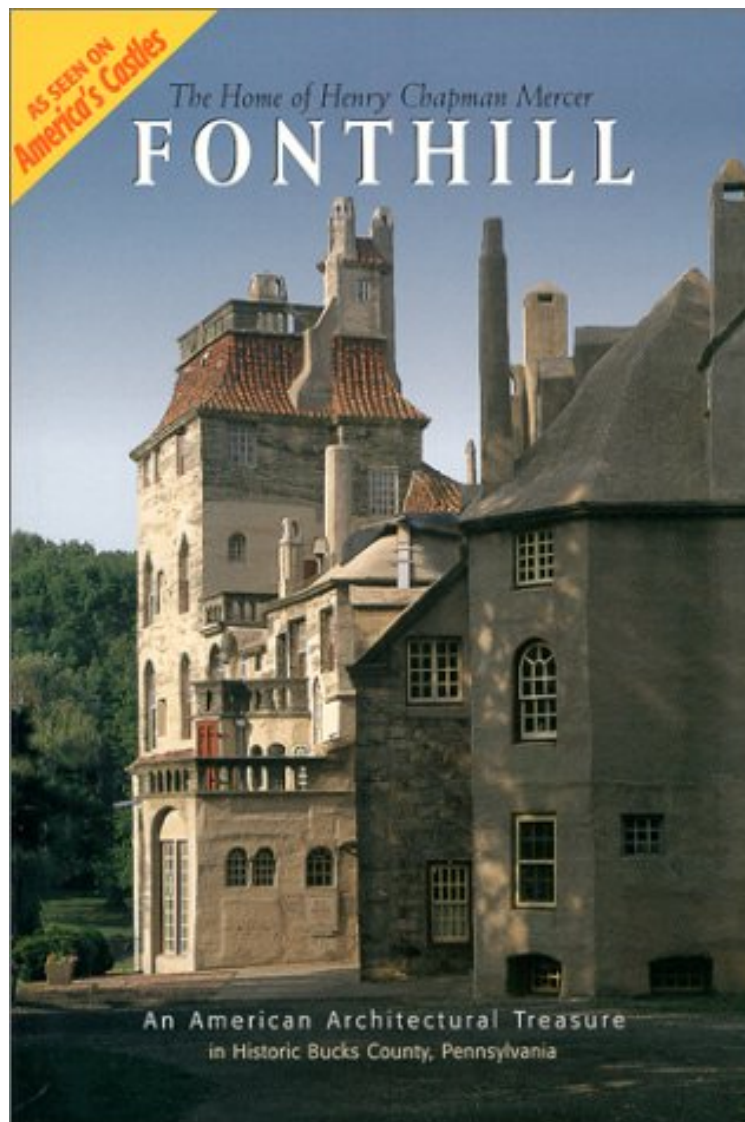


(Pdf free) Fonthill : The Home of Henry Chapman Mercer--An American Architectural Treasure in Historic Bucks County, Pennsylvania

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Thomas G. Poos

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Thomas G. Poos : Fonthill : The Home of Henry Chapman Mercer--An American Architectural Treasure in Historic Bucks County, Pennsylvania before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fonthill : The Home of Henry Chapman Mercer--An American Architectural Treasure in Historic Bucks County, Pennsylvania:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fonthill : unique, incomprehensible and mindbogglingBy Piet HeinBought this book after visiting Fonthill "castle" an unusual and unique structure. The building is filled with millions(?) of tiles attached to floors, ceilings, walls and almost any surface imaginable. The entire structure is created from reenforced concrete and the chambers (Rooms is to plebian a word) are connected in a convoluted manner. It is a most amazing spectacle of spaces and space relationships. The book does not reflect the half of the overwhelming and mind boggling presentations, in this amazing place. In addition there are hundreds upon hundreds of very old books scrolls and maps that have not seen daylight in eons. The book presents a quick overview, with a few photo's of the most notable tiled surfaces. The building is an architectural nightmare, and should be photo recorded, inch by inch, so rich are the contents and so unique the execution of even things like concrete dressers and bed side tables. The book just alludes and skims, a travesty. Piet Hein6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Very highly recommended reading for architectural studentsBy Midwest Book ReviewIn 1908, tile maker Henry Chapman Mercer turned his artistic talents to planning and constructing Fonthill, a "castle in concrete". Fonthill served as Mercer's residence and a personal museum for his decorative tiles, prints and artifacts from 1912 until his death in 1930. Fonthill: The Home Of Henry Chapman Mercer is an informative survey and presentation of this architectural achievement, enhanced throughout with photography (22 b/w, 56 color), heretofore unpublished illustrations, as well as sketches and comments from mercer's own construction notebook. The photography, architectural cross sections and floor plans for each level of Fonthill highlight the innovative design, artistic detail and decorative tile work comprising an original American architectural treasure. Fonthill: The Home Of Henry Chapman Mercer is very highly recommended reading for architectural students and anyone with an interest in American architectural history and the National Historic Landmark series.12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Fonthill A Must Read and A Must VisitBy A CustomerI have visited Fonthill Museum many, many times and finally there is a book that does this fantastic place justice. The color photographs and the floorplans alone are worth the price of the book. Fonthill is a unique artistic expression of a relatively unknwn renaissance man, Henry Chapman Mercer. As the book describes, despite its random apperance from the exterior and interior, the house is built with a great deal of thought, intent, and philosophy. If you love tiles, architecture, archaeology, the Arts Crafts Movement, and history, then this book is a must read, and Fonthill is a must visit!

This book provides a fascinating look at the unique home and creative genius of Henry Chapman Mercer. In 1908, renowned tile maker Henry Chapman Mercer, a key figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement in the U.S., turned his genius and artistic talents to planning and constructing Fonthill, a "castle in concrete." Fonthill served as Mercer's residence and a personal museum for his decorative tiles, prints and artifacts from 1912 until he died in 1930. More than 100 pages of text, abundant photography, and previously unpublished illustrations, sketches and comments from Mercer's own construction notebook, give readers a wonderful appreciation for Fonthill and Henry Mercer. Twenty color photographs (of 56 total) combine with architectural cross sections for each level of Fonthill to highlight the innovative design, artistic detail and decorative tile work that comprise this American architectural treasure. This book shows why Fonthill, one of the best late-Romantic buildings in America, has been designated a National Historic Landmark and featured on television in an award-winning episode of "America's Castles."

"Fonthill is a house, a laboratory, a showcase and an exploration of ideas and ideals." -- Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor and Chair of Architectural History, University of Virginia--and Architectural Historian and Commentator for the noted television series --America's Castles. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.A Journey Past The year is 1913. You are traveling north on Easton Road toward Doylestown, accompanying your good friend, John Wanamaker, on a visit to Fonthill, the recently built home of Henry Chapman Mercer, noted archaeologist, historian and ceramist. As you roll along in his new motorcar, Wanamaker explains the reason for your visit. It seems that he is quite taken with the idea of decorating the fireplaces in his home with ceramic tile the rage in interior design and the finest examples of tilework that hes seen are those by Henry Mercer. Wanting nothing but the best, he has requested Mercer tiles for his fireplaces. And to help him decide on a theme, Henry Mercer has graciously invited him to Fonthill to see designs created for previous customers, which the ceramist has incorporated into his own home. The invitation includes dinner as well, and Wanamaker assures you that Mercer has insisted that you stay over until morning before returning to Philadelphia. It is a long drive, but at last you swing into the driveway leading up to Fonthill. As you pass slowly between two rows of young sycamore trees, the imposing structure looms ahead, resembling a cross between a Gothic mansion and a French chateau. From a distance, its gray color suggests weathered granite, but as you climb down from the automobile, a closer inspection reveals, instead, that the house is made entirely of concrete. Fonthills somewhat unusual appearance, however, pales quickly in comparison to what you discover inside. From the moment you enter, its obvious that this is no ordinary country home. Henry Mercer himself greets you at the door he is a handsome man in his late fifties, with a full moustache and you follow in fascination as he leads you through his beloved Fonthill. It is at once both mysterious and exciting, filled with unexpected vistas and changes in level. There are curved, vaulted ceilings reminding you of ancient castles. There are uniquely shaped rooms

and alcoves connected by so many narrow passageways and winding staircases you could easily get lost for days. And all manner of niches and shelves are filled with ancient artifacts, tools and pottery. The feeling is medieval, yet you also notice that the house boasts the latest electric lighting, modern plumbing and a central heating system. And the tiles everywhere there are tiles: set into the arches of the ceilings; on the walls and around windows; above and around fireplaces; on the floor and on the tops of built-in concrete vanities. They catch your eye with color and often tell a story. Why, there's even one room where the ceiling is completely covered with tiles depicting scenes of Columbus' discovery of the New World. Later, after Wanamaker and Mercer have concluded their business, you are shown to your room. It is the Yellow Room, you are told, and there you start to dress for dinner. It takes longer than usual, however, for you can't help staring at the story of Bluebeard told in tiles on the wall. A noise like footsteps echoing nearby arouses your curiosity, but you dare not wander from your room for fear of losing your way in the maze of passageways. Dinner is a sumptuous affair, served at a large table in the Saloon, the cavernous, two-story main room on the ground level. This is how, you imagine, the knights and nobles must have felt as they feasted in their castles. Over the main course, you ask Henry Mercer how he built such a remarkable home. While he explains, you look around with even greater appreciation at what this ingenious man has achieved. Afterward, you adjourn to the library for brandy and cigars. There, you notice once again the motto, "Plus Ultra," inscribed in tile letters above the fireplace. From your study of Latin, you know that it means "More Beyond." How true, you think, remembering all that you've seen at Fonthill that day. How very true.