

CASTLE CHRONICLES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SUMMER 2021



MERCER
MUSEUM
& FONHILL
CASTLE



Smithsonian
Affiliate

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CASTLE



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GENERAL INFORMATION

MERCER MUSEUM

84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 345-0210
Tuesdays – Sundays, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Closed Mondays

MERCER MUSEUM RESEARCH LIBRARY

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursdays – Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Closed Sundays & Mondays

FONTHILL CASTLE

525 East Court Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 348-9461
Tuesdays – Sundays, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Closed Mondays

Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle are operated by the
Bucks County Historical Society.
Schedule and programs are subject to change.
Visit mercermuseum.org for the latest information.

ON THE COVER

Mercer Museum 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

Although 2020 was a year of uncertainty, we have also met countless opportunities to reflect, revisit, realign, and refine what we are doing to move forward with a renewed sense of purpose, hope, and gratitude. Recovery is happening all around us, and while many organizations look to bounce back, the Bucks County Historical Society is looking to bounce forward.

During the pandemic, community members found a safe haven for respite in our outdoor spaces, and we are constantly looking for ways in which we can make the grounds more welcoming and enticing to the community. We continue to enhance the appearance of the grounds at both the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle. Several trees have been planted to replace ones lost to disease and weather; trails have been cleaned, widened, and wood-chipped to make for easier access; and hazardous and dead trees have been removed. For more information on the Mercer Museum Beautification and the Fonthill Woodlands projects and how you can help, please visit our website and help us maintain the beauty of our grounds for generations to come.

BCHS has also created indoor enhancements to welcome you back inside our buildings. We installed a climate management system in six of the twelve empty rooms at the Mercer Museum, which was supported by a grant received from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. *Awaken _____: An Experimental Exhibit*, supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, offers visitors a reimagined Mercer Museum experience, reinventing unused museum spaces into areas in which to engage more deeply with the collections and one another. The displays are meant to be working prototypes, not polished exhibits, and this experimental project allows us to transform various empty rooms in the original historic core of the Mercer Museum into intimate spaces designed for meaningful connections through the power of objects.

Looking forward, our Board of Trustees, staff, and community members have begun the process of writing a new BCBS strategic plan for 2022-2024, with completion targeted for the end of the year. I expect the outcome to be another robust plan, full of ambitious yet attainable goals and values.

I am one of those people who keeps my eyes focused on the future and has enormous dreams. One of the cliché messages I keep in mind is to always aim for the moon because if we miss, we'll still land among the stars.

We are an organization bouncing forward with new confidence from the lessons we learned in 2020. Now all we have to do is keep up the momentum. I thank all of our supporters who helped us not only survive the pandemic but thrive in spite of it.

Kyle McKoy
President & Executive Director

2021 SUMMER INTERNS

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle's 2021 Summer Internship Program, or Experiential Learning Academy, allows a dynamic group of students with varied interests, strengths, and goals to immerse themselves in an outstanding educational and professional environment. Interns receive a paid stipend to learn and work directly with our staff in a team-based, collaborative environment which offers experiential learning, mentoring benefits, and leadership-building skills.

This year's interns are with us from June 7 – August 13, 2021, and their work supports exhibits, archives, development, education, and community services initiatives.



2021 Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle Interns

Top (L to R): Emily Whitted, Logan Saugling, Eliza Mlodzinski, and Becca Merriman-Goldring

Bottom (L to R): Grace Soler, Katy Pownall, and Theresa Condon

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 and measurable outcomes for the people they service. In addition, we are pleased to once again partner with The Foundation Community Partnership's Summer Youth Corps Program to sponsor one of our summer interns.

IMLS GRANT FUNDS A CONDITION SURVEY OF THE MERCER MUSEUM'S WINDOWS

In 2020, the Mercer Museum received a \$40,000 matching grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, to support a detailed condition survey of all 256 concrete sash windows in the original Mercer "castle." The grant is part of the IMLS' Museums for America program, supporting collections care, preservation, and access concerns across the nation.

Late last year, the museum formally launched the project with an interior examination of all of the windows, including dormers and skylights. The Philadelphia-based firm, Materials Conservation LLC, was contracted to conduct the survey. In this project phase, conservators classified window typologies, mapped locations, and took photographs. Samples of the original concrete, comprising the building's fabric, were also taken for analysis.

The project resumed early this year with exterior examination of all of the windows, a process that required a high lift and aerial drone to capture and record information at the highest reaches of the museum. All of the information obtained by the conservators will result in a report, which will also establish priorities and recommendations for future restoration work. The project is expected to conclude this summer (2021).

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. They advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grant-making, research and policy development. Their vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.



FONTHILL QUESTERS GIFT SUPPORTS FONTHILL CASTLE TAPESTRY REPRODUCTIONS

The East Bedroom at Fonthill Castle has been restored to some of its original splendor thanks to a generous gift from the Fonthill Questers. The Bucks County Historical Society unveiled new reproduction window coverings in the East Bedroom, once a guest bedroom in the former home of Henry Mercer.

The original window coverings in the room were removed by museum staff in the early 1980s and placed into storage to protect them from further light damage. These original tapestries, purchased by Mercer from William C. Patton and described in 1912 as “brown...[and] very narrow” Louis XIV revivals, were heavily faded due to light damage that began even during Mercer’s lifetime, as noted by Mercer in his writings.

In 2019, curatorial staff and former Fonthill Castle tour guide Kathy Appel, who now works with Hearth & Hedgerow Interior Design in Quakertown, undertook a study of the original tapestries in an effort to find a similar pattern still in production that could be fabricated to replace the originals. The closest pattern, called “Verdure Villeroi,” was offered by Heirloom Tapestries in California and was purchased through the Questers’ donation.

Hearth & Hedgerow divided the tapestry into sections to fabricate eight custom window coverings for the four windows in the bedroom. The new window coverings include a blue corduroy border instead of Mercer’s original red, which matches the reproduction fabric border and avoids red dyes that tend to fade more quickly, ensuring that these tapestries will add to the interpretation of this unique space for years to come.

The Bucks County Historical Society continues to be grateful to the Fonthill Questers for supporting this project and many other restoration projects at Fonthill Castle.



Left: An original tapestry window covering from the East Bedroom at Fonthill Castle, purchased by Henry Mercer and now in storage. Right: A view of the new coverings today.



Left: An original tapestry window covering from the East Bedroom at Fonthill Castle, purchased by Henry Mercer and now in storage. Right: A view of the new coverings today.

PROTOTYPING: MERCER EXHIBITS LAB

The Mercer Museum’s exhibits team is developing an immersive exhibit based on Henry Mercer’s travels through France in 1889. In spring of 2021, museum visitors helped our team by previewing beta-tests of exhibit designs and ideas in our changing exhibits gallery, and providing feedback that will help inform the next steps in this exhibit’s development. The two primary questions we sought to answer through prototyping were:

- What are visitor reactions to the immersive experiences?
- Are visitors interested in the exhibit content?

Here is a sampling of what we learned:

Visitors had overwhelmingly positive responses to the idea of exploring an immersive history exhibit. Many offered detailed suggestions for enriching and adding to the experiences. They wanted more complete sensory experiences, but also expressed concern for accommodating diverse audiences with differing needs. For example, visitors loved exploring by lantern light but also suggested that people with visual impairments may have trouble reading small maps and labels.



Right: Prototype introduction space.

Continued on page 6

COLLECTIONS CONNECTION: RESEARCH AND PHOTO SERVICES

The Mercer Museum Research Library contains thousands of resources for academic researchers, local organizations, journalists, and at-home hobbyists to find the materials for their publications and other projects. The collection includes books, letters, postcards, photographs, broadsides, and seemingly endless other ephemera for all curious minds.

Below are just a few of the requests and projects the Mercer Museum Research Library has been able to assist with in the last few months:

- The Lambertville Free Public Library is revamping the History page on its website. The updated page will include photographs from the Mercer Museum Research Library's John Anderson collection that document the organization in its original form as the Stryker Library.
- The James-Lorah Memorial House in Doylestown, PA, will soon be exhibiting some exciting historical works documenting the history of the house, including its history as the birthplace of Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer's parents once resided in the house, and one of Mercer's handwritten notebooks in the Mercer Museum Research Library collection provides information about the exact location within the house where he was born in 1856. A copy of this entry will be part of the display.
- A Perkasio resident is working on a personalized history of Bucks County. This homemade book will include information and photographs of some of his favorite locations within the area throughout the years. The cover will include a 1915 map of Bucks County from the Mercer Museum Research Library collection.

The Mercer Museum Research Library is currently open to the public from Tuesday to Saturday. Access to the Research Library is included with Mercer Museum admission or by membership to the Bucks County Historical Society.

Right: Hand-drawn map of Bucks County from 1915.



Photo taken by John Anderson of a Librarian in the Stryker library (now the Lambertville Free Library) in 1907.



PROTOTYPING *Continued from page 5*

A majority of participants were first-time visitors to the museum. However, a lack of familiarity with Henry Mercer did not seem to diminish interest in the exhibit's content. Participants expressed that they were interested in learning more about Mercer and exploring different aspects of history through the exhibit content. For example, visitors frequently asked what motivated Mercer to travel to France and also wanted to know more about glass plate photography.

Prototyping allowed us to test the impact and effectiveness of our designs and also helped us to better understand visitor interests, needs, and curiosities. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Right: Prototype of the cave Mercer visited on his European travels.



SUMMER 2021 EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHT: MEASUREMENT RULES

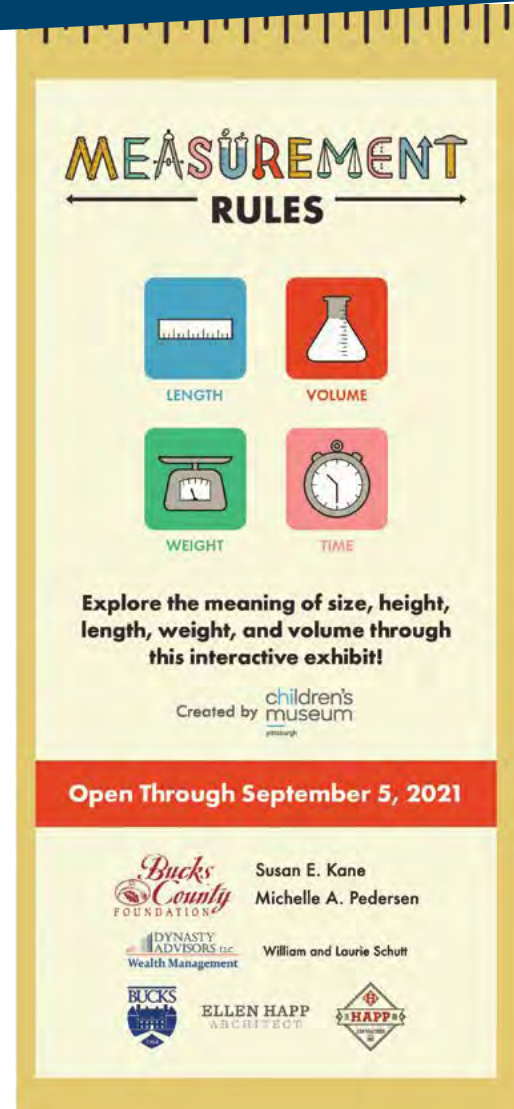
This summer, the Mercer Museum offers a family-friendly, traveling interactive exhibit created by the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh called *Measurement Rules*. Located in the Martin & Warwick Foundation Galleries in the modern wing of the museum, the exhibit is open to the public through Sunday, September 5, 2021.

Measurement Rules explores the meaning of size, height, length, weight, and volume through a variety of hands-on activities for kids of all ages like giant tape measures, treadmill odometers, balance scales and more!

This playful exhibit, perfect for young children and families, teaches the fundamentals of measurement through fun questions like, "How many chickens do you weigh? How tall are you in apples or inches or pennies? Can you use your foot as a ruler?"

"We've designed this exhibit to enable kids to work together and become more confident in the language of measurement," explains Anne Fullenkamp, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's Director of Design.

Entrance to the *Measurement Rules* exhibit is included with general Mercer Museum admission.



AWAKEN _____: AN EXPERIMENTAL EXHIBIT

In 2019, the Mercer Museum received a \$230,000 grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to support a major initiative over a period of two and a half years entitled, "Plus Ultra: Awakening the Mercer Museum Core." Inspired by the Latin motto *Plus Ultra*, or "more beyond", the Mercer Museum's founder Henry Mercer spent his life as an archaeologist, historian, tile maker, storyteller, collector and advocate for human ingenuity.

This experimental project allows the museum to prototype and transform various empty rooms in the original historic core of the Mercer Museum castle into intimate spaces designed for meaningful experiences through the power of objects. It will reintroduce the Mercer Museum in a fresh, unexpected and exciting way. These exhibits are meant to be working prototypes and are designed to offer "mini-excursions" adjacent to the larger experience of the Mercer Museum historic core and will offer visitors three prototypes to discover over the next two years.

Awaken _____: An Experimental Exhibit has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.



SUMMER 2021 EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHT: MAGNIFICENT MEASURES! THE HAUSMAN-HILL COLLECTION OF CALCULATING INSTRUMENTS

Magnificent Measures! The Hausman–Hill Collection of Calculating Instruments is a companion exhibit to our family-friendly *Measurement Rules* summer exhibit, and features rare examples of historical measuring instruments drawn from the private collection of Bucks County residents Kathryn Hausman and Jim Hill. Located in the Martin & Warwick Foundation Galleries at the Mercer Museum, the exhibit is open through Sunday, September 5, 2021.

Over the last fifty years, Hausman and Hill have built one of the most extensive private collections of early colonial and 19th-century American measuring implements. Many of the early measuring tools and complex instruments on display embody the sophisticated scientific principles that helped map, measure, and build early America. The exhibit includes instruments for measuring the weather (thermometers, barometers), land (surveying instruments), and the human body (a tailor's rulers and other implements for gauging the size of arms, legs, waists, feet, heads, and fingers for crafting clothing and accessories).

Magnificent Measures! showcases the work of significant early makers of measuring implements, such as notable 18th and 19th-century craftsmen Anthony Lamb, Rufus Porter, Thomas Greenough, Justus Roe, Caleb Leach, and the Chapin Family of Connecticut. Historic photographs and documents of these makers and their businesses add to the exhibit's appeal.

The origin of the Hausman-Hill collection traces its roots back to Jim Hill's youth. Hill discovered an early love of science and mathematics, which inspired an interest in calculating devices. These objects, it seemed to him, were more than simply tools or mechanical artifacts. To Hill, they were "significant, physical manifestations of how math and science have long been applied to everyday life." Later, Hill's professional career as a machinist, metalsmith, woodworker, restorer, and custom manufacturer soon became intertwined with his collecting interests.

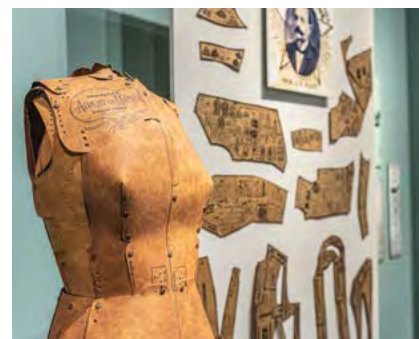
It is the hope of Mr. Hill and Ms. Hausman that *Magnificent Measures!* inspires visitors to "look to our past as an inspiration for the future – its legacy of practicality, creativity, and progress should not be forgotten."

Entrance to this exhibit is included with general Mercer Museum admission.

Magnificent Measures! The Hausman–Hill Collection of Calculating Instruments is sponsored by: **Friends of the Mercer Museum**



Left: Portable or Pocket Balance Scale
Wood, brass, other metals, celluloid,
fabric Herman Kohlbusch Company
New York City c. 1888



"Adjust-o-matic" Dress Form Cellulose
and metal. Invented by Luigi Cella.
Patented January 26, 1960.



L to R: Jim Hill and Kathryn Hausman.

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT: THE CHAPIN COMPANIES

One of the most extensive groupings of calculating instruments now on view in *Magnificent Measures! The Hausman-Hill Collection of Calculating Instruments* features products from a company founded in 1825 by Hermon Chapin in Pine Meadow, Connecticut. Chapin was born on October 9, 1799, in New Hampshire as a seventh-generation descendant of a New England lumbering family.

As a young man, Hermon worked at the family sawmill. Through some of his family's lumber dealings with the Hartford, Connecticut firm of D. & M. Copeland, Hermon was introduced to the Copeland Company. He signed an apprenticeship agreement on May 20, 1822. D. & M. Copeland had begun to utilize automated machinery extensively to manufacture its line of woodworking planes – something that made a lasting impression on Hermon. The young apprentice showed an aptitude for the plane and joinery tool business and signed a co-partnership agreement with Daniel Copeland in 1825.

In an effort to expand his firm's plane-making capability, Hermon embarked on an exploratory trip in late December 1825, seeking out a new building site with access to a source of water power. During his trip to what later became known as Pine Meadow, Connecticut (today a neighborhood in the village of New Hartford), Hermon met Catherine Merrill, his future wife. Merrill's father, Jonathan, operated a tavern in what was then called Kelloggville.

It is unclear whether the water power available on the north branch of the nearby Farmington River, or the powerful pull of romance, led Hermon Chapin to choose this site for his future factory. He married Catherine on May 28, 1828, and settled in Pine Meadow. There they had a family of nine children, though only three survived to adulthood: Edward Merrill Chapin, George Washington Chapin, and Philip Eugene Chapin.

Plans for the construction of Chapin's new factory at Pine Meadow were finalized in an agreement made on December 23, 1825, with Daniel Copeland. The agreement enabled Hermon to lease the property adjacent to an existing woolen mill operated by the Kellogg Family, complete with water power rights. Hermon's new factory was thirty feet by thirty-five feet, with two stories. A water wheel and gearing were located in the basement.

By July 1826, the new wooden plane manufacturing facility, with power-assisted machinery, was completed. This marked the beginning of the H. Chapin "Union Factory." Chapin added rules and measures to his product line with the acquisition of another firm in 1835.

As demand for Chapin's rules increased, his Union Factory hired additional hands under various work agreements. By 1860 Hermon's eldest son, Edward Merrill Chapin, began directing the family business. The firm then became known as "H. Chapin's Son Union Factory." Several additional name changes occurred over succeeding years as management of the firm changed hands from 1866 to 1901.

In that year, with the acquisition of another tool-making firm – Stephens & Company – the Chapins' original enterprise became known as the Chapin-Stephens Company. Chapin-Stephens operated until 1929, when it was bought out by the familiar Stanley Rule & Level Company. Remarkably, for nearly a century and throughout its entire operation – 1826 to 1929 – the firm maintained its home in the small hamlet of Pine Meadow.



Daguerreotype (Early photographic image created on a sheet of silver-coated copper, popular in the 1840s and 1850s) of Hermon Chapin, New Hartford, Connecticut, ca. 1845.



Above: No. 51 Arch Joint Engineer's Scale Folding Rule with Gunter Slide, H. Chapin, ca. 1850.



Right: Patent Combination Rule, Stephens & Company, Riverton, Connecticut, 1860-1900.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

They say history is made every day, and we all saw that saying in action in 2020. The challenge for an organization like the Mercer Museum is how to collect recent history in the form of *things* – three-dimensional artifacts that future generations can see and touch that will capture a sense of what it was like to live in Bucks County during these turbulent times. To achieve that goal, curatorial staff adopted a more active collecting strategy over the past few months, adding several yard signs and other artifacts related to last year's many historic events to the permanent collection through creative forms of "field collecting."

One of these signs will be familiar to everyone in the Doylestown area: the "Doylestown Strong" yard sign distributed last spring by Doylestown Neighbors United, a local citizens group that launched a COVID-19 response fundraiser for frontline workers, families facing housing and food instability, and other pandemic-related crises. The sign, a related magnet, and t-shirt are visible reminders of how towns in our area came together to help each other during the coronavirus pandemic.

Later in the year, the 2020 presidential election inspired a renaissance of handmade yard signs across the region. One sign, originally mounted by local citizens near the corner of the Mercer Museum's grounds, was obtained for the permanent collection after the election. Reading simply "Please Vote!" in red and blue marker, the sign symbolizes the spirit of civic participation that was especially strong during this election year. Other signs collected by curatorial staff include a handmade sign from the "Protect the Results" rally in Doylestown the day after the presidential election and a handmade "Black Lives Matter" sign from a demonstration in Doylestown earlier in the summer of 2020. In many ways, collecting "history in action" continues and extends Henry Mercer's mission to collect material culture before it disappears.

In addition to "field collecting," the Mercer Museum continued to collect early American tools and trade materials as well as less recent local history objects. Other gifts include the tool chest of Morrisville carpenter Benjamin Kinsey Knowles c. 1850 (gift of the Children and Grandchildren of Eldred Knowles), Goodnoe's Family Restaurant artifacts (gift of Richard Duvall), Hilltown Glassworks archaeological materials (gift of John and Susanne Clauser), a bassinet from Quakertown (gift of Susan Gares Farrell and Carol Ort Degenhardt), a Mennonite cap, pillowcase, and ivory book sculpture from the Civil War (gift of David R. Oakley In Loving Memory of Eleanor Gayman Oakley, 1927-2019), a stoveplate, level, feed bag, and grain cleaner salesman's sample (gift of David B. Long), a tin cup, ceramic jar, druggist's bottle, and Mastin Farms feed bag (gift of David B. Long in Memory of Donald C. Long), Adolph Yeske World War II artifacts (gift of Charles Yeske), Ruth Leidy World War II artifacts (gift of the Leidy Family), a cast iron bollard c. 1880s (gift of Paul R. Weber), and a butternut cracking bench, an apple crate stenciling kit, and two Pennsbury Pottery figurines (gift of David B. Long).

Right: **Apple Crate Stenciling Kit.** Sudbury, Vermont, c. 1870-1930. Gift of David B. Long, 2021.



"Doylestown Strong" Yard Sign. Doylestown Neighbors United. Collected by Cory Amsler, 2020.



"Please Vote" Election Sign. Found on Mercer Museum grounds, 2020.



GENE ASRO COLLECTION

In September 2020, the Gene Asro negative and photograph collection was donated to the Mercer Museum Research Library by Asro's widow, Alice M. Deeny. This exciting addition to our archive includes roughly 25,000 black and white negatives taken by Bucks County photographer Gene Asro. These negatives capture Bucks County scenery, political and sporting events, the early years of Levittown, and more. The images range in date from the 1960s to the 1990s. His early black-and-white images were produced from a Graflex 4x5 camera, and the negatives in the collection also include 120- and 35-mm formats.

Asro was born Augustine Samuel Rossana in April 1922. After serving six years in the U.S. Navy, Asro eventually settled in Levittown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He resided there until his death in 1998. Gene Asro spent most of his life as a photographer for the police department, fire department, and as a United Press International (UPI) contributor. His first photography job was working for *The Trentonian* newspaper in New Jersey.

In March 2021, the Mercer Museum Research Library received a Historical & Archival Records Care grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) to begin working on this large and important collection. The negatives have spent years stored in acidic envelopes and held in dilapidated shoe boxes. This grant enables the Bucks County Historical Society to properly re-house these negatives in storage materials that will guarantee the longevity of the collection. In addition to improving storage, the collection will be inventoried and cataloged. This process will provide easy access to researchers in the Mercer Museum Research Library. These photographs have major historical significance due to the rare glimpses they provide of burgeoning suburban life in Bucks County and the ever-changing landscape. The PHMC grant facilitates the important and necessary processes required to protect Gene Asro's prolific body of work.



Gene Asro photo of a campaign rally with Senator, and VP candidate, Hubert Humphrey in 1964.

FONTHILL WOODLANDS VOLUNTEER DAYS

The Fonthill Woodlands Project is an ongoing initiative to support and enhance the property's historical, ecological, recreational, and cultural benefits.

As stewards of this special site—and with the help of our community—the Bucks County Historical Society has cleared trails, removed fallen trees, enhanced garden beds, cleaned the reflection pond, installed new plantings, and removed all graffiti and spray paint from the Little House in the Woods. The Bucks County Historical Society is continuously working on improving the trails and woodlands around Fonthill Castle for the community to enjoy.

Get involved by signing up for one of our monthly Fonthill Woodlands Clean-Up volunteer days, or contribute to this important initiative by sustaining the ongoing grounds work and care. Through community donations and volunteer efforts, we are able to continue our commitment to this natural gem. To learn more, visit mercermuseum.org/support/fonthillwoodlandsproject.



PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY: FAMILY'S HISTORY INSPIRES COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

It is an honor to be a member of the Bucks County Historical Society's *Plus Ultra* Society, which recognizes individuals who include BCHS in their wills and planned giving. I made the commitment to support the organization because of my family's history and my late husband's great interest in the Mercer Museum.

I was born in Doylestown's original house hospital, located on Pine Street and Oakland Avenue, one month after the town's 100th Anniversary celebration in 1938. I grew up enjoying the uniqueness of Doylestown's castles and hearing about the tremendous legacy Henry Mercer left to the community.

I never knew my grandfather—Spencer Granville Hart Sr.—but my family told me he helped build the Mercer Museum by mixing concrete and completing other tasks as needed. My late husband, George M. Carr III, enjoyed visiting the Mercer Museum to see the tools and equipment on display. George had his own collection, and he would often study the museum's exhibits, sketch certain pieces, and then return home to fix the items he owned based on his observations of the museum's items.

Today, I continue my family's commitment to local history by supporting the organization. I belong to the Friends of the Bucks County Historical Society auxiliary group, which hosts free quarterly programs focused on heritage, history, and the arts. I am a member of the Cocktails at the Castle event planning committee, and together we enjoy preparing for this major fundraising event that benefits the Mercer Museum's educational and community services. I have donated artifacts to the organization's collection, including the typewriter that belonged to another renowned Doylestown native, Dr. William Edgar Geil.

There are many ways to support the Bucks County Historical Society, but I think planning for its future, through my planned gift, is one of the most rewarding steps I have taken. Join me, and become a *Plus Ultra* Society member today. Your commitment will have a lasting effect.

—Doris Hart Carr



To learn more about joining the *Plus Ultra* Society, or to notify us if you have already included the Bucks County Historical Society in your plans, please contact Gloria Pugliese, Vice President of Development, at 215-345-0210, ext. 129.

MERCER MUSEUM HOSTS VIRTUAL NATIONAL HISTORY DAY CONTEST

The Mercer Museum has coordinated the National History Day regional contest since 1996, encouraging Bucks and Montgomery County high school and middle school students to take their love of history beyond the classroom. This year, for the first time, the Mercer Museum hosted the contest virtually.

210 students submitted digital projects for judges to review. Nearly 100 judges reviewed projects online and then met via Zoom to discuss each project. Due to the virtual nature of judging, volunteer judges from across the region, state, and country were able to participate, providing crucial feedback to students and critical support to Mercer Museum staff.



2021 National History Day Virtual Judge Zoom Session

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

KARINA KOWALSKI, MANAGER OF EDUCATION

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

I'm originally from an island in Lake Erie in Ohio and have always had a passion for sharing history with others, and museums attracted me as places I could spend hours learning something new. While working towards my Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program at SUNY Oneonta in 2018, I visited the castles while passing through the area. I was struck by the sheer size and scope of the places and the opportunities for educational engagement that could span history, art, and STEM. In 2019, I spent the summer as a Community Services Intern and then accepted the position of Education Coordinator in August 2019. I am thrilled to have been promoted to Manager of Education in June 2021.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I love the spark of imagination and discovery that is inherently part of the castles and collections. I work on the planning and executing of educational programs, including field trips, summer camp, and children's activities. Seeing the excitement in a child's eye when they finally find Rollo's paw prints, the awe of families when they see objects hanging five stories above their heads, or the realization from youth groups of how long it *actually* takes to churn cream into butter are constant reminders to me of how these castles are catalysts for the joy and wonder of our past and the meaningful connections that can be made.

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

During spring 2021, we organized our first *virtual* regional National History Day Contest for Bucks and Montgomery Counties for high school and middle school students. While the switch to a virtual contest brought its own challenges, it was an honor to facilitate this program as the Regional Coordinator. The determination, adaptability, and creativity of the competing students shone through this year, despite the changes that came with a virtual contest. Success for this program was possible through the efforts of many hard-working groups: from our team at the Mercer Museum, the teachers, and the volunteer judges. I am so proud to have worked to coordinate a program that positively impacted so many participants.

In addition, we've also had the privilege to begin welcoming back small school groups, both to the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle, for the first time in over a year. When I joined the Community Services Team in 2019, I was regaled with tales of daily field trips to castles in the spring and personally experienced a taste of that during the fall of 2019. This past spring and summer, it has meant the world to me to see the castles through their fresh eyes again, and I feel that I get to experience the sites anew with every visiting group.

What is your favorite artifact in the Historical Society's collection and why?

One of my favorite artifacts is an unassuming leather punch. It looks like a single hole punch found at most office desks, but instead of only punching one size hole, multiple size cylinders rotate so the user can select the size hole they would like to make. It was used to punch holes in leather for items like saddles or belts or to make ornamental designs.

When I brought my parents to visit the museum, my dad spotted this tool and smiled, saying this tool hadn't changed much from Colonial times as he has one on his workbench, albeit made of steel and rubber. It struck me that there are some tools where the simple hand tool is just as functional and has stood the test of time.



SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY PROGRAMS MOVIES AT THE MERCER MUSEUM

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle have partnered with the County Theater and The Moving Picture Cinema for *Movies at the Mercer Museum*, a new film series with outdoor screenings on the Green of the Mercer Museum.



Every third Thursday from April through October, we feature a movie where guests can bring blankets and chairs to enjoy a family-friendly evening outdoors! The spring line-up included classics like *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *Grease*. The current schedule is available at mercermuseum.org/moviesatthemerger.

Movies at the Mercer Museum is sponsored by:



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VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle community programming adapted to meet new audiences and bring history alive in people's homes. Many museums transitioned their programming to the virtual realm, and the Bucks County Historical Society enthusiastically took on the challenge as well.

Beginning in August 2020, a wide variety of community programs were offered to those in the local Bucks County area as well as to guests around the country.

Programs that had been previously held in-person were translated to the digital realm, including exhibit-related lectures and library programs.

Three brand-new community programs also debuted virtually: The *Highlights of Fonthill Castle* virtual tour, The *Highlights of Central Court at the Mercer Museum* virtual tour, and a virtual community outreach program entitled *Henry Chapman Mercer: A Legacy Built in Concrete*.

This outreach program was created during the COVID-19 shutdown to connect with other local organizations, like libraries, historical societies, and senior communities.



2021 FONTHILL CASTLE BEER FEST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 2021

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

(1:00 p.m. for VIP Early Access)

Fonthill Castle – 525 E. Court St.

Doylestown, PA

Fonthill Castle is hosting our annual end-of-summer Beer Fest fundraising event on the afternoon of Saturday, August 14, 2021.

Guests will enjoy local craft beers, music by Billy & Miles, light fare catered by Chambers 19 Bistro & Bar, and a commemorative beer-tasting glass in a one-of-a-kind setting while supporting our preservation and educational initiatives.

VIP Tasting Experience Tickets are \$150/ticket and are sponsored by B&B Beverages. VIP Tickets offer special early access at 1:00 p.m. and include samplings of a curated selection of exclusive specialty beers.

General Admission Tickets are \$60/Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS) Members, \$70/Non-BCHS Members and \$25/Designated Drivers (includes food and non-alcoholic beverage selections).

All attendees must show valid ID of 21+ years of age for entry.



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5TH ANNUAL KITE DAY

FRIENDS OF THE BUCKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Friends of the Bucks County Historical Society hosted their 5th Annual Kite Day on the grounds of Fonthill Castle on Sunday, May 2, 2021. This family-friendly outdoor spring event included an hour-long session to decorate and build kites in the outdoor tent adjacent to Fonthill Castle, with time to fly kites on the castle grounds.

Participants learned how to build and fly a kite with a presentation by Clifford "The Kiteman" Quinn, who once again brought his prized kite-building skills to Doylestown and shared his passion with the community.

The Friends of the Bucks County Historical Society is a group of community members sharing an interest in history, culture, and the arts for more than fifty years. "Our programs attract a diverse group of people who enjoy coming together to explore history and contribute to the community in a positive way. We are a community united by our desire to enrich ourselves, while connecting with the amazing legacy that Henry Mercer left to all of us", says Christine Harrison, President of the Friends of BCHS.

The revenue generated from Friends of BCHS programs such as Kite Day supports future community initiatives at the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle.





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