

The Grey Towers Legacy



Information and Calendar of Events



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Left: Gov. Pinchot economic recovery initiatives in the 1930s included paving the PA roads “to get the farmer out of the mud.”

Right: Funds will be used to bring the Allee back to how it looked in 1927, including replacing the Locust trees, which have reached the end of their natural life cycle.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds Improve, Invest in Grey Towers

Pinchot Had History of Economic Recovery Initiatives

The year was 1931 and Gifford Pinchot was beginning his second term as Pennsylvania’s governor. The nation was in the midst of the Great Depression and Pennsylvania was hit hard. Gifford Pinchot was one of the most active governors to fight for unemployment relief.

Progressive and innovative, Pinchot knew he had to act quickly. He set up work camps throughout the state, which later became models for FDR’s Civilian Conservation Corps. He advocated Federal economic relief for states and donated a quarter of his own gross salary for one year. He pushed for large reductions in utility rates. And perhaps his favorite, and most well-known accomplishment was to build 20,000 miles of paved rural roads to “get the farmer out of the mud.” He put the men in the relief camps to work and the roads not only enabled farmers to get to their markets, but stimulated Pennsylvania’s economy into an upward spiral.

Pinchot’s economic recovery initiatives were a success: Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate decreased and the improvements he initiated had long-lasting and widespread impact. Thousands were thankful and still today in Pennsylvania there are some who refer to the “Pinchot Roads.”

Fast forward to 2010. Federal economic stimulus funds much like those that Pinchot advocated for in the 1930s are available in communities throughout the nation. It is historically fitting that in Milford, PA, the US Forest Service has

successfully applied for and received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to make improvements at Grey Towers National Historic Site, Pinchot’s ancestral home.

Throughout the year, you will see members of the Job Corps of America as well as local construction and landscape companies working here to improve the safety, security and historic preservation of the estate, which today serves as a center for natural resources and works to keep the Pinchot legacy active and alive.

Some of the projects include:

- Restore the historical landscape plantings along the Black Locust Allee, leading up to the mansion.
- Resurface the roads surrounding the Mansion.
- Upgrade electrical and HVAC systems.
- Restore stone walls throughout the property.
- Repaint much of the interior walls and exterior trim.
- Repair several roofs on the property, and
- Install storm windows throughout the mansion.



Please bear with us as we make these improvements. Minor and temporary inconveniences with access and vehicular and pedestrian flow, aesthetics and some noise may be apparent throughout the 2010 public season.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is Grey Towers?

A 44-room French chateausque mansion that was built in 1886 by James Pinchot. Today it serves as an education and leadership development center for natural resources. Administered by the U.S. Forest Service, it was donated to the public in 1963 by Dr. Gifford Bryce Pinchot to carry on the legacy of his father, Gifford Pinchot, eminent conservationist and two-term Pennsylvania governor.

What did Gifford Pinchot accomplish?

As founder and first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot introduced and then implemented the groundbreaking concept of conservation, or sustainable use of our natural resources. An eminent conservationist, he helped create the National Forest System, which today comprises over 190 million acres. As two-term governor of Pennsylvania, Gifford, along with his wife Cornelia, made tremendous changes in the economic, social and political climate of the Commonwealth.

Who were some of the other Pinchots?

James and Mary Pinchot, Gifford's parents, built the house in 1886. James, who grew up in Milford, was a wealthy businessman who made his fortune in wallpaper. As patrons of the arts, James and Mary were supporters of the Hudson River School of Painting, and James was co-founder



of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. James had a strong conservation ethic and vision for the nation and both encouraged their son Gifford to pursue forestry as a career. Amos Pinchot, Gifford's brother, was his political confidante and advisor, a lawyer who helped found the American Civil Liberties Union. Their sister Antoinette married a British diplomat and focused her energies on social causes in Europe, including running the American hospital in France during WWI.

Were the gardens at Grey Towers always so lavish?

No. During James and Mary's time, the grounds included a large rose garden and apple trees, but mostly was a working farm. It wasn't until Gifford and his wife Cornelia Bryce Pinchot moved to Grey Towers in the 1920s and 1930s that the gardens, under Cornelia's planning and vision, began to take shape. Working with landscape architects and designers, Cornelia added all the plantings and stone features in the landscape, including the buildings. She and Gifford planted over 100 trees.

Why can't we see the upper floors of the mansion?

The second and third floors of the mansion have been renovated as an active conference center, in keeping with the original intent of the gift of Grey Towers from Dr. Gifford Bryce Pinchot. He wanted to make sure Grey Towers continued to be a place where conservation discussions and dialogues would continue to take place, just as they did when his father lived here. Check the calendar schedule to find out when a three-floor tour or an Open House is offered to give visitors a look at those upper floors.

Who can use the Conference Center at Grey Towers?

Any natural resource agencies, groups, associations and organizations that are working on conservation or have as their mission natural resource conservation.

What can I do at Grey Towers?

Visitors are encouraged to join us on a guided tour of the first floor of the mansion and the grounds. Or, you can walk around the grounds, see the historic gardens or



take a hike on the trails. There are a number of public programs planned throughout the visitor season. School programs, conferences and leadership development programs also are held here.

Can I have my wedding or take wedding photos at Grey Towers?

As nice as the landscape is, it is not within the scope of our mission to host weddings or other private social functions. There are a few locations in the landscape outside of the historic corridor where we allow wedding photos, as long as they don't interfere with our primary functions and use. Use of these locations must be approved in advance.

How do we get to the falls?

The waterfalls are located on private property and the landowner no longer allows public access.

Is Grey Towers haunted?

There have been no documented sightings of ghosts, though some claim to have "felt" a presence. It depends on your personal interpretation and beliefs.

Why isn't there a dining room in the house?

Grey Towers served mainly as a summer home. Gifford and Cornelia Pinchot spent a lot of time outdoors. The outdoor dining table, also known as the Fingerbowl, served as their dining room and is the most popular feature in the landscape.

Festival of Wood Promotes Goods From the Woods

August 7-8, 2010



The Festival of Wood helps us recognize the many ways we use wood in our everyday lives and how sustainably managed forests can provide that wood today while ensuring forests for the future.

The Festival of Wood is fast becoming an educational program that helps thousands of people make the connection between a sustainable marketplace and sustainable management of the forests. Since 2004, we have successfully built upon previous events while expanding the activities, programs and events to help celebrate our natural and cultural heritage of wood. Most events are free!

Highlights of the 2010 Festival:

Unique wood crafts and art are exhibited, sold and demonstrated. Some examples include: wood furniture, pipe boxes, Shaker boxes, sawdust folk art, wooden snowflakes, wooden bowls, wood turning, fretwork and hand-carved sculpture. Co-sponsored by the Pocono Arts Council, the crafts component illustrates how beautiful objects that we use in our everyday lives are created from wood.

Children's activities include games and toys using wood and wood products. A magician and musician will entertain and educate children about the forest. Children can build bluebird nest boxes (from wood, of course!) and learn about habitat conservation. Live amphibians and reptiles will visit.

Lectures about wood and forestry will be available throughout the weekend. Topics such as Alternative Forest Products and Private Forest Landowners are offered.

Free music with wood instruments will be provided each day.

Educational exhibits and handouts from a variety of organizations and agencies, such as reintroducing the American Chestnut Tree, next generation landowner information, tree identification, U.S. Forest Service wood technology initiatives and reducing your carbon footprint.



A celebration of Gifford Pinchot's birthday, with free refreshments.

All three floors of the historic mansion are open for visitors both days; a \$4 fee is charged.

The Festival of Wood is a collaborative project of the U.S. Forest Service at Grey Towers, Grey Towers Heritage Association, the Pocono Arts Council and many, many community partners.



CONSERVATION LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AT GREY TOWERS

Teachers: Plan a field trip or have us visit your classroom

Educators: Earn continuing education credit at one of our teacher workshops

Natural Resource Professionals: Research, reflect or write using the inspirational ambiance of Grey Towers. Forest Service detail opportunity (570-296-9630) or Edgar Brannon Conservation Fellows Program (202-797-6580/www.pinchot.org).

College Students: Check out our internship opportunities www.fs.fed.us/gt/internships.

Graduate Students/Historians: Live and work at Grey Towers while completing your research project. Contact the Forest Service historian at lbramwell@fs.fed.us about the Scholar in Residence program.

YOU: Take a tour, attend a program, visit the estate grounds, participate in an event.

Grey Towers Most Popular Tree: European Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* “*Atropurpurea*”)

The European Copper Beech was Gifford Pinchot’s favorite tree and he had nine planted at Grey Towers in the 1920s. They all measure more than three feet in diameter and stand almost 100 feet tall.

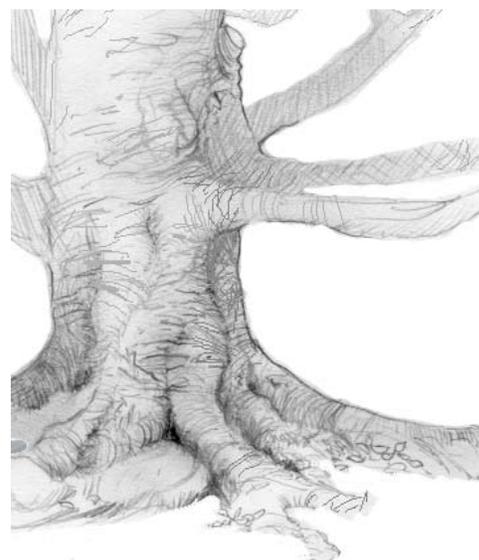
It has a unique and beautiful bark, which some say resembles elephant hide. Its leaves emerge in spring as a deep purple, turning a brilliant copper



in autumn, and are egg shaped. You can find the European Copper Beeches near the Letter Box, the moat, the Gatehouse, halfway up the front drive and near the service wing entrance. Because of their immense size and outstanding color, you can look out over the landscape and easily recognize the Copper Beeches.

Many have taken seeds from the Grey Towers’ European Copper Beech in an unsuccessful attempt to grow their own. The only way to grow your own European Copper Beech is through a cutting grafted onto an American Beech rootstock. Or you can purchase one from a specialty nursery.

Like its common name, this popular tree is found readily in Europe. As an estate tree, European Copper Beeches require large open areas and they are not suitable for the typical suburban lot size. Also, they grow slowly, taking 40-50 years to reach maturity.



When these were planted by Gifford Pinchot he knew, because of their slow growth, that they would be enjoyed by generations to come. The simple act of planting trees today for future generations is the very essence of conservation, symbolized here by Pinchot’s favorite tree.

Curator’s Corner

There are more than 10,000 artifacts in the Grey Towers’ museum collection and we continue to receive items of historical significance. Most recently, we received several heirloom books from Pinchot family members.

The Library is one of the most impressive rooms in the mansion and illustrates the intellectual depth and diverse interests of several generations. These new additions include:

Several sets of poetical works belonging to the Pinchot family circa 1780’s, including Geoffrey Chaucer, Samuel Butler, and Edmund Spenser; a complete 31-volume set of the series, “The Temple Shakespeare,” 1894-1896; and selected works by Oscar Wilde, Lord Byron and Edgar Allan Poe.

Several Pinchot family bibles including: Mary J. Eno’s, 1859, with handwritten inscriptions and dates of birth and/or death for her children Gifford, Lucy, Antoinette, and Amos; bible belonging to Gifford’s friend Laura Houghtaling containing several poems and silk bookmarks; pocket New Testament inscribed on inside to Gifford by his great-grandmother Mary Eno, aged 92 years.

Grey Towers also recently conducted research on a human skull that has been in the collection since 1963. We wanted to determine its origin and make sure the Forest Service was in compliance with the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), if it were determined to be of Native American origin. Tests reveal it is of Polynesian origin, which fits with our unconfirmed information that Gifford Pinchot brought it back from his 1930’s voyage to the South Seas.



Several Pinchot family bibles including Mary J. Eno’s, circa 1859, with handwritten inscriptions and a pocket New Testament inscribed on inside to Gifford by his great-grandmother Mary Eno, aged 92 years.



Forest Service staffer Lee Salber demonstrates how math and science are used in forestry during a school program at Grey Towers.

Forestry Trail Combines Science and Math For Unique Learning Opportunities

Area teachers looking for a unique, out-of-classroom experience that combines science and math may want to explore a program on the Grey Towers Forestry Trail. Whether your students are studying biology, ecology, history, science or math, the Forestry Trail at Grey Towers offers a hands-on opportunity to expand their knowledge in a natural environment.

Participants learn to identify and determine the age and health of popular trees. Students also search for wildlife clues that can reveal important habitat information and have hands-on experiences that demonstrate the interrelationships between plants and animals. The roles of predators and prey are examined and students learn to identify wildlife by their sounds. Advanced studies challenge

students to use math and science to determine such things as the amount of merchantable lumber in a tree and the size of the local deer population.

The half-mile Forestry Trail also includes a replica of the camp used by Yale Forestry School students from 1901-1926. The campsite provides a glimpse into the past and the historical role the Pinchots played in bringing forestry to America.

Instructors tailor the educational material to fit curriculum needs for grades 2 through college. To schedule your class trip or for more information, call 570-296-9630. There is no fee for this conservation education program and some transportation costs can be reimbursed if criteria is met.

Native Plantings Help “Green” Grey Towers

The Visitor Parking Lot is more than just environmentally-engineered for resource conservation. In addition to the pervious asphalt, the parking lot is a living demonstration of how careful selection of plant species and bed design can enhance the natural landscape.

When designing the parking lot, the US Forest Service opted to plant in large landscape beds instead of divided areas. Large landscape beds improve plant health and life span.

We also designed the plant layout so that the shrubs and trees were grouped together. Grouping helps screen vehicles and cools the surrounding area.

Sensitive to the aesthetics of the rest of our site, we wanted to create a landscape within the parking lot, softening the built environment and having it fit in more naturally. We chose native plantings that cut down on the amount of water and care required.

Finally, the deer enclosure helps us demonstrate what could be growing in the fields and forests of this region.

When visiting Grey Towers, please take a moment when you arrive to enjoy, appreciate and learn from the landscape in the Visitor Parking Lot.



Grey Towers



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For information about this and other Grey Towers' publications contact Lori McKean, lmckean@fs.fed.us or 570-296-9672

Interested in Volunteering at Grey Towers?

Tour guides, research,
landscape work available.

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