

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich  
President & CEO

## Preserving Our History

This summer, the Senator John Heinz History Center will welcome the newest addition to our museum system with the opening of the Museum Conservation Center, which includes state-of-the-art collections storage and more.

Located behind the History Center in the Dietrich Building at 1221 Penn Ave., the new nine-story, 55,000-square-foot LEED Certified Green Building will allow all of the museum's artifacts to be stored under one roof for the first time with Smithsonian-quality security, temperature, and humidity controls throughout.

Earlier this year, the History Center moved its off-site collections into the new building and completed the construction of the bridge across Mulberry Way that will provide easy access to the Sigo Falk Collections Center visible storage area on the fourth floor. This artifact-rich installation is slated to open in November 2014.

The first floor Museum Conservation Center will provide visitors with expert

advice on how to preserve their artwork, family photographs, archival materials, antique furniture, and much more. Museum conservators with a variety of specialties—including textiles, paper, art, and objects—will educate visitors on how to best care for and preserve their antiques and family heirlooms. The Museum Conservation Center is an innovative enterprise that will enable the public to receive the same quality treatment for their treasures as museums provide for their artifacts and archives.

The end result of similar conservation efforts can be seen on display at the History Center's newest exhibition, *Pittsburgh's Lost Steamboat: Treasures of the Arabia*. After the boat spent nearly 150 years underground and below the water table, caring for artifacts from the sunken *Arabia* proved to be a challenge. However, the team at the Arabia Steamboat Museum worked hard to ensure that objects, from doorknobs to fragile wool clothing, were



The History Center's Conservation Lab provides state-of-the-art facilities and Smithsonian-quality care for artifacts.

HHC. Photo by Paula Andras.



**TOP:** While leather survived being buried underwater, cotton thread did not. The Hawley family and their dedicated volunteers carefully reassembled nearly every pair of boots and shoes found on the *Arabia*, re-stitching thread back through existing holes.

Arabia Steamboat Museum. Photo by David Hawley.

**MIDDLE:** Shoes from the *Arabia* being prepped to go on display in the museum.

HHC.

**BOTTOM:** Textiles required careful maintenance and treatment. Here, Arabia Steamboat Museum lab technician Dr. Judy Wright examines the sleeves of a red wool shirt. The wool pieces were first stored in a box and frozen until the staff was ready to undertake the delicate steps needed to reassemble the shirt.

Arabia Steamboat Museum. Photo by David Hawley.



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conserved in a way that allows them to be seen and enjoyed by museum visitors today and in the future. The same kind of work can now be done on your own treasures with help from the History Center.

With the opening of the Museum Conservation Center, the History Center will provide professional conservation services directly to the public. Stay tuned to [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org) for information on upcoming conservation workshops throughout the year.

Museums alone cannot care for all the significant heritage and material culture of our region. Working together, we can preserve our history for future generations. ☀

## Learn More Online



Readers can view three Arabia Steamboat Museum videos documenting the reassembly process of a wool coat (similar to one that will be in the exhibit) on the museum's Facebook page.

## The following donors generously supported the Museum Conservation Center:

State RACP  
Falk Foundation  
Buncher Company  
Allegheny County CITF  
Eden Hall Foundation  
Hillman Foundation  
Jack Mascaro  
David Barendsfeld  
Chuck Hammel  
Bob Peirce  
Urban Redevelopment Authority  
Anonymous

## Learn More Online



Steamboat Arabia exhibit info.



Andy Masich discusses a family heirloom at last year's popular *Pittsburgh's Hidden Treasures* event with KDKA-TV. This year's appraisal event is August 17.

Photo by Rachel Lynn Schoen.



Excavating the *Arabia* was truly a family affair, and everyone helped with the early task of gently washing off the worst of the mud and debris.

Arabia Steamboat Museum.



Visitors can meet with a variety of professional conservators to discuss the best ways to preserve their antiques and heirlooms at the new Museum Conservation Center.

Photo by Rachel Lynn Schoen.



# Somerset Historical Center



- The Somerset Historical Center (SHC) is a 150-acre rural history museum that preserves the history of life in rural southwestern Pennsylvania from the region's first farmers to the present day through exhibits, workshops, and educational programs.
- The SHC is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in partnership with the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County, Inc.
- The Visitors Center, constructed in 1997, houses permanent orientation exhibits and videos, changing exhibits, and is home to the Historical Society's Genealogical Research Library.
- The SHC also features a re-created c. 1771 settler's cabin, the Adam Miller Farmstead, the 1859 Walters Mill Covered Bridge, the c. 1890 Jacob Emerick Cider Press, and a reproduction c. 1860 Maple Sugar Camp.
- From April 1 through October 31, the SHC is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m. From November 1 through March 30, the SHC is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Guided tours of the outdoor exhibits are available from April 1 through October 31 with the Visitors Center, Genealogical Library, and Museum Shop remaining open throughout the year.
- The SHC sponsors Mountain Craft Days the first weekend after Labor Day. The festival features demonstrating artisans, traditional foods, interpreters, and entertainment.
- The SHC will host the Heinz History Center's traveling Civil War exhibit, *The Civil War in Pennsylvania*, June 7–August 5, 2014.

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The History Center Affiliates Program, HCAP, is a membership-based network that allows local and regional historical societies and museums access to museum professionals and best practice standards through the Senator John Heinz History Center. To find out more about HCAP or to apply for membership for your organization, please contact Robert O. Stakeley, Educator, at [rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org) or (412) 454-6359.

