

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich
President & CEO



This year, the Fort Pitt Museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary. As we commemorate the museum's opening in 1969, it is fitting to look even further back—more than 250 years—to understand how the triangular parcel of land where the city's three rivers meet played a pivotal role in American history and as the birthplace of Pittsburgh.

Located at the forks of the Ohio River, the area now known as Point State Park once served as an important hub for trade between

American Indians and European traders in the mid-18th century.

By the beginning of the French & Indian War, the Point had become a key military stronghold. In February 1754, Virginian Captain William Trent established the first fort at the Point, commonly known as "Trent's Fort." Later that spring, more than 800 French troops arrived and forced the British to flee peacefully. The French then built Fort Duquesne, named in honor of Marquis Duquesne, the governor-general of the French-controlled colonies.

In 1755, an attempt to capture the Fort by British General Edward Braddock ended in one of the most devastating defeats in British military history on a field across the river from what is now Kennywood. A few years later, a second British expedition of 6,000 soldiers led by John Forbes marched across Pennsylvania and eventually arrived at the Point in November 1758. Before they could arrive, the French—seeing themselves outnumbered—

destroyed their fort and abandoned the Point. Forbes immediately ordered a larger fort to be built, which he named Fort Pitt in honor of British Secretary of State William Pitt.

Forbes dubbed the settlement between the rivers "Pitts-borough," pronounced like his native Scotland's "Edinburgh."

After surviving Ottawa Chief Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763 and serving as a crucial Western hub for the Americans during the Revolutionary War, Fort Pitt was ultimately decommissioned by the U.S. Army in 1792.

Today, the Fort Pitt Museum is operated as a branch museum of the Heinz History Center. Life-like figures, dioramas, and rare artifacts can be found in the reconstructed Monongahela bastion. Visitors delight in living history demonstrations, including fife & drum marches and ceremonial firings of a bronze British six-pounder cannon.

We hope to see you soon at Point State Park, the "birthplace of Pittsburgh." 🌟

