Thank You ...  
No, Thank You, William Pitt

BY HAX McCULLOUGH

General John Forbes is the man who named Pittsburgh—in honor of William Pitt, the Elder, Prime Minister of Great Britain. Pitt had sent Forbes and his army to drive out the French and claim the forks of the Ohio for George II, king of Great Britain.

When word of Forbes' military success of November 25, 1758, reached Pitt, he thanked General Forbes profusely in a letter dated January 23, 1759. Forbes was back in Philadelphia by that time, but mortally ill; historians doubt he ever saw Pitt's letter before his death on March 11, 1759. Fortunately, the text of the letter survives. Here are key excerpts:

"I take the Opportunity to acquaint you, that His Majesty saw, with the Highest Satisfaction, that the well concerted Plan against Fort Du Quesne, which you had formed with so much Prudence and Judgement, and executed with equal Steadiness and Resolution, had been attended with the Success It so justly merited; And I have the King's Commands to assure You of His most entire Approbation of your whole Conduct thro' every Step of an Enterprize of the highest Importance to the Safety and Welfare of His Majesty's Possessions in North America..."

Give me leave, before I conclude this Letter, to add my particular Congratulations on this Occasion, and to assure you that all His Majesty's Servants join in sincere wishes for the Recovery of Your Health, and that you may live long to enjoy the great Honor you have acquired, as well as to finish the arduous work, you have so happily begun, by compleatly [sic] re-establishing the Crown of Great Britain in the Possession of Its Rights to the richest and most fertile part of North America, on a firm and lasting Foundation."

ANSWER TO LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO  Sylvia Fields recognized the amusement rides as part of Fairview Park, operated by African American churches on Route 22 in Delmont near Route 66. Ernest C. Jackson, current president of Fairview, says the rides were removed about 1980. There were once kiddie rides, concessions, and even a dancing pavilion. When the park was founded in 1945, blacks weren't welcome at most amusement parks.

In recent years, the churches fought successfully to make the park exempt from county taxes as a charitable organization. But mounting taxes over the years still forced the sale recently of two-thirds of the park's 150-some acres.

Still in place, however, is a kitchen, playground, picnic shelter, athletic field, horseshoe ring, and courts for basketball and volleyball. Its mission is to provide churches and civic groups a site for worship, learning, and recreation "away from the hassles, struggles, and worldly influences of daily living." Jackson invites those interested to call (412) 553-6450.