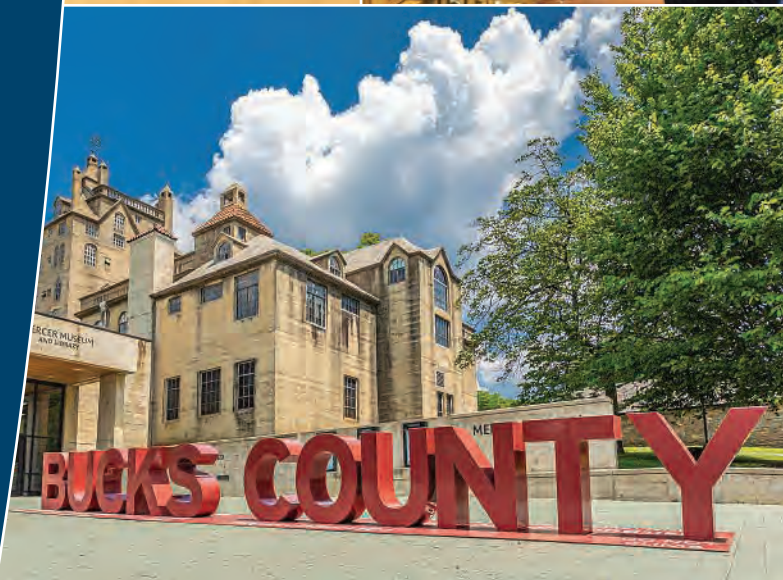




Bucks County Historical Society 2020 Annual Report





Mercer Museum



Fonthill Castle

Photos by Kevin Crawford

A MESSAGE

from the Board Chairman and the President

As we've pushed through the uncertainty of the pandemic, we have met countless opportunities to reflect, revisit, realign, and refine what we are doing, and 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, BCHS looks to bounce forward. My deepest gratitude goes to all of our staff, volunteers, and community supporters who have stood with us and are the true heroes that guided our recovery.

In March 2020, upon the closing of the museums, our Community Services team kept the ball rolling for BCHS with partnerships and collaborations that took advantage of our grounds. Their expertise made a difficult transition from in-person programs, tours, and ticketing, to remote and online programs and tours seamless. They were the key group keeping us connected to the community while our doors were closed.

During the pandemic, community members found a safe haven for respite in our outdoor spaces. We continue to enhance the appearance of the grounds at both the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle. Several trees were planted to replace ones lost to disease and weather. Additional picnic tables now grace the Mercer Museum property. Fonthill Castle trails have been cleaned, wood chips were added to make for easier travel, and hazardous and dead trees have been removed. We continually look for ways in which we can make the grounds enticing and welcoming for our community.

The Loraine L. Thompson Gateway to the Mercer Collection exhibition, installed during the pandemic, provided a wonderful introduction to the Mercer Museum upon reopening in July of 2020. We installed a climate management system in six of the twelve empty rooms at the Mercer Museum, funded by Richard and Angela Clark of the Franklin Street Giving Tree Foundation. *Awaken: An Experimental Exhibit*, supported by a grant received from 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 Research Library saw an uptick in online research requests and shepherded an important software conversion to make it easier for researchers to access collections. They also joined the virtual movement by adding programs for the public.

We are an organization bouncing forward with the confidence we gained 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.



Heather A. Cevasco
Board Chairman



Kyle McKoy
President & Executive Director

OUR MISSION...

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

MERCER MUSEUM

Exhibitions

Despite the challenges presented by the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle's temporary closures during the pandemic, the Mercer Museum continued its program of special exhibitions – albeit a bit delayed. The original March 2020 opening date for *200 Years of Bucks County Art* coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. When the Mercer Museum reopened in July of 2020, *200 Years of Bucks County Art* finally premiered to the public. To allow visitors more time to encounter this unique collection, the museum shifted other exhibit plans, and extended the run of the exhibition through the end of the year.

200 Years of Bucks County Art was curated and designed in-house to showcase the museum's vast collection of paintings, prints, and drawings and to honor two centuries of Bucks County's artistic heritage. Works of art included portrait and landscape paintings by well-known Bucks County artists such as Edward Hicks, Martin Johnson Heade, William Trego, Daniel Garber, R. Sloan Bredin and, of course, Henry Chapman Mercer. A pair of 1778 portraits by the Philadelphia painter Charles Willson Peale – those of Bensalem residents Richard and Margery Gibbs – were the earliest works in a show that also included many 20th-century pieces.



A unique feature of the *200 Years of Bucks County Art* exhibit was the inclusion of a number of historical artifacts related directly to the artists, sitters, or subjects of the works. These added context and created a multi-layered, history-museum spin on an otherwise traditional form of art exhibition. Special funding permitted the museum to conserve a significant number of the paintings placed on exhibit, for which we are especially thankful.

In addition to this temporary exhibition featuring Bucks County art and artists, the museum also opened a new long-term installation: *The Loraine L. Thompson Gateway to the Mercer Collection*. Located between the museum's modern wing and the original 1913-1916 concrete "castle", this new exhibit serves as an orientation site in which visitors are introduced to the founder of the Mercer Museum, Henry Mercer. The space also highlights the history and collections of the Mercer Museum and the greater constellation of attractions that form Doylestown's "Mercer Mile", which includes the Mercer Museum, Fonthill Castle, and the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works.

Supported by a major gift in honor of Loraine Thompson, one of the museum's first docents, the Gateway features original artifacts and graphic reproductions as well as interactive media stations. Interactive elements include a "Meet Henry Mercer" video station where visitors can hear how Mercer envisioned, planned, and erected the museum and a large touch table that enables users to virtually explore the other Mercer buildings and some of Doylestown's architectural history. This playful and informative space sets the stage for visitors to embark on a journey through Mercer's original museum and learn more about his unique vision and legacy.

Finally, during our periods of closure, the Mercer Museum Research Library staff added three new exhibits to our online offerings, accessible via our website. These included *Digging In: Historic Seed Companies in Bucks County*, *The Art of Love: Historic Valentines*, and *The Mercer Museum Research Library: The History of Our Shelves*.



MERCER MUSEUM

Collections

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

The continued stewardship of the collections is a primary responsibility of the Mercer Museum and the Bucks County Historical Society and an important task for both curatorial and library staff. Stewardship involves the care and preservation of collections as well as the improvement of documentation and access to collections information for researchers and other users – both on and off-site.

Ongoing stewardship activities include: maintaining our historic structures, processing and cataloging collections, photographic documentation, housekeeping, inventory maintenance, and environmental monitoring of collections spaces. Many new acquisitions are received annually and must be accessioned and entered into the institution's database. Researchers may access information about a portion of the museum and library collections through the "RolloPAC" online catalog portal, accessible via our website. In 2020, staff added approximately 2,900 additional catalog records to RolloPAC for the museum and library collections.

Despite months-long closures and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 360 researchers visited the Mercer Museum Research Library this year. Library staff adapted to pandemic restrictions by expanding the library's research-by-mail service, fulfilling over 40 remote research requests. In addition, over 100,000 individual off-site searches were recorded in the museum's RolloPAC online catalog database.

Important collections preservation and access projects completed in 2020 include the acquisition of a second microfilm reader in the Mercer Museum Research Library; cataloging and photography of the Mercer Museum's textile tools collection; creation of online exhibits and lectures, including presentations on the Mercer Museum Research Library's history and Bucks County true crime; installation of reproduction tapestries in the East Bedroom and roller shades in the West Bedroom at Fonthill Castle; continued restoration of window sashes and frames at Fonthill Castle; and conservation and restoration of the Mercer Museum's concrete tile marker sign at the corner of Green and Ashland Streets.

2020 Collections Highlights

- Accessioned and cataloged over 280 new acquisitions into the museum and library collections despite COVID-19 site closures.
- Approved a loan for an exhibit at Historic Trappe and renewed prior loans to the Milwaukee Art Museum and the National Building Museum.
- Received a \$40,000 Institute of Museum and Library Services grant to survey the condition of the Mercer Museum's concrete sash windows. On-site evaluation began in late 2020.
- Began the process of converting to a new collections management system for museum, library, and archival collections. The new databases are expected to launch by fall 2021.
- Acquired the Gene Asro collection of over 25,000 photographic prints and negatives documenting daily life in Bucks County. Cataloging and digitization began in 2021.

Grain Cleaner Salesman's Sample,
c. 1870. Demonstrated the grain cleaner patented by Edwin J.R. Uebberoth and John D. Brunner, Doylestown. Museum Purchase with Contribution by David B. Long, 2020.



Redware Sugar Bowl, attributed to Johannes Neis, Upper Salford Township, Montgomery County, PA, c. 1830, gift of Henry Mercer, 1917. Approved for loan to Historic Trappe for their 2023 exhibit, From Hubener to Medinger: Redware Potters of Montgomery County.



MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE

Community Programs & Educational Outreach

In 2020, the Mercer Museum hosted over 900 program attendees at 36 community programs, both virtually and in-person, including adult lectures, family programs, and community outreach presentations.

After our summer reopening, family groups were invited to the Mercer Museum Log House for the new family program

Colonial Farm Experience, which highlighted the daily tasks of colonial farmers and their families. Local libraries, historic sites, and senior communities enjoyed our brand-new virtual presentation, *Henry Chapman Mercer: A Legacy Built in Concrete*. This community outreach program brings the history of Henry Mercer and his buildings to life paired with stunning photography and archival images.

The museum also hosted programs in conjunction with our special exhibits. Guests of all ages and interests were able to further their connection to our *200 Years of Bucks County Art* exhibit through a virtual lecture series called, *Beyond the Frame*, led by BCHS staff and partners from the James A. Michener Art Museum.

Across the mile, Fonthill Castle hosted over 900 program attendees at 26 community programs, both virtually and in-person, including special tours and holiday programs.

In 2020, Fonthill Castle offered a new virtual tour to bring Henry Mercer's Fonthill Castle to screens around the world. The *Highlights of Fonthill Castle* virtual tour was filmed and adapted to new virtual audiences, local and around the region. In December, *Fonthill Castle's Winter Wonderland Daily Tours* brought guests to the site to enjoy the splendor of Mercer's home decorated for the holidays. The annual *Holiday Lights Meander* event continued to delight guests as well.

The Bucks County Historical Society also furthered connections to Bucks County history and the museum's collections through its educational programs. The Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle hosted limited numbers of students in person, and our educators revitalized two of our legacy educational programs, *Simple Machines* and *Meet the Makers*.

In addition to educational programs, each year, the Bucks County Historical Society acts as the Bucks and Montgomery County regional coordinator for the National History Day contest. In 2020, the regional contest was prepared to serve 401 student participants, but was unfortunately canceled due to the COVID-19 shutdown in March.

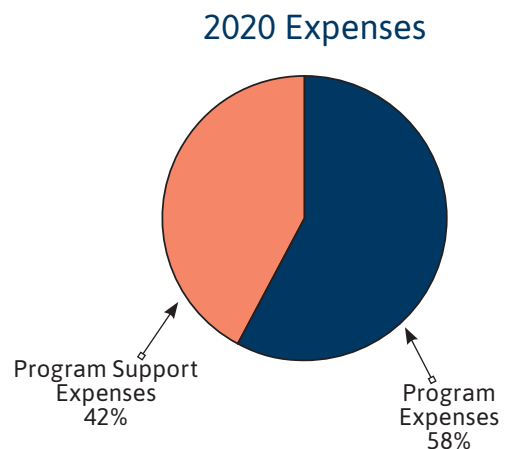
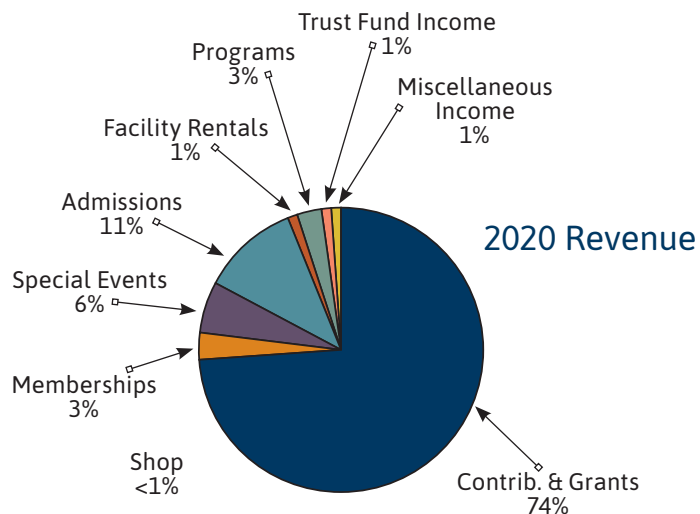


FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Financial Position

Statements of Activities: Years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| SUPPORT AND REVENUE: | | |
| Grants and Contributions | \$ 1,782,076 | \$ 742,540 |
| Memberships | 77,921 | 74,644 |
| Special events | 142,297 | 256,902 |
| Museum operations: | | |
| Admissions | 268,632 | 602,163 |
| Programs | 78,352 | 218,034 |
| Museum shop | 4,286 | 30,622 |
| Facilities rental | 18,250 | 50,674 |
| Miscellaneous income | 13,382 | 7,059 |
| Trust fund income | 28,569 | 31,827 |
| | 2,413,765 | 2,014,465 |
| EXPENSES: | | |
| Program Services: | | |
| Library | 280,531 | 250,586 |
| Curatorial | 1,091,683 | 1,144,553 |
| Educational | 517,050 | 485,018 |
| Support Services: | | |
| Management and general | 751,945 | 690,469 |
| Development and fundraising | 604,520 | 712,171 |
| | 3,245,729 | 3,282,797 |
| Change in net assets before Nonoperating Revenues, | | |
| Gains and Other Support | (831,964) | (1,268,332) |
| Non-operating Revenues, Gains and Other Support | | |
| Investment Income | 1,661,370 | 1,905,545 |
| Change in net assets | 829,406 | 637,213 |
| Net assets, beginning of year | 23,141,298 | 22,504,085 |
| Net assets, end of year | \$23,970,704 | \$23,141,298 |
| Special Events cost | — | — |
| Museum Shop Cost | 56,037 | 54,857 |
| Publication Cost | — | — |



OUR 2020 DONORS AND CONTRIBUTORS...

Making all we do possible through their generosity.

PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY

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

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 or omissions*

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 Patricia Braun*

FONTHILL RESTORATION PROJECTS

The Argus Fund
 Cascade Foundation
 Nancy Freudenthal

MERCER RAINMAKERS BUSINESS MEMBERS

Master Craftsmen

Adams-Bickel Associates, LLC
 BLBB Charitable
 Bucks Country Gardens, Ltd.
 Bucks County Herald
 Bucks Mont Party Rental
 C&N Bank
 Covenant Bank
 Fred Beans Family of
 Dealerships
 Jeffrey A. Miller Catering
 Maria's House Montessori Inc.
 Penn Color, Inc.
 PLOW Digital
 The Thompson Organization
 Univest
 Visit Bucks County

Waste Management
 Wells Fargo Advisors

Craftsmen

A to Z Party Rental/Rental World
 Boar's Head
 Dontech Incorporated
 ESCA Blast
 Monster Tree Service
 Penn Community Bank
 Vizi

Guildsmen

B&B Beverages
 Bucks County Community College
 Curtin & Heefner, LLP
 Dynasty Advisors, LLC
 E.C. Bentz Electrical Contractor, Inc.
 Fiduciary Trust International
 (formerly Pennsylvania Trust)
 Graphic Imaging
 John Paton, Inc.
 Midnight Productions, Inc.
 Papillon Center
 PECO, An Exelon Company
 Pine Run Retirement Community
 WBCB

Artisans

AB-8 Waste Solutions, LLC
 Ann's Cake Pan
 Barn Studio Gallery
 BenchSmith LLC
 Beth L. Snyder, DMD
 Boardroom Spirits
 Breakthru Beverage Group
 Chambers 19 Bistro & Bar
 Christopher A. Lewis, Merrill Lynch
 Clusters Handcrafted Popcorn
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 Doylestown Commerce Center
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 Edible Arrangements of Doylestown
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 Ellen Happ Architect
 Empanada Mama & Nourish by
 Mama
 The First National Bank of Newtown
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 Joseph Ambler Inn
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 Luberto's Bakery & Deli
 LUV Superfoods
 Mind Your Design
 Nina's Waffles & Ice Cream
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 Nothing Bundt Cakes



Penn Beer Distributors, Inc.
 Penn Taproom/PA Soup & Seafood
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 Poretta & Orr
 Quinoa Peruvian &
 Mexican Restaurant
 Sand Castle Winery
 Silverman Family Partnership, Inc.
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 Spinal Wellness Center/
 Dr. Finkelstein
 Stockertown Beverage Company
 Sweet Victory Gluten &
 Dairy Free Treats
 Vela Restaurant
 Vulcan Spring
 Wegmans Food Market
 Wycombe Vineyards, Inc.

Tradesmen

Augenblick & Co., P.C.
 Barb Lin Inc.
 Bi County Fuels, Inc.
 Biersmith Aviation
 Bucks County Magazine
 Caledonia Spirits, Inc./Barr Hill
 Capital Insurance & Investment
 Planning, LLC
 Carr and Duff, Inc.
 Carter van Dyke Associates
 Central Bucks Dental Medicine
 Class-Harlan Real Estate
 Cook Drilling Corp.
 Cowhey Family Shoprite
 Discover Doylestown
 The Doylestown Bookshop
 DunlapSLK CPAs
 Econsult Solutions
 FREEMAN'S
 Gemmi Construction, Inc.
 George's Tool Rental, Inc.
 Gratz Gallery & Conservation
 Studio Inc.
 Harper Business Law, P.C.
 The Hattery Stove & Still at
 Doylestown
 Hearn's Minuteman Press/
 Signarama
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 Conditioning
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 Knight Engineering Inc.
 Law Offices of Michael J. Brooks



Law Offices of William L.
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 QNB Bank
 Raphael Architects
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 Thompson Networks
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 Tullyvision Inc.
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Apprentice

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 Brown Dog Design
 Carroll's Jewelers
 Fegley's Brew Works
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 The Hammerstone Museum
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 McAllister Brewing Company
 Moss Mill Brewing Company
 Muller, Inc.
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 Stable 12 Brewing
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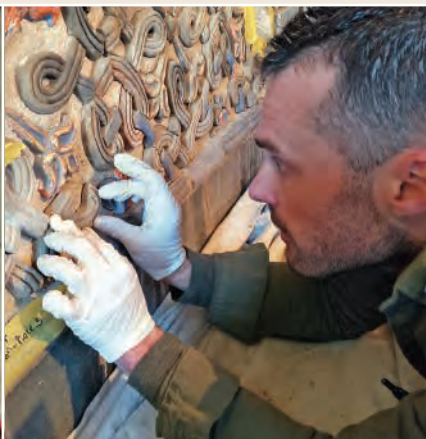
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AIM FOR 2 "ROLLO THE DOG" LENGTHS

Or approximately 6-8 feet.