

PITTSBURGH UNDER SIEGE

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"Where liberty dwells, there is my country."

—Famous quotation attributed to Benjamin Franklin displayed in *Unconquered's* final scene.

By the mid-20th century, only the oldest Americans had even a distant living memory of the frontier, though its symbolism still loomed large in the American consciousness.



During the closing days of the French & Indian War in 1763, the victorious British and wounded French empires sorted out their differences through a diplomatic process known as the Treaty of Paris. The two nations had been at war off and on for several hundred years, and the resolution of the latest conflict, though more decisive than those prior, must have felt somewhat routine. In addition to the two great powers, lesser combatants including Spain joined the negotiations, as economic concessions were made, boundaries redrawn, and territories—including vast parts of the interior of North America—were swapped. But the matter-of-fact way in which hostilities were concluded belied deep tensions between the European powers and the native peoples who inhabited most of North America, tensions which finally boiled over in a pan-Indian revolt named for the charismatic Ottawa war chief who became its most famous leader.

During the summer of 1763, American Indians, incensed at the flood of white settlement, British restrictions on trade, and their abandonment by the French, united in an attempt to retake the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains once and for all.

The short war, known as Pontiac's Uprising, witnessed the fall of nearly every major British post west of the mountains, with the exception of Forts Detroit and Pitt, and eliminated any illusion that peace in Europe would lead to peace in the backwoods of North America.

In the century and a half after Pontiac's Uprising ignited the Eastern frontier, American settlers pushed westward across the Mississippi, Great Plains, and Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, all the while engaging in conflicts with Native Americans. By 1890, with small pockets of settlement spilling over into virtually every corner of the country, the U.S. government officially declared that the frontier region no longer existed.¹ In a tragic coincidence in late December of the same year, a band of Hunkpapa and Miniconjou Lakota—including old men, women, and children—were massacred by troops of the U.S. 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota, bringing a symbolic conclusion to the centuries-long conflict known as the Indian Wars.²

The two events also marked an end to a central element of the American narrative, that of the ever-expanding Western Frontier, a fact which was not lost on Americans at the time.³ By the mid-20th century, only the oldest Americans had even a distant living memory

of the frontier, though its symbolism still loomed large in the American consciousness. Long before the frontier faded into memory, it was mythologized in dime store novels, stage performances, Wild West reviews (such as the one operated by Buffalo Bill Cody), and eventually by the fledgling motion picture industry, which built an entire genre around the myth and spectacle of the Old West.⁴ During the 1930s and '40s, however, several films including *Allegheny Uprising* and *Northwest Passage* looked back to the earlier, Eastern frontier, when French and British forces fought for dominance of the continent, and the region just beyond the Appalachian Mountains marked the boundary between indigenous and European cultures. Not to be outdone, in 1947, legendary director Cecil B. DeMille threw his hat into the ring with the Pontiac's War epic, *Unconquered*. As the last in his series of films on American history, *Unconquered* embodied many of DeMille's personal beliefs about the resilience of the national spirit in the face of adversity, and despite a liberal dose of campy action sequences, his audience—many of them soldiers just back from World War II—went along for the ride.⁵ A new exhibit at the Fort Pitt Museum examines the movie; this article takes a detailed look at the events that inspired the film.



Dressed in the uniform of a Virginia Regiment officer, Holden (Cooper) attempts to trick Guyasuta (Boris Karloff) and the "medicine man" Scioto (Marc Lawrence) into freeing Abby Hale (Goddard).

Private Collection.

AMERICA GOES TO THE MOVIES

While many aspects of post-WWII society were far from resolved, America in the late 1940s was largely a culture on the upswing, and its people were never more confident of their place in the world. Having only recently emerged victorious from the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific, American G.I.'s returned home to an economy booming with renewed demand for goods and services. They also created a boom of another kind as hundreds of thousands resumed the

family life they had put on hold.⁶ With new families and considerably more disposable income, Americans took to the movies in droves. For their part, Hollywood studios such as Paramount and MGM churned out a steady stream of lavish epics and dramatic blockbusters with a cast of stars that embodied all that Americans saw in themselves, or more accurately, what they wanted to see in themselves.

Perhaps better than anyone else at the time, famed director Cecil B. DeMille knew what popular audiences craved. His reputation for extravagant historical dramas with enough sex to keep the censors on

edge—and audiences lined up—was well-known, and his success was bolstered by a studio system that consistently supplied him with A-list heartthrobs and heroines. It also ensured his ability to develop long-standing working relationships with some of the best actors as they rose to stardom.⁷ *Unconquered*, for instance, marked the third time he had worked with his friend and collaborator Henry Wilcoxon, the third with Paulette Goddard, and the fourth with Gary Cooper.⁸ He pushed his actors to their limit, and they in turn gave some of the most memorable performances of Hollywood's Golden Age. *Unconquered* was no different, as Cooper, Goddard, Wilcoxon,



Unconquered marked the third time DeMille had worked with his friend and collaborator Henry Wilcoxon, the third with Paulette Goddard, and the fourth with Gary Cooper. He pushed his actors to their limit, and they in turn gave some of the most memorable performances of Hollywood's Golden Age.

LEFT: Gary Cooper poses with the original swivel-breech rifle he carried in *Unconquered*.
Joseph Musso. Original image by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

ABOVE: Swivel-barrel flintlock rifle, c. 1760, and loading blocks, c. 1947. The swivel-barrel flintlock rifle shown here was carried by Gary Cooper's character Christopher Holden in *Unconquered*. Like several other key props, it actually dates to the mid-18th century. Made by gunsmith John George Flittner of Carlsruhe, Saxony, around 1760, it mounts two barrels, one rifled at approximately .52 caliber, the other "straight rifled" at about 20 gauge. This rifle was rented for the picture from the legendary firm of James Stembridge, which dealt exclusively to the motion picture and theatrical industries from its warehouse on the Paramount Pictures back lot.

Private Collector.



Cecil B. DeMille directs Paulette Goddard during a scene in which she is captured by the Senecas.

Joseph Musso. Original image by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

and others brought the Western Pennsylvania backcountry to life in grand style.

While ostensibly based on a novel of the same name by author and former Pittsburgh newsman Neil H. Swanson, *Unconquered's* plot and the script had originally been worked out for the screen by a group of veteran Hollywood writers. Swanson (whose earlier work, *The First Rebel*, formed the basis of the 1939 John Wayne film, *Allegheny Uprising*) had written a pair of historical novels set in the pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania backcountry, and *Unconquered* was meant to be the next in the series. DeMille, however, was impatient to begin shooting, so it was decided to shelve the novel until the film was finished.⁹ Though DeMille and his research team gathered thousands of pages of supporting material on every imaginable subject, several obstacles soon presented themselves to the master showman, including how to devise an interesting way to shoot the story's main action sequence, the Siege of Pittsburgh. In his own words, "There is nothing more boring than a Siege in a picture. An audience doesn't give a damn about it.... So when we take that on, we take on something that has to

be done differently than it's been done before, because it's been a flop before."¹⁰

Nevertheless, filming began in earnest in the summer of 1946, and while most of the action was shot on the Paramount back lot, with exteriors in the mountains of Idaho, the film's opening sequence, narrated by DeMille himself, was shot in Cook Forest State Park. A Department of Forests and Waters newsletter of the time provides a vintage glimpse of a now-common sight: a film crew on location in Western Pennsylvania. Interestingly, the Pennsylvania shoot also included the film's largest use of actual Native Americans playing Native Americans, in this case a group of Senecas from western New York.¹¹

In total, the film featured hundreds of background actors and principal cast, each of whom had to be costumed and equipped from the ground up. For the effort, DeMille employed all the resources that the well-established Hollywood production machine had to offer. Costumes were created from scratch by the venerable Western Costume Company, which had been in business since 1911.¹² Many of the props, including an original circa 1760 rifle carried by Cooper and

made by John George Flittner of Karlsruhe (in present-day Germany), were procured from the firm of James Stembridge, who first entered the business in the silent days at DeMille's request.¹³ Ironically, though the swivel-breech flintlock is somewhat unique, the rifle's overall style and design would not have been out of place in 1760s Pittsburgh.

To further equip his lead actor, the master showman lent a pair of 18th-century pistols from his personal collection. Beautifully carved and engraved, the pistols—meant to be carried in bucket-type holsters while on horseback—was made by Johann Andreas Kuchenreiter, a gunsmith working in Bavaria in the mid- to late-18th century. For the production, Paramount props-men outfitted the guns with gold-plated belt clips, allowing Cooper to sling them from a specially designed holster in somewhat anachronistic (but true Hollywood) style.¹⁴

HISTORY MEETS HOLLYWOOD

For all the hours of research DeMille and his team amassed in preparation for the film, in the end, the old showman took considerable liberties with historical accuracy. "Audiences," he once declared, "do not want to be educated, but entertained."¹⁵ And, despite a story grounded in history, in the final cut, *Unconquered* featured several instances of the director's propensity for jazzing up actual events, a fact that did not escape the notice of either his peers or historians. At the September meeting of the venerable Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, historian Alfred P. James of the University of Pittsburgh gave a talk to help members separate fact from fiction.¹⁶

The story, which begins aboard a ship bound for Virginia, brings together two characters one certainly could have encountered

at Fort Pitt in the early 1760s: an officer of the Virginia Regiment, and an indentured servant hoping for a new beginning on the frontier. For this last part, DeMille cast Paulette Goddard in the role of Abigail Hale, a white “bond slave” who chose servitude in America over the gallows in England. Gary Cooper’s character, Chris Holden, combined traits of a Virginia gentleman and backwoodsman, reminiscent of a slightly more mature George Washington. Indeed, in the film, Holden and Washington are friends and fellow veterans of backwoods campaigns.

As the story progresses, Holden discovers a plot by Indian trader Martin Garth, played by Howard Da Silva, to supply weapons to Pontiac—a historical Ottawa war chief—and assume control of the Ohio Country. In reality, the character of Garth appears to have combined the worst perceived traits of

several actual Indian traders, such as George Croghan and Robert Callendar, both of whom operated on the Pennsylvania frontier in the 1760s. In the pre-Revolutionary backcountry, such men were feared as much as respected for their influence among American Indians, and the fact that they often worked as government agents (in Croghan’s case, under Sir William Johnson) made them at once more powerful and subject to greater suspicion. Their influence played upon the worst fears of settlers, namely that the traders, in league with colonial officials, were supplying to Native Americans the very implements—guns, tomahawks, and scalping knives—by which backwoods families were being murdered.¹⁷

While Garth at least captured the essence of a historical character, others in *Unconquered* are slightly more contrived. If the nefarious trader embodied the genuine fears of 18th-century

settlers, Chris Holden personified the more modern, post-war American ideal of the lone frontiersman, equally at odds with both white and native societies, but constantly fighting on behalf of settlers. In the film, Holden heroically flouts the military command at Fort Pitt under Captain Simeon Ecuyer; pursues the villain, Garth; launches a one-man expedition to rescue Abigail Hale from indigenous warriors under Guyasuta (Boris Karloff); and later coordinates a scheme to save Fort Pitt with the real-life hero of Bushy Run, Colonel Henry Bouquet. In the interest of not spoiling the ending, readers who wish to know whether he gets the girl as well will have to check out the film, which shows twice daily at the Fort Pitt Museum through the run of the exhibit.

Despite the somewhat fantastical unfolding of events in *Unconquered*, in reality, life on the frontier was far more complex.



Scene from *Unconquered*, in which the women of Fort Pitt form a bucket brigade to put out fires caused by Native American arrows. Unlike some of the events depicted in the film, this scene is very faithful to the historical record.

Joseph Musso. Original image by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

Soldiers, especially officers, were the anchors of the military establishment at far-western outposts, and as such were loath to disobey orders and take matters into their own hands, actions that might cost them their lives. Further, Indian captives were seldom redeemed, let alone rescued, especially during such tumultuous times as Pontiac's Uprising. However, an interesting occurrence at Fort Pitt, noted by Quaker merchant James Kenny brings to light the subtlety of interaction between whites and American Indians. According to Kenny, Jammy Wilson, an Indian man who "never went to War by report," had decided to free the white woman who had become his wife.

On finding she inclined to return to her own People, he brought her & ye boy with ye Amount of his Estate to our Store & told ye Woman notwithstanding, He loved her, as she want'd to leave him, would let her go, so he divided his substance equally with her, giving half ye remaindr to ye Boy & set them both free & went with ye Woman home giving her a Horse to Ride; an instance of more self denial than many men of great Christian professions shews their poor Negroes.¹⁸

Wilson's actions speak volumes about the nature of war and retribution on the frontier. In native society, captives filled the void left by deceased family members, often those who had died in battle or as a result of disease. For their part, those captives who were not killed (primarily women and children) were taken violently from their own homes and families, and subsequently adopted into their captors'

This coat, based on the apparel of the Virginia Regiment, was probably worn by Paulette Goddard in *Unconquered*, c. 1946.

Hollywood Movie Costumes, Inc.



Pipe tomahawk, c. 1755. Made by frontier blacksmith John Fraser, this tomahawk is similar to many found in archaeological sites throughout the Ohio Country and is the only signed example of Frasier's work.
Stephen Fuller.



Abby Hale (Goddard) is welcomed to the King's Birthday Ball at Fort Pitt by Captain Simeon Ecuyer (Victor Varconi, center), Chris Holden (Cooper, right), and Captain Steele (Henry Wilcoxon, far left). The coat worn by Wilcoxon is the same on display in *Unconquered: History Meets Hollywood at Fort Pitt*.

Joseph Musso. Original image by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

society, often assuming the very identity of a deceased member of a tribe.¹⁹ In time many, particularly the youngest, lost all memory of their white families, causing much heartache in the event of their redemption. So conflicted were many upon their return to white society that they escaped to their Indian families at the first opportunity.²⁰

If the complexities of captivity were oversimplified for dramatic effect, *Unconquered* depicted Native Americans with outright unfairness. In what was undoubtedly the film's biggest historical shortcoming, DeMille portrayed Indians, who somehow managed



to mobilize a massive inter-tribal war effort against the British Empire, as simple-minded savages driven primarily by their lust for blood. Indeed, even the Seneca leader Guyasuta is only a supporting villain to Garth, and his people are relegated to the role of a savage horde preying mercilessly upon white settlers. In addition, most of the actors portraying Indians in *Unconquered* (and, to be fair, many other films of the day) were not Indians at all. Boris Karloff, the English actor best known for his role as the monster in *Frankenstein* (1931) and the voice of the Grinch in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1961), played Guyasuta; Jewish American Marc Lawrence (Max Goldsmith) portrayed the "medicine man" Scioto; DeMille's adopted daughter, Katherine, played Garth's Indian wife, Hannah; and Noble Johnson, a veteran African American actor, portrayed Guyasuta's anonymous henchman.²¹

Johnson and his brother, George, had founded the first primarily African American studio, The Lincoln Motion Picture Company, in Nebraska in 1915 before moving to Hollywood the next year. Thus, by the time he played an Indian warrior in *Unconquered*, Johnson had over 30 years' experience in Hollywood.²² Ironically, his ability to cross racial boundaries in his film roles did not necessarily mean that his Native American peers had the same success. Though several Indian actors such as Jay Silverheels and Chief John Big Tree worked on the film, the major roles all went to whites. To his partial credit, DeMille did employ Iron Eyes Cody, a Native American consultant to ensure that at least the visual aspects of the film were more or less authentically portrayed, though he was apparently misled: Iron Eyes, who also portrayed the warrior Red Corn in *Unconquered* and later became famous for shedding a tear in the 1970s "Keep America Beautiful" ad campaign, was born Espera DeCorti, the son of Italian immigrants. When he moved to Hollywood, he adopted his life-long persona as a Native American.²³

Royal American officer's coat made by Western Costume Company, and worn by veteran actor Henry Wilcoxon in *Unconquered*, c. 1946.
Hollywood Movie Costumes, Inc.



LAYING SIEGE TO FORT PITT

Though he took considerable artistic license with everything from the characters to the plot, DeMille saved his biggest guns for the film's dramatic crescendo, the Siege of Pittsburgh. During the action sequence, the fictional Fort Pitt was bombarded with fireballs hurled by American Indian warriors who used canoes as ladders to scale the walls, as settlers and soldiers fought bravely to keep them at bay. Though liberally embellished, the film version of the siege does reflect the unusual circumstances under which the real Fort

Pitt was attacked. In 18th-century America, Indians seldom attacked a large fortified structure, preferring instead to fight in smaller, more mobile war parties, which allowed them to strike and retreat quickly while sustaining a minimum number of casualties. The fact that they chose to lay siege to Fort Pitt—one of the largest forts in North America—illustrates both the decisiveness and desperation that Pontiac's Uprising represented. In some ways, the manner in which they fought during the rebellion was as significant as the decision to take up arms in the first place.

In addition to its economic and political components, the rebellion also had a significant spiritual undercurrent inspired by an American Indian leader named Neolin. Sometimes

referred to as the "Delaware Prophet," he based his assertions that Indians should renounce European ways, especially their reliance on material goods, on a series of dreams in which the Master of Life had spoken to him. Thus, the very tangible problem of diminished access to European goods found a spiritual solution as some warriors laid aside their guns in favor of bows and arrows.²⁴ An undated powder horn, almost certainly made by a resident of Fort Pitt during the siege, shows several warriors skulking about the fort armed with bows, arrows, and tomahawks. In a further example of the resort to non-traditional tactics, Native Americans also employed specially made fire arrows in hopes of igniting the roofs of buildings inside the walls of Fort Pitt and other outposts.²⁵



ABOVE: Soldiers of the 42nd and 77th Highland Regiments march triumphantly toward Fort Pitt.

Joseph Musso. Original image by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

RIGHT: *The Scottish Highlander*, engraving by G. Bickham, 1743. An early depiction of a soldier from the Highland regiments, showing the adoption of ethnic Scottish clothing and accouterments by these regular British units.

National Museums of Scotland.



Citizens and soldiers at Fort Pitt also took desperate measures to prevent their enemy from breaking through the fort's defenses. According to the fort's commander, Captain Simeon Ecuyer, after building a makeshift palisade wall around the Ohio Bastion,

I collected all the beaver traps which our merchants had and they were set in the evening outside the palisades. I would be happy to send you one, with a savage's leg in it, but they haven't given me that satisfaction. I have had a number of crow-foot traps made for the ditch, they are pointed enough for their moccasins.²⁶

The "crow-foot traps," or caltrops to which Ecuyer referred, were thrown in the ditch surrounding the hastily repaired walls in hopes of inflicting both physical and psychological

trauma on the attackers. In addition, he formed several militia companies from the civilian men who had crowded into the fort with their families; organized the women into a brigade to extinguish fires caused by hostile fire arrows; and positioned snipers and cannon in each of the fort's bastions.²⁷ In a further illustration of the extreme measures taken by the defenders, when two Native American men who had come to speak to the commander told falsely of the destruction of Fort Ligonier, one of Ecuyer's most trusted men, William Trent, recorded that they were given a gift of "two blankets and handkerchief out of the Small Pox Hospital." "I hope," he wrote, "it will have the desired effect."²⁸ On July 31, Trent recorded that they "threw some hand grenades into the ditch, where we imagined

some of the enemy were."²⁹ On August 2, Ecuyer again expressed his resolve and utter contempt for the Indians in a letter to Bouquet. If either the hardened commander or his men were fearful of another attack, he did not let on.

I permitted no one to fire without seeing his target, and as soon as they showed their noses they were picked off like flies, for I have good marksmen.... How gratified I should be if they attempted an assault. They would remember it to the thousandth generation.³⁰

Even as Ecuyer wrote to him, Bouquet was on the march westward from Carlisle, having received orders to relieve the garrison at Fort Pitt. By August 5, after leaving detachments of 30 men each at Forts Bedford and Ligonier, he neared the post known as Bushy Run Station,

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about 25 miles from Fort Pitt along the Forbes Road. His force, composed of the remnants of the 42nd and 77th Highland Regiments, and 60th Royal Americans, along with a small detachment of Maryland Rangers, totaled by his own calculation about 400 men under arms.³¹

They were attacked on August 5, at a place called Edge Hill, by a combined force of Shawnees, Mingoes, Wyandots, and Delawares. The two-day battle saw heavy casualties on both sides and again demonstrated the determination of both natives and whites to win at all costs. Actual figures from the American Indian force are unknown, but the British loss was tallied at 110 men overall, many of them officers of the Highland and Royal American Regiments. A hastily scribbled casualty list, written by Lieutenant James Grant of the 77th (Montgomerie's) Highlanders—and on display with his sword and pistol—bears witness to the frantic nature of the battle. In the end, Bouquet's exhausted and dehydrated men outmaneuvered and defeated the Native Americans, effectively lifting the Siege of Pittsburgh upon his arrival at the fort on August 22. Though he was victorious, the veteran soldier spoke highly of his adversaries, stating that, "they fought with the greatest bravery and resolution for two days." His highest admiration, however, was reserved for his own men. "[T]he Highland[er]s," he declared, "are the bravest Men I ever Saw, and their behaviour in that obstinat [sic] affair does them the highest honor."³²

In *Unconquered*'s final scene, the door closes behind Holden and Hale, displaying the famous quotation attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "Where liberty dwells, there is my country."³³ But while the curtain fell neatly on the characters of *Unconquered*, the suppression of Pontiac's Uprising was just another chapter in the decades-long border war for control of the Ohio Country.

It would be another three decades, with countless lives lost and atrocities committed on both sides, before a tenuous peace settled over the region. Following the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, the area known as the


Old Northwest Territory was opened to white settlement, pushing the native population even further west. During the War of 1812, a Shawnee leader named Tecumseh led a second pan-Indian uprising to reclaim the region. He was unsuccessful in his efforts, but the short war he provoked marked another chapter in a story that would be repeated from coast to coast as the pressures of frontier settlement caused constant unrest between indigenous peoples and whites.³⁴ As the frontier moved ever westward, liberty would prove to be a subjective term, and an end to the conflict would only come at the expense of many lives.

THE SECOND SIEGE OF PITTSBURGH

As the fall of 1947 approached, Pittsburghers again prepared for a siege, this time rolling out the red carpet for an army of high-profile invaders. At the helm was "the old master," Cecil B. DeMille, proudly marshaling the celebration of his latest epic and the great city that had grown up around old Fort Pitt. "*Unconquered*," he once told a local reporter, "belongs to Pittsburgh," and he could think of no better place for its world premiere.³⁵ So, for a few unseasonably warm days in early October 1947, the Steel City became the center of the entertainment universe.

While the film's biggest stars, Gary Cooper and Paulette Goddard, were unable to attend, several members of the cast and other stars, including Howard Da Silva, did make appearances. Among the other dignitaries present were noted film critic Hedda Hopper, author Neil H. Swanson, Governor James Duff, Mayor David Lawrence, and of course DeMille, who once again took the opportunity to praise Pittsburgh and her citizens.

The film's official parade and premiere at the Loew's Penn Theater drew



Trade knife, c. 1770, and Native American quilled-neck knife case, c. 1780. Knives such as these were popular trade items at outposts like Fort Pitt in the 1760s and 1770s.
Stephen Fuller.

Cecil B. DeMille and daughter Katherine, who also starred in *Unconquered*, pose with the 18th-century pistols used by Cooper in the film and on display as part of the exhibit.
Private Collection.






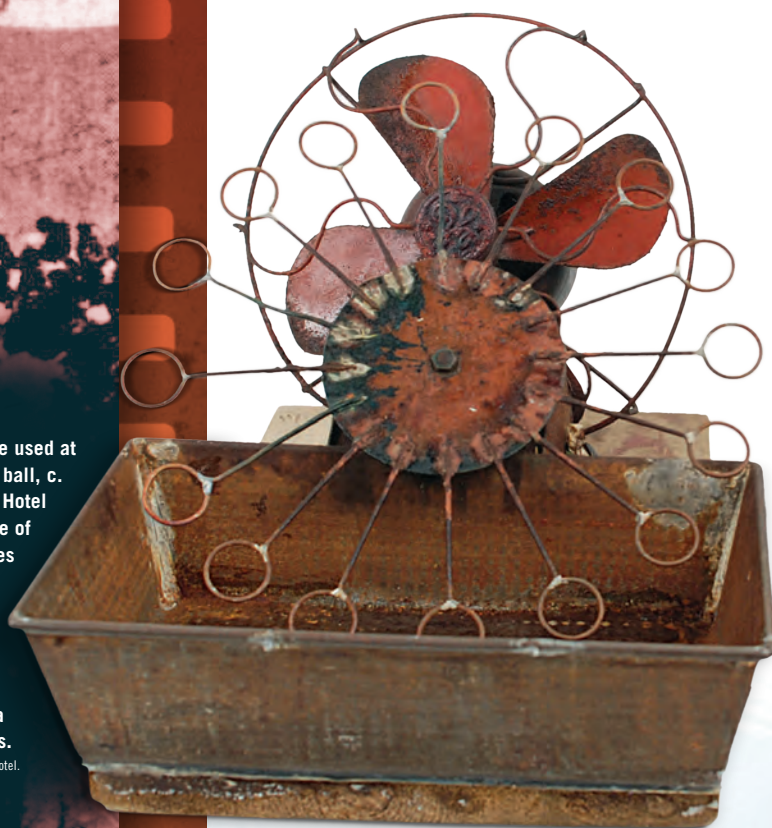
The *Unconquered* parade as it crossed the intersection of Fifth and Liberty Avenues.
Pittsburgh Press, October 3, 1947.

Bubble machine used at *Unconquered* premiere ball, c. 1947. Crafted by William Penn Hotel engineer Ludwig Demoshek for the premiere of *Unconquered*, this machine wafted a cloud of bubbles over the attendees of the official premiere ball, held on the 17th floor of the hotel in October 1947. In addition to the throng of celebrities, film critics, and wealthy local industrialists in attendance, a young bandleader named Lawrence Welk provided musical accompaniment for the event. Welk was so pleased with the bubble effect that he adopted it as his own and kept it as a signature element of his variety show for many years.

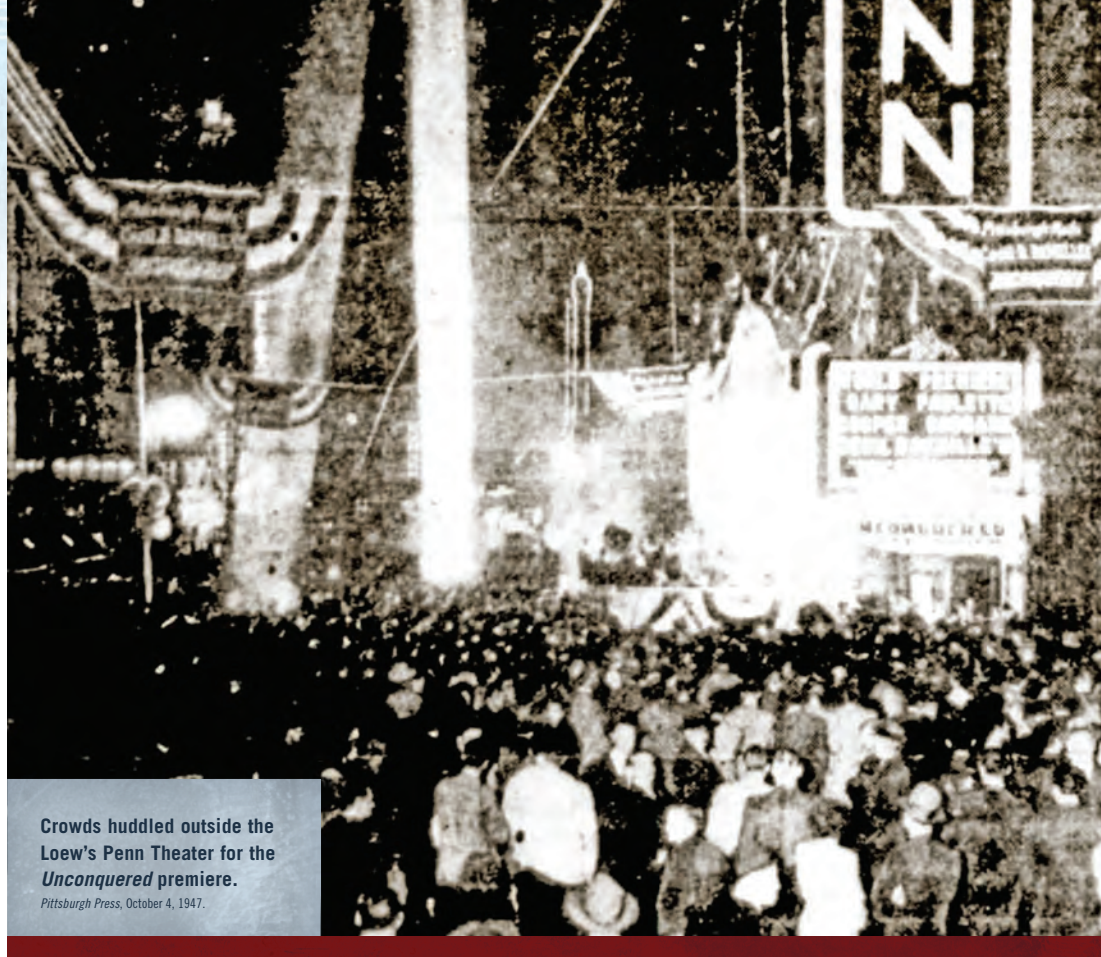
Omni William Penn Hotel.

thousands to the city streets in hopes of catching a glimpse of the spectacle. An estimated 5,000 participants, including 30 Seneca Indians, marched in the celebration, which Governor Duff proclaimed the official beginning of Pennsylvania Week, 1947. For his part, DeMille moved constantly from public engagements to society dinners, never missing an opportunity to compliment the host city and her people. He also gave several patriotic speeches in which he warned against external threats to American democracy, namely the rise of Communism, which would become a central element of the American experience in the decades following WWII.³⁶ DeMille and the Hollywood he helped to create have largely faded into memory, but our fascination with the colonial frontier, and the movies that take us there, continues to this day.

To learn more about the Siege of Pittsburgh and the film inspired by it, visit *Unconquered: History Meets Hollywood at Fort Pitt*, an exhibition at the Fort Pitt Museum running through August 2, 2014. 



Michael Burke is a lifelong student of Early American history and material culture, and has always been interested in historic clothing and textiles. After graduating with a degree in History from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, he worked as a costumer to various documentaries and feature films in New England. In the spring of 2012, he returned to his roots in Western Pennsylvania, and the history of the 18th-century frontier that first captured his interest as a boy. He is currently the exhibits specialist for the Fort Pitt Museum and, along with Museum Director Alan Gutches, recently oversaw the development and in-house construction of the new exhibit, *Unconquered: History Meets Hollywood at Fort Pitt*, which allowed him to draw on his background in both history and film. Special thanks to HHC Chief Registrar Courtney A. Keel for assistance with artifact images.



Crowds huddled outside the Loew's Penn Theater for the *Unconquered* premiere.

Pittsburgh Press, October 4, 1947.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Compendium of the Eleventh US Census: 1890*, Robert P. Porter, Superintendent, Part I- Population, under Table, "Areas in Square Miles of the Different Classes of Settlement in 1890, by States and Territories," xlviii. Accessed at www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1890b3_p1-01.pdf.

² Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Owl Books, 1971, reprinted 2007), 439-446.

³ Richard White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," essay accessed online at www.studythepast.com/his378/turnerandbuffalobill.pdf.

⁴ Gabe Esso and Raymond Lee, *Cecil B. DeMille: The Man and His Pictures* (New York: Castle Books, 1970), 22-31. DeMille's first film, *The Squaw Man* (1914), itself based on a popular stage play, is credited with being the first full-length feature shot in Hollywood, as well as the first Western.

⁵ "Story of Fort Pitt Offers Lessons for American Defense, DeMille Says," *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 3, 1947, 18.

⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Publications & Special Studies, *100 Years of Consumer Spending: Data for the Nation, New York City and Boston*, BLS Report 991, 21.

⁷ Henry Wilcoxon, "The Biggest Man I've Ever Known," in Esso and Lee, *Cecil B. DeMille*, 263-275.

⁸ Esso and Lee, *Cecil B. DeMille*.

⁹ Kaspar Monahan, "Pittsburgh Promised World Premiere of New 'Wonder' Movie," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 14, 1947, 10.

¹⁰ Robert S. Birchard, *Cecil B. DeMille's Hollywood* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), 331.

¹¹ *Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters Newsletter* 1, no. 2 (1946). This organization was the predecessor to the modern PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

¹² Tyler Beard and Jim Arndt, *100 Years of Western Wear* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith, 2001), 21.

¹³ Jeremy Agnew, *The Old West in Fact and Film: History Versus Hollywood* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 141.

¹⁴ Notes of private collector regarding DeMille pistols.

¹⁵ Esso and Lee, *Cecil B. DeMille*, 147.

¹⁶ "Historians Here on Warpath Charge Movie Scenes Faked," local newspaper clipping (author, date and publication not included) pasted in Fort Pitt Society, Daughters of the American Revolution scrapbook for 1947.

¹⁷ James Smith, "An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Col. James Smith" in *Scoouwa: James Smith's Indian Captivity Narrative*, with notes by William Darlington and annotation by John J. Barsotti (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1996), 123.

¹⁸ James Kenny, "Journal of James Kenny, 1761-1763," ed. John W. Jordan, in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 37, no. 1 (1913): 7. Journal entry for June 12, 1761.

¹⁹ Barsotti ed., *Scoouwa*, 31.

²⁰ William Smith, *Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, in 1764* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1868), 80. Accessed at archive.org/details/cihm_13807.

²¹ Internet Movie Database, imdb.com.

²² Toriano S. Berry and Venise T. Berry, *Historical Dictionary of African American Cinema* (Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 2007), 190.

²³ Amy Waldman, "Iron Eyes Cody, 94, an Actor and Tearful Anti-Littering Icon (Obituary)," *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1999.

²⁴ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 94-104.

²⁵ Captain Simeon Ecuyer to Colonel Henry Bouquet, August 2, 1763, quoted in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part II (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942), 6.

²⁶ Ecuyer to Bouquet, June 16, 1763, quoted in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part I (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942), 153-155.

²⁷ Ecuyer to Bouquet, June 2, 1763, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part I, 125-127.

²⁸ William Trent, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt," ed. A.T. Volwiler in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 11, no. 3 (1924): 400. Journal entry for June 24, 1763.

²⁹ *Ibid*, entry for July 31, 1763.

³⁰ Ecuyer to Bouquet, August 2, 1763, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part II, 5-6.

³¹ Bouquet to Maj. Henry Gladwin, August 28, 1763, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part II, 26.

³² Bouquet to Lieut. James MacDonald, August 28, 1763, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Series 21649, Part II, 30.

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