PITTSBURGH, Nov. 16, 2017 – For more than 130 years, families made the trip to Downtown Pittsburgh to celebrate the annual Christmas tradition of visiting Kaufmann’s (and later, Macy’s) department store. Along with checking gifts off their holiday shopping lists, they came to marvel at the breathtaking lights and decorations, magical window displays, and of course, to pay a special visit to Santa Claus himself.

This holiday season, visitors can relive those cherished memories in the Senator John Heinz History Center’s A Very Merry Pittsburgh, a holly jolly exhibition opening Saturday, Nov. 18, featuring original artifacts from Kaufmann’s/Macy’s department store, Christmas decorations, historic toys spanning the 1940s to the 2000s, and much more.

No trip to Santaland is complete without a visit from old Saint Nick, so each day through Christmas Eve from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., visitors can take photos with Santa Claus in an exact replica of his original chair from Kaufmann’s – all included with regular admission.

The 5,000-square-foot A Very Merry Pittsburgh exhibit will showcase dozens of nostalgic artifacts recalling Pittsburgh’s Christmas past, including:

- Ornate objects from Kaufmann’s Christmas window displays;
- Santa’s original chair and giant Mr. and Mrs. Claus ornaments from Kaufmann’s;
- The Santaland mailbox from Kaufmann’s, where thousands of Pittsburgh children mailed their Christmas wish lists to the North Pole;
- Classic toys from the 1940s through 2000, including toy soldiers, an original Slinky, Mrs. Potato Head, Barbie, Easy-Bake Oven, Rock ’em Sock ’em Robots, and a Red Ryder BB gun (made famous by the holiday movie, “A Christmas Story”);
- An interactive kids’ area with a selection of classic toys for children to play with; and
- Original costumes and float materials from the Macy’s holiday parade in Pittsburgh.

A Very Merry Pittsburgh is one of many offerings at the “Smithsonian’s home in Pittsburgh” during the holiday season. Locals and out-of-town guests alike can spend the day exploring the History Center’s six floors of exhibit space, featuring kid-friendly interactive areas like the new Discovery Place exhibit, along with iconic artifacts like the original television set and puppets from the "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" show, the world's oldest jeep, and Franco Harris’ cleats from the Immaculate Reception.

-more-
Visitors can wrap up their holiday shopping in the History Center Museum Shop, featuring quirky Heinz products, Pittsburgh-proud T-shirts and apparel, award-winning books, and more!

The **A Very Merry Pittsburgh** exhibit is on display through Monday, Jan. 15.

For more information, including behind-the-scenes photos and a full lineup of public programs, please visit [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org).

The **Senator John Heinz History Center**, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and the largest history museum in Pennsylvania, presents American history with a Western Pennsylvania connection. The Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum is a museum within a museum, comprehensively presenting the region’s remarkable sports story through hundreds of artifacts and interactive experiences for visitors of all ages. The History Center and Sports Museum are located at 1212 Smallman Street in the city’s Strip District, and are open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The History Center’s museum system includes the Sports Museum; the Fort Pitt Museum in historic Point State Park; and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, a National Historic Landmark located in Avella, Pa. in Washington County. More information is available at [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org).

This holiday season, visitors can relive those cherished memories in the Senator John Heinz History Center’s **A Very Merry Pittsburgh**, a holly jolly exhibition opening Saturday, Nov. 18, featuring original artifacts from Kaufmann’s/Macy’s department store, Christmas decorations, historic toys spanning the 1940s to the 2000s, and much more (image by Linda Barnicott).

-more-
No trip to Santaland is complete without a visit from old Saint Nick, so each day through Christmas Eve from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., visitors to the History Center can take photos with Santa Claus – all included with regular museum admission!

# # #