



SENATOR JOHN HEINZ
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



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From Maps to Mermaids: Fort Pitt Museum's New Exhibit Showcases 18th Century Powder Horns

*-The Point State Park museum is one of the most affordable family-friendly experiences
in Western Pa.-*

PITTSBURGH, June 29, 2017 – Few objects from colonial America had such a personal connection to their owners as the powder horns used by soldiers, settlers, and American Indians to store the gunpowder necessary for their survival.

Beginning this Fourth of July weekend, the Fort Pitt Museum – part of the Senator John Heinz History Center museum system – will reveal the stories behind these delicately carved objects as part of a new exhibition, ***From Maps to Mermaids: Carved Powder Horns in Early America***, which opens this Saturday, July 1.

In a world where firearms were necessary tools, the powder horn – made from the lightweight and hollow horn of a cow – served as the constant companion of thousands of frontier residents. While powder horns kept gunpowder dry, many owners also recognized the smooth surface of the horn as the ideal place to leave their mark. They etched names, dates, maps, and war records, as well as purely whimsical figures, into the objects.

Many carved powder horns found in Pennsylvania in recent decades illustrate stations along the Forbes Road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and include some of the earliest first-hand depictions of Fort Pitt.

Surviving in large numbers, carved powder horns represent early American folk art in its purest form and serve to illuminate the past.

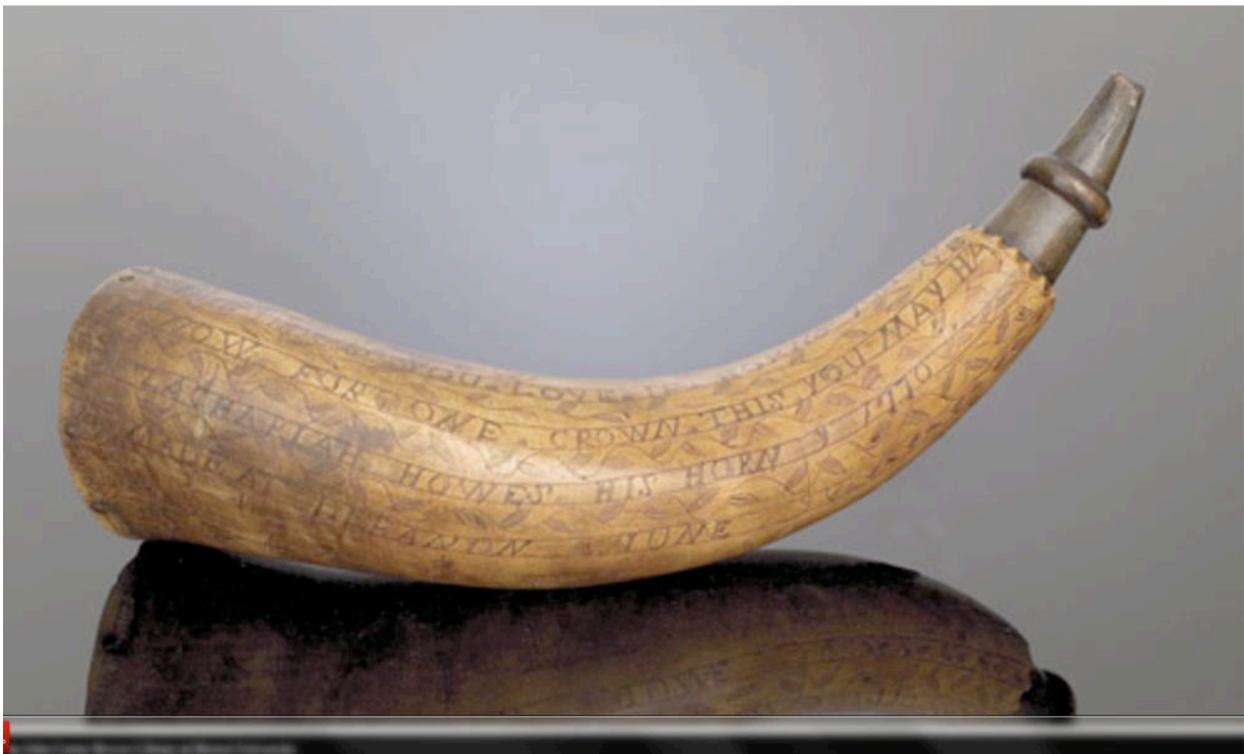
Highlights of the ***From Maps to Mermaids*** exhibition include:

- More than 60 authentic artifacts spanning from the 17th century to the 19th century, including more than 40 rare powder horns and flasks;
- Two powder horns by an anonymous 18th century engraver so talented that collectors have dubbed him the "Master Carver;"
- A 1764 powder horn depicting the Forbes Road between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The horn is signed by Jno. Fox, who may have been a soldier in the Royal American Regiment stationed at Fort Pitt; and
- An American Indian-carved horn with numerous depictions of animals, including a Horned Underwater Panther, a mythical creature that appears in the beliefs of Great Lakes and Eastern Woodland Indians.

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One of the most affordable family-friendly cultural experiences in the region, admission to the Fort Pitt Museum is just \$8 for adults, \$7 for senior citizens, \$2 off for retired and active duty military, and \$4.50 for students with a valid ID and children ages 6-17. Children under 5 and History Center members get in free.

The Fort Pitt Museum, built in a recreated bastion of the British fort originally constructed in 1759, focuses on the critical role that Western Pennsylvania played during the French & Indian War, the American Revolution, the Whiskey Rebellion, and the founding of Pittsburgh. The Fort Pitt Museum is located in Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh. The Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, operates the Fort Pitt Museum in partnership with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). For more information, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org.



Beginning this Fourth of July weekend, the Fort Pitt Museum will reveal the stories behind dozens of finely carved powder horns as part of a new exhibition, ***From Maps to Mermaids: Carved Powder Horns in Early America***, which opens this Saturday, July 1.

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