



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

New Spring 2021 Virtual Programs From Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

DOYLESTOWN, PA – The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), are pleased to announce a new slate of virtual programs this spring that are designed to bring local history and the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer and his renowned concrete castles in the heart of Bucks County, PA to audiences in their own homes.

Throughout the months of March and April, these virtual experiences will showcase the architectural beauty and historic significance of the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle, and invite online viewers to learn more about the buildings and the vision of the man who built them. By combining recorded film, historic photographs and live virtual interactions with museum guides, these virtual programs offer a new way to experience Smithsonian-affiliate museums in the digital age.

The virtual programs, all presented via Zoom, cover a variety of topics for audiences of all ages, including virtual tours of the Mercer Museum’s prized Central Court, Fonthill Castle’s enchanting and labyrinth-like interior, Henry Mercer’s legacy and personal story, family programs in a colonial-style log house, and guest speakers covering specialized local history topics.

BCHS Vice President of Community Services & Marketing Marjan Shirzad notes, “There has never been a more important time to utilize the power of technology to build community connections and transport art and culture from our museum halls into our visitors’ homes. These new virtual programs are designed to educate, inspire and delight. We are always looking for new ways to create meaningful cultural experiences, and are thrilled that virtual programming makes our castles more accessible than ever.”

A selection of these virtual programs and topics include:

Virtual Tour – Highlights of Central Court at the Mercer Museum

Various dates and times at mercermuseum.org/virtualprograms

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/ Free Member Virtual Connection

Looking up from the heart of the Mercer Museum’s Central Court is an experience like no other. Artifacts hanging from rafters and objects at every turn create a most unique sensory experience. This 45-minute virtual experience features a 15-minute recorded tour of the Mercer Museum’s Central Court, followed by an array of historic and current-day photographs and a live virtual Q&A conversation with an experienced tour guide.

Virtual Tour – Highlights of Fonthill Castle

Various dates and times at mercermuseum.org/virtualprograms

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/ Free Member Virtual Connection

Delight in the splendor of a virtual guided historic tour of Fonthill Castle in the heart of Doylestown, Bucks County, PA. These 45-minute virtual experiences feature a 30-minute recorded guided journey through Henry Chapman Mercer’s home, followed by a live virtual Q&A conversation with an experienced tour guide.

Virtual Lecture – Henry Chapman Mercer: A Legacy Built in Concrete

Wednesdays: March 31 & April 28, 2021

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/\$5 Member Virtual Connection per household

In this one-hour virtual multimedia program, Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle educators bring the stories of Henry Mercer and his concrete castles to life through film clips, historic archives and modern-day images. Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle are two historic castles that celebrate the life and legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar.

A live discussion following the presentation brings the magic of Henry Mercer’s vision right into your home and is perfect for history lovers of all ages.

Friends of BCHS– Virtual Lecture: The Private Henry Mercer

Monday, March 15, 2021

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Free for all – Advanced online registration required.

This multimedia presentation by BCHS Vice President of Collections and Interpretation Cory Amsler touches on some of the lesser-known aspects of Henry Mercer's daily life at Fonthill Castle - his intimate and personal relationships, his interactions with household staff, his political and social positions, and his private concerns and passions.

Virtual Family Program – Colonial Farm Experience

Fridays: March 12 & April 23, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/\$5 Member Virtual Connection per household

Have you ever wondered what it was like to live in a log house? Explore the daily life of colonial farmers with Mercer Museum educators during this virtual family program. Learn about the well pump, colonial games and toys, churning butter, and more!

These 60-minute virtual experiences feature a 45-minute recorded journey in a colonial log house, followed by a live virtual Q&A conversation with Mercer Museum educators that is fun for the whole family.

Virtual Family Program – Meet the Makers: Bartering in Colonial Times

Fridays: March 19 & April 16, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/\$5 Member Virtual Connection per household

Join a Colonial shoemaker and the owner of a general store and learn how people in early America bartered for the household objects they needed to survive. See how they made shoes, tin-punch lanterns, iron nails and so much more in this 45-minute virtual experience, followed by a live virtual Q&A conversation with expert educators.

Virtual Lecture – Postcards of Bucks County: The Complete Arnold Brothers Series

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

\$10 General Admission Virtual Connection per household/\$5 Member Virtual Connection per household

Back by popular demand, join the Mercer Museum for this exclusive virtual lecture with Chase Palmer, author of the book *Postcards of Bucks County: The Complete Arnold Brothers Series*.

Explore the history of Bucks County and its landmarks through early postcards of images taken by the Arnold Brothers from the late 1890s through the turn of the 20th century. Learn about the history of this postcard series as well as the “unpublished Arnold negatives,” roughly 400 image negatives preserved in the archives of the Bucks County Historical Society.

Chase Palmer’s new book builds on Betty Davis’s work *Postcards of Bucks County*, published in 1980, and features 248 Arnold Brothers postcards along with contemporary location photos from 1980 and today. This new presentation recounts the story of the Arnold Brothers, their Bucks County businesses, and much more.

Signed copies of Chase Palmer's book will be available at the Mercer Museum Shop, open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday-Sunday.

For more information on the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle's upcoming virtual programs, please visit mercermuseum.org/virtualprograms.

###

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 (BCHS).

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier cultural attractions and a Smithsonian affiliate, 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.

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.

The Mercer Museum is located at 84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA, 18901.
Fonthill Castle is located at 525 East Court Street in Doylestown, PA, 18901.

For up-to-date ticket and schedule information, please visit mercermuseum.org.

For additional information, please contact:

Breanna Fair, PR & Marketing Manager

Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

(215) 345-0210 ext. 131

bfair@mercermuseum.org