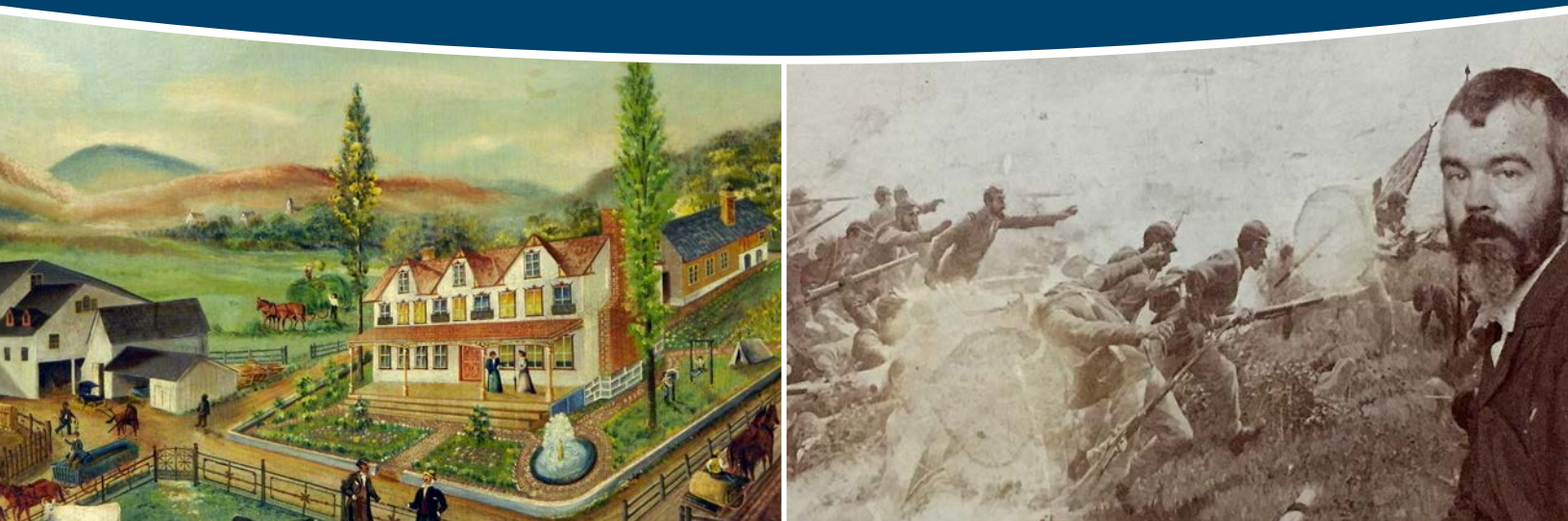
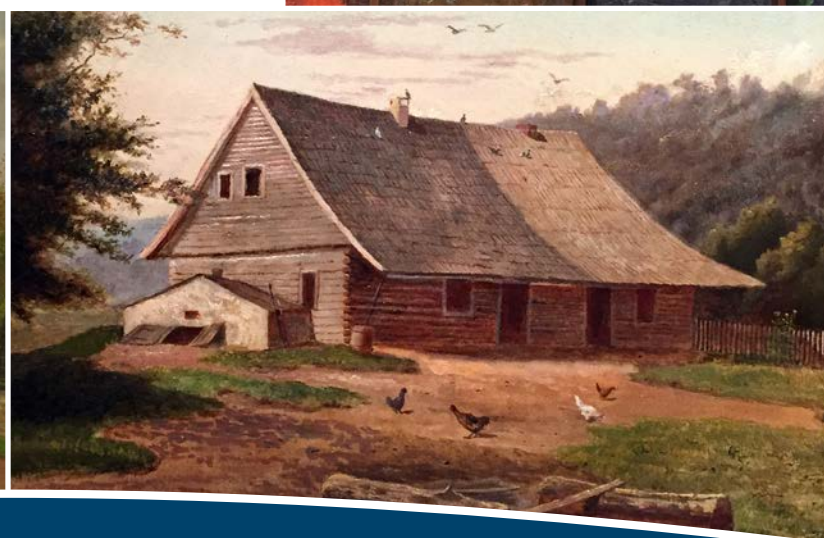
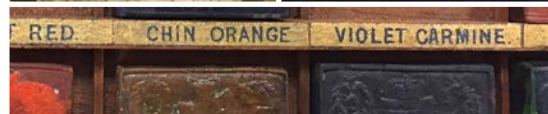


CASTLE CHRONICLES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



200
Years of
BUCKS
COUNTY
ART



FALL 2020



MERCER
MUSEUM
& FONTHILL
CASTLE



Smithsonian
Affiliate

VOL. 34 NUMBER 1



**MERCER
MUSEUM
& FONTHILL
CASTLE**



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GENERAL INFORMATION

MERCER MUSEUM & MUSEUM SHOP

84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 345-0210

Open Seven Days

Check Website for Current Hours

Research Library Hours – By Appointment Only

Open Tuesday – Saturday

Check Website for Current Hours

FONTHILL CASTLE

525 East Court Street, Doylestown, PA
(215) 348-9461

Open Seven Days

Check Website for Current Hours

Due to current capacity limits, advanced on-line reservations are highly recommended.

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

ON THE COVER

200 Years of Bucks County Art Exhibit Collage

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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 thing about championship teams is that they're resilient. No matter what is thrown at them, no matter how deep the hole, they find a way to bounce back and overcome adversity."

—Nick Saban, Football Coach for the Alabama Crimson Tide

What a difference six months can make. While the pandemic has had global impacts, it affects each of us in a personal manner. We are not all in the same boat. We are not even in the same storm. All of us have altered aspects of our lives—and with the help of our families, neighbors, friends, and community—we are exiting the eye of the storm and entering our future as changed people. This experience has exposed our strength, adaptability, flexibility, and nimbleness.

All of us at the Bucks County Historical Society owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to our community of supporters—our members, volunteers, and donors. Thanks to an outpouring of generosity from more than 160 contributors, our July Match Campaign exceeded its original goal, raising nearly \$110,000. With the help of public funding agencies, and the commitment of local foundations, BCHS received nearly \$63,000 in grants between May through July. Our local businesses are renewing their memberships, and we are seeing, firsthand, just how resilient our commerce sector is.

Throughout the shutdown, we were proud to retain all of our staff and redeploy their skills towards the creative reimagining of our offerings and a focus on digital outreach and reprioritized goals. With the aim of providing memorable learning experiences online, and with the guidance of our community partners, our Community Services, Library, and Curatorial teams shifted a number of educational programs to remote offerings—providing much needed and welcomed encounters with the castles in a new way. Following national and state health protocols, we safely welcomed guests once again to the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle for in-person experiences that only Henry Mercer's cherished sites can provide.

Our community has made us a stronger organization, and with our community's steadfast support, we are ready for what the upcoming months will bring. We all need to remember that ***we are a championship team because we are resilient.***

Kyle McKoy
President & Executive Director

WELCOME BACK TO THE MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE



The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle have both reopened their doors to the community with a number of safety measures and enhancements that ensure the health and safety of staff and guests alike.

The Mercer Museum began welcoming back guests on Monday, July 20, 2020 with three special Member-Only Preview Days and a public opening on Thursday, July 23, 2020. New safety procedures at the museum include new timed-ticketed entry to ensure limited capacity and upgraded cleaning procedures.

Fonthill Castle reopened to the public on Monday, August 3, 2020 for guided tours. Each tour is now has limited capacities to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Additionally, timed-ticketed entry allows for a safer guest experience.

In order to limit on-site staff interaction, all members and guests should reserve or purchase tickets online prior to their visit. Any remaining tickets for timed-entry slots will be available for purchase at our castles on a first-come, first-served basis each day.

“We were so excited to reopen the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle and breathe life anew in Henry Mercer’s great concrete castles. We missed the joy and energy of our guests, and could not wait to welcome them back to our halls and share the wonder of our new exhibit,

200 Years of Bucks County Art, with them,” adds President & Executive Director Kyle McKoy.

Additional information regarding the new safety procedures for both castles can be found at mercermuseum.org/WelcomeBack.

VITAL SUPPORT IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

With the help of public agencies, and the commitment of local foundations, the Bucks County Historical Society received nearly \$63,000 in grants between May through July. Aimed at supporting operations, programs and safety protocols across the Mercer Mile, these varied grants were established to assist charitable organizations with immediate funding needs in light of mandated closures, and economic disruptions due to COVID-19.

“The actions taken by both foundations and government agencies to offer emergency grants have made a tremendous difference to the charitable sector,” stated Kyle McKoy. “Our organization applied for all eligible options, and we were fortunate to receive support from Arts Aid- PHL; BLBB Charitable; Foundations Community Partnership; Morel Family Foundation; NEA Grants to the Arts; PHC Cares; and Pew Center for Arts and Heritage. We are extremely grateful to these philanthropic leaders for their commitment to our organization’s programs and services.”

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

BUCKS COUNTY IN THE PANDEMIC: SHARING YOUR STORIES

In 1793, Dr. Jonathan Ingham of Solebury, Bucks County, rode to Philadelphia to help tend to those who were sick and dying during the Yellow Fever Epidemic. Sadly, Ingham contracted the illness himself and succumbed while trying to reach a mineral spring in New Jersey. The Bucks County Historical Society knows about Ingham, his practice, and his sacrifice because someone chose to record his story. And, because his account book from 1782-86 was preserved, and survives in the collections of the Mercer Museum Library.

What stories will be recorded and remembered about Bucks County's present-day pandemic experience? What accounts, writings, journals, images, and artifacts will be preserved to help tell those stories? The Mercer Museum's Library has embarked on a project to collect some of these materials and accounts now—while history is happening—and the Library Staff is calling for your help.

The Library would like to hear how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting you, your family, your neighborhood, and your community. How has your life changed? How are you spending your time? What emotions are you experiencing? What changes have you observed in your neighborhood or in others around you? Future Bucks Countians will want to know how you coped, what you did, how you managed. This is your opportunity to tell them.



You are invited to submit stories, observations, accounts, drawings, screenshots, and photographic images—anything that can be submitted digitally—for potential inclusion in the archives of the Mercer Museum and Bucks County Historical Society.

For more information about how to submit your story, visit mercermuseum.org/collectingcovid19.

NEW EVENT TENT AT THE MERCER MUSEUM

Imagine your special celebration in the Mercer Museum's newly constructed event space, featuring a custom-made, clear tent that showcases dramatic views of the picturesque and beautifully lit, historic landmark building. Accommodating up to 160 guests, the courtyard is embraced by the towering castle, providing a one-of-kind, unforgettable setting. Innovative menus are prepared by the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle's exclusive caterer and regional leader, Jeffrey A. Miller Catering. To tour the castles and learn more about the rental program, contact Anthia Graham, 215-460-0926 / anthiag@jamcater.com.



COLLECTIONS CONNECTION

LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

Researchers have been busy utilizing the Mercer Museum's Library and its vast collections and archives throughout 2019 and into 2020. Library patrons' research subjects range from genealogy to house and property history and more. Our collections are cared for with the mission of preserving the history of Bucks County. These collections are available to explore now and they will continue to be for future generations of researchers.

- Michael Szilagyi, who is on the board of the North Wales Historic Commission & Greater North Penn Area Partnership Transportation Management Association, is writing *Bucks County Trolleys*. His book features images from our collection of various locations throughout the Bucks County Trolley system. *Bucks County Trolleys* was released on June 1, 2020.



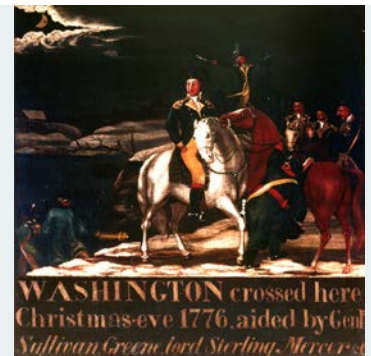
George Hart Photograph Collection, Newville Toboggan Trolley. Newville is located in New Britain Township in Bucks County at the intersection of Route 152 and New Galena Road.

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

The Mercer Museum & Library and Fonthill Castle collections have inspired a variety of researchers and cultural institutions to request access. Many have sought images of our artifacts for use in scholarly papers, articles, exhibits, websites and documentaries. Others wish to visit us and view artifacts up close and in person.

Here are some recent uses of objects from our collections by scholars, journalists and other researchers:

- Sanford Schwartz, *On Edward Hicks*. Sanford Schwartz is an editor for The New York Review of Books. The publication includes an image of our Washington Crossed Here bridge sign painted by Edward Hicks. The scholarly paper will be published by Lucia/Marquand in September of 2020.
- American Philosophical Society, *Dr. Franklin, Citizen Scientist*. The exhibition examines the production, circulation, application, and accessibility of scientific knowledge through the life and work of Benjamin Franklin. The exhibition catalog includes an image of the Franklin Stove from our collection. The exhibition has postponed its opening date until it is safe to reopen to the public.
- Brian Schmolt of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site Interpretation is researching and analyzing paid casting cleaning at Hopewell Furnace. This research is to further understand Hopewell's archival collection of account books, specifically how workers were paid for casting cleaning, the removal of the mold material after the metal has solidified after it cools. He accessed a variety of the museum's stove holdings. In addition to stoves, Brian viewed flasks and casting tools used for the construction of iron stoves that are in our collection.



Edward Hicks, Washington Crossed Here, c. 1830



Brian Schmolt, Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, studying the Mercer Museum & Library's Isabella Furnace stove.



Franklin Stove or Pennsylvania Fireplace, manufactured by Warwick or Mount Pleasant Furnace, c. 1740

200 YEARS OF BUCKS COUNTY ART

The Mercer Museum, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society, is pleased to announce the opening of its new major exhibit *200 Years of Bucks County Art* in the Martin & Warwick Foundation Galleries. This exhibit opened to the public on Monday, July 20, 2020 and will run through December 31, 2020.

200
Years of
BUCKS
COUNTY
ART

Since its founding in 1880, the Bucks County Historical Society has collected works of art—fine and folk paintings, portraits and landscapes, genre and decorative works. Never before displayed together, this collection is the centerpiece of the Mercer Museum's new exhibit *200 Years of Bucks County Art*.

"Our audiences are often astonished by the extraordinary depth and breadth of the museum's collections. I believe *200 Years of Bucks County Art* will surprise once again as visitors discover the many remarkable paintings, drawings and watercolors featured, and encounter the artists—both prominent and obscure—who produced them," said Vice President of Collections and Interpretation Cory Amsler.

This exhibit highlights local portraiture and landscape painting by noted American artists and important regional painters, as well as numerous companion pieces such as historical artifacts, documents and images from the Bucks County Historical Society collection that relate to the artists or their subjects.

The exhibit features over one hundred works, including paintings by Charles Willson Peale, Edward Hicks, Martin Johnson Heade, Thomas Hicks, Thomas Otter, William Lathrop and Daniel Garber, as well as Jonathan and William Trego, Edward Trego, Samuel DuBois, Robert Street, Samuel Moon, and many others. Notable works on display include "The Peaceable Kingdom" by Edward Hicks, "October" by Daniel Garber, an early self portrait of Thomas Hicks c. 1835-40 and several of Henry Mercer's own pastels and illustrations.

200 Years of Bucks County Art also offers audiences experiential opportunities to "step into" portraits and become part of the artwork.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the Mercer Museum will host an array of virtual community programs throughout the fall. Up-to-date program information is available at mercermuseum.org.

Mercer Museum Vice President of Community Services & Marketing Marjan Shirzad adds, "We look forward to highlighting our vast collection of art and artifacts and sharing the fascinating stories behind the artists and their work. Our virtual community programs for this exhibit offer our guests an opportunity to be inspired as well as entertained, all from the comfort of their own homes."

200 Years of Bucks County Art is sponsored by Presenting Sponsor UNIVEST, Visit Bucks County, Tom Thomas, Gratz Gallery, Penn Color, Susan E. Kane, Kathleen F. O'Dea and J. Lawrence Grim, Jr., and Brian and Louise McLeod.



MUSEUM'S ART COLLECTION SPANS THREE CENTURIES

The Mercer Museum's current exhibition, *200 Years of Bucks County Art*, actually crosses three centuries of our region's past. With this in mind, and to celebrate the exhibit's opening, these pages highlight a painting from each of those three centuries—the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s—and offer a somewhat deeper exploration of the works.

PORTRAIT OF RICHARD GIBBS

The well-known portrait artist Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) painted Richard Gibbs and his wife, Margery, in the midst of the American Revolution. In fact, it is thought that he executed the portraits during the brief period that Peale and his family resided in Northampton Township, Bucks County. Peale was active in the Patriot cause, commanded a militia unit in Washington's army, and probably came to reside in Bucks County during his military service. His son, Rembrandt Peale, was born near Richboro in 1778.

The subject of Peale's portrait, Richard Gibbs, was born in Wiltshire, England in 1723. At the age of twenty-three, he came to America, arriving in Philadelphia in 1846. He came to Bucks County that same year to take a position as a schoolteacher in Bensalem Township. Not long after he met Judge Lawrence Growden, a wealthy and prominent political figure in the colony. Growden offered him a position as a clerk on his estate, Trevoise. By 1753, Gibbs had met and married Margery Harrison, a young woman from Long Island and a member of the Society of Friends. The couple moved into the "west wing" of Trevoise.

Growden died in 1770, leaving a considerable sum in his will to Gibbs and his family. Gibbs then struck out on his own, building his own home, Eddington, in Bensalem. In 1771, he was appointed sheriff of Bucks County, serving until 1773. With the onset of the Revolution, he became active in the patriot cause. In concert with others, in 1777 Gibbs helped secure Bucks County's public records and prepare the County offices—then in Newtown—to serve as a powder magazine and arsenal for the revolutionaries. He also loaned considerable sums to Congress to support the cause. Because of his activities, Gibbs was compelled to flee his home from time to time when British raiding parties came to call.

Following the war, Gibbs returned to his Eddington estate. His wife, Margery, died in 1790. He passed in 1795. The Gibbs portraits descended in the family until presented to the Mercer Museum in 1975. Intriguingly, these do not seem to be the only portraits of Richard and Margery that survive. In 2016, nearly identical paintings, housed in matching frames, were sold at auction by Doyle's in New York City. Perhaps Gibbs had several portraits painted by Peale, distributing them among his five children.



Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827),
Richard Gibbs, c. 1778-80,
Gift of Emily G. and Catherine B. Porter, 1975

LANSDOWNE

The gift of this painting in 2011 came only with a brief narrative written on its reverse. The inscription claimed that it portrayed an estate located in Croydon, Bucks County, once owned by a Johnson Family. The names of several members of the family, allegedly depicted in the work by the anonymous artist, were also included in the inscription. Research for *200 Years of Bucks County Art* expanded on this information considerably, and helped to corroborate the bit of history that accompanied the painting.

Lawrence Johnson, once the owner of "Lansdowne," was born in England in 1801. In 1818, he sailed with his parents to America, eventually settling in Albany, New York. While still in his teens, he began to learn the printing



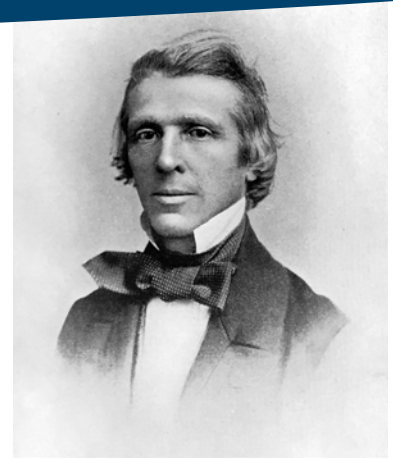
Unidentified Artist, Lansdowne,
c. 1855, Gift of David B. Long in honor
of Professor John Wilmerding, 2011.

ART COLLECTION *Continued from page 8*

business and moved to New York City. He rose quickly in business, and in 1823 moved to Philadelphia to open a type foundry, applying for citizenship at the same time. Almost an immediate success, his firm turned out plates for book printing and publishing. In 1851, he purchased Lansdowne, a farm and country estate along Neshaminy Creek in Bristol Township, Bucks County. It became a summer residence for his family. Although Johnson died suddenly in 1860, his descendants continued to live on the estate well into the 20th century, according to census and other records.

Further documentation for the painting of Lansdowne was encountered by chance in a Johnson family genealogy, published in 1934. Surprisingly, an image of the painting was actually reproduced in the volume. In fact, one of Lawrence Johnson's children recalled that about 1855 an artist had come to stay with the family, and produced the painting of the family estate. The painting "hung...for many, many years at the top of the first stair landing" in the Johnson home, he remembered. He confirmed, too, that the figures did indeed depict each of the Johnson children, as well as the "nurse" who took care of them.

Where the painting had traveled between 1934 and 2011 is unknown, but it is seldom that the clues to an object's history are so easily re-discovered. It is unfortunate only that the name of the artist could not be remembered by the narrator in the 1934 volume.



Lawrence Johnson (1801-1860), from *The Johnson Family and Allied Families of Lincolnshire, England...Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press, 1934*. Mercer Library Collection

OCTOBER

This spectacular work was presented to the Bucks County Historical Society by the artist, Daniel Garber, in 1918. In that year, the Society held one of its meetings near the artist's home in Solebury. The subject is a house, in autumn, overlooking the Delaware River. Although Garber knew nothing of the history of the house, a Society member apparently informed him that the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier had summered there between 1838 and 1840. But why was the New England poet in Pennsylvania? During those years, Whittier was serving as editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, the newspaper of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society.

Though the offices of the Society were in Philadelphia, Whittier spent summers in the country, probably for his health. In May of 1840, he wrote to his sister Elizabeth, "I have been for some time at Joseph Healy's Spring Grove Farm, on the banks of the Delaware, or rather high on a bluff overlooking the river, with a fine view of the New Jersey side." This was the house that would appeal to Garber some eighty years later.

It was during Whittier's tenure as editor, and during his residence in Bucks County, that the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society completed Pennsylvania Hall, an abolitionist-meeting place in Philadelphia. The *Freeman's* offices were also located in the building. In 1838, the Hall opened with a dedication ceremony, followed by a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. Over the next three days, the threat of violence began swirling around the building as a mob assembled in opposition to both abolition and the mixed audience of blacks and whites inside. Fearful, the mayor took control of the building, locked it and cancelled further meetings. Finally, however, the mob broke into the Hall and set it on fire. On May 18, 1838, Pennsylvania Hall burned to the ground.

The serene scene in Garber's painting belies the turmoil Whittier must have felt standing on that same porch, or looking out over the river, during the summer that followed the destruction of Pennsylvania Hall.



Daniel Garber (1880-1958), *October*, c. 1918. Gift of the artist, 1918.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

In planning for the opening of our newest exhibit, *200 Years of Bucks County Art*, museum curatorial staff were keenly aware that certain local artists were not represented in our collections. Since the museum's primary focus is history rather than art, however, the absence of a particular artist was not especially surprising. Our paintings collection has been built primarily based on the subjects of the various works, rather than upon an individual artist and his oeuvre. Still, we knew that if the opportunity presented itself, and a painting met our historical criteria, we would happily add the work of another well-known local artist to our collection. We are grateful to the Grim Family of Perkasio, Bucks County for making such an addition possible with their gift of a painting by Sellersville native Walter Emerson Baum (1884-1956).

Baum features prominently in the story of Bucks County's artistic heritage not only because of his prolific production of local landscapes and village scenes, but also because he was an early student of another native painter, William B.T. Trego. Baum's wife, Flora, and their infant daughter even served as models for some of Trego's work. The only other painting by Walter Baum in the Mercer Museum collection is a small portrait of Trego which Baum painted while a student in Trego's North Wales studio.

The recently donated painting depicts a property on Lawn Avenue in Sellersville. The owner, Harry Westlake, commissioned the work from Baum in the summer of 1949. Baum traded the painting for a number of old frames in Westlake's possession. Though it was summertime, Westlake desired a winter scene—a specialty of Baum's. Baum depicted the home and property in the snow, with two of Westlake's young daughters playing with their sleds in front of the house. Built apparently in the 1700s, the site was home to the Westlake family for several decades, until it was sold in 1956. Referred to by the Westlake's simply as "The Homestead," it still stands on Lawn Avenue.



The Homestead (Westlake Home, Sellersville) by Walter E. Baum (1884-1956), oil on canvas, 1949. Gift of Gregory E. Grim, 2020.

Attorney J. Lawrence Grim acquired the painting in 1998, and eventually passed it to his son, Gregory, who donated it to the Mercer Museum collection. The Grims are descendants of Walter Baum, through Baum's daughter, Marian. Because the painting portrays an identifiable Bucks County property, and has an extensive provenance and history, it meets important collecting criteria for the museum. The painting is prominently featured as a recent acquisition, connected with our current exhibit, in the Mercer Museum's Great Hall, where it will be on view through the end of December 2020.



In 2021, the Mercer Museum will welcome the traveling exhibit, *Measurement Rules*, from the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. This interactive exhibit features a variety of hands-on elements that encourage kids to explore the many different forms and units of measurement. To accompany the exhibit, the museum will feature a variety of measuring tools and implements from our collections—all essential to the various crafts, trades and occupations featured in the Mercer's original core. Among the instruments to be included will be those used to measure area and distance—like a surveyor's transit recently given to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. Art Brownell.

Continued on next page

Surveyor's Transit and Accessories, Heller & Brightly, Philadelphia, c. 1883. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Art Brownell, 2019.

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR FONTHILL CASTLE TILE PROJECT

A project to restore and stabilize tile installations at Fonthill Castle has received a significant boost from a \$10,000 grant from the New England-based Cascade Foundation. In 2015, a study was undertaken by the firm Materials Conservation to examine the condition of Fonthill Castle's wall tiles. The study resulted in a report detailing methods for re-attaching original tiles that had fallen, as well as for securing other tiles in danger of being lost. While some of this work has gone forward with the assistance of interns and volunteers, the museum has not been able to address the project comprehensively.

Now, thanks to the Cascade Foundation, the museum has retained the services of restoration contractor Clint Flack to guide the project toward its eventual completion. Flack began work in February, taking on one room and tile installation at a time. The work consists, first, of carefully injecting an adhesive material behind endangered tiles (those that are loose, or might become detached), and, second, fitting and re-attaching fallen tiles in their original locations (using a different, and reversible adhesive). In addition, Flack is re-assembling and repairing broken tiles, which then will also be restored to their original places in the house.

Conservator Andrew Fearon, of Materials Conservation, touches up a stucco patch on the fireplace in Fonthill's Library.



While there are also some "missing" tiles which have been lost completely over time, replacing these is a more complicated endeavor, to be addressed in a future project. As the restoration process moves through the house, we look forward to demonstrating to our visitors the care that is necessary to preserve Henry Mercer's extraordinary interiors.

In addition to the tile project, work has also been done over the winter months to repair damaged and unstable stucco finishes in two locations at Fonthill: a column on the fireplace in the Library, and a wall in an upper bathroom. The Materials Conservation firm has also implemented these restoration projects.



Restoration contractor Clint Flack re-attaches a tile in Fonthill's "Smoking Room."

RECENT ACQUISITIONS *Continued from page 10*

Made by Heller & Brightly of Philadelphia in the 1880s, the transit was used by land surveyors to measure horizontal and vertical angles. Though manufactured in Philadelphia, this particular instrument was later used to survey waterways in California. We are delighted to be able to add this major tool of land measurement to our large collection of surveying and navigational instruments.

The Mercer Museum also welcomed a number of other gifts to the collections over the past few months. These include a Brewster SB2A "Buccaneer" aircraft recognition model from World War II (gift of Clint Flack); a mid-19th century name plate from a threshing machine produced by Daniel Hulshizer of Doylestown (gift of Clint Flack); a commemorative plate from the Doylestown *Intelligencer* (gift of Lorene Mervine Miklos); a Central Bucks High School athletic letter, c. 1955, earned by James Frantz of Buckingham (gift of Clint Flack); a group of early to mid-20th century employee badges from Bucks County industries (gift of Clint Flack); and a druggist's medicine bottle and a milk bottle from local businesses (gift of David Long).



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: KRISTIN LAPOS, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

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

I am originally from Allentown, Pennsylvania, but moved to New Jersey after college to go to graduate school at Seton Hall University. After graduate school, I worked for several years as the Curator of Collections at the Museum of Early Trades & Crafts in Madison, New Jersey. It was a great little museum with great people (and a collection very similar to the Mercer Museum's), but eventually, I decided to move back to Pennsylvania to be closer to my family. I was very lucky, as a position in the collections department here at BCHS opened up just as I was preparing to move. I fell in love with the two castles and the diverse collection when I was here for my interviews—who wouldn't?

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I love organizing, databases, and working with artifacts, and I get to do at least one of those things every day. On the best days, I get to do all three! My undergraduate major in college was Anthropology with a focus in Archaeology, and I actually worked as an archaeological field technician for a short time after college, so material culture has always been an important part of my career. I love all aspects of working with cultural objects, and I am privileged to have some responsibility for ensuring that artifacts are organized, secure, and available to future generations. I also love the longevity of this organization. It is very humbling to find notes and inventories in artifact files that date from long before my parents were even born. It definitely gives me some perspective on what the long-term care and preservation of objects really means.

What have been some of your most meaningful experiences as the Collections Manager to date?

Many of my best experiences so far are defined by the great people I get to work with each day. In addition to our department staff, I also got to work with the Penn-Jersey Basketry Guild for a special inventory and cataloging project this past summer, and listening to them talk about our basket collection with such passion and enthusiasm was very exciting! They were able to identify interesting pieces in our collection that certainly would have escaped my notice, and that just highlighted the importance, for me, of getting outside perspectives on collections. It has also been fun to learn more about the incredible holdings we have in the Mercer Museum Library. I've found old photographs of Fonthill during its earliest tile installations and even photographs of Mercer's archaeological campsites. As someone interested in archaeology, "Mercer as an Archaeologist" (one of his many facets) is fascinating to me. It is amazing how his work has actually held up quite well even a century later.

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

My favorite artifacts in the collection are actually not on display, but I get to walk past them almost every week at our collections storage center: a collection of nineteen wooden marionettes from the early twentieth century. Marionette shows were popular a century ago and featured large puppets controlled by wires. Italian immigrants Gemi Strassi and Pietro Dicofano brought their collection of marionettes to America in 1914 and played shows in New York and Bethlehem, but they sold the collection after they were drafted into World War I. Each marionette is different, with unique and hand-carved facial features, clothing, and personalities. They are also big—several are over two feet tall. The collection also includes nine knights in full armor, and they catch my eye every time I walk past their storage unit.

PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY: LEGACY GIFTS TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF THE CASTLES

Along with my wife, Laurie, I have been involved with the Bucks County Historical Society for many years. The organization is a center point of our community, and it serves so many people of all ages in countless ways. People can have a lifetime of experiences at the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle. Youth participate in summer camps. Families visit changing exhibitions. Adults enjoy social gatherings. Explorers join the Friends of the Bucks County Historical Society and go on fun-filled trips. Couples share vows and marry at the castles. Lasting friendships are made.



One could say I married into the Mercer Museum and Plus Ultra. When Bill and I married, he was already fully engaged with the Bucks County Historical Society. Initially, I maintained a low profile, attending events because Bill was involved but not actively involved myself. However, as time has passed, I have come to appreciate the role of the organization in our community, as well as the historic significance of both the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle. I love the changing exhibits and

that I learn something new whenever I visit one of the sites.

These experiences are not static; they are vibrant, active and engaging. I feel the most important thing you can do in life is to help and give back to benefit others. Our focus is to give back to help our youth, to support education, and to benefit our community. That is why we included the Bucks County Historical Society in our estate planning—it is one of the best ways to fulfill our focus. We would like nothing more than to see the organization and its great programs continue into the indefinite future.

By sharing Mercer Museum memories with our children, grandchildren, and other family members, I have come to appreciate the important legacy the Mercer represents. Our membership in the Plus Ultra Society means that we are supporting the Mercer Museum for future generations to come.

—William R. Schutt

—Laurie Schutt

The Plus Ultra Society recognizes individuals who include the Bucks County Historical Society in their financial and estate plans. To learn more about planning options and/or to notify us if you have already included BCHS in your 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.

COCKTAILS BY THE CASTLE

Mercer Museum (84 South Pine Street, Doylestown)

Join us on October 10, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. for a one-of-a-kind, al fresco experience on the grounds of the Mercer Museum. Enjoy a portable feast, cocktails, entertainment, and auction, while following guidelines for a socially-safe gathering. Proceeds support programs and initiatives at the Mercer Museum. Tickets and event information are available at mercermuseum.org/cocktails.



BRINGING THE HISTORY OF MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE INTO YOUR HOME

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle reimagined how to share the history of its historic sites with audiences at home while the museums were closed.

This opportunity allowed for museum staff to think creatively about their collections and resources and prompted them to work collaboratively with museums locally and across the country to come up with new ideas for community engagement.

The museum's Education Team updated their online resources on Bucks County history to support future virtual and in-person learning, offered at-home games and activities, and reimagined the future of school field trip programs.

The Community Programs Team researched and planned virtual and in-person, socially distant programming that would connect with the community, collections and the museum's new exhibit, *200 Years of Bucks County Art*.

The Communications Team collaborated with museum's across the country to create and participate in social media trends that included museum social media games, crossword Sundays, National Days, drawing pages, behind-the-scenes videos, never-before-shared historic photographs, and more. Additionally, the team worked closely with the Curatorial Department to create virtual exhibits on the museum's website.

These virtual museum resources are all available at mercermuseum.org. Guests and supporters are always encouraged to follow the organization's social media accounts @MercerandFonthill.

35TH ANNUAL MERCER LEGACY SWEEPSTAKES & DRAWING PARTY

The Bucks County Historical Society is grateful to all who participated in the 35th Annual Mercer Legacy Sweepstakes, all in support of school field trip programs at the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle.

The yearly Mercer Legacy Drawing Party has become a tradition at the Bucks County Historical Society, where the organization typically welcomes over 300 guests to watch the grand prize winner be drawn. This year, however, circumstances changed as health precautions became the priority with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Drawing Party was rescheduled to a private drawing at the Mercer Museum on Friday, July 17, 2020, and it was verified by a representative from DunlapSLK. The 2020 Mercer Legacy Sweepstakes grand prize winner was Tyler Kofron, who won a cash prize of \$10,000. The second prize winner, Christina Greenwood, won \$1,000 courtesy of C&N Bank and third prize winner, Tom Maclin, won a \$500 gift card.



The Mercer Legacy Sweepstakes was sponsored by C&N Bank, Bucks Mont Party Rental and Vizi.

L to R: Tom Hebel (Bucks Country Gardens), **Tom Maclin** (C&N Bank), **Julie Davis** (DunlapSLK), **Chris Nardo** (C&N Bank), **Kyle McKoy** (BCHS President and Executive Director), **"Henry Mercer," John Stanojev** (Capital Insurance and Investment), **Lynne Anne Donchez** (BCHS volunteer), and **Therese Conturso** (BCHS staff).



Terry McNealy in the Library, c. 1980.

TERRY MCNEALY – 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE BCHS

This year marks a half-century of service for one prominent member of the Historical Society's family. A Doylestown native, Terry McNealy began his career with the Society in 1970, working with then Librarian Cora Decker. Completing his library degree at Drexel University, he succeeded Decker as the Society's Librarian shortly after. Although retiring in 1993 to pursue writing projects, he continued to work part-time until 2007. Even then, never fully leaving the Society's employ,

he was called upon for special projects. And, until recently, he served as one of our Library Assistants, helping researchers navigate the library collections.

Over the course of his fifty years McNealy has contributed significantly to the Society's success, while at the same time demonstrating his commitment to the preservation and chronicling of local history. His many accomplishments and activities have included writing the Library's first collections policy, implementing improved collections management and conservation practices, launching the original Bucks County Genealogical Society, negotiating long-term deposits of County records and materials from the Early American Industries Association, serving as editor of the Historical Society's publications, and authoring the major work, *Bucks County: An Illustrated History*, published in 2001.

The Society is grateful for all that Terry has accomplished and contributed over his long career. As the preeminent expert on Bucks County history, Terry will continue to be sought out for projects that require his considerable knowledge, perspective, and wisdom.

2020 DIGITAL SUMMER INTERNS

The Mercer Museum's Curatorial Department welcomed two graduate students as interns this summer, both working on future exhibitions primarily in a distance capacity.



Chaya Arabia, is a Museum Studies student at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She created and is presently tallying responses to a "front-end" audience survey for an exhibition on Bucks County Farming. In addition, she has developed designs for prototyping elements of a planned exhibit on Henry Mercer's European travels in the 1880s.



Maia Council, is a Public History student at Middle Tennessee State University. From her home in Murfreesboro, Maia has been conducting much-needed research to map and contextualize Mercer's European journeys.



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