

CASTLE CHRONICLES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



FALL 2019



MERCER
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& FONTHILL
CASTLE



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GENERAL INFORMATION

MERCER MUSEUM & MUSEUM SHOP
84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
215-345-0210

Hours:
Monday – Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, Noon – 5:00 p.m.

Research Library Hours:
Tuesday – Thursday, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday & Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday & Monday, Closed

FONTHILL CASTLE
525 East Court Street, Doylestown, PA
215-348-9461

Hours:
Monday – Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, Noon – 5:00 p.m.

One-hour, daily guided tours are available on a first-come, first-served basis. No advance reservations are required for daily tours.

Our members receive unlimited admission to the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle.

ON THE COVER

Mercer Museum Central Court by Kevin Crawford

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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.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of the most powerful approaches for creating healthy communities is by partnering with collaborators to achieve a common goal. Over the last several months, the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS) has been busy forging community ties, and the results have been impressive:

- We are excited to announce that BCHS was awarded a \$450,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation, which will be paid out over the next three years to support our operations.
- In August 2019, as part of the American Alliance of Museum's annual #InviteCongress day, Pennsylvania legislators spent a morning exploring the Mercer Museum, Fonthill Castle, and the Collections Storage and Study Center. Inviting elected officials and their staff members to our museums allowed us to showcase the work we do every day.
- Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle neighbors attended two Muffin and Mimosas events to meet our staff, learn more about the happenings at the castles, and of course, enjoy muffins and mimosas.
- The 2019 Summer of Exploration-themed exhibits, featuring *Making Astronauts: Bucks County to the Moon* (a partnership with the Johnsville Centrifuge and Science Museum) and *From Here to There*, were extremely popular and well attended.
- Four summer interns completed the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle inaugural Experiential Learning Academy, generously sponsored by BLBB Charitable.
- And last, but certainly not least, several community organizations stepped forward to help us remove the graffiti from the Little House in the Woods on the Fonthill Castle grounds.

It was a busy summer indeed, and our hard work continues throughout the fall and winter. Our new catering agreement with Jeffrey A. Miller Catering will include enhanced event spaces at both the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle in the future. Additionally, as we look towards 2020, we are excited for the Mercer Museum-curated exhibit, *200 Years of Art in Bucks County*, featuring artwork from the BCHS collections.

Henry Mercer dedicated a section of tile on the ceiling of his beloved home to the hardworking team that made Fonthill Castle's construction a reality with the right planning, execution and partnerships.

Partnerships are essential to all that we do here today. We hope that you are enjoying the results and we thank you for being such a vital part of our work.

Kyle McKoy
President & Executive Director



Tile detail at Fonthill Castle with inscription reading,
"Here see the names of the men who planned this house — Directed its plan — Executed its construction — Adorned its walls — Embellished its pavements — Built it with their labor — And the horse who uplifted its strength."

WELCOME OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBERS

Kathleen Balkey, Business Office Assistant — When she is not crunching numbers in the BCHS business office, Balkey is passionate about fly-fishing and spin casting. She also enjoys organizing.

Andy Harris, Facilities Associate — Harris joins the team at the castles after years of experience in carpentry, landscaping and facilities management. He recently moved from Massachusetts where he worked at a history museum.

Karina Kowalski, Education Coordinator — Kowalski graduated from the Cooperstown Graduate Program this past spring with a Master's degree in Museum Studies, with a focus on history museums. She spent the summer of 2019 as a Community Services Intern at BCHS and looks forward to continuing her work across the Mercer Mile.



L to R: Karina Kowalski, Andy Harris, Kathleen Balkey

OUR NEWEST PART-TIME STAFF MEMBERS:

Shannon Byrne, Fonthill Castle Tour Guide

Amanda Dean, Mercer Museum Guest Services

Associate & Weekend Manager

Alex Fuchs, Fonthill Castle Guest Services Associate

Cian Grouke, Mercer Museum Guest Services Associate

Danielle Kahn, Fonthill Castle Guest Services Associate

Declan Lorié, Fonthill Castle Guest Services Associate

Sergio Martinez, Mercer Museum Guest Services Associate

Paul Mattina, Fonthill Castle Guest Services Associate

Logan Mazullo, Fonthill Castle Tour Guide

Christopher McCall, Mercer Museum Guest Services Associate

SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle's 2019 Summer Internship Program, or Experiential Learning Academy, was a great success! The program allowed a dynamic group of students with varied interests, strengths, and goals to immerse themselves in an outstanding educational and professional environment. Interns received a paid stipend to learn and work directly with our staff in a team-based, collaborative environment which offered experiential learning, mentoring benefits, and leadership building skills. The internship began on June 3, 2019 and lasted between ten and twelve weeks. This year's wide array of independent intern projects included research



on Fonthill Castle's grounds and woodlands, collections and historic preservation work and the updating of various educational offerings.

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle's Internship Program is sponsored by BLBB Charitable. BLBB Charitable supports initiatives that help people discover their true and full potential through educational and leadership opportunities. In keeping with the legacy of its founders, BLBB Charitable makes more than donations — it makes investments in nonprofit organizations whose creative approaches and sound strategies yield meaningful and measurable outcomes for the people they service.

2019 Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle Interns

L to R: Maggie Wright, Karina Kowalski, Riley Hager, Austin Levant

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: OLIVIA BROWN, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS COORDINATOR



How did you come to join the team at the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle?

I'm originally from Northern Virginia, but my mom grew up in Philadelphia and we came to this area often when I was growing up to visit family. I realized I wanted to work in museums during my time in college at the University of Virginia. Charlottesville, Virginia is full of history and after I graduated, I worked as a tour guide at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, which really sold me on the museum field and affirmed my passion for history. In 2018, I received my Master's degree in Public History and a Graduate Certificate in Museum Management from the University of South Carolina. In 2018, I spent a summer at the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle as a Community Services Intern and then accepted the position of Community Programs Coordinator in September of 2018.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I work on the planning and execution of community programming across the mile, including exhibit-related lectures and talks, family programs, community partnerships and more! I love my job because it gives me a chance to be creative by planning a variety of programs, and also allows me to meet and learn about the wonderful Doylestown and Bucks County communities.



Black American Racers Program at the Mercer Museum, June 2018

What have been some of your most meaningful community program experiences to date?

In 2018, we hosted a presentation with the Black American Racers, a group of men who shared their experiences in car racing while battling racial divides in the 1960s and 1970s. Not only was it special to hear the stories of these pioneering racers, but the program really highlighted that history is all around us.

I have also had the pleasure of working with our education team to bring fun and informational programs to visiting school groups. Arriving at work one morning to a surprise bundle of thank you notes from a group of fourth graders meant the world to me. Teaching children of all ages about Henry Mercer and the history of our collections and sites makes me hopeful for the historians of the future.

What is your favorite artifact in Henry Mercer's collection and why?

As many of us can see after visiting the museum, Henry Mercer loved to collect multiples of the same type of tool or object. I really like one of the cider presses that Mercer collected, located in the Animal Husbandry exhibit on the third floor of the museum. At first, there may not seem to be anything special about this cider press, as it is smaller than the one prominently located in Central Court. However, I like this one in particular because of where it's located. This cider press had to be placed in the room before construction was finished or it wouldn't have fit. When you look at it, you can see that its vertical beam goes through a hole in the concrete ceiling, and if you go to the fourth floor, you can see the same beam jutting out of the floor. I love sharing this interesting fact with our museum guests!



Brown with a school group in the Mercer Museum's historic log house



GRANTS PROVIDE VITAL SUPPORT

Both Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle were fortunate to receive key grants benefitting a variety of programs, projects and operations.

The William Penn Foundation granted the Bucks County Historical Society \$450,000 over three years to support Mercer Museum operations and core initiatives. This form of funding is very important because it enables the organization to fund day-to-day activities and priority needs. In similar fashion, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) granted over \$35,000, to support operations across the Mercer Mile. The Morel Family Foundation provided major funding to support the Mercer Museum's much anticipated exhibition, *Forging A Link; Metalsmiths Respond to the Mercer Museum Collection*. The Tonamora Foundation granted essential funds to upgrade the shelving system in the Mercer Museum Research Library, enabling enhanced access for researchers and library users. The final piece of grant support over the last few months came from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), with nearly \$5,000 to support art-centered activities, including the musically-enriched Stories Under the Trees series.

"We are extremely grateful to these valued funders," stated Kyle McKoy. "They provide critical support that makes it possible for both castles to enrich our communities with unique programs and educational services. We simply could not achieve all we do without these generous contributors."



If you would like to connect us with potential funders or you know of a family foundation that supports education, preservation and community enrichment services, please call Laura Biersmith in the development department, 215-345-0210, ext. 129.

RESTORING THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE WOODS

The Little House in the Woods, as it is commonly known by Doylestown locals, received lots of TLC this past July, thanks to the generosity of Hatfield-based company ESCA Blast and many local volunteers.

The Little House is one of the major components of the Fonthill Castle and Woodlands Project, an overarching initiative to care for and maintain the property Henry Mercer called home. "We want to make sure we are serving our community in positive ways, and we need to be the best stewards of Henry Mercer's legacy to do so," said President and Executive Director Kyle McKoy.

From July 10 through July 22, ESCA Blast employees worked with BCHS staff and community volunteers to remove all of the graffiti that covered the house's exterior facade. Using ESCA's Special Clean process — which has been used to clean buildings and monuments for the National Park Service, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Library of Congress — the end results were remarkable. Jeff Paduano, president of ESCA Blast, was the person who made it all possible. "I knew we could help the organization bring back the beauty of the Little House, shared Paduano, "and we wanted to be a part of this project and give back to the local community."

Lots of positive feedback about the exterior has been posted on social media, and the community's support and involvement continues to grow. The final 2019 Fonthill Castle grounds clean-up day was held on Saturday, October 5, with a focus on the area around the Little House.

To learn more and/or support the Fonthill Castle and Woodlands Project, visit mercermuseum.org/support/fonthill-woodlands-project.



The Little House in the Woods before and after ESCA Blast cleaning.

PERKASIE NEWS-HERALD DIGITIZATION PROJECT COMPLETE

That's a wrap! The Mercer Museum recently concluded a two-year partnership with the Perkasio Historical Society to microfilm and digitize over fifty years of the *Perkasie News-Herald*. The Museum Library loaned bound volumes of the papers to the Historical Society for microfilming and digitization, helping to preserve the content and making it more accessible. Thanks to hard work by dedicated staff at both institutions, digital versions of the volumes are now available to researchers on Newspapers.com, and to patrons of the Mercer Museum library. The project also involved digitizing bound volumes stored at the Sellersville Museum.



Mercer Museum Assistant Collections Manager Annie Halliday with one of the acid-free boxes used to re-house original volumes of the *Perkasie News-Herald*.

Overall, more than one hundred years of Perkasio history is available online. The Perkasio Historical Society Museum provides free on-site access to both of these local newspapers. Patrons who are interested in learning more can call the society at 267-733-5441 to schedule an appointment. Access to the newspapers will be available at the Bucks County Historical Society via the Mercer Museum Library. Subscribers to Newspapers.com and Ancestry.com subscribers may also access the collection online, based on the terms of their own personal subscriptions.

This August, Mercer Museum Collections Assistant Annie Halliday worked with summer fellow Alex Torchio to label and re-house the library's original bound News-Herald volumes in acid-free boxes before placing them back into storage, completing the final step in the Mercer Museum Library's portion of the project. Access to digital copies means less handling of the fragile volumes, which will hopefully live longer lives in storage. The museum was delighted to collaborate with the Perkasio Historical Society to protect and increase access to such an important part of Bucks County history.

ARTIST INSPIRED BY THE MERCER MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS

A watercolor inspired by the Mercer Museum "came home" this summer when local artist Charles Schmidt donated the framed piece to the collection. The piece, called "An Interior Landscape," was inspired by the museum's former architectural hardware exhibit and began its life in a makeshift studio inside the museum in 1970. As a young artist and Temple University instructor in the late 1960s, Schmidt was inspired by the Mercer Museum's "dramatic scale shifts, orderly chaos and unending randomness." Robert McDonald, the museum director at the time, gave Schmidt permission to create a small studio in a storage room near the stove plate gallery and granted him access to locked exhibit rooms. The several works created by Schmidt, and inspired by the collection, were exhibited and sold throughout the United States over the years.



"An Interior Landscape," watercolor with Lucite frame, Charles Schmidt, 1970. Gift of the Artist.

The view of the architectural hardware exhibit in "An Interior Landscape," including iron door handles on a wire frame, is intentionally rotated ninety degrees, appearing to the viewer as a "surrogate landscape." Schmidt encourages viewers to interpret his landscapes in interesting and non-literal ways. "One watercolor was interpreted as military tanks in a landscape until the viewer realized the parts were pieces of clockworks," Schmidt said, describing another piece inspired by the museum's collection. He added that "mystery can be an important part of art."

FORGING A LINK BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

“Machinery can’t make art,” Henry Mercer declared in a 1928 interview in the *New York Times*. “It can make automobiles, radios and telephones, but it cannot create art. Art needs the touch of a human hand, its failings as well as its skill.” Then nearing the end of his life, Mercer had dedicated more than thirty years to collecting the tools and implements of pre-industrial labor, and making a product — earthenware tiles — that honored traditional handwork.

Despite this torrent of creativity and collecting, Mercer felt a profound sense of failure as he neared the end of his life. The Arts and Crafts Movement — which had sustained his tile production — had essentially run its course. Additionally, the individuals he most hoped to teach and inspire with his museum — historians, archeologists, artisans — were not necessarily those who came to visit. It would be another generation or more before Mercer’s efforts, and his collection, would receive fuller appreciation — especially in the handcraft revival of the 1960s and 1970s.

The quest for appreciation, relevance and meaning is one that concerns many history museums. Over the past several decades, the Mercer Museum has worked to expand its audiences, add to its facilities, and tell new and different stories with its collections. The process of re-inventing and re-imagining Henry Mercer’s vision continues.

In 2016, this process benefitted from an opportune encounter. Cappy Counard, Professor of Metals and Jewelry at Edinboro University, walked into the Mercer Museum. Inspired by her visit, and by the museum’s collections, Counard went on to produce work for an invitational show. Soon after, she broached the idea of an exhibition at the museum.

From the museum’s perspective, the idea of creating a contemporary art exhibit within the original 1916 museum core was intriguing. Though not a new idea in the museum world, it would be new to the Mercer Museum. Such an exhibit would offer visitors a very different way of “seeing” Mercer’s collections. This was, after all, Mercer’s intent in the first place — to present history “from a new point of view.”

Such an exhibit would aid efforts to find fresh relevance for the museum collection — in this case as inspiration for contemporary artists. It also would link the museum to a new audience of artists and artisans, and engage them in a collaborative process of discovery. We were delighted that Counard agreed not only to participate as an artist, but also to serve as the exhibition’s guest curator.



Forging a Link Artists Visit the Mercer Museum, October 2018

When Henry Mercer originally founded the museum, he infused it with a spirit that is equal parts curiosity, discovery and imagination. Our *Forging A Link* metalsmiths have engaged that spirit. Given the opportunity to explore, touch and contemplate the museum and collections, they found their own inspiration and meanings, and revealed them through their work. We have put history in their hands, and they have responded.

A NOTE FROM GUEST CURATOR CAPPY COUNARD

I clearly remember my first visit to the Mercer Museum to research the collection for a body of metalwork I was creating. It was a cold February day in 2016 and though I had limited time and a storm to travel through, I could not stop myself from peering into the next trade room or climbing another winding staircase until I had reached the circuitous paths of the top floors. Each of my visits since has been marked by the same fascination, yet now there are so many favorite tools and architectural moments that I am compelled to seek out. On the way, I always discover another extraordinary object in Mercer's collection that had not caught my attention before.



This feeling of awe and endless possibility led me to propose an exhibition of contemporary metalwork inspired by the Mercer Collection. To my delight, Cory Amsler, Vice President of Collections and Interpretation, was intrigued by the idea as we explored the project's potential to create new opportunities for the museum as well as the artists. We invited twenty-two blacksmiths, metalsmiths, and jewelers, who live within four hours of Doylestown, to join me in making work for the exhibit *Forging a Link: Metalsmiths Respond to the Mercer Collection*. I intentionally chose artists who are at different points in their careers and exemplify many distinct approaches so that museum patrons could learn about the diversity of the contemporary metals field while viewing Mercer's collection with fresh references.

In October 2018, we gathered at the museum to launch our project by exploring the displays, examining the tools, considering the space and documenting what we noticed. The diversity of what drew the artists' attention as inspiration for their work is fascinating. For some, the beauty of Mercer's collection lies in the trace of the hand left on every handle or the critical mass of objects displayed in relationship to each other. Others were affected by the shape of calipers or a pair of scissors, the graphic lines of a staircase or the imprint of woodgrain in cement. Some are reflecting on trades that were once essential while others are referencing the collection to comment on current political issues. Visitors can count on the finished metalwork to expand boundaries, challenge preconceptions, and exceed expectations.



Counard exploring the Bucks County Historical Society's Collections, October 2018

I am most excited by the way this collaboration united the independent ideas of an entire community of makers and museum staff to transform an idea into something much more expansive, significant, and rewarding than we imagined. I am incredibly grateful to the Mercer Museum and all of its staff members for their infinite generosity, organization, and expertise that made *Forging a Link: Metalsmiths Respond to the Mercer Collection* possible. It has been remarkable to see the enthusiasm and care of the artists who spent long hours in their studios creating pieces for this exhibition. Because their work disrupts, questions, and injects a moment of unexpected wonder into the Mercer experience, it will surely inspire people to contemplate a broader way of thinking and seeing through the objects that connect us.

NEW EXHIBIT: PIGSKIN PEANUTS

NOVEMBER 15, 2019 – FEBRUARY 9, 2020

Just in time for football season, the Mercer Museum is showcasing a selection of Charles M. Schulz's famous football-themed comic strips in a new exhibit entitled *Pigskin Peanuts*.



This exhibit, organized and toured by the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center, Santa Rosa, California, features fifty Sunday and daily Peanuts comic strips featuring the sport of football and the popular characters Charlie Brown, Woodstock, Snoopy and more. Guests can play dress up as football players and take pictures at the interactive photo station featuring *Peanuts* characters.

We are grateful to our local exhibit sponsors: Visit Bucks County, C&N and Mary Jane Clemens.



© 2019 Peanuts Worldwide LLC

BUCKS COUNTY PLAYS FOOTBALL!

To complement our upcoming exhibit, *Pigskin Peanuts*, the Mercer Museum is excited to mount a companion show highlighting some of Bucks County's own football history and traditions. Opening in conjunction with *Peanuts*, the exhibit will include numerous still images, video footage, game programs, tickets, sports cards, and other artifacts and memorabilia, ranging in date from the 1890s to the 1990s.

George School, the traditionally Quaker boarding school in Newtown, is believed to have played the first organized football in Bucks County. As early as 1893, the school had begun to field intramural teams. By the 1920s, public schools had picked up the game. The exhibit's first segment, "Playing the Game," traces the sport's gradual rise from these early years, through the 1950s, '60s and '70s, when football grew to dominate most scholastic athletics, becoming the most popular spectator sport. In the 1940s and 1950s, Bucks County even saw the formation of an adult amateur league, "The Big Six."

High school athletes who went on to experience success, and live their dreams, in the ranks of professional football will be recognized in a second exhibit segment, "Going Pro." The pageantry that accompanied the game nearly from its beginning, in the form of marching bands and cheerleading, will be featured in the exhibit's final section, "Rah! Rah! Rah!"

As America gets ready to embark on another autumn filled with hard-fought games and flying pigskins, everyone is invited to the Mercer Museum to see how football grew, developed and flourished right here in Bucks County.



(Left) **Football Game Program, Lansdale vs. Doylestown Thanksgiving Day Classic, November 28, 1946.**
Mercer Library Collection

(Below) **George School Cheerleaders, Newtown, Bucks County, 1936.**
George School



CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON AT THE CASTLES

There is no better time to visit the castles with friends and family than during the winter holiday season.



Beginning with the **Mercer Museum's Annual Holiday Open House** on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., guests can delight in the sounds, scents and scenes of the holidays at this free community open house. This special evening program features traditional community elements such as the burning of the greens and a visit with Santa in the historic log house. Guests of all ages will enjoy the festive hot cider station generously sponsored by Marias's House Montessori, as well as performances by the CB East Band,

Council Rock HS South Vocal Ensemble & Council Rock Carolers, Delaware Valley University Chorale, Bucks County Country Gentlemen, Got Strings/INRUSH and Temple Judea Youth Choir.



Winter Wonderland: Daily Tours at Fonthill Castle

Throughout the month of December, daily 60-minute tours at Fonthill Castle will showcase Henry Mercer's home decked out for the holidays. These daily tours do not require advanced reservations and are available to guests on a first-come, first-served basis.



The celebration continues at **Fonthill Castle's Holiday Open House** on Sunday December 8, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Enjoy our holiday decorations during this free community open house of the ground floor level of the castle. After visiting the castle, enjoy hot cider and make a holiday ornament craft in the historic Terrace Pavilion located in our newly renovated Welcome Center. The Moravian Pottery & Tile Works will also offer hot chocolate, holiday music and a visit with Santa at their property.

Fonthill Castle Holiday Lights Meander

On Saturdays & Sundays, December 21 & 22, 28 & 29, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., come wander at your own pace through Fonthill Castle's many decorated rooms and enjoy a magical holiday experience complete with seasonal hot cider and delicious treats in the historic Terrace Pavilion next door. Advanced tickets are highly recommended for these events, as they do sell out. Tickets are on sale at mercermuseum.org.



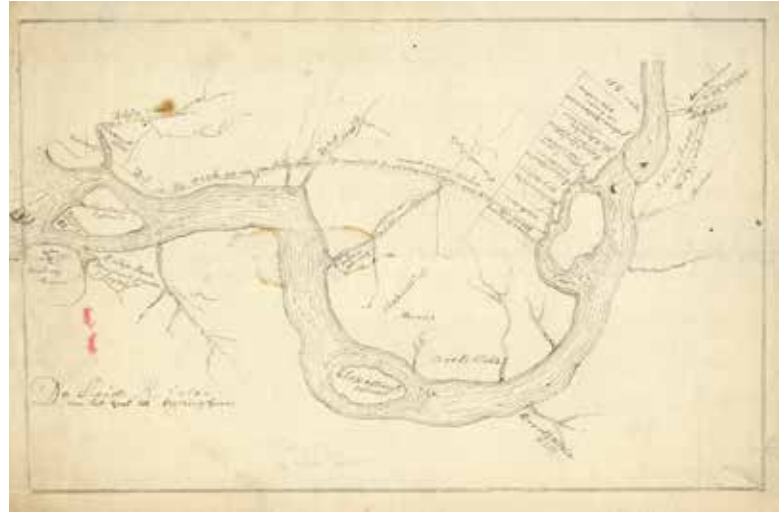
COLLECTIONS CONNECTION

Researchers regularly utilize the vast collections of the Mercer Museum's Library for media projects, craft studies, outside exhibitions, publications and other ventures.

Here are a few of the projects recently conducted by scholars and journalists who have used the library's collections, including letters, photographs, books, musical scores, digital materials and museum objects.

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

- National Canal Museum, *What Rivers Saw: Mapping 200 Years of the Delaware Corridor's Living Landscape*. The Canal Museum's exhibit focused on an area of land in Falls Township, Bucks County that eventually became Fairless Steel Works. The exhibit includes an image of a Dutch map from our collection, the "De Suid Rivier von het val tot Borling town" (The South River from the Falls to Burlington, NJ).
- Nick Whitmer (Ithaca, NY), an artist who constructs Uilleann Pipes and writes Irish music, wrote a web biography called *William Taylor and the Taylor Pipes* (livesofthepipers.com). His biography will include an image from a book in Henry Mercer's library at Fonthill, Ryan's Mammoth 1050 *Irish Reels & Jigs*.
- Alexander Ames (The Rosenbach, Philadelphia, PA), *The Letter and the Spirit: Popular Piety and the Manuscript Arts in Early Pennsylvania*. His book features an image of the Deep Run Schoolhouse in Bedminster Township, c. 1842. It will be published by The Pennsylvania State University Press in 2020.
- RadicalMedia® (New York, NY), is producing a Ulysses S. Grant documentary. This documentary will feature a Civil War recruitment broadside from our collection. The movie's premiere date will be announced soon.



Map of the 1679 view of the South River from the Falls to Burlington, NJ, now known as Morrisville, PA.



MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

On May 1, 2019, a delegation from the Anthony Hay Cabinet Shop from Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, visited the Mercer Museum and Library. Bill Pavlak, Brian Weldy, and John Peeler came to study the museum's woodworking tool and musical instrument collections. Their interests centered especially on cabinetmaker's tools — wood planes, saws, early lathes, etc.

Bill Pavlak and John Peeler, of the Anthony Hay Cabinet Maker Shop at Colonial Williamsburg, examine and study the Mercer Museum & Library's woodworking tools collection.

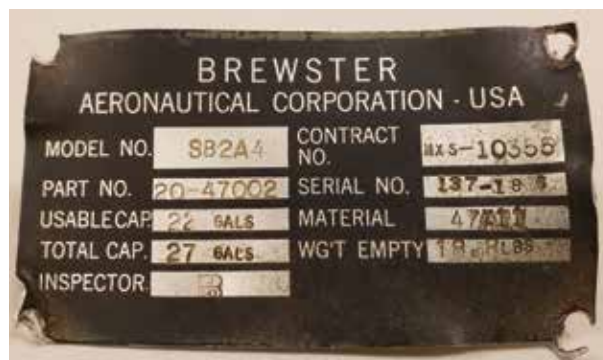
RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The Mercer Museum's changing exhibits program provides many opportunities to display materials already in our collections – often those held in storage and not regularly on view. Sometimes these exhibits encourage new gifts to the collection as well. Such is the case with this past spring's exhibit, *Manufacturing Victory: The Arsenal of Democracy*. This exhibit, which told the story of American productivity during World War II and its role in helping to win the war, came to us from The National WWII Museum in New Orleans. To augment its national focus, we added a number of artifacts, images and documentary materials related to wartime Bucks County.

As a direct result of the exhibit, one donor in particular was inspired to contribute several artifacts and related archival materials to the museum and library. Clint Flack of Doylestown donated various employee badges, aircraft components, pins, photographs, postcards, and other items from the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation in Warminster, and the Fleetwings Company in Bristol, Bucks County. These were two of the most important firms producing locally for the war effort, but the limited quantity of materials in our collections did not reflect their significance. Brewster produced "Buffalo" and "Corsair" fighters, and "Buccaneer" bombers, while Fleetwings built amphibious planes, target drones and various components for other military aircraft under contract to the federal government.

In addition to Flack's gifts, Edward B. Johnson contributed materials related to his father's service as an army chaplain. A resident of Newtown, Bucks County, Wilbur H. Johnson served as an Assistant Chaplain with the 1637th Engineers in the both the Pacific and European Theaters. During the run of the *Manufacturing Victory: The Arsenal of Democracy* exhibit, the donor had left a note in a visitor response box in the gallery indicating he was interested in adding to our collections. A follow-up by collections staff resulted in the gift, which included a scrapbook, chaplain's armband, dish for communion wafers and campaign ribbons.

The Mercer Museum & Library also welcomed a number of other gifts to the collections over the past several months. These include toys and games from the Dobron Family of Point Pleasant, Bucks County (gift of Jeanne Dobron); a patchwork quilt made c. 1900 by Elmira Bergey Fluck of Quakertown (gift of Jessica Raymond); a mahogany drop-leaf side table crafted by Isaac Rapp of Erwinna, Bucks County in 1837 (gift of David Long); a c. 1839 printed fraktur taufschein, or birth certificate, for Levi Krauthammel of Bedminster Township (gift of the Crouthamel Family); a c. 1870 reed organ, or melodeon, produced by Britting & Brother of Cincinnati, Ohio (gift of Brenda Hart); a c. 1930 feed bag elevator used at the Thrift Feed Mill in Cross Keys, Bucks County (gift of Walter Homacki); an asbestos shingle cutter employed by German immigrant carpenter Hans Scheich in house construction in the Croydon, Bucks County area in the 1950s (gift of Janet Anderson); a child's painted chair advertising the former Kooker & Smith Furniture Store in Quakertown (gift of David Long, in honor of David and Katherine Ludwig); a pair of men's leather "slippers," cut down from a pair of hob-nailed shoes, c. 1860 (gift of Jay and Barbara Gerber); a banner from a tent "Chautauqua," held at Coryell's Ferry, or New Hope, in 1921 (gift of David Long, in honor of David and Katherine Ludwig); and a 1970s watercolor by Charles Schmidt, painted inside the Mercer Museum and abstractly depicting the architectural hardware exhibit (gift of Nancy Schmidt).



Data Plate from Brewster "Buccaneer" Bomber, Warminster Township, Bucks County, c. 1943.
Gift of Clint Flack.



Kaiser Fleetwings Employee ID Badge, Bristol, Bucks County, c. 1944.
Gift of Clint Flack.

PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY BECAUSE THIS IS HOME

Bucks County is our home. Although we have lived elsewhere in our careers, our hometown is the place where we thrive, where we raise our children, and where we enjoy our lives with our friends and family. The sense of community here is palpable, and there are unique institutions that remind us why this area is so special to so many — places like the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle.

As members of the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), which operates the Museum and the Castle, we are fortunate to experience an array of programs year-round. From changing exhibits, to family-themed traditions like Fonthill Castle's Old-Fashioned Fourth of July and the Mercer Museum's Holiday Open House, there is something for people of all ages and from all walks of life who want to come together as a community. For our children, few things compare to visiting Santa in the Mercer Museum's Log House in December!

We value the important role BCBS plays in creating shared experiences and preserving the uniqueness of our community. That's why we have made plans in our estate to support the organization, so it can continue to support the community and the generations that will follow ours.

Join us, and become a member of the *Plus Ultra Society*. Your generosity will make a difference.

– John and Liz Augenblick

To learn more about joining the *Plus Ultra Society* to support BCBS via planned giving, and/or to notify us if you have already included BCBS in your financial plans, please call Laura Biersmith at 215-345-0210 ext. 129. **Don't have a will? You're not alone! Now is a great time to start planning, and please consider including a bequest to Bucks County Historical Society in your plans.**



John and Liz Augenblick at Fonthill Castle



15TH ANNUAL SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM DAY

On Saturday, September 21, the nation celebrated *Smithsonian* magazine's 15th Annual Museum Day, a day in which participating museums emulate the free admission policy at the Smithsonian Institution's Washington D.C.-based museums and open their doors free of charge to the community.

As Smithsonian Affiliates, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle proudly participated in this nation-wide museum celebration and welcomed almost 2,200 guests in one day!



Smithsonian magazine
museum day

COCKTAILS AT THE CASTLE: A DELECTABLE JOURNEY THROUGH BUCKS COUNTY'S BEST FOOD AND DRINK



The Mercer Museum's major annual fundraiser, Cocktails at the Castle, returned to Doylestown on Friday, October 11, 2019 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., for an unforgettable night of culinary delights and craft cocktails.

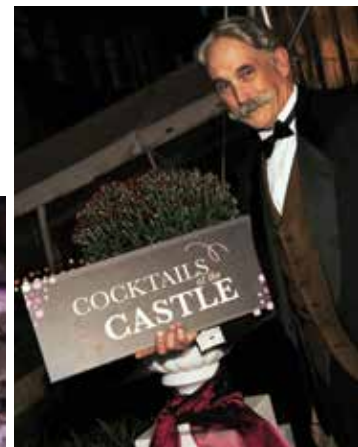
Foodies and history lovers joined to celebrate this legendary evening in a one-of-a-kind castle. Cocktails at the Castle is renowned for its extraordinary focus on crafted cocktails and scrumptious offerings from some of the area's most celebrated restaurants, caterers, and bakeries, all in support of the Mercer Museum's year-round exhibitions, youth education programs and community initiatives.

President & Executive Director Kyle McKoy notes, "We were so excited to welcome the community to another wonderful Cocktails at the Castle. With so many regional favorites returning to share their culinary creations, as well as new additions to the roster, all in an exceptional historic setting, it was our best year yet!"

An important fundraising component of Cocktails at the Castle is the online silent auction that features one-of-a-kind experiences and VIP packages, all to benefit a great cause. This year's selection of unique auction experiences and deluxe offerings offered something for everyone, including a luxury seven-day vacation on Sanibel Island, a private behind-the-scenes tour of the Mercer Museum's vast collections, a custom watercolor portrait of your home, a golf outing for three at Bucks County's Lookaway Golf Club, a full detailing of your car at Four Seasons Car Wash and so much more.

Cocktails at the Castle sponsors at the leadership levels include Presenting Sponsor: Wells Fargo Advisors, Pinnacle Sponsor: BLBB Charitable, ESCA Blast, Tower Sponsors: A to Z Party Rental, Dontech, Inc., Penn Color, Inc. Penn Community Bank, Spire Sponsors: Bucks Mont Party Rental, Curtin & Heefner LLP, Linda B. Hodgdon, Thompson BMW, Vizi, Finial Sponsors: Advent Security Corp., Bucks County Community College, Kathleen Herb Brower, DMD, MD, Maureen and Mark Carlton, Doris Hart Carr, in memory of George M. Carr III, Heather Cevasco and John Platek, Doylestown Health, DunlapSLK CPAs, Susan E. Kane, Keenan Motor Group – Keenan Motors & Keenan Honda, John Ortolfo and Gail Linenberg, Brian and Louise McLeod, Tom Modzelewski, Rockwood Wealth Management, Taffy and Fred Schea, Lisa Kristin Soren, STAT Waste Solutions, LLC, Tom Thomas, Walter R. Dorn Estate, Inc., Worth & Company, Inc. and Media Sponsor: Bucks County Herald.

Thank you for your support of Cocktails at the Castle 2019.





ONE OF A KIND SETTINGS. ONE OF A KIND CELEBRATIONS.

