

The Power of



Bucks County Historical Society 2018 Annual Report





Mercer Museum



Fonthill Castle

A MESSAGE

from the Board Chairman and the President

Partnerships and community are at the heart of all that we do at the Bucks County Historical Society. Every day, our staff serves a vibrant and dynamic group of guests, members, supporters and volunteers at our beautiful castles across the Mercer Mile. To our many supporters who provide their valuable time and help sustain our endeavors, your involvement makes unique experiences like these a reality:

- Changing local and national exhibits that present unique experiences for guests of all ages and provide opportunities for guests to learn more about Bucks County's history
- Annual community programs, including Fonthill Castle's Old-Fashioned Fourth of July, the Mercer Museum's Holiday Open House and Fonthill Castle's Holiday Lights Meander
- Lectures and special community programs on myriad of subjects, including first-person interpretations, active learning opportunities and family events
- Offerings in education K-12 for over 4,000 schoolchildren
- Volunteer clean-up days for the Fonthill Woodlands Project
- Top-notch guest services for nearly 63,000 guests annually across the Mercer Mile
- Opportunities to explore Mercer's unique collection of artifacts, which offers guests a unique window into pre-Industrial America through comprehensive portraits of material culture
- Access to the Mercer Museum's extensive Research Library for scholars, genealogists and inquisitive minds

As we take a moment to look back to 2018, we hope that you will enjoy remembering all that we have accomplished together at the Bucks County Historical Society and thank you for being such a vital partner in our work.

This 2018 Annual Report highlights the broad support that our community provides to advance the mission and vision of the Bucks County Historical Society. It is an honor to serve this remarkable organization and to work alongside an extraordinary group of individuals who make a difference every day.



Heather A. Cevasco
Board Chairman



Kyle McKoy
President & Executive Director

OUR MISSION...

To educate and engage our many audiences in appreciating the past and to help people find stories and meanings relevant to their lives — both today and in the future.

MERCER MUSEUM

Exhibitions



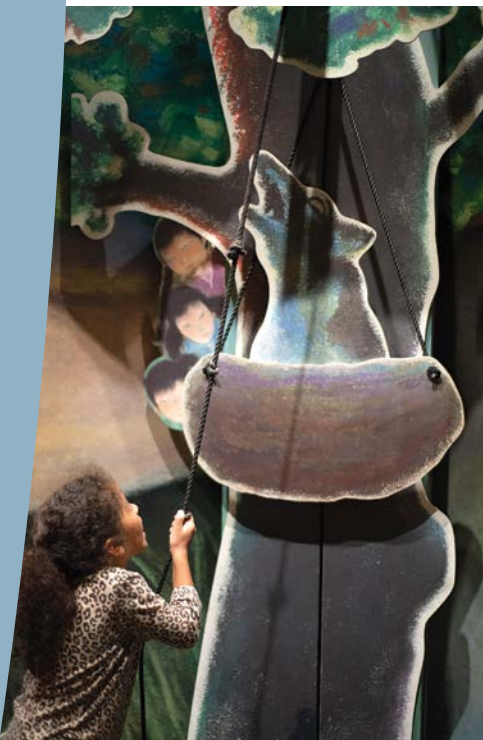
In 2018, the Mercer Museum continued its regular program of special exhibitions presented in its Martin & Warwick Foundation Galleries. In the winter, the museum staged *Unpacking Collections: The Legacy of Cuesta Benberry, African-American Quilt Scholar*, a traveling exhibit from Michigan State University. To augment the traveling show, the museum organized a companion exhibit, *The Friendly Quilters: 21st Century Traditions*, featuring the contemporary work of sixteen local African-American quilters. The latter exhibit, in partnership with the Friendly Quilters collaborative, was guest curated by Dr. Cassandra Gunkel.

In May, we opened an original exhibit, developed entirely by the Mercer Museum, exploring the history and culture of racing in Bucks County and nearby areas. Ranging from the 18th-century through the mid-20th century, the exhibit focused on various forms of foot, horse, bicycle, and motor racing in the region. Entitled *Racing: A Need for Speed*, the exhibit was developed over a three-year period and combined extensive original research, numerous interviews and oral histories, and the identification of key artifacts, original film footage, and other materials held in public and private collections. Exhibit development benefitted from research by several interns, and by the assistance of community members who shared their considerable knowledge and expertise. Highlights of the exhibition included local African-American racing history artifacts borrowed from the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, a restored Indy car once raced at Langhorne Speedway, and edited video footage of our oral history interview with racing legend Mario Andretti, who once competed at Langhorne.



Rounding out our exhibits for 2018, the museum presented *Once Upon a Time: Exploring the World of Fairy Tales*, which traveled to us from The Magic House in St. Louis, Missouri. Preliminary research revealed that Henry Mercer himself was a great fan of traditional fairy tales, so the museum presented a small, related exhibit inspired by volumes Mercer read and owned in his library at Fonthill. *Once Upon a Time* featured a series of fun, immersive environments, each centered on a particular folk or fairy tale. The show offered children and families an opportunity to play and learn, throughout the fall and into the holiday season.

As 2018 drew to a close, exhibit staff also began planning for 2019, launching projects to bring the work of contemporary metals artists and craftspeople to the museum, and to highlight Bucks County's role in America's early space program – the latter a collaborative effort with the Johnsville Centrifuge and Science Museum in Warminster, Bucks County.



MERCER MUSEUM Collections

The collections of the Mercer Museum and Library, and Fonthill Castle, portray three broad aspects of our past: (1) Bucks County history and culture, to the present day, (2) the history of everyday life and work in pre industrial America, to circa 1850, and (3) the contributions and achievements of Henry Chapman Mercer – archaeologist, collector, architect, tile maker and museum founder.

The continued stewardship of the collections is a primary responsibility of the Museum and Historical Society, and an important task for both curatorial and library staff. Stewardship involves the care and preservation of collections, as well as improving documentation and providing access to collections information for researchers and other users – both on- and off-site. In 2018, some 650 researchers visited the Mercer Library, while nearly 1,000 received answers to queries by mail, telephone and e-mail.

Ongoing stewardship activities include maintenance of our historic structures, processing and cataloging collections, photographic documentation, housekeeping, inventory maintenance, and environmental monitoring of collections spaces. Many new acquisitions are received annually, and must be accessioned and entered into the institution's database. Researchers may gain access to information about a portion of the museum and library collections through our website, utilizing the "RolloPAC" on-line catalog portal. In 2018, staff added some 750 additional catalog records and images to RolloPAC, continuing to enhance its value as a visual reference.

Key collections documentation and preservation projects initiated in 2018 included the cataloging and digitization of the A. Oscar Martin collection of Bucks County bridge plans; the cleaning, inventorying and re-housing of volumes in Henry Mercer's library at Fonthill Castle; the acquisition of supplies and equipment to enhance emergency and disaster preparedness at our various sites; and the repair and restoration of wooden window sashes and frames at Fonthill.

2018 Collections Highlights

- Accessioned and cataloged nearly 300 new acquisitions into the museum and library collections.
- Extended loans for exhibits at the Landis Valley Farm Museum (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission), the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture.
- Collaborated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bensalem, Bucks County, to arrange the short-term loan of the church's 19th-century Sabbath School banner, on the occasion of the 200th-anniversary of the founding of the church.
- Received a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to support the digitization and cataloging of early 20th-century Bucks County bridge plans drawn by Bucks County architect A. Oscar Martin.
- Collaborated with the Perkasio Historical Society to microfilm and digitize nearly sixty years (1943-2000) of the Perkasio News-Herald, original editions of which are held by the Mercer Museum Library



Landreth's Seeds Catalog,
Bristol, Bucks County, 1927.
Gift of David B. Long.



Damask Wedding Gown
of Catherine Fullam
Meyers, Gardenville,
Bucks County, 1940.
Catherine Fullam Meyers,
who made this dress
for her 1940 wedding,
was the sister of John
P. Fullam, United States
District Court Judge. Gift
of Mary K. Segal, 2018.



Coverlet for Maria Swartz, Samuel B.
Musselman, Milford Township, Bucks County,
1842. Gift of Dianne Snook, 2018.

MERCER MUSEUM AND FONTHILL CASTLE

Community Programs & Educational Outreach

In 2018, the Mercer Museum hosted more than 4,000 program attendees at 43 community programs, including adult lectures, craft workshops, family storytelling events, all-day family celebrations and off-site outreach programs.

Guests enjoyed legacy programs at the Mercer Museum, including the beloved *Dolls' Day Out* and the *Mercer Museum Holiday Open House*, and delighted in new experiences such as our new family *Crafternoon* drop-in art series and our historic *Black American Racers* expert panel discussion.



The museum also hosted special programs in conjunction with our changing exhibits. From quilting activity days to family racing celebrations and theatrical storybook performances, guests of all ages and interests were able to further their connection to our exhibits and collections through our slate of community programs.

Across the mile, Fonthill Castle hosted over 6,000 attendees at 52 community programs, including special tours, theatrical performances, all-day celebrations and themed escape rooms.

In 2018, Fonthill Castle worked in partnership with Doylestown Escape Room to create a brand-new interactive puzzle experience inside a tower room of the castle. This historically-themed escape room proved to be extremely popular with guests, bringing in over 978 participants throughout the year. In December, Fonthill Castle's Holiday Lights Meander events grew dramatically, as we increased attendance from 140 guests to almost 1,000 guests over the two weekends.

Finally, we hosted more than 4,000 students at the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle with 81 school and youth groups visiting our castles. These groups were connected with Bucks County history and the museum's collections through our educational programs *Log House Life*, *Frontier Trading*, *Simple Machines* and many more.

Each year, the Bucks County Historical Society acts as the Bucks and Montgomery County regional coordinator for the National History Day contest. In 2018, the regional contest was held in collaboration with professors and staff at Ursinus College and welcomed 170 student participants.

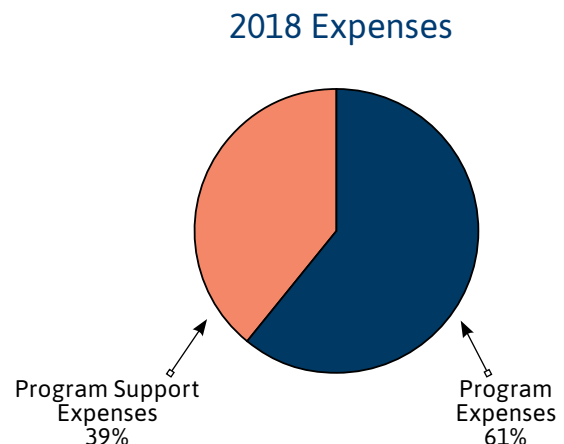
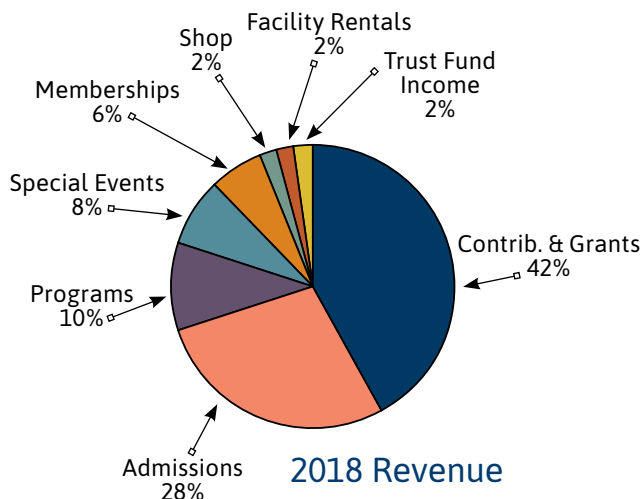


FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Activities: Years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:		
Grants and Contributions	\$691,173	\$650,925
Memberships	96,141	100,552
Special events		
Society Activities (Net of Direct Costs of 2018 \$105,778; 2017 \$95,858)	139,441	122,133
Museum operations:		
Admissions	474,957	473,213
Programs	162,976	143,262
Museum shop, Net of expenses (2018 \$65,357; 2017 \$52,136)	37,553	37,328
Publications, Net of Expenses (2018 \$2,216; 2017 \$1,802)	1,356	2,435
Facilities rental	29,202	54,560
Miscellaneous income	4,744	7,266
Trust fund income	32,777	27,213
	1,670,320	1,618,887
EXPENSES:		
Program Services:		
Library	233,566	243,183
Curatorial	1,052,472	954,202
Educational	413,109	328,866
Support Services:		
Management and general	563,248	576,428
Development and fundraising	537,721	595,265
	2,800,116	2,697,944
Change in net assets before Nonoperating Revenues,		
Gains and Other Support	(1,129,796)	(1,079,057)
Nonoperating Revenues, Gains and Other Support		
Investment Income	(497,446)	1,591,520
Change in net assets	(1,627,242)	512,463
Net assets, beginning of year	24,131,326	23,618,863
Net assets, end of year	\$22,504,084	\$24,131,326
Special Events cost	105,778	95,858
Museum Shop Cost	65,357	52,136
Publicaitons cost	2,216	1,802



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Making all we do possible through their generosity.

PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY

Demonstrating an extraordinary expression of devotion, these individuals ensure the future of our organization by including the Bucks County Historical Society in their estate plans.

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FONTHILL CASTLE BEER FEST SPONSORS

Keg

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Bristol Riverside Theater
Bucks Country Gardens, Ltd.
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Ooka Restaurant
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Tabora Farm & Orchard
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The Bucks Club
The Doylestown Bookshop
The Hattery Stove & Still at
Doylestown Inn
The Phillies
The Salt Cave at Doylestown
& Newtown
The Zen Den Coffee/Tea House
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The Washington House
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We apologize for any misspellings
or omissions

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