



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Mercer Museum Awarded Grant from Institute of Museum and Library Services

DOYLESTOWN, PA – The Mercer Museum, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), is pleased to announce that it has received a grant to improve the care, management, and cataloging of 500 artifacts installed in its 1916 historic Central Court.

The museum was the recipient of an \$111,907.00 matching grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, in 2022 as part of IMLS' *Museums for America* grant program which will support the Mercer Museum's aim of preserving and providing access to the collections entrusted to its care.

The grant will allow the museum to fully perform an inventory, clean, catalog, and assess the condition of objects that are free-standing and suspended from the ceilings and mezzanines of the Mercer Museum's historic Central Court. Beginning in November 2022, a hydraulic lift will be used to survey the artifacts hanging in the core of the Mercer Museum – unreachable otherwise from the ground. The survey is anticipated to be completed of 2024.

During this time, the grant project team will photograph these artifacts and collections, assess lighting conditions, and conduct historical and contextual research to inform future museum planning and enhancing the knowledge of museum staff and guests. In the future, data about the Central Court artifacts could enhance visitor engagement through an online catalog, as well as in person at the museum.

Henry Mercer's unusual presentation of artifacts "wowed" visitors in 1916 when the museum opened, and Mercer's vision continues to evoke surprise, awe, and curiosity among modern visitors. By thoroughly documenting and assembling historical information on the nearly 500 artifacts in the museum's core, this project works toward satisfying this curiosity and addressing any gaps in knowledge regarding the artifacts.

The Bucks County Historical Society's Vice President of Collections and Interpretation Cory Amsler notes, "This project will enable the museum to more fully document the Central Court collections, perform comprehensive up-close photography, and point us towards new and creative methods for delivering this content to future guests."

The Mercer Museum project was one of 120 projects nationwide funded through IMLS' *Museums for America* grant program in 2022. Of these 120 grants, only eight were for projects in Pennsylvania. The matching portion of the Mercer Museum grant, \$112,504.00, is being supported by community contributions and the museum's operating funds.

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 grantmaking, research, and policy development. Their vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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About the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are historic castles celebrating the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar. Both sites are operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS).

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier cultural attractions and a Smithsonian affiliate, features both local and national seasonal exhibits as well as a core museum collection of over 50,000 pre-Industrial tools. This permanent collection offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America through sixty different crafts and trades, and is one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of American material culture. The museum also features a research library that is a center for local history related to Bucks County and the surrounding region, with its roots dating back to the founding of the Bucks County Historical Society in 1880.

Fonthill Castle was built between 1908-1912, and was the home to Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his home and as a showplace for his collection of tiles and prints. The castle serves as an early example of reinforced concrete and features forty-four rooms, over two hundred windows, and eighteen fireplaces. Fonthill Castle's interior features Mercer's renowned, hand crafted ceramic tiles designed at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement.

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

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

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