

The trustees agreed with King's analysis and formed a search committee composed of King, who took the chair, by then as the board's president-elect, plus James O'Hara Denny III, Van Beck Hall, Jane Smith and Thomas Thomson.

Advertisements in professional periodicals brought 40 applicants. Later, on a tip, the name of John Herbst of New Jersey was added as one of 10 finalists to be interviewed by search committee members over one weekend.

Herbst was young, 33, and had worked for various types of historical organizations. He was a man with vigor and ability. He had already developed a labor history museum at a site which he had worked to have designated as a national landmark in Haledon, his hometown outside of Paterson.

The search committee split three ways, 2-2-1. Finally, on the third vote, one member switched to Herbst, giving him the majority required. He was hired April 10, 1986. Says King today: "We specifically picked someone with the drive and skill to expand the Society activity to get visibility to raise funds for a center."

At the end of the search process, Bill King had showed Herbst a copy of the CPAH white paper. When asked his opinion of the proposal, Herbst asked why the Historical Society wasn't taking the lead — it was a natural fit in institutional type and mission. Herbst hit the ground running. No sooner had he arrived on May 17, 1986, than he was visited by a CPAH delegation composed of Richardson and anthropologists Verna Cowin and Ronald Carlisle. Armed with the CPAH paper, the three asked Herbst if he would like to submit to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission a grant proposal for studying the feasibility of an industrial history museum in Pittsburgh.

When he readily agreed, Richardson, Carlisle, and another CPAH board member, Frank Kurtik, worked with Herbst to develop the proposal, which was submitted on May 30, 1986. On August 20, the Society, CPAH and PHMC held a press conference at the Allegheny County Courthouse to announce the state grant of \$12,000. The Pittsburgh Foundation also contributed a \$6,000 grant.

Meanwhile, Herbst had wasted no time in moving the concept forward with the Society's board. Although he raised \$70,000 to upgrade the headquarters building on Bigelow Boulevard, Herbst argued that the facility was inadequate for housing collections over the long haul and for programming that would appeal to a broader audience. He proposed a two-track effort. One was to lay out a five-year plan for expansion of Society activities. The other was to plan for a history center. Herbst directed a planning effort with staff, CPAH members, and museum consultants that produced a report pegging the cost of a proper history center at \$40 million.

"That just blew everybody's mind," King recalls. "Here we were, an organization with a \$200,000 annual budget and a \$2.5 million endowment, hearing that kind of talk."

Then, a long-range planning committee of the board was established. It came up with three alternative plans: 1) modest expansion; 2) major expansion of the scope of activities, such as two exhibitions in the \$150,000 range; and 3) maximum expansion.

What, then, will be the visitor's experience when the Senator John Heinz Regional History Center opens in April?

by Clarke Thomas

VISITORS ENTER FROM the Smallman Street doors into the "Great Hall," with its 1949 trolley and the massive fire bell, cast after the devastating downtown fire of 1845. From there, you ascend to the principal exhibition gallery on the second floor. In "Points in Time: Building a life in Western Pennsylvania, 1750 - Today," you follow a chronological path through 250 years of history, from Native American life at the time of arrival of the first white settlers, through industrialization and into the present.

Three furnished partial replicas of homes anchor the permanent exhibit: a 1790 settler's log house from Cecil Township in Washington County; a 1910s steelworker's home from the industrial mill town of Homestead; and a 1950s house from the blue-collar suburb of West Mifflin. According to Museum Director Bill Keyes, visitors may explore the interiors of these replicas of actual structures and imagine life there.

In addition, interpretive parts in the main exhibition include:

- The Hill District between the world wars, including its Jewish, Lebanese, Syrian, Central European, Italian and African American communities.
- The fall of the steel industry. Keyes said this was an especially tricky one to design. "We're talking about quite recent history, with a wide variety of opinions as to why this deindustrialization happened.

Usually, you have a 50-year insulation between an event and the time you mount an exhibition. But we think this exhibit will make people understand that the museum is relevant to our lives today."

The second floor will contain things that you can see and touch — a reproduction 18th century fowling rifle, a steel mill wrench, a computer keyboard. Keyes says there will be interactive computer exhibits, with history quizzes, coal and steel maps, and the like.

Another exciting component is "Stages in History," the museum theatre program of the History Center. Actors portraying various characters at different points in the region's history will bring to life the people who built this area. From Andrew Carnegie to abolitionist Jane Grey Swisshelm to a 1980s third-generation African American steelworker, the characters' words, where possible, are drawn from letters, diaries, speeches and writings. The program is interactive, as well; characters will chat with interested visitors and answer questions.

After viewing the second floor's permanent exhibits, you may go to the fourth floor with its five galleries of changing exhibits. (The third floor is for children, to be discussed later in this article.) Opening day exhibits include:

- "To Live and Be Well: The History of Jewish Health Care and Social Services in Pittsburgh," which will travel later to other venues.

- "From *Paesi* to Pittsburgh: The Italian American Experience in Western Pennsylvania."

- "Afloat on the Ohio, 1894," a collection of 44 photographs Reuben Gold Thwaites took during an 1894 trip by rowboat from Brownsville on the

Monongahela River past Pittsburgh and down the Ohio to Cairo, Illinois.

- "Pittsburgh Rhythms: Music of a Changing City, 1820-1950," an interactive exhibit chronicling local musical and cultural traditions from Stephen Foster to the Pittsburgh Symphony, radio and jazz.

Future projects being planned include:

- An exhibition of 200 years of glass making in the region, based upon the Society's premier glassware collection, opening in Fall 1997.

- In 1998, the fourth floor will house a major exhibition from H. J. Heinz Co.'s 10,000-piece collection, both artifacts and paper (everything from pickle scales and containers to the company's innovative advertising campaigns).

"We think people will be surprised by all of this," says Keyes, "with its constant emphasis on people. Such a museum needs to have elements that will attract people more than once. We think that not only will our exhibits be so big, so in-depth, that people will need to come back to catch it all, we believe they will latch on in an emotional way and want to bring their relatives and friends to see some or all of the exhibits."

Families are a big part of the History Center's target audience. Tremendous resources and careful attention to making history accessible to children have gone into creating the third floor's "Discovery Place," 2,600 square feet devoted to young historians. Education Director Ann Fortescue explains Discovery Place activities will enable children to "discover the past through the observation of objects." For example, children can gain a sense of a chronology in local history through a game of matching shoes with a period, their function, and the people who

would have worn them. Featured are high-buttoned shoes from the 1880s, turn-of-the-century bathing shoes, and 1970s steelworkers' boots.

Discovery Place exhibit sections include:

- "Make Your Fortune on the Rivers" — a game where children move a steamboat and cargo from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, encountering river hazards and fortunes.

- "Climb in a Steel Mill" — children climb through a part of the steelmaking process. They pretend to be a piece of iron on its way to the Bessemer furnace, where they are converted into steel and slide down to become a finished rolled steel plate or rail.

- "Crafts the Western Pennsylvania Way" — workshop stations with activities representing three handmade crafts once popular in Pittsburgh.

- "Keeping House" and "Making Tracks" — two play areas developed with toddlers in mind, they feature a play log house and a tabletop of toy trains and boats set up in the shape of Pittsburgh's Point.

A trip to the sixth floor (the fifth floor, which will not be open to the public, is to be completed in the next construction phase) brings us full circle, back to the original CPAH impetus — the shortage of appropriate space in Pittsburgh for archival materials.

The sixth floor will be devoted to archives and research, available not only to scholars, dissertation writers and genealogical researchers, but also to high school and even elementary students. The centerpiece is a comfortable reading room that can seat as many as 100 researchers. Exposed timbers and brick walls open onto a western exposure, three-story picture window view of Downtown toward the Point.



First Floor
Great Hall
 In this open, airy space is found the Museum Shop, Cafe, 1940s trolley, Pittsburgh fire bell, Conestoga wagon, "The Visible City" mural by Douglas Cooper, historic neon signs, coat check, elevators, rest rooms, and more.



Second Floor
Points in Time
Points in Time, the History Center's largest exhibit, focuses on the stories of people in the region over the past 250 years. A 10-minute video in the orientation theater introduces the exhibit.

	Restrooms		Cafe
	Elevator		Pay Telephone
	Security		Coat Check

The History Center archives include materials from corporations, foundations, families, women's groups, social service and benevolent societies, and sports and business clubs. Archival materials will be placed in acid-free folders and boxes, and catalogued "so researchers can find what they need efficiently," says Carolyn Schumacher, director of Library and Archives. She adds that Western Pennsylvania is quite "under-researched," despite its central role in the history of iron, steel and glass. The Society has added significant resources for research in these areas.

Corporate holdings include materials from the H. J. Heinz Co., Mellon Bank, Gulf Oil Corp., U.S. Steel, Alcoa, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the former Pittsburgh Stock Exchange, the United Jewish Federation, a Homestead synagogue, and the Young Women's Christian Association, which includes valuable material on early racial integration efforts in Pittsburgh. The ethnic collections include Jewish American, Italian American, Polish American, Slovak American, and African American materials, with plans for adding Irish and Asian American collections.

"We will be the only institution in the city," Schumacher says, "that can take both artifacts and papers, for example, letters of courting and the wedding gown that followed."

Society directors underscore the synergy that is possible with other collections in the city: the Archives of Industrial Society in Hillman Library at the University of Pittsburgh, where collections emphasize organized labor and labor/management relations; the Pennsylvania Room at the Carnegie Library; Pittsburgh

History and Landmarks Foundation and its architectural archives; the Steel Heritage Center being developed in the Homestead area; and Allegheny County's archives. Scholars will have ample reason for coming to Pittsburgh in search of archival riches.

Future plans for the Library and Archives include an expanded women's history project and a continuation of taped oral histories. Schumacher is also reaching out to Pittsburgh's major artists to collect their papers.

Ten years ago, the Society had three working in its archives. Now there are 12, plus 20 volunteers and about a dozen interns. ☼

Basic Information

Hours

Museum open daily, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Library open Tuesday-Saturday,
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

History Center closed on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Admission

Adults \$5.75

Children \$4.25

Seniors (over 65) \$4.25

HSWP members Free

Phone Numbers

General Information 412/454-6000

Library & Archives 412/454-6407

Membership 412/454-6321

Volunteer Office 412/454-6431

Group Tours and Facilities Rental

Special rates are offered for adult or school group tours of the History Center, and must be scheduled in advance. For more information, call 412/454-6304.

Museum Shop

The Museum Shop offers a wide selection of items including books, memorabilia, and historic reproductions.

The Cafe

A cafe is located adjacent to the Museum Shop in the Great Hall. Snacks, light lunches, coffee, and dessert on the menu. Seating for 80.

For Your Convenience

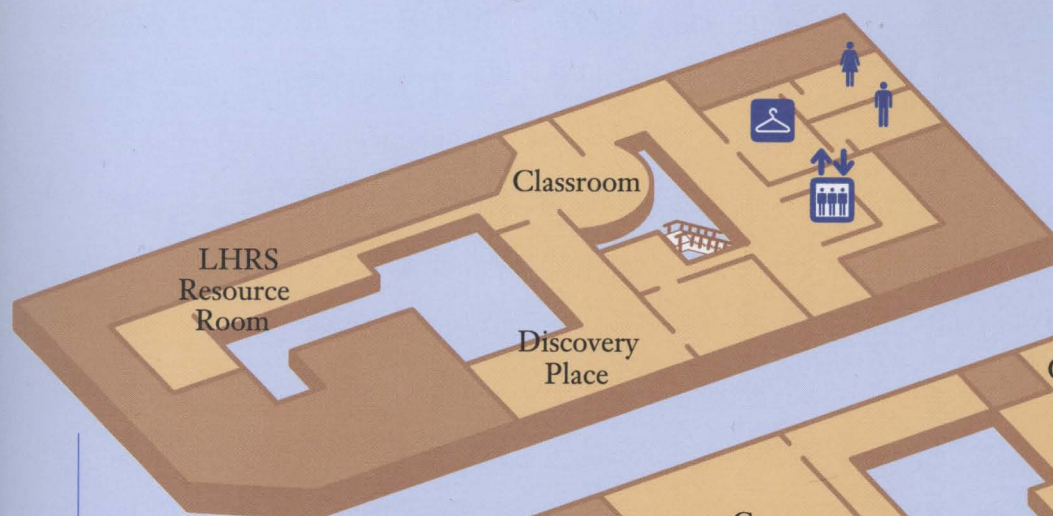
Coat check and restaurant refrigerator for perishables available behind the Cooper Mural gathering space on first floor.

Visitors requiring special assistance may inquire about wheelchairs at the coat check, first floor.

Restrooms located on first, second, third, and sixth floors. Baby care facilities available on the first and third floors.

Pay phones available on first floor.

Water fountains located on every floor.



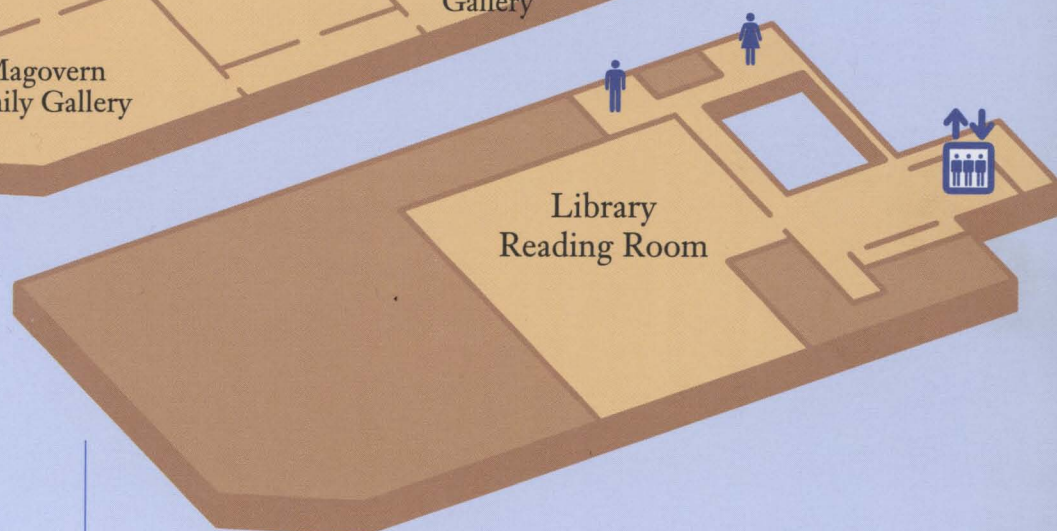
Third Floor **Discovery Place**

An exploratory facility for children and their families, the Discovery Place offers eight different interactive exhibits and games showing how to use artifacts to learn from the past.



Fourth Floor **Changing Exhibit Galleries**

Five large exhibit galleries offer regularly changing exhibits on a variety of historical topics.



Sixth Floor **Library & Archives**

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Books, family histories, personal papers, business records, and photographs make this the largest collection of printed and manuscript materials dedicated to Western Pennsylvania history.