



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

New Grave Marker for Infamous Doan Outlaw

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. –A grave marker for one of Bucks County’s most infamous outlaws, Abraham Doan, was recently donated to the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS) and is now on display in the new major exhibition *The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution* at the Mercer Museum through December 2026.

The marble stone, placed outside of the walls of Plumstead Friends Meeting cemetery in 1966, was replaced with a reproduction stone commissioned by BCHS as part of the agreement. The original grave marker is alleged to mark the burial site of Abraham Doan (c. 1760-1788).

Abraham Doan was a member of the infamous "Doan Gang," a network of Loyalists in Bucks County who supported Great Britain during the Revolutionary War. The Gang robbed tax collectors, militia members, and other citizens who supported the American revolutionary cause. Abraham and his cousin Levy Doan were hanged in Philadelphia in 1788 and remain the only individuals ever executed for "outlawry" in the United States of America.

The Doan cousins were buried in Bucks County after their executions, however the exact location remained a mystery. Early accounts note that they were buried outside of the walls of the Plumstead Friends Meeting cemetery, possibly in unmarked graves in a small patch of woods across the street from the cemetery itself.

“The leadership of the Friends, often called Quakers, had issued a directive forbidding its members from taking up arms in the Revolution,” said Clint Flack, BCHS Exhibit Specialist and a co-curator of *The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution* exhibition. “Abraham and Levy weren’t active Quakers, and to make things worse, they had taken up arms in the conflict. All of that

meant that they were barred from being buried within the walls of the Friends cemetery, but the Friends may have found a place for them outside the walls.”

By the 1950s, many locals had come to believe that two unengraved stones directly outside of the cemetery’s walls marked Abraham and Levy Doans’ burial sites. These stones are now believed to actually have marked the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers who died while the Meetinghouse was used as a hospital.

Regardless of this fact, the legend of the stones continued to grow. In 1966, two engraved stones, one for Abraham and one for Levy, appeared near the unmarked stones. The engravings noted the names and parents of the Gang members and referred to each simply as “An Outlaw.” Although Levy’s stone remains intact, Abraham’s stone saw damage and had broken in half over the decades.

The Bucks County Historical Society contacted Plumstead Friends Meeting and Buckingham Friends Meeting last year about adding Abraham’s 1966 stone to the Mercer Museum collection and displaying it as part of the upcoming exhibition, *The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution*. BCHS commissioned an exact, unbroken reproduction of Abraham’s stone from Beechwood Memorials in Plumsteadville, and placed it in its original location next to Levy’s stone outside of the cemetery walls. The original 1966 stone will remain in the Mercer Museum collection after the end of the exhibition in 2026.

“Although these grave markers from 1966 probably do not mark the actual burial sites of Abraham and Levy, who may be buried across the street, they are still an important part of the story,” said Annie Halliday, BCHS Director of Library & Archives and a co-curator of the exhibition. “They speak to the connection of people in our region to the legend of the Doan Gang, and serve as important commemorative markers for Doan descendants when they visit the area. We are thrilled to have worked with Plumstead Friends Meeting and Buckingham Friends Meeting to display the Abraham Doan grave marker in the exhibition.”

The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution exhibition at the Mercer Museum investigates the extraordinary tales of the Doan Gang’s criminal exploits throughout the region and explores the conflicts that arose among neighbors, friends, and families in Bucks County who were forced to

choose sides during a time of great political and social unrest. Admission to this special exhibition is included with general museum admission. The Mercer Museum is open Tuesdays – Sundays from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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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 17,000 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 of Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his residence and 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.

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle are open Tuesdays – Sundays from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For up-to-date ticket and schedule information, please visit mercermuseum.org.

For additional information, please contact:

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