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## YOUR TOWN

# Fountain of pride in water and marble

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By MAIA DAVIS  
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PATERSON -- A century ago, wealthy American industrialists built gilded mansions both to celebrate their own success and to counter the prevailing European view that this upstart country had no culture.

Paterson mill owner Catholina Lambert filled his stately Garret Mountain estate with stained glass, paintings, and sculptures. And, in a final flourish, he decorated his formal garden with an ornate two-tiered fountain.

The Passaic County Historical Society is installing a replica of that fountain on the grounds of what is now called Lambert Castle. It is part of a five-year, \$6.1 million restoration of the mansion, which is due to be finished within several months. A Sept. 24 ribbon-cutting is planned.

Just as Lambert and other industrialists saw their estates as proof of America's appreciation of art and culture, the historical society hopes the restored castle will remind the public of Passaic County's rich history.

"This is a point of pride for Passaic County," said the society's president, Michael Blanchfield.

The society, which leases the mansion from Passaic County and will run it as a local history museum, has put a lot of pride into the restoration. Organizers were picky, for instance, about the type of fountain that would adorn the newly landscaped courtyard.

County Historian Ed Smyk said the design for the



12-foot-high replica was based on century-old photos of Lambert's original, complete with sculptures of winged horses and cherubs riding a dolphin.

"It lends an authenticity to the entire site," Smyk said of the fountain. "It also balances the building."

While the mansion itself is an imposing dark brownstone, the fountain replica is designed with contrasting bright white marble, like the original.

Marble is expensive. But Smyk said the society got a good deal by having the fountain manufactured at a plant in China owned by an Irvington company. The total cost, including labor, was \$37,500.

Lambert's fountain sat in a formal garden surrounded by elaborate sculptures and busts of philosophers such as Socrates. But the historical society isn't going that far.

As with the rest of the castle, the aim is adaptation of the original, rather than reconstruction.

"This is not a glorification of Mr. Lambert," Blanchfield said. "It's a county museum."

From outside the castle, visitors will see the magnificent view of Paterson and beyond that led Lambert to call the estate "Belle Vista." Inside, the museum will function, literally and figuratively, on many levels.

On the first floor, visitors will get a glimpse into the lifestyles of the county's rich and famous, circa 1900. Rooms will be filled with furniture, paintings, and other decor that were originally in Lambert's mansion or other wealthy residents' homes, said Andrew Shick, the museum's curator.

The second floor, which has a wraparound balcony overlooking a grand hall on the first level, will exhibit landscapes, portraits, and other paintings depicting the county's history.

The third level will house rotating exhibits of art and historical objects. The basement will hold a research library of documents and photographs.

Lambert was fanatical about collecting paintings and other art objects, Smyk said. But much of his art has been lost because business setbacks forced the self-made silk

magnate to sell many possessions in his later years. He stayed in the mansion until his death in 1923.

"You know what I call it?" Shick said. "Rags to riches to very nice rags."

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