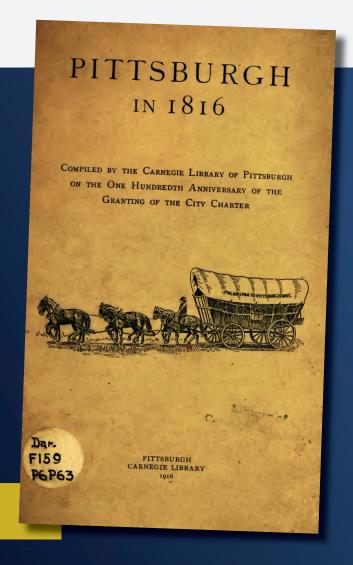


"This morning about sunrise, we left Pittsburgh with all the joy of a bird which escapes from its cage. 'From the tumult, and smoke of the city set free,' we were ferried over the Monongahela, with elated spirits."

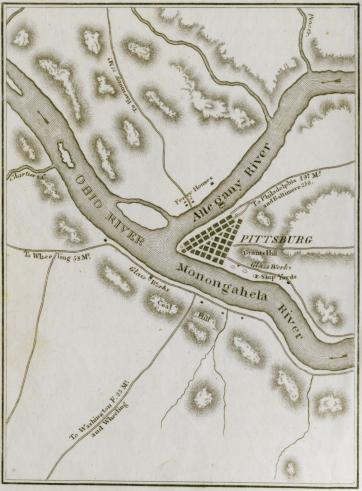
"(John Byrne) at his Umbrella Manufactory, Fourth, Between Market and Ferry Streets. Just received and for sale at his Oyster House, a few kegs of the most excellent Spiced Oysters (but) continues to make and repair Umbrellas and Parasols in the newest manner."

~ both from Pittsburgh in 1816, published 1916 1

These two spirited, offbeat quotes are a tiny but entertaining window into the world of Pittsburgh in 1816, the year of its official incorporation as a city. In 1916, Pittsburghers saw fit to mark the centennial of the incorporation by gathering small sketches about the city for a book, *Pittsburgh in 1816*. The slim volume was compiled by unknown authors from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and is structured like a written photo album, with snapshots of information to "interest the Pittsburgher of 1916 chiefly because the parts and pieces of which it is made were written by men who were living here or passed this way in 1816." To mark the bicentennial of the incorporation of Pittsburgh, it is fitting to look back on both the city's founding and its centennial year.



Cover of Pittsburgh in 1816.
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.



We see an example of a perceived insult by a Boston newspaper, which was apparently unaware of Pittsburgh's location as well as the origin of its new mayor.

VIEW of the COUNTRY round PITTSBURG.

Map of Pittsburgh c. 1817, drawn in 1850.

Pittsburgh's first mayor, Ebenezer Denny, was elected in 1816 and served for five months. As discussed by The Commonwealth, he was a native of Carlisle, Pa. HHC Detre I &A



Pittsburghers of 1916 lived during a tumultuous period, not entirely unlike their counterparts from the previous century. European nations were already fighting the Great War, while America was still dealing with the aftermath of the sinking of the Lusitania a year earlier. When the ship was sunk by a German torpedo, it took with it nearly 1,200 passengers, including Margaret Kelly from Maginn Street on Pittsburgh's North Side.3 At home, Pittsburghers were grappling with labor problems: martial law was declared in Braddock following riots at the Edgar Thompson Works, and in May some 50,000 coal miners walked off the job on strike.4

In spite of trouble abroad and labor disputes at home, Pittsburghers were able to pull together and celebrate their progress over the previous century. In March 1916, as the William Penn Hotel in downtown was finished at a cost of \$6 million, the cornerstone was being laid for a new City-County Building. August saw the purchase of a site at Smithfield Street and Oliver Avenue by the Mellon family for their new bank, and the following month, Schenley High School in Oakland opened.⁵ By the close of 1916, residents could look back on a lot of changes, from an explosive population increase, an influx of immigrants, the parallel growth of industry, and the advancement and improvement of services provided by the city. The spirit and optimism of the Progressive Era is evident in Pittsburgh as the city began to celebrate all it had achieved in the last 100 years.

One of the largest celebration events was the Charter Centennial Parade, held Friday, November 3. Newspapers called it the "Greatest Parade in [the] City's Annals," causing traffic to be delayed for hours by the "great throng" of both parade participants and spectators—of which there were reported to be 250,000 to 300,000.6 One account reported that "half of Pittsburgh stood on curbs, sat on rickety boxes, hung out of windows, dangled from fire escapes and clung to poles, billboards and cornices—anything that would afford a vantage, however precarious—to watch the charter centennial parade, long heralded and actually realized as the most elaborate procession ever seen in this city."7

The parade featured an array of floats and organizations. Indeed, "much that has gone in the last 100 years to bring honor and fame to Pittsburgh as a city of commerce, manufacture, education and patriotism, passed in review through Fifth avenue to the Oakland district."8 Included were floats featuring branches of municipal government, fraternal and ethnic organizations, and at least one float featuring a birthday cake with 100 candles.9 Many of the floats portrayed differences between 1816 and 1916:

> The old Conestoga wagon that made its bi-monthly trip from and to Philadelphia; the canal boat, that held as much freight as a box car now contains; the first street car, drawn by mules; the hand-pump fire engine, followed by types of the fire-fighting engines in the order of their development; the archaic horse car, preceding the modern electric trolley car; the little log school house, in juxtaposition to replicas of the highest type of educational institution; the first local efforts in art, contrasted with the magnificent development of today in painting, sculpture and architecture; the blacksmith's forge alongside the modern steam-hammer; the old-time iron furnace overshadowed by the great blast furnaces and rolling mills of 1916-all passed in review before the many thousands who trod the concrete sidewalks.10

Spectators "were taken to and from the scene in trolley cars and horseless vehicles that are of a type that the Pittsburgher of 100 years ago would never dared even to dream of," emphasizing just how far the city had come.11

The emphasis on historical reflection is embodied by the Pittsburgh in 1816 book. The text uses articles from three newspapers of 1816—The Gazette, Pittsburgh Mercury, and The Commonwealth—as well as quotes from

travel books and memoirs. When a primary source was not available to quote, summarized information was added from various histories of the city, their sources as mysterious as the authors themselves. This questionable source material aside, the text is valuable for its window into the minds of Pittsburghers of 1916 seeking to celebrate their city's innovation by comparing the past to their present. In that era of Progressive politics, it was only natural that the city's residents and leaders might pause to review how far they had come in a hundred years. The following paragraphs from the book range from nostalgic to self-congratulatory.

Pittsburgh in 1816

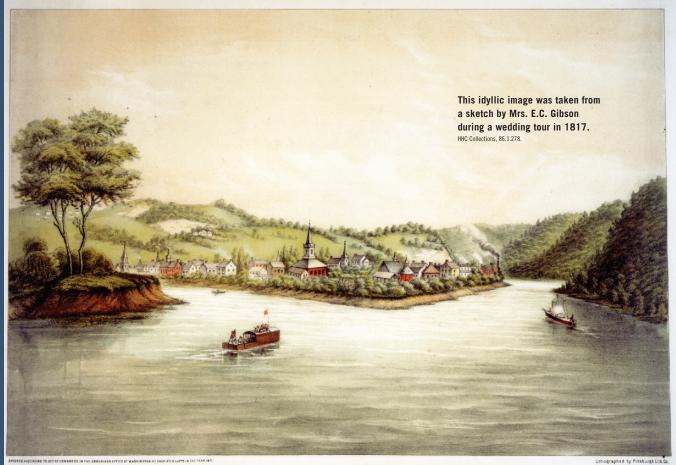
Pittsburghers of 1816 were certainly proud of their new city, as the book's unnamed authors make clear. Here, we see an example of a perceived insult by a Boston newspaper, which was apparently unaware of Pittsburgh's location as well as the origin of its new mayor. An author at The Commonwealth—one of Pittsburgh's papers—however, was quick to defend the city and Mayor Denny and to deliver a stinging rebuke.

> Ebenezer Denny, esq. has been elected mayor of the city of Pittsburgh, Ohio.-This gentleman we believe is from Massachusetts and is highly regarded for his integrity and patriotism.

~ Boston Yankee

We congratulate the editor of the Yankee upon the knowledge of men and places, exhibited in the foregoing article. It has been a custom at the Eastward to censure and burlesque the people of Western Pennsylvania on account of their ignorance. Let the editor of the Yankee now blush at his own. Could it be believed that any man of common geographical knowledge... would have located Pittsburgh—a city containing ten thousand inhabitantspossessing a manufacturing capital of many millions-having three banking institutions, and a commerce extending to every part of the union-a place

RIVER



NIEM OLLHE CILL OL SILLEBURCH IN 1817

Taken from a sketch drawn by Mrs.E.C.Gibson.Wife of Jas.Gibson.Esq. of the Philada, Bar, while on her WeddingTour in 1817.

which has long been considered the emporeum [sic] of the West, and which makes a more conspicuous figure in books of travels than even the Town of Notions itself;-could it, we ask, be believed, that such a place should be so little known or thought of in the town of Boston, as to be located in the state of Ohio? Mayor Denny possesses all the virtues that are attributed to him by the Yankee, and many more, that render him an ornament to the station to which he has been elected:-but he does not boast an ancestry in the land of steady habits, the seat of Hartford Convention politics. He is a native of Carlisle, in this state.

~ Commonwealth, Aug. 6, 181612

Pittsburgh in 1816 looked to the region's colonial history as a source of pride. Since the beginning of the settling of North America, colonists sought to push further and further

into the frontier. This desire to acquire western lands can be seen through a number of examples, including the conflicts that sprung up from the post-Seven Years' War expansion west. These clashes resulted in Britain's attempt to secure the frontier with the Proclamation Line of 1763, forbidding settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. But Western Pennsylvania proved too alluring. Desire for western lands was so great that this action in part led to the formation of "revolutionary alliances" between colonists, and later to the War for Independence itself.¹³ Such fascination with the west drove many Americans to move. It also gave interest to the genre of travel narratives written throughout the 19th century. Below are some of the impressions authors of these narratives had of Pittsburgh.

Fort du Quesne, built by the French, formerly stood here; its site has almost

disappeared in the Ohio. The remains of Fort Pitt (from whence the town has its name) are very faint; we can yet perceive part of the ditch, its salient angles and bastions ... but several houses, stores, and a brewhouse, are built on the ground.

~ Palmer's Journal of travels in the United States and Canada, 1817¹⁴

Although Pittsburg, a few years since, was surrounded by Indians, it is now a curiosity to see any there; a few traders sometimes come down the Alleghany, with seneca oil, &c.

~ Palmer's Journal of travels in the United States and Canada, 1818¹⁵

When this city and vicinity was surveyed by the author of this treatise, in October, 1815, there were in Pittsburg 960 dwelling houses, and in the suburbs, villages, and immediate outskirts, about 300 more, making in all 1260, and

Mawang Garage

including inhabitants, workmen in the manufactories, and labourers, upwards of 12,000 inhabitants.

~ Darby's Emigrant's guide, 181816

Pittsburgh is laid out to front both rivers; but as these do not approach at right angles, the streets intersect each other obliquely. It is not a well built city. The south-west part is the most compact, but many years must elapse before it will resemble Philadelphia. Wooden buildings, interspersed with those of brick, mar the beauty of its best streets; and as few of these are paved, mud, in showery weather, becomes abundant. A short period, however, will probably terminate this inconvenience.

~ Thomas's Travels through the western country in 181617

The authors of Pittsburgh in 1816 included information about the city's past with slavery—an institution not limited to the South. With the "Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery," Pennsylvanians in fact held slaves into the 1840s. By 1850, there were none recorded.18

> Nearly all of the first residents of Pittsburg and vicinity who were wealthy enough to afford the luxury were owners of slaves. The Nevilles, John Gibson, James O'Hara, Alexander Fowler, Adamson Tannehill, the Kirkpatricks and many others owned them, and several thousand continued to do so as late as the war of 1812. The old newspapers contained advertisements for runaway slaves even as late as 1820.

~ Wilson's History of Pittsburg19

Pittsburgh has been often referred to as the Smoky City. This image, attributed to the rapid growth and success of industry, is probably most often associated with the second half of the 19th century and a majority of the 20th. These quotes from Pittsburgh in 1816 demonstrate that Pittsburgh was an industrial city even before its incorporation.

> In 1813 there were five glass factories, three foundries, a new edge tool factory,

Cowan's New Rolling Mill, a new lock factory built by Patterson, two steam engine and boiler works, one steel factory and a goodly number of small concerns manufacturing various articles. In 1817 the city councils appointed a committee to collect and publish a list of all the large factories in the city. This was done perhaps to let the world know of the industry and thrift of Pittsburg, and is valuable because it is an official list and is to be relied upon. It must also be remembered that these figures represented the industries of Pittsburg when barely emerging from the panic of 1815-17, a financial depression that has scarcely been equalled [sic] in Western Pennsylvania in all its history.

~ Boucher's Century and a half of Pittsburg20

There are many good stores in Pittsburg, and a great trade is carried on with Philadelphia, Baltimore, and the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, &c.; exclusive of the carrying trade, and the number of boats that are always proceeding down the Ohio, with vast quantities of foreign merchandize, destined to Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, &c. The inhabitants send up the Allegheny, Monongahela, and their forks, whisky, cyder [sic], bacon, apples, iron, and castings, glass and foreign merchandize; in return they receive many thousand bushels of salt from Onondago, and immense rafts from Alleghany and French creeks. The quantity of rafts imported into Pittsburg annually, is computed at 4,000,000 feet; average nine dollars per 1000 feet.

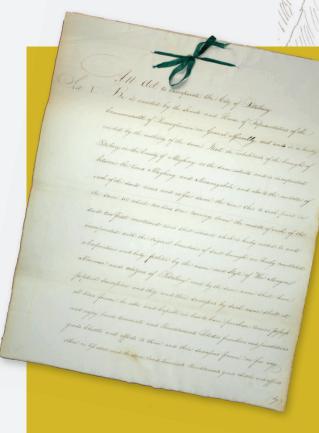
~ Palmer's Journal of travels in the United States and Canada, 181721

Pennsylvania does not seem to be very wide until one has to traverse the distance between its two largest cities, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Pittsburgh in 1816 offers a glimpse into a time when this distance was not only inconvenient or potentially unpleasant, but downright difficult and certainly excruciating.

Before the time of railroads between

"The remains of Fort Pitt ... are very faint; we can yet perceive part of the ditch ... but several houses, stores, and a brewhouse, are built on the ground."

460

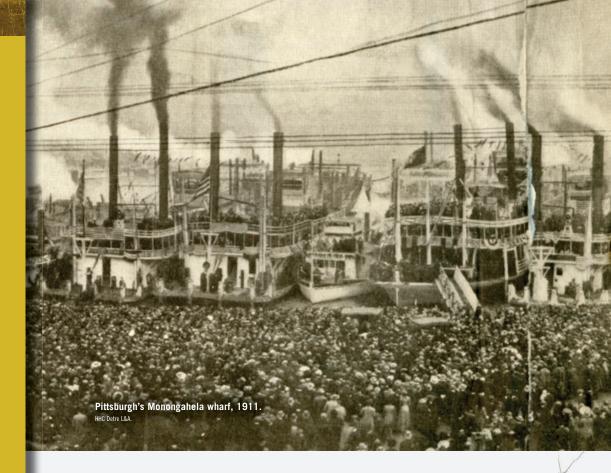


"An Act to Incorporate the City of Pittsburgh," passed March 18, 1816. This 25-page document establishes the city of Pittsburgh as a legal entity with its own system of government. The charter, approved by the state Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly, describes the method for electing and appointing government officials including the city's first mayor, outlines the role of the mayor's court, and empowers the county sheriff and the mayor to uphold city laws.

Group 10, Proclamations (series 10.3), L2016.3.1, Photo by Nicole Hayduk.

RIVER

Rivers offered natural highways to the early settlers of the west, and in particular Pittsburgh—long prized for its access to these waterways.



the east and west of the Allegheny mountains, the freight business to the Monongahela was carried on by means of the Conestoga road wagons drawn by six horses. By this way the freight to Pittsburgh was carried exclusively, but after the completion of the Pennsylvania canal, transportation was divided between the canal-boat and the wagon. As early as 1817, 12,000 wagons, in twelve months, passed over the Allegheny mountains from Philadelphia and Baltimore, each with from four to six horses, carrying from thirty five to forty hundred weight. The cost was about \$7 per 100 weight, in some cases \$10. To transport one ton of freight between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, therefore, would cost about \$140, and in so doing two weeks, at least, of time would be consumed.

~ Van Voorhis's Old and new Monongahela²² (Printed in 1893)

With the Conestoga wagons originated our modern "stogie" cigars which have become so common in Pittsburg and which have been in recent years, sent from Pittsburg to every section of the Union. They were made in that day of pure home grown tobacco and being used very largely, at first by the Conestoga wagoners, took the name 'stogies' which clings to them yet.

~ Boucher's Century and a half of Pittsburg²³

Overland transportation, though, was not the only way to travel. Rivers offered natural highways to the early settlers of the west, especially in Pittsburgh—long prized for its access to these waterways. As a center for river traffic, Pittsburgh was unsurprisingly the home of the first steamboat to travel on western waters.²⁴ Pittsburgh in 1816 provides a few snapshots of Pittsburgh's early relationship with these technologically revolutionary watercraft as well as some of the smaller vessels used to transport goods.

A company, stiled [sic] the 'Ohio steam boat company,' has lately been formed, who intend building steam boats to run between this place and the Falls of Ohio. The dimensions of the boats will be 100 feet keel and 20 feet beam. They contemplate having two running this fall or winter, 1815–6.... This line of Steam Boats, though not attached

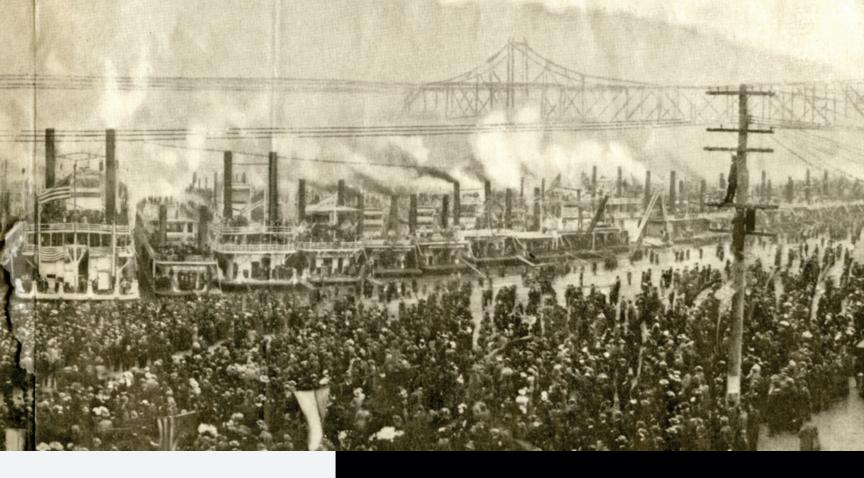
to those belonging to the Mississippi Steam Boat Company, will form a chain of conveyance from New Orleans to this place, which must result very much to the advantage and prosperity of Pittsburgh and intermediate towns.

~ Cramer's almanack [sic], 1816²⁵

Steam-boat, ark, Kentucky, barge, and keel-boat building is carried on to a considerable extent. Sea vessels have been built here, but the navigation is too far from the sea, and attended with too much hazard for it to answer. The following vessels, besides steam-boats, have been built at Pittsburgh and on its rivers: ships, Pittsburgh, Louisiana, General Butler, and Western Trader; brigs, Dean, Black Walnut, Monongahela Farmer, and Ann Jean; schooners, Amity, Allegheny, and Conquest (navigator).

~ Palmer's Journal of travels in the United States and Canada²⁶

The best mode perhaps in descending the Ohio, in time of low water, is in keel boats.... Merchants are beginning to prefer this method for safety and expedition; and instead of purchasing boats and taking charge of them



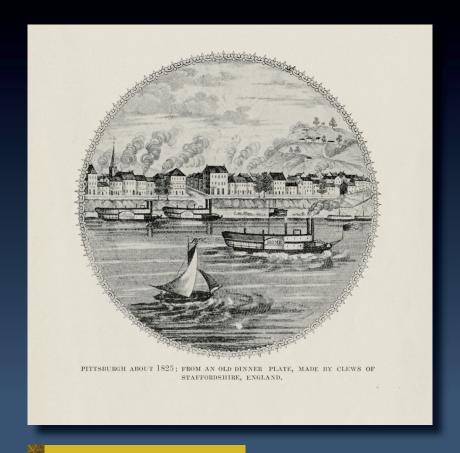
themselves, they get their goods freighted down from Pittsburgh in keel boats by the persons who make them, and who make it their business to be prepared, with good boats and experienced hands for such engagements.

~ Cramer's Navigator, 1817²⁷

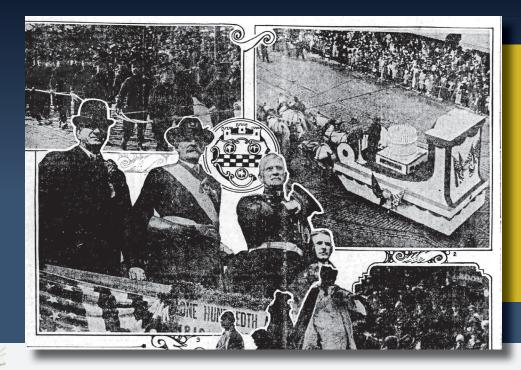
The manners of the boatmen are as strange as their language. Their peculiar way of life has given origin not only to an appropriate dialect, but to new modes of enjoyment, riot, and fighting. Almost every boat, while it lies in the harbour has one or more fiddles scraping continually aboard, to which you often see the boatmen dancing.

~ Flint's Recollections of the last ten years, 1826²⁸

Today Pittsburgh is known as the City of Bridges with a record 446 bridges in the city as of 2006—perhaps there is one less for the moment with the recent demolition of the Greenfield Bridge.²⁹ However, when Pittsburgh officially became a city in 1816, it did not have any. The first two bridges were not completed until 1818 (crossing the Monongahela at the



Pittsburgh, c. 1825. HHC Detre L&A, GPC.



Collage featuring (left to right)
Mayor Joseph G. Armstrong;
Colonel James M. Shoonmaker,
the chief marshal; S.W. Jefferis,
adjunct of staff; and William H.
Stevenson, president of Western
Pennsylvania Historical Society;
and the Birthday Cake Float
complete with 100 candles.

The Gazette Times, November 4, 1916, 1.

site of the Smithfield Street Bridge) and 1819 (crossing the Allegheny River between Sixth Street and Federal Street).³⁰ Until then, ferries were needed, as discussed below.

Between 1764 and 1819 the only means of crossing these streams, at Pittsburgh, was by way of ferries. The first of these, it is believed, was operated from the foot of Ferry street, Pittsburgh to the opposite shore, and this was the origin of the name Ferry Street.... Early in the nineteenth century a ferry was established from the mouth of Liberty street, called Jones Ferry. Foot passengers desiring to cross the river employed skiffs, while stock was taken over on flat-boats. Such boats were pushed by means of poles, at low stages of water, and by oars in high water periods.

~ Boucher's Century and a half of Pittsburgh³¹

In relation to water, in 1816 Pittsburghers obtained their drinking water from wells. Municipal running water would not be available for a number of years. In 1916, the Bureau of Water included two floats in the Centennial Parade, displaying Pittsburgh's advancements in this vital public service from its earliest days.

The water supply was gained, up to 1802, from wells and springs which flowed from out the hillsides, these being sufficient for a small town. An ordinance passed August 9, of that year,

called for the making of four wells, not less than forty-seven feet in depth. Three of these were to be located on Market street, and were to be walled with stone.... Wells, with the springs at Grant's Hill, furnished the supply of water for public use until 1826.

 \sim Boucher's Century and a half of Pittsburgh $^{\rm 32}$

Newspapers from 200 years ago were similar to modern newspapers in a number of ways. Below is a sampling of one of these similarities—advertisements. While Pittsburgh in 1816 gives a number of interesting and humorous examples, these are some which may prove most interesting to the reader of 2016.

LITERARY NOTICES.

John Binns of Philadelphia proposes to publish a splendid edition of the Declaration of Independence, which shall be in all respects American: The paper, the types, the ink, the designs, the engravings,—the publication throughout shall afford evidence of what our citizens have done in politics, and can do in art.³³

NOTICE

My wife Fanny having thought proper to withdraw herself from my protection, without the least cause given on my part for her doing so, I am compelled, though very reluctantly, to forbid all persons from trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts which she may contract hereafter. J. Tibbette N.B. I also inform those who wish to be shaved in Imperial Style, that I am always to be found at my Shop in Market Street, between Front and Water Streets.³⁴

WANTED

At the United States' Arsenal, now erecting near Pittsburgh. Forty good Stone Masons, and Twenty Labourers, to whom constant employment and good wages will be given for one or two seasons. Apply to the subscriber on the ground. Christopher Armstrong³⁵

THREE CENTS AND A POUND OF OLD HORSE-SHOE NAILS REWARD!

Strayed away from the subscriber on the 11th instant.

John Donaldson,

an apprentice to the blacksmith business—aged 18 years—five feet 7 or 8 inches high—stout built—very slow in the motion—very fond of playing ball or being idle—more proud of dress than of his work;—He took with him no more clothes than what was on his back, which consisted of one common shirt, a dark marsailles waistcoat, a dark grey coattee and pantaloons, one pair stockings, one pair shoes half worn, a neck-handkerchief, and one new black fur hat, made by Wm. Church. No other marks are recollected. The above

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Complete listing of all the bicentennial events

reward, no charges and no thanks, will be given to any person who will return said stray. James Yourd.36

Two centuries have passed since the incorporation of the City of Pittsburgh, and today residents have even more to look back on. Summed up positively by the Kaufmann & Baer Co. in its 1916 Centennial Sale advertisement, the story of Pittsburgh "is the story of 'Ever Onward and Upward.' Pittsburgh's progress and prosperity are due to work and service, not luck or chance.... Pittsburgh serves all the Earth. This store serves all of Pittsburgh."37 No doubt at the tercentennial and beyond, Pittsburghers will look back and consider their past in a similar light.

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Carrie Hadley is a graduate of Duquesne University's Public History Program. She is a part-time cataloger of the Elaine B. and Carl Krasik Collection of Presidential and Pennsylvania Political Memorabilia at the Heinz History Center.

- ¹ Pittsburgh in 1816 (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 1916), 16, 67.
- ² Ibid., 3.
- ³ "Will Administer Kelly Estate," Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, June 4, 1915, 7. The newspaper account reported that Ms. Kelly was buried in Queenstown, Ireland, and that her father, Thomas Kelly, settled her estate, which included an account containing \$2,450 at the Dollar Savings Bank.
- Stefan Lorant, Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City (Pittsburgh: Esselmont Books, 1999), 692; Robert I. Vexler, Pittsburgh: A Chronological & Documentary History (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, 1977), 53.
- ⁵ Ibid., 53.
- ⁶ "Traffic Held for Hours By Great Throng," Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, November 4, 1916; "Pittsburgh Suspends Work As 250,000 Crowd to See Charter Centennial Parade," Pittsburgh Daily Post, November 4, 1916.
- ⁷ "Pittsburgh Suspends Work."
- "Progress of City Is Reviewed in Charter Pageant," Pittsburgh Daily Post, November 4, 1916.
- 9 "8,600 March in Celebration of Centennial," Pittsburgh Daily Post, November 4, 1916, 3.
- 10 "Pittsburgh's 100 Years of Growth Shown," Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, November 4, 1916.
- 12 Pittsburgh in 1816, 9.
- ¹³ "Proclamation Line of 1763, Quebec Act of 1774 and Westward Expansion," Milestones: 1750-1775, Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/ proclamation-line-1763 (accessed March 19, 2016).
- 14 Pittsburgh in 1816, 13.
- 15 Ibid., 13.
- 16 Ibid., 14.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.. 17.

- 18 "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery March 1, 1780," 1776-1865, Our Documentary Heritage, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/ documents/1776-1865/abolition-slavery.html (accessed March 18, 2016).
- 19 Pittsburgh in 1816, 63.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 21.
- ²¹ Ibid., 21.
- ²² Ibid., 26.
- ²³ Ibid., 27.
- ²⁴ Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, "Pittsburgh Iron & Steel: Transportation," eCLP, http://www. carnegie library.org/e CLP/iron steel/transportation.html(accessed March 19, 2016).
- ²⁵ Pittsburgh in 1816, 34.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 34-35.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 35.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 35-36.
- ²⁹ Pittsburgh's Action News 4, "Just How Many Bridges are There in Pittsburgh?," wtae.com, September 13, 2006, http://www.wtae.com/Just-How-Many-Bridges-Are-There-In-Pittsburgh/7685514 (accessed March 19, 2016).
- 30 Rick Sebak, "The (Official) Birth of Pittsburgh," Pittsburgh Magazine, February 19, 2016, http:// www.pittsburghmagazine.com/Pittsburgh-Magazine/ March-2016/The-Official-Birth-of-Pittsburgh (accessed March 19, 2016).
- 31 Pittsburgh in 1816, 40.
- ³² Ibid., 56-57.
- 33 Ibid., 67.
- 34 Ibid., 68.
- 35 Ibid., 68.
- 36 Ibid., 73.
- ³⁷ Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, March 12, 1916, 4-5.

