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**The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Awards \$230,000
to the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, PA
for “*Plus Ultra: Awakening the Mercer Museum Core*” Project**

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. – The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage announced that it will provide a \$230,000 grant, over a period of two and a half years, to the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, PA to support a major initiative, entitled “*Plus Ultra: Awakening the Mercer Museum Core.*” This project will allow the museum to prototype and reinvent two empty rooms located in the original historic core of the castle into community-centric, intimate spaces designed for meaningful and active learning through the power of objects.

Inspired by the Latin motto *Plus Ultra*, meaning “more beyond”, Henry Mercer spent his life as an archaeologist, historian, storyteller, collector and artist, and a true advocate for the humanities. In his lifetime, Mercer always looked to the future and nurtured his passion for discovery. Today, stirred by Henry Mercer’s curatorial compass and his commitment to community and learning, the Mercer Museum seeks to reintroduce itself as a place for guests to pursue meaning while contemplating human ingenuity. Supported by the Mercer’s vast collection of historic artifacts, the initiative will offer guests fresh, engaging perspectives and reinterpret unused areas into lively, informal spaces.

“We are thrilled to receive this grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to reawaken our historic Mercer Museum core and bring to life Henry Mercer’s vision of community engagement in new and exciting ways,” said Kyle McKoy, President and Executive Director of the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle. “Mercer founded the museum in 1916 to house his collection of early American material culture, to encourage people to see beyond the mundane, and to view ordinary objects in extraordinary ways.

Moving forward, we wish to preserve this awe-inspiring collection while exploring new, community-created opportunities to engage with our objects in more personal ways, including multisensory experiences, live demonstrations by artists and craftspeople, as well as storytelling. The objects will transition from passive artifacts to modern catalysts for conversation and community.”

A historic collaboration between Mercer Museum staff, local neighbors and community connectors, leaders from the museum field, community engagement experts, and contemporary artists, will enable the project to explore relevant community needs, redefine existing interpretive approaches, evaluate impact, and reposition the museum as a valuable resource for learning and bridging connections.

For more than 100 years, the Mercer Museum has been a prominent fixture in Bucks County, with a recognizable building cherished by locals and visitors alike. Through this project, the museum can engage local stakeholders more deeply so that they have shared agency in programming and project ideas that the museum may undertake in the future. Through this grant, a successful outcome not only repurposes two of the museum’s twelve empty rooms and creates a model for the remaining spaces yet to be reimagined, it provides a vital forum for a community of local and national voices to take part in the reawakening of a Bucks County institution.

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge-sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center invests in ambitious, imaginative, and catalytic work that showcases the region’s cultural vitality and enhances public life, and engages in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural practitioners and leaders. The 2019 awards total more than \$8.4 million and provide funding for 12 Pew Fellowships and 26 Project grants. For more information, visit www.pewcenterarts.org.

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About the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are historic castles celebrating the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar. Both sites are operated by the Bucks County Historical Society.

The Mercer Museum, a Smithsonian affiliate and one of Bucks County's premier cultural attractions, features both local and national seasonal exhibits as well as a core museum collection of over 50,000 pre-Industrial tools. This permanent collection offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America through sixty different crafts and trades, and is one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of American material culture. The museum also features a research library that is a center for local history related to Bucks County and the surrounding region, with its roots dating back to the founding of the Bucks County Historical Society in 1880.

The Mercer Museum is located at 84 South Pine Street in Doylestown, PA and is open year-round. For up-to-date schedule and admission information, please visit mercermuseum.org or call 215-345-0210.

Fonthill Castle was built between 1908-1912, and was the home to Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his home and as a showplace for his collection of tiles and prints. The castle serves as an early example of reinforced concrete and features forty-four rooms, over two hundred windows, and eighteen fireplaces. Fonthill Castle's interior features Mercer's renowned, hand crafted ceramic tiles designed at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Fonthill Castle is located at 525 East Court Street, Doylestown, PA and is open for guided one-hour tours. Reservations are not taken in advance, and tours are booked at our Welcome Center each day, on a first-come, first-served basis.

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