, including unlimited admission to our current exhibition “*To Save Our Fellow Citizens: Volunteer Firefighting 1800-1875*” and the much anticipated “*LEGO® Castle Adventure*” coming in October! Join online at www.mercermuseum.org.



Doctor Cadwallader Evans' Journal

By Jesse Crooks, Mercer Library Volunteer

The Mercer Museum & Library recently acquired the journal of prominent Philadelphia physician, Cadwallader Evans (1726-1773). The journal contains Evans' notes on a series of ninety-one medical lectures he attended in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1754. Through these notes, Evans provides a window into a fascinating period in which medicine was becoming an empirical science. The lectures cover techniques for bleeding patients and mixing medicines using lead and arsenic, practices related to the ancient theory that disease is caused by an imbalance of bodily fluids called "humours." Evans also describes modern surgical techniques and the use of new medical implements like syringes. In practice, Evans enthusiastically embraced the techniques of scientific medicine, and before his trip to Edinburgh he collaborated with Benjamin Franklin to treat an epileptic woman using electricity.

The journal was later passed down through the family of Evans' student, Doctor John Chapman (1740-1800) of Upper Makefield, who used the blank pages to transcribe a history of his family dating back to the early 1600s. This narrative begins with his ancestor, John Chapman of Yorkshire, England. Chapman was an early convert to Quakerism and was persecuted for his beliefs. He was set in stocks, jailed, and had his goods and livestock confiscated. Chapman immigrated with his family to Bucks County in 1684, and the journal recounts their perilous nine-week journey across the Atlantic. They were nearly shipwrecked in a terrible storm that destroyed their masts on the open sea, and they



Chapman Homestead, Wrightstown. (date?)

"lay thus distressed like a pitiful wreck... without hopes of recovery" for fifteen days before they drifted into sight of the Capes of Virginia. When the Chapmans arrived in Bucks County, they became the first settlers in what is now Wrightstown.

The journal remained in the family for generations and later owners added to the text. They made notes, continued the family genealogy, and added a biography of Dr. Chapman, who served as a US Representative and was an acquaintance of Alexander Hamilton. Overall, the journal was in use for 122 years, with the final notation dating from 1876. ■

Library Grant Updates



Volunteer, Pat Pepe carefully measures and re-houses the library's Bound Manuscript Collection.

Excited to report that grant projects are well on their way to completion! As reported in the previous newsletter, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant provided funds to temporarily expand the curatorial staff and consult with a conservator on the proper handling and storage techniques of key collections. Thousands of artifacts are carefully packed and relocated to an off-site storage facility where they are documented and re-housed for preservation.

A grant awarded by National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Preservation for Small Museums is enabling Library staff to address the preservation and housing conditions of the Bound Manuscript Collection. This collection is comprised of account books and business ledgers of craft, farm and trade, as well as military history, volunteer organizations, and personal diaries documenting everyday life (18th-20th century). Volumes are carefully measured and documented, and grant funding is used to purchase custom-made archival boxes. These boxes act as a "second skin," and according to Rebecca Smyrl, Consulting Book Conservator, it is one of the best preservation methods for a collection like ours.



Curatorial Assistant, Kelsey Ransick readies West African artifacts for relocation.

A Deep Commitment

We have an amazing group of volunteers and donors who, year in and year out, help us achieve all that we do. Every charitable organization has valued friends but we think our supporters are extraordinarily special. On May 12th, we honored and thanked these partners at our annual Recognition Celebration. Over 200 guests took part in the event where we recognized volunteers who have achieved significant hours of service, and donors who have provided valuable funds for our mission-based programs and services. “Our volunteers give countless hours to assist our staff in so many ways and much of what we do relies on volunteer involvement,” said President and Executive Director Doug Dolan. “Just as important is the commitment of philanthropy from all of our donors,” added Dolan. “We simply would not be able to enrich our communities with the programs and services we offer without the deep commitment and unwavering dedication of these wonderful friends. They make us a stronger and more diverse organization and we are extremely grateful for all they do.”

Volunteers recognized for their dedicated hours of service included:

1,000 Hours:

Grace Deon
Vance Kohler
Brian McLeod

500 Hours:

Maureen Carlton
Patricia Pepe
Michelle Pedersen
Lisa Pretecrum
Michael Raphael

250 Hours:

John Augenblick
Sydney Beckett
Jesse Crooks
Tim German
Sandra Gehring
Tim Katsiff
John Mauro

Our 2014 comprehensive donor list, highlighting the generosity of our supporters, was installed and will be proudly displayed in the Mercer Museum’s Great Hall through 2016. To view the donor list, please visit our website at www.mercermuseum.org. See photos from the Recognition event on page 3.



The diversity of the museum’s artifact collection, along with our extensive documentation process that includes capturing the artifact’s “unique story,” is well known by museum professionals, historians, and collectors. The curatorial department is contacted on a regular basis with research queries and permission to access artifacts for study. We are delighted entertain such requests, as it becomes a learning opportunity for everyone involved. Recently we hosted Goschenhoppen Historians who were researching papermaking tools; a dozen traditional crafts interpreters from Colonial Williamsburg, and associates of the Chipstone Foundation, including Luke Beckerdite, editor of the *American Furniture* journal. They requested access to the stove plate and fire back collection to study and to address a “hunch” they had. Their “hunch” was confirmed and our catalog records become more complete! They were able to attribute a carved pattern for a stove plate to the shop of John Pollard (1775-1785) of Philadelphia (accn. #20507). Their complete documentation, along with images, was published in *American Furniture*, 2014. ■

Genealogy Program “What you always wanted to know about Fraktur, but were afraid to ask”

In March, we welcomed well-known Fraktur historian, Corinne Earnest to the museum. Her beautifully illustrated program explored the genealogical value that can be found in various forms of fraktur, including birth and baptismal certificates and bible records. We would like to thank the Bucks County Genealogical Society (BCGS) for all their help in making this program a success!



Russell & Corinne Earnest (Back row, right-hand side) with members of BCGS and Mercer Museum staff.

Friends of BCCHS Keep History Alive

With an interest in history and culture, the Friends of BCCHS is a volunteer auxiliary group that promotes history education through engaging quarterly programs, fascinating bus trips, and other special events. The Friends' next outing will be a day-trip to Easton, Pennsylvania, on Thursday, August 13. We will start the day with docent-led tours at the Sigal Museum, Northampton County's leading institution of local history. After lunch, the group will visit the National Canal Museum, featuring a voyage on the Lehigh Canal, on the state's only mule-drawn canal boat ride. Join the Friends for this memorable trip through history!

Among the projects supported by the Friends of BCCHS for 2015 are the Mercer Museum's revised "Frontier Trading" school program, "Stories Under the Trees" summer outdoor program, storage supplies to house the Library's Oscar Martin Collection, public programs in conjunction with the "To Save Our Fellow Citizens" exhibit, and entertainment at Fonthill's Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration.

Learn more about the Friends of BCCHS at the September 21 and November 16 meetings, held at the Mercer Museum. Meetings feature an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones, while learning about a variety of historical topics. Membership in the Friends of BCCHS is open to all Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle Members, for an additional \$15/year. To learn more about the Friends of BCCHS, their programs and activities, and/or to join this special group, please visit our website, www.mercermuseum.org or contact Eileen Shapiro, Special Events Coordinator at 215-345-0210 ext. 132 or email eshapiro@mercermuseum.org.



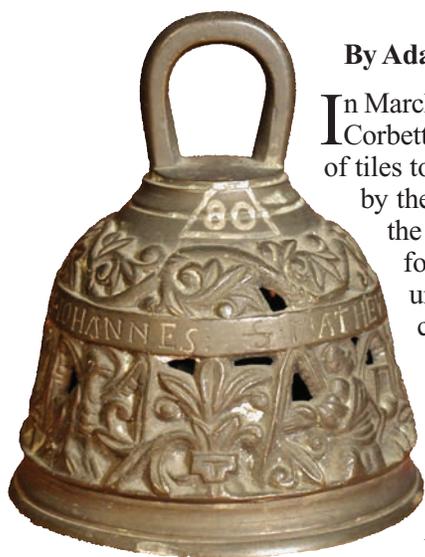
Former BCCHS Trustee Joan Johnson led the Friends of BCCHS on an informative tour of her fraktur collection, while it was on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



Friends of BCCHS Vice President Christine Harrison assists speaker Karl Gimber, to provide a closer look at his colorful hooked rugs based on historic tavern signs.

The Evangelists

By Adam Zayas, Head Ceramist, Moravian Pottery & Tile Works



In March of 2014, Pennsylvania Governor Corbett and Mrs. Corbett traveled to the Vatican and presented a special gift of tiles to Pope Francis. The four Evangelist tiles produced by the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works were selected by the First Lady, as they were a simple gift appropriate for the humble Pope Francis who is accessible and unassuming. She also chose the tiles for their connection to the PA State Capitol building whose floor has Moravian Tiles illustrating the history, flora, and fauna of Pennsylvania.

In preparation for the Pope's attendance at the World Family Conference in Philadelphia this September, the Tile Works is arranging a display of the Four Evangelists conjoined by a Greek cross, both with and without a Maltese cross border (as



illustrated). The source for the Evangelist designs is an ancient Romanesque twelfth century hand bell

from Reims, France. Various reproductions of Evangelist bells were sold throughout Europe as souvenirs in the nineteenth century, and some are even still made today. Fonthill has in its collection a souvenir reproduction of the bell that Henry Mercer acquired. ■

Reprinted from *MOR News: Member Newsletter of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works*, March 2015.

Ed. Note: Henry Mercer described the bell referred to above in his catalogue *Collection of Objects at Fonthill*. The entry reads "80. Bell. Recast from an original in a celebrated French cathedral. (Reims) Four evangelists, from which design many tiles made at Moravian Pottery of H.C.M." During the month of September this bell will be on display at Fonthill with examples of the tiles it inspired.

Annual Fund...Advancing Our Mission

In 2014, more than 260 donors contributed over \$125,000 to support this important appeal that benefits the community enrichment programs and services BCHS provides annually. Annual Fund contributions enabled our organization to present a variety of traveling exhibits, such as the history and pageantry of the circus, the exploration and playing of games from around the world and across centuries, a trip along the historic Route 66, and a stirring look back at visual culture during the Civil Rights Movement. Education services were also supported through this effort, with more than 8,000 schoolchildren exploring both the Mercer and Fonthill Castle. The Mercer Research Library benefitted from these valuable funds as well, with completed upgrades and improvements that ensure enhanced access for the nearly 2,500 users who rely on our expert staff for their projects. Clearly, Annual Fund contributions affect every area of the organization and without these vital donations, and your unwavering support, we would not be able to deliver these valued community services. Our 2015 campaign is underway, with our

Board of Directors projected to provide nearly 50% of our \$130,000 goal for this year.

You can play a major role in helping us achieve this goal by considering three ways to get involved:

1. **Donate** to the Annual Fund campaign when you receive your 2015 appeal package. Your gift, in any amount, has an immediate impact.
2. **Encourage** your friends and family to follow your lead so they, too, will support our valued mission.
3. **Promote** the importance of our education programs and services and help us continue to grow our network of history explorers.

If you have already contributed toward this effort, THANK YOU for sharing our passion for history! For a complete listing of our 2014 Annual Fund contributors, please visit our website www.mercermuseum.org and click Ways to Donate to access the Annual Fund page. ■

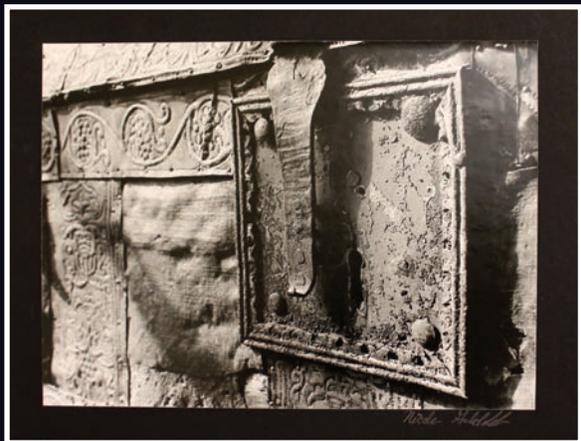
High School Photography at Fonthill



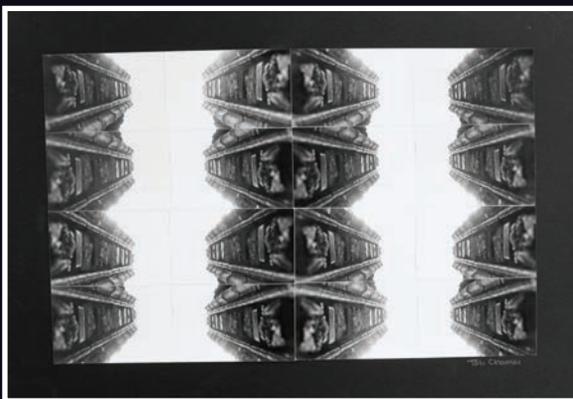
Chris Kang, Central Bucks High School South



Erin Chioffe, Central Bucks High School South



Nicole Goldhahn, Central Bucks High School West



Talia Choinski, Central Bucks High School West

Fonthill Castle staff were delighted to work again with the advanced photography students from high schools in the Central Bucks School District. Art teachers, Stephanie Ferraro, from Central Bucks High School West and Elizabeth Janney-Horan from Central Bucks High School South, brought their students to Fonthill as part of their class work. The

photographers were instructed on how to capture unusual perspectives and to explore how lighting can enhance a story or articulate a mood. Selected pieces of the students' work were on display at Fonthill during the spring. We look forward to being able to share more of the work that comes about because of this collaboration. ■

Fonthill's North Street Gate

With the funds raised so far through the efforts of the many Quester chapters and individual donors, the BCHS completed restoration work on the Mercer gate on North Street. The Society worked with John Milner Architects to develop a methodology to repair the gate markers. We applied expertise learned from other historic restoration projects at Fonthill. One of the biggest challenges with the gate markers is Mercer's use of cinder as the aggregate in much of the concrete. Unlike rock, the cinder absorbs water and causes swelling and contraction, never a good thing for the long-term preservation of concrete. Happ Contractors and Strouse Masonry worked to remove the layers of loose material, searching to find a hard core from which they could build out from again. Once this was done, concrete was poured to recover the gate and recreate its original appearance. We are extremely grateful to all who contributed to this very important project. As additional monies are raised, we will begin to work on the eight other gate markers that surround the property.



Bob Stouse of Strouse Masonry applies the finishing touches to the "Fonthill" label on the North Street gate post.

"Lenape" Bicycle Restored

In 2011, Historical Society member, David Long generously donated to the museum a rare "Lenape" bicycle produced in Doylestown near the close of the nineteenth century. Though we had long known of the P. & R., or Lenape, Cycle Works, founded by James Pollock and Henry Ruos in the 1890s, we were thrilled to acquire an actual example for the collection — one of only two or three bikes still known to exist from the firm. Found by Long in an online auction, the bicycle arrived at the museum in several pieces — wheels, frame, handlebars and other parts. Some assembly would definitely be required!

The problem confronting museum staff, however, was exactly how to re-assemble the bicycle and, more importantly, how to discern what parts were original and what parts have been later additions or replacements. After some months had passed, word reached a local bicycle collector and restorer that the museum was in need of expertise and assistance in sorting out the parts and putting the bike back in

condition to be exhibited. We are very grateful to this individual, Clint Flack, for taking on this project and — just recently — returning a fully-restored Lenape to us!

In the early 1890s, following the introduction of the so-called "safety" bicycle, America was in the throes of a full-blown bicycling (then commonly known as "wheeling") craze. The huge popularity of bicycling as a novel form of transportation cannot be overstated. While earlier versions of the bicycle, like the direct-drive velocipede and the "ordinary" (high-wheel), had their adherents, the new chain-driven bicycle was less expensive, safer, and far easier to ride. Flouting earlier conventions, women also took enthusiastically to wheeling, taking advantage of the freedom offered by the development of a new female sports garment — bloomers.

With the market for bicycles booming, entrepreneurs rushed to set up shops to capitalize on the demand. In Doylestown, Pollock and Ruos — formerly dealers for the popular Columbia bicycle — introduced

their own "Lenape" brand, taking the name from the aboriginal peoples of the Delaware Valley. Starting their business in 1896, the pair set up a factory in a building on Donaldson Street, between State and Oakland — a building that today houses the Zen Den coffee house.

According to reports, the P. & R. Works had the capacity to turn out one hundred wheels a week during its first few years of operation. Approximately thirty hands were employed in the factory, and orders were brisk. Although the owners intended to do a "strictly wholesale" business, retail advertisements for their wheels began to appear in the local papers. In the summer of 1896, the going price for a Lenape was \$50.

In 1898, Ruos bought out his partner's share of the business and continued in operation with his brother. In October of that year, however, a fire struck the Lenape factory. The fire was confined to a portion of the building, and much of the inventory was apparently saved, but more than a dozen employees were temporarily thrown out of

continued on page 19

work. The Ruos' re-built and re-modeled their mill, making bicycles at the Donaldson Street location until 1899, when Henry Ruos purchased the Doylestown Agricultural Works. Bicycle production was then moved to the new location.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the Lenape Cycle Works apparently ceased production. Henry Ruos may have lost interest in bicycles, becoming enamored instead with a still newer mode of transportation — the automobile. A portion of Ruos' Agricultural Works was leased to the Winslow Motor Carriage Company, for production of that company's motor cars. In 1902, Ruos filed for bankruptcy, and turned the Agricultural Works over to his son, Joseph. By that time, it is doubtful there were any more Lenape cycles emerging from the plant.

It is unknown how many bicycles were produced by Pollock & Ruos, or by Ruos after his partner's departure from the firm. Newspaper accounts suggest that a number of different models were actually made at the two plants, and not all of them may have been branded "Lenape." Of the two cycles that survive locally in restored condition, one is likely an earlier model, perhaps c. 1896. The one now in the Mercer collection is probably a later version, built perhaps in 1898 or 1899. It bears a more ornate, nickel-plated



BICYCLE HISTORIAN AND RESTORER CLINT FLACK WITH THE MERCER MUSEUM'S LENAPE BICYCLE. *Lenape (P & R) Cycle Works, Doylestown, PA, c. 1898-9, with restorations. Gift of David Long in Honor of Trish L. Long, 2011.*

nameplate, as well as an identifying serial number.

In restoring the bicycle, Clint Flack conducted extensive research, and consulted with several knowledgeable experts on both the Lenape and other period wheels. He determined that the wheels, frame, crank, and handlebars on the museum's cycle were likely original. However, the seat, tires, pedals, and rear hub had been replaced. The seat was clearly wrong for the period. For the restoration, Flack found appropriate period (antique) pedals and a seat, and integrated these with

the original elements of the cycle. The tires were replaced with modern rubber, but with a color and tread pattern typical of the 1890s. Although the original Lenape had pneumatic tires, the new tires are solid, and are made expressly for historical display purposes (they won't go flat!). Still in the works is the casting of a display stand for the bicycle, with the pattern for the stand taken from an original iron stand of the 1890s period.

The museum is deeply indebted to Mr. Flack for taking on the restoration project, and completing it so ably and thoroughly. In this effort, he was assisted by historical cycle enthusiasts Sue and David Gray of Doylestown and by Brian Boger of the Bike Works of Doylestown, who earlier this spring presented a program for the Doylestown Historical Society on early cycling in the Borough.

The history of bicycling in Bucks County, and particularly of bicycle racing, will be one element of a planned 2018 exhibit at the Mercer Museum focused on racing in various forms, from foot to automobile. Though the restored Lenape will likely be included in that exhibit, we hope to have the cycle placed on temporary display much sooner in the museum's Great Hall. ■

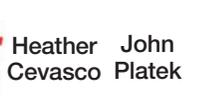
Fonthill Castle Beer Fest



Join us for Fonthill Castle's annual Beer Fest on Saturday, August 29 from 2 – 5 p.m. Sample an incredible selection of over twenty high-quality local and regional breweries in the beautiful outdoor setting of Fonthill Castle. Enjoy some of the best craft beers paired with locally prepared foods. Dance to the sounds of Hot Bijoux. All proceeds from the event support education programs at Fonthill Castle. Check the Beer Fest event page on our website for updates on breweries that will be attending. Guests must be 21 years of age and have a valid ID. The cost is \$45 per person and \$40 for members. Designated Driver are \$25 and VIP First Tap tickets are \$75.

To purchase tickets, visit fonthillmuseum.org. For more information, call 215-348-9461. ■

Special thanks to our sponsors:



In the Winner's Circle...



Jennifer and Jake Hoisington are congratulated by John Thompson of Thompson BMW.

Our 30th Annual Mercer Legacy Sweepstakes Drawing Party was filled with lots of excitement and celebration. More than 300 guests gathered to enjoy the Kentucky Derby themed event, which took place on Sunday, May 3 at Fonthill Castle. Led by our organization's Mercer Rainmakers business member committee, the event was sponsored by Thompson BMW, Monument Bank, and Bucks Mont Party Rental. "It's always a great time," stated John Thompson, whose company—Thompson BMW—has been a dedicated supporter for years. "We enjoy this wonderful party while at the same time supporting the valuable work of the Bucks County Historical Society," added Thompson. This year's Mercer Legacy Sweepstakes grand prize winner, Jake Hoisington, had the option of selecting a

brand new 2015 BMW 320i sedan from Thompson BMW or \$20,000. "It was so exciting to hear my number and I was thrilled when it was confirmed," said Jake. BCHS Trustee and Monument Bank representative, Michelle Pedersen, drew the winning number for the second prize, which went to Robert Meissner, who received a \$1,000 gift card compliments of Monument Bank. The third prize, two tickets to the Mercer Museum's popular Cocktails at the Castle gala, went to Suesan Klein.

In addition to the exciting drawing results, new this year was a live auction component. Five items, including a one-week trip to the Dominican Republic, an exciting Polo Package for Ten at Tincum Park Polo Club, and a Fonthill Castle Beer Fest Package, were auctioned off to the highest bidder by professional auctioneer

Michael Ivankovich. "We're all here for the same reason," noted Ivankovich, "to ensure future generations appreciate and learn from our past."

Nearly \$40,000 in net proceeds will benefit education programs, preservation projects, and community services of the Mercer Museum and Library & Fonthill Castle. ■

THANK YOU!

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Memorable Affairs

*and special thanks to our
Mercer Rainmakers Committee*

Grants Support Exhibits and Projects

Our museums are most appreciative of project support from public and foundation sources which make it possible for us to serve a diverse audience. In spite of a severe reduction in public funds available to museums, our museums continue to be competitive for the funds that are available.

The Bucks County Convention and Visitors Bureau, through its Tourism Grant Program, has provided important funds to market changing exhibitions at the Mercer Museum to audiences outside Bucks County. A grant of \$25,000 is providing funds to market the Firefighting exhibit, which is drawn from the Mercer's own extensive collections. An additional grant of \$25,000 will support the upcoming LEGO® Castle Adventure exhibit.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

(PHMC) has awarded a General Operating Support grant to the Bucks County Historical Society for 2015 for \$30,858. In addition, PHMC has awarded Fonthill a General Operating Support grant in the amount of \$5,557.40. General operating funds are particularly important to arts organizations for basic support of operations.

The Mercer Museum's education programs have been supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. PCA awarded the Mercer Museum a \$5,104 grant for 2014-2015 through its regional arts funding partnership, Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA). PPA is administered in this region by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

Business Supporting History & Culture



(L-R) Mercer Rainmakers: Susan Okun, National Penn Bank, Jane Moore, Moore Cleaning, Alan Katz, Wealth Development, and Tom Hebel, Bucks Country Gardens.



Mercer Rainmakers Committee Members L to R: Eric Lepping, SherpaLab, Matthew Nicolas, Benefit Ideas Group, Lynn Ann Donchez, L.A.D. & Company, Jack Skudris, Memorable Affairs, Jennifer Stailer, AB-8 Waste, John Stanojev, Capital Insurance & Investment Planning, and Tom Maclin, Monument Bank.

Our region's businesses play a key role in advancing the mission of the Bucks County Historical Society. Through the Mercer Rainmakers business membership program, more than 130 businesses provide vital funds to support our organization's education programs, preservation efforts, changing exhibitions, and community offerings. Varied industries comprise this impressive group of companies and they are making a difference in our work. To join, businesses can select from several levels of support, and each membership includes exclusive and unique benefits such as unlimited admission to the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle, guests passes for employees and clients, discounts on purchases and facility rentals and so much more. "My business joined because it's a way to make a difference in the community where I live and work," said Bud James, owner and CEO of Dynasty Advisors and a new business member. "I'm supporting something that means a great deal to me, my family and my employees and the wonderful benefits that come with my business membership are an added value."

Beyond a membership, businesses can explore other opportunities for support, including the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program to benefit BCHS, as well as exhibition, event, and program sponsorships. To learn how your business can support our efforts and deepen your commitment to the Bucks County Historical Society, please contact Laura Biersmith in our development department at 215-345-0210 ext. 129 or lbiersmith@mercermuseum.org. ■

Looking to the Future... A Planned Gift

Tom Thomas has been involved with the Bucks County Historical Society for more than 40 years. He joined the board in the mid-1970s as a young business professional, and over the years served two terms as Board President and Chairman. "I was recruited along with Nancy Kolb to fill the need for new trustees under the age of 35," stated Thomas, "and I am very happy I joined. I remember being very impressed with Henry Mercer's achievements and the treasures he collected for the community's benefit—then and now. I learn something new and different about Mercer's interests with every program, exhibition, and community service BCHS provides."



Tom continues his dedication to this day, serving as a current trustee and the chairman of the Development and Planned Giving committees. As a firm believer in the importance of planning for the organization's future and sustainability, Tom created a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, a Planned Gift which will ensure future generations experience history through their exploration of the Mercer Museum and Library & Fonthill Castle. "I think history education is very important and this planned gift is one way for me to play a role in preserving the past for the future. I want to make sure our exhibitions, preservation work and education programs continue to inspire visitors of all ages for many years to come."

Consider joining Tom and many other history enthusiasts who have provided for the future of BCHS by establishing a planned gift and becoming a member of The Plus Ultra Society. To inform us of a planned gift or to learn more about planned giving options, please call Laura Biersmith in the development office, 215-345-0210 ext. 129 or email lbiersmith@mercermuseum.org. ■

Terrace Room Drapery Update



L to R: BCHS Vice President for Collections and Interpretation Cory Amsler, Fonthill Quester President Marcia McCarthy, Fonthill Guide and Textile Consultant Kathy Appel, and Fonthill Quester Ginny Clemens stand in front of the new drapery in the Terrace Room.

Following up on the Terrace Room Drapery piece that was in the Summer/Fall 2014 Newsletter, we are happy to report that the reproduction drapery has been installed. Earlier this past winter, Kathy

Appel, Fonthill guide and interior designer, hung the completed curtains. It was amazing to see the difference the drapery made in the appearance of the room. A special thank you to the Fonthill Questers for their \$1,800 donation that made this project possible!

Staff update

Join us for Cocktails at the Castle... A Night You Won't Want to Miss

If you value cultural enrichment... appreciate good times with family and friends... enjoy great food... and like bidding on unique gifts, then the Mercer



Museum will be the place to be on Friday, October 9th as we celebrate our annual Cocktails at the Castle Gala. This is a very special event that offers more than 350 guests the opportunity to explore the Museum in a whole new way—all while raising valuable funds to support education programs for schoolchildren, access to traveling exhibitions from across the country, historic preservation efforts, and the remarkable Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle collections. This year's Mission Appeal focus will be the restoration of the Fonthill Castle Gates, a community-centered project to preserve the unique Mercer-designed gate posts located along the grounds' perimeter. For information, please call Eileen Shapiro at 215-345-0210 ext. 132 or email eshapiro@mercermuseum.org.

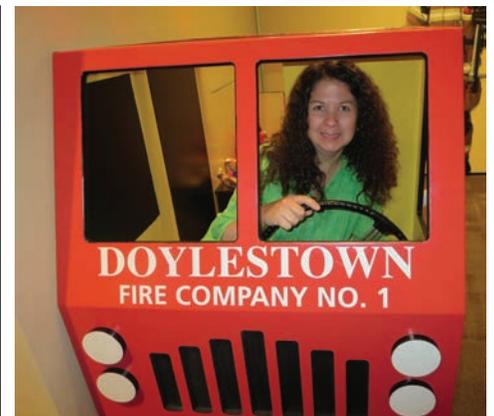


(L-R):
Leesa
Shulman,
Frances Boffa
and Eryn
Boyce

The Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are pleased to welcome several new staff members. Maya Hartmann is the new Curator of Exhibits at the Mercer Museum. Maya studied Museum Exhibition Planning and Design at the University of the Arts and received a BFA in Textile Design from Rhode Island School of Design. She has previously worked at the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, and the City Museums of Las Cruces, NM.

In addition, the following part-time staff join us: The new face at the front desk at Mercer is Frances Boffa, who is our new Visitor Services and Volunteer Coordinator. Frances holds a B.F.A. in Art History from Moore College of Art and a M.A. in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins University. She was a recent session presenter on the topic of audience research at the Small Museums Association Conference held in Maryland earlier this year. Frances was formerly a Weekend Manager at the Mercer.

At Fonthill, Leesa Shulman is the new Visitor Services Coordinator. Leesa has



Maya Hartmann

lived in Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Maine, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. She loves sharing our town and museums with visitors from all over the world. Leesa is also a Weekend Manager at the Mercer Museum. Eryn Boyce is the new Site Assistant at Fonthill Castle. She is a graduate of the Master's Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania with over three years of experience in the heritage field and over five years of involvement at Fonthill. ■

That's What the Heck it is! (From back cover)

...a dibble! Also known as a dibber, planting stick, or hoe stick, this handy hand tool was used by gardeners as early as the sixteenth century and as recently as 1929. By plunging the dibble into the soil, a gardener let in light and air, making a neat hole for new seeds. The use of the dibble eliminated the need for raking, tramping, plowing, or hoeing that followed the "broadcasting" method of sowing seeds, which involved scattering seeds by hand. A man could be a "double dibber,"

as it were, by carrying one dibble in each hand and using them on two seed beds simultaneously. His children might follow along behind him, sowing the seeds in the new holes as they went.

The dibble took many forms over the centuries, producing such variants as the multi-pronged dibble (used to create several holes at once), the long-handled dibble (for those with bad backs), the stainless-steel dibble (for the niche market of "fancy" and "worried about the damp"),

and the aluminum trowel dibble.

Though the dibble was largely replaced by a wheeled seed box in the nineteenth century, the tool's simplicity and elegance awarded it centuries of usage. In fact, the dibble was still popular enough in 1929 that it was sold in garden stores in the Doylestown area, where Henry Mercer found one and remarked upon its utility. To learn more this object, visit our online catalog RolloPAC and keyword search "Dibble" or enter accession #19438. ■

Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle 2015 Summer-Fall Calendar of Events

Exhibits at the Mercer

**“To Save Our Fellow Citizens:”
Volunteer Firefighting, 1800–1875**
Through September 7

Lego® Castle Adventure
October 3 – January 17, 2016

**Under the Tree:
A Century of Holiday Trees and Toys**
November 21 – January 3, 2016

Camps at the Castle

Wild World of Wizarding School
July 13–17 (sold out) OR
August 3–7, 9 a.m.–noon

Lego™ Robotics Workshops: FUNDamentals
July 20–24 (sold out) OR
August 10–14, 8:30–11:30 a.m. (sold out)

Lego™ Robotics Workshops: Basics Trek
June 29–July 3, 8:30–11:30 a.m. OR
August 10–14, 12:30–3:30 p.m., OR
August 17–21, 12:30–3:30 p.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshops:
Intermediate Quest**
June 29–July 3, 12:30–3:30 p.m. OR
July 20–24, 8:30–11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshops:
Advanced I NXT Exploration**
July 27–31, 8:30–11:30 a.m.

**Lego™ Robotics Workshops:
Advanced II EV3 Expedition**
July 17–21, 12:30–3:30 p.m.
Aug. 17–21, 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Mercer Museum Programs

Stories Under the Trees with Darcy Fair
Tuesdays: July 14 & August 4
Sundays: July 19 & August 9
12:30–1:30 p.m., Mercer Museum Grounds

An Evening of Firefighting Memories
Wednesday, July 29, 7–8:30 p.m.

**Working Hand in Hand:
Philadelphia’s Volunteer Fire Companies
and the Insurance Industry**
Saturday, August 8, 2 p.m.

Friends of BCBS Bus Trip to Easton, PA
Thursday, August 13
Bus Leaves from Fonthill Castle at 8:15 a.m.

**Doylestown Walking Tour:
Firefighting History**
Friday, August 14, 5:30 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Friends BCBS Quarterly Meeting
Monday, September 21
12:30 p.m.

**Cocktails at the Castle...
A Savory Exploration to Benefit
the Mercer Museum**
Friday, October 9, 6:30–10:30 p.m.

Friends BCBS Quarterly Meeting
Monday, November 16
12:30 p.m.

Holiday Open House
Tuesday, December 8, 7 p.m.

Fonthill Castle Events

Tower Tour for Families
Saturdays: August 1, Sept. 5,
Oct. 3, Nov. 7 & Dec. 5
10:30 and 11:45 a.m.

Fonthill Castle Beer Fest
Saturday, August 29, 2–5 p.m.

Behind the Scenes Tours
Saturdays: October 24 & November 7
6:30–9 p.m.

Winter Wonderland Holiday Tours
December 5 – January 3
Regular Tour Times

2015 BCBS Board of Trustees

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Vice-Chair Heather Cevasco
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General Information

Check out our 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.

Newsletter

Gayle Shupack, Editor
Molly Lowell, Associate Editor
Newsletter is a benefit of membership.

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

Member Appreciation Weeks!

Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle Gift Shops

August 17–23
December 7–13

Members receive an additional 10% off most merchandise in both gift shops.
Shop for unique gifts, jewelry, books, and toys at Mercer and books and tiles
by area artisans at Fonthill.

www.mercermuseum.org



**MERCER
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& FONTHILL
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**View online tours of the
castles on our website at
www.mercermuseum.org or
follow us on Facebook & Twitter.**

Plan Your Next Event at One of Our Landmark Castles



The Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle offer unique and culturally rich venues for entertaining. From an intimate party in the Elkins Gallery, a special celebration in the Terrace Pavilion, or a business meeting in the Great

Hall, your guests will appreciate the unforgettable experiences these National Historic Landmarks offer. With exclusive caterer Memorable Affairs planning your culinary selections, your event will surely be one to remember. To learn more about entertaining at the Mercer Museum, please contact Eileen Shapiro, Special Events Coordinator at 215-345-0210 ext. 132 or eshapiro@mercermuseum.org. For events at Fonthill Castle, please contact Edward Reidell, Site Administrator at 215-348-9461 or ereidell@fonthillmuseum.org.

What the Heck is it?



Tired of sharpened twigs and old spade handles? Feel like your own two hands are just too good for the job? Ready to try something shiny, new, and more expensive than the free versions already sitting out in the garden? Then look no further! An old-technique-made-new-again is here, and it's every bit as useful as you would expect from...
(see answer, on page 22).

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