

## Bucks County Historical Society 2022 Annual Report







Mercer Museum



Fonthill Castle

Photos by Kevin Crawford

# A MESSAGE

## from the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

It is with great pride that we present to you the Bucks County Historical Society 2022 Annual Report, a reflection of our collective achievements and the valuable impact of your support. We stand committed to a vision that connects people with our shared history and environment as we promote interdisciplinary education and commitment to serving the community. This past year has been filled with extraordinary moments that promote Henry Mercer's legacy as we enrich the present and activate the future.

Within these pages you will discover how we practice responsible stewardship of the collections, which include artifacts, buildings, and properties. We embarked on projects that focus on preserving collections, including an IMLS grant-funded assessment and cataloging of the Mercer Museum's historic core objects. We also successfully completed a three-year grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage that resulted in a future-forward interpretive framework forming the basis for programs and exhibitions at both the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle for years to come.

Henry Mercer's vision reached far beyond the preservation of his buildings and the display of his collections. He was also committed to providing spaces for people to grow their knowledge through firsthand experiences, thereby inspiring them to pursue their own lifelong learning. Today, we are committed to carrying forward Henry Mercer's legacy by telling lesser-known stories, reinterpreting how collections are displayed, and enhancing our accommodations for our guests. By creating a sense of belonging, we advance our goal to provide access to programming, collections, and exhibition spaces to those who wish to experience them.

As we stand on the foundation of the past, ready to embrace the future, we recently explored the highest and best use of the Fonthill Castle grounds, thanks to a state-funded grant for conceptual planning work completed by OLIN, an internationally-recognized landscape architecture and urban design firm. Years ago, Henry Mercer initiated this effort by planting native wildflowers and trees throughout the Fonthill Castle grounds, working to create a landscape in harmony with the surrounding environment. BCHS is committed to facilitating an outdoor experience for public enjoyment and learning as enriching as the indoor experience at Fonthill Castle and on its grounds.

Our 2022 Annual Report recognizes the remarkable generosity of our supporters and celebrates the achievements of BCHS over the past year. Our deepest gratitude goes to all of the BCHS Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, and community supporters, without whom none of this success would be possible.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda B. Hodgdon".

Linda B. Hodgdon  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kyle McKoy".

Kyle McKoy  
Chief Executive Officer



## 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

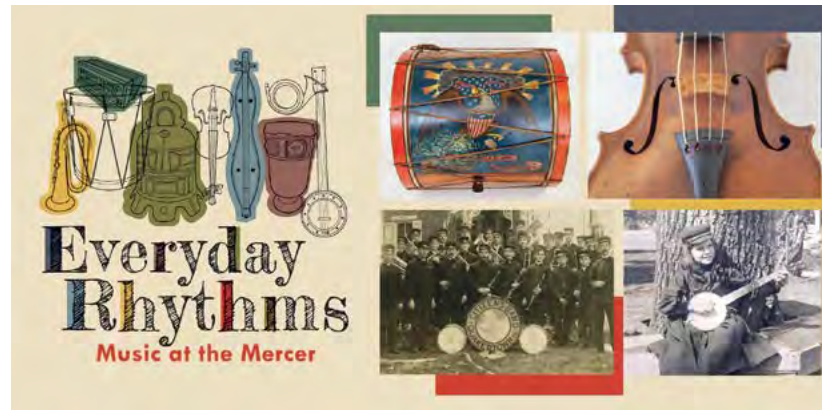
## Exhibitions

The Mercer Museum continued its program of special exhibitions in 2022, with two major offerings. The spring saw the conclusion of our 2021 exhibition, *Found, Gifted, Saved! The Mercer Museum Collects Local History*. This exhibition, featuring numerous artifacts, images and ephemera acquired in the first two decades of the 21st century, emphasized the museum's role as a custodian of Bucks County history. In a series of thematic groupings, each featuring a broad array of material culture, *Found, Gifted, Saved!* revealed some of what has been captured – and perhaps what has been missed – in documenting and recording the county's past. The groupings focused on themes like, "The Way We Played," "What We Wore," "Going to School," and "A Diverse People." The exhibition encouraged visitors to consider how their own personal histories and experiences intersected with these themes, and which artifacts and materials most resonated with their own lives.



In June, the museum opened *Everyday Rhythms: Music at the Mercer*, based on the museum's collection of musical instruments. The exhibition invites guests to consider the many purposes that music has had across time, place, and culture. In addition to expressing ourselves, and entertaining each other, human beings have created, played, and adapted instruments to send signals, tell stories, convey power, accompany rituals, organize work, sustain culture and tradition, and give order to community life. Instruments featured included not only European-American forms, but also those from areas of Africa and Asia, acquired by museum founder Henry Mercer during his collecting efforts in the 1920s. To augment the museum's collection and help extend the stories behind certain instruments, a number of objects borrowed from major private and public collections were also featured.

The museum also turned its attention back to its "original core," the 1913-1916 reinforced concrete "castle" and its warren of exhibit rooms. A multi-year grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage enabled the development of a series of experimental exhibits in a few of the museum's vacant rooms. These "prototypes" were designed to test different methods for engaging visitors in the collections, experiment with forms of interactivity, and initiate collaboration with community members. The first half of 2022



saw the installation of two experimental exhibits, both focused on food. Artifacts and other prompts inspired visitors to reflect on their own food-related traditions and experiences. Guests shared memories of things that had been passed down in their families, like recipes, traditions, and special kitchen implements. In the fall, a "community mapping" activity with a group of Doylestown residents resulted in a third prototype entitled, *Crossroads: Doylestown*. This installation featured places in town that held special meaning for participants, as well as artifacts and memorabilia that helped express or illustrate those meanings.

Finally, 2022 saw the launch of a project to develop a major exhibition related to the history of the "Doan Outlaws," a

Revolutionary War-era gang who committed numerous robberies, thefts, and home invasions in Bucks County in opposition to the revolutionary cause and in support of the British crown. Research and planning will continue until the exhibition's opening in 2024.



## AWAKEN

AN EXPERIMENTAL EXHIBIT



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



AwakenTheMercer  
AwakenTheMercer.org

# MERCER MUSEUM

## Collections

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

The continued stewardship of the collections is a primary responsibility of 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 improving documentation and providing access to collections information for researchers and other users, both on- and off-site. More than 640 researchers visited the Mercer Museum Research Library in 2022. Library staff also continued to expand the library's special research services, fulfilling over 50 remote research requests and launching a new Digitization Lab, a service aimed to help family historians protect fragile family documents that fulfilled four requests in its first year. Over 100,000 individual off-site searches in the museum's online catalog database were also recorded.

Ongoing stewardship activities include maintenance of 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 gain access to information about a portion of the museum and library collections through the museum's online catalog portal, accessible via our website. In 2022, staff added over 2,000 additional catalog records to the online database, including both museum and library collections.

Important collections preservation and access projects completed in 2022 included implementing free access to research databases (Ancestry, Fold3, and Newspapers.com) for on-site researchers; transferring, cataloging, and re-housing over 300 badges and buttons from the research library to the museum collection; creating new library programming inspired by Bucks County history; digitizing oversized farm maps for increased researcher accessibility; installing reproduction draperies in the Yellow Bedroom and reproduction bedspreads and rugs in several other rooms of Fonthill Castle, thanks to grants from various local Questers groups; and conserving of one of the Mercer Museum's concrete sash windows as part of a test project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

### 2022 Collections Highlights

- Received an \$111,907 matching grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to inventory, catalog, and survey the condition of all free-standing and hanging objects in the Mercer Museum Central Court.
- Launched new data management systems for museum, library, and archival collections to provide for better organization, retrieval, and public access to collections information.
- Approved loans for exhibitions at the Mütter Museum and the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia showcasing our "vampire-killing kit" and a presentation trumpet connected to the 1838 Anti-Abolition Riots in Philadelphia.
- Accessioned over 400 new acquisitions into the museum collection, including early American tools, textiles, and over 300 badges and buttons from the Research Library.
- Acquired ten scrapbooks for the Research Library related to the Bucks County Farm Bureau covering 1970 to 1982 and research materials compiled by Alice T. Laquer documenting the history of the Plough Tavern in Gardenville.
- Presented nine programs, including a presentation on the history of Northampton Township as part of their 300th anniversary celebrations in September 2022.





# MERCER MUSEUM & FONTHILL CASTLE

## Community Programs & Educational Outreach

In 2022, the Mercer Museum hosted over 5,782 program attendees at 35 community programs both virtually and in-person, including adult lectures, family and community programs, cultural events, outreach presentations, and summer camp.

The Mercer Museum and The County Theater, in partnership with The Moving Picture Cinema, brought outdoor movies to the community with the *Movies at the Mercer Museum* series.

In June 2022, we hosted the *First Annual Juneteenth at the Mercer Museum* community program with our partners The African Diaspora Collective of Bucks County, the PairUP Society, the Bucks County Anti-Racism Coalition, the NAACP of Bucks County and the African American Museum of Bucks County. This event celebrated the occasion with speakers, live performances, musicians, food trucks, vendors and artisans, family-friendly crafts, and activities.

We also partnered with the Desis of Doylestown for the first ever *Eid-ul-Fitr Celebration* as well as *Doylestown's 2nd Annual Festival of Lights Diwali Celebration*, both held at the Mercer Museum. These events were free, family-friendly, and included food and festivities.

We rejoiced at bringing back the beloved *Holiday Open House* program to the Mercer Museum. This free event highlighted local musical performances, visits with Santa, crafts and activities, and plenty of hot cider.

Across the Mercer Mile, Fonthill Castle hosted over 5,742 program attendees at 30 community programs, including community events, special tours, and holiday programs.

In 2022, we celebrated the return of 4th of July on the grounds of Fonthill Castle with some old-fashioned festivities, including a decorated bike parade, games, and live music. We then joined ActorsNET of Bucks County to present live performances of Shakespeare's *King Lear* staged in the spectacular outdoor setting of Fonthill Castle. Later that winter, *Fonthill Castle's Winter Wonderland Daily Tours* and the annual *Holiday Lights Meander* weekends mesmerized guests as they enjoyed the splendor of Henry Mercer's home decked out for the holidays.

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle also furthered our connection to Bucks County history and the museum's collections through our K-12 educational programs and school trips. The Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle hosted 2,082 field trip students in 2022, with 68 school and youth groups visiting our castles. In addition, each year the Bucks County Historical Society acts as the Bucks and Montgomery County regional coordinator for the National History Day contest. The 2022 contest was conducted virtually and welcomed 263 student participants and 166 student entries from across the region.

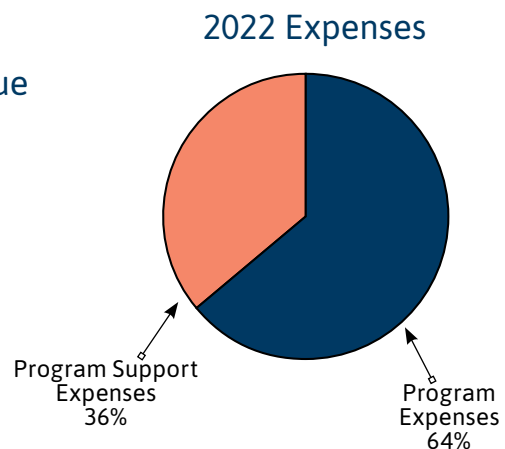
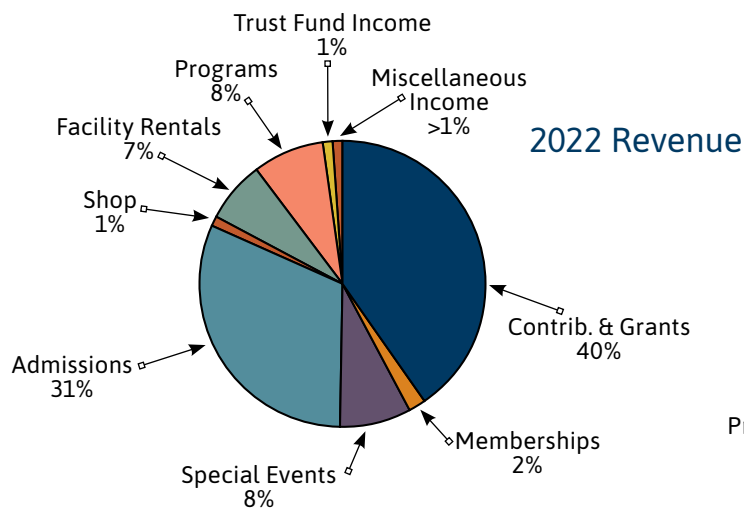


# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Statement of Financial Position

Statements of Activities: Years ended December 31, 2022 and 2021

	2022	2021
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE:</b>		
Grants and Contributions	\$ 996,574	\$1,062,413
Memberships	47,546	53,852
Special events	193,718	221,078
Museum operations:		
Admissions	769,581	695,460
Programs	205,761	183,421
Museum shop net	36,619	33,990
Facilities rental	160,239	150,319
Miscellaneous income	17,202	12,107
Trust fund income	34,716	30,921
	2,461,956	2,443,561
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
Program Services:		
Library	378,988	349,691
Curatorial	1,412,970	1,358,546
Educational	837,830	615,726
Support Services:		
Management and general	871,190	789,242
Development and fundraising	638,459	670,888
	4,139,437	3,784,093
Change in net assets before Nonoperating Revenues,		
Gains and Other Support	(1,677,481)	(1,340,532)
Non-operating Revenues, Gains and Other Support		
Investment Income	(1,963,219)	1,363,404
Change in net assets	(3,640,700)	22,872
Net assets, beginning of year	23,993,576	23,970,704
Net assets, end of year	\$20,352,876	\$23,993,576
Special Events cost	-	-
Museum Shop Cost	56,037	54,857
Publications Cost	-	-





# OUR 2022 DONORS AND CONTRIBUTORS...

Making all we do possible through their generosity.

## PLUS ULTRA SOCIETY

*Inspired by Henry Mercer's legacy of the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle, members of the Plus Ultra Society, past and present, create their own legacy. By including the Bucks County Historical Society in their estate planning, these forward-thinking individuals support the BCHS's mission far into the future.*

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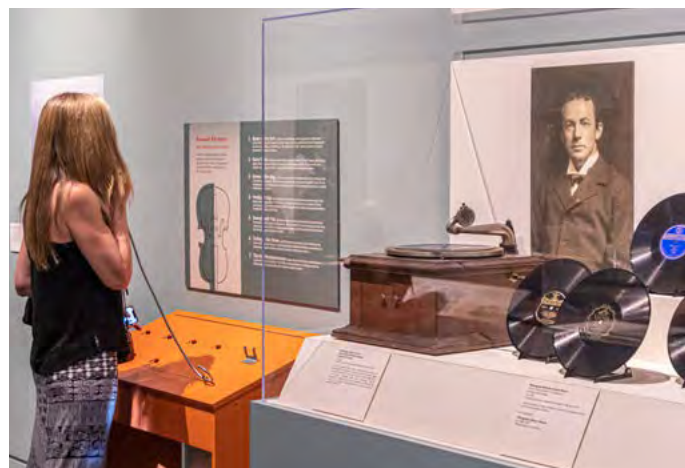
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*Our work is possible through  
your generosity. Thank you.*

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E. C. Bentz Electrical Contractor, Inc.  
Econsult Solutions  
Paganini/Pag's Pub/Pag's Wine Bar  
Pine Run Retirement Community  
Worth & Company, Inc.

### Artisans

Bucks County Magazine (BCM  
Media Company)  
Cook Drilling Corp.  
Cross Culture – Fine Indian Cuisine  
Doylestown Animal Medical Clinic  
Doylestown Commerce Center  
Economy Roofing & Siding Co., Inc.  
Empanada Mama &  
Nourish by Mama  
Gemmi Construction, Inc.  
Graphic Imaging  
Happ Contractors, Inc.  
Hops/Scotch  
Jarrett Vaughan Builders, Inc.  
Lewis-Loftus Group, Merrill Lynch  
Raphael Architects  
Silverman Family Partnerships  
Simply Fresh by McCaffrey's  
Sweet Victory Gluten &  
Dairy Free Treats  
The Barn Studio Gallery  
The First National Bank and  
Trust Co. of Newtown

### Tradesmen

Antheil, Maslow and MacMinn, LLP  
Augenblick & Co., P.C.  
Barb-Lin Inc.  
Bucks County Women's Journal  
Caledonia Spirits, Inc. / Barr Hill  
Capital Insurance & Investment  
Planning, LLC  
Carter van Dyke Associates, Inc.  
Chambers 19 Bistro & Bar  
Crews Surveying, LLC  
Delaware Valley Concrete Co, Inc.



Doylestown & Lahaska Bookshops  
DunlapSLK CPAs  
Ellen Happ Architect  
George's Tool Rental, Inc.  
Gratz Gallery  
Hugh A. Marshall Landscape  
Contractors, Inc.  
J. A. Smith Heating &  
Air Conditioning  
J. Carroll Molloy Realtor, LLC  
Joseph A. Fluehr III Funeral Home  
Knight Engineering, Inc.  
Krista P. Harper  
Law Offices of  
William L. Goldman, P.C.  
Mind Your Design  
Phillips & Donovan Architects, LLC  
Reed & Steinbach Funeral Home, Inc.  
Rockwood Wealth Management  
STAT Waste Solutions LLC  
The Hammerstone Museum  
Universal Electric Service, Inc.

### Apprentice

AB-8 Waste Solutions, LLC  
Amy Parenti Personal Property  
Solutions, LLC  
Barefoot Botanicals  
Brown Dog Design  
History Attic Research  
Kelly Thibeault  
Mark Baran  
The Solana Doylestown

*We apologize for any misspellings  
or omissions*



# OUR 2022 VOLUNTEERS...

Making all we do possible through their valuable time, talents, and energy.

Constance Ace	Lilly Foulk	Molly Lowell	Nicole Roper
Alise Adornato	David Franke	Bella Mackey	David Ross
Michael Araten	Nancy Freudenthal	Tom Maclin	Lauren Rosse
Samantha Barrett	Jerry Fritz	Cindy MacMillan	Jared Salla
Lisa Beightol	Mary Ann Fuller	Ruth Maxson	Logan Saugling
Patricia Bell	Liam Gannon	Logan Mazullo	Kathleen Schea
Nancy Bergere	Richard Girkin	Mary Lou McFarland	Jack Schmidt
Shelly Bloom	Elissa Goldberg	Chuck McIlhinney	Rebecca Schmidt
Mary Catherine Bluder	Megan Good	Brian McLeod	Thomas Schmitz
Miriam Blum	Kim Guthrie	Regina Melchiorre	Linda Schreiner
Julia Boettigheimer	Lisa Hanover	Becca Merriman-Goldring	Steve Schreiner
Kieran Bolger	Barbara Harrison	Maxx Meyers	William Schutt
Scott Bomboy	Christine Harrison	Christine Mifsud	Richard Scott
Rosanne Bonaventura	Carol Hearn	Holly Mirales	Nicolo Scuderi
Melissa Bond	Thomas Hebel	Konane Mookini	Carolyn Shaddinger
Deirdre Brett	Karen Henderson	Jean Morris	Eileen Shapiro
Olivia Brown	Emma Hejlik	Robert Moyer	Jenya Shuportyaka
Thomas Brunt	Brendan Hickey	Chip Muir	Emily Sippel
Marlene Burns	Jarrett Hill	Dave Mumbauer	Susan Smith
Jordan Butkus	Jillian Hinderliter	National Charity League –	Claudia Sonke
Pamela Butkus	Linda Hodgdon	Bucks County Chapter	Lisa Kristen Soren
Anna Callahan	Annika Huber	Cheryl Neas	Kurt Spence
Rudy Cambra	Smeed Irfan	Alexis Nelson	Marcy Stanley
Kathy Cannon	Tracy Jackson-Benson	Kim Nelson	John Stanojev
Maureen Carlton	Andy Jarin	Sean Newman	Sharon Stern
Mark Carlton	Zach Jarin	Gianina Nixon	Ron Strouse
Doris Hart Carr	Jennifer Jarret	Robert Ott	Craig Stutman
Heather Cevasco	Hilary Jebitsch	Jeff Paduano	Pat Tagliolini
Melissa Charry	Carol Jurin	Chase Palmer	Randall Tenor
Sirui Chen	Ivan Jurin	Richard Paynton	Stephen Terry
Pete Chiovarou	Kent Jurin	Michelle Pedersen	Tom Thomas
Libby Clark	Trip Kahn	Patricia Pepe	Rochelle Thompson
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Josif Collazo	Dean Karrash	Hannah Pfeifer	Andrea Tucker
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Jesse Crooks	Jocelyn Kluesner	Kathryn Pownall	Heather Walton
Kelley Cwiklinksi	Harold Kodikian	Lisa Pretectrum	Kayla Warren
Betsy Dardeshi	Melani Kodikian	Barbara Purnell Boyle	Sandra Weisel
Mary Ann Darlington	Josh Kokinda	Ryan Putman	Tana Wentzel
Katie Dawson	Meredith Krouse	Joshua Quinn	Carol West
Grace M. Deon	Siobhan LaCreta	Stephen Raab	Erin Whitehead
David Dlogosz	Alivia Lanoue	Michael Raphael	Emily Whitted
Lynne Anne Donchez	Joe Lapeire	Caroline Rawlings	Jackie Winderman
Tom Dougherty	June Larson	Morgan Reamy	Desiree Winiarski
Joseph Erman	Douglas Lea	Johathan Reiss	Larry Woodson
Sarah Ernst	Jayne Lester	David Riedel	Marie Woodson
Darcy Fair	Jack Lewis	Nina Rizzo	George Wozar
Susan Fisher	Nolan Lindsay	Laura Robinson	Jack Young
Joseph Fite	Susan Longergan	Jacob Roman	Paula Young



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Serving as leaders, ambassadors, and community connectors  
working to advance the organization's mission.

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Vice-Chair	Thomas Hebel
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