Pittsburgh, Virginia? Fort Pitt Museum’s New Exhibit Explores Hidden Chapter in Region’s History

- The exhibition also features a rare carved powder horn believed to be one of the earliest objects made in Pittsburgh -


The Fort Pitt Museum, part of the Heinz History Center museum system, will explore how Pittsburgh nearly became a permanent part of Virginia as part of a new exhibition, Pittsburgh, Virginia, which opens on Saturday, Oct. 5.

From the 17th century through the American Revolution, Pennsylvania and Virginia had overlapping claims to much of present-day Western Pa.

The Pittsburgh, Virginia exhibition will focus on the turbulent events of 1774, when the two colonies fought for control of Pittsburgh, while Lord Dunmore’s War put the fate of the Ohio Country and all of its inhabitants at stake.

Using 18th-century artifacts and period imagery, the exhibit will tell a fascinating story about the lust for Indian lands (led by ambitious Virginian speculators like George Washington), colonial rivalries, and the quest to preserve sovereignty by all parties involved.

Highlights of the Pittsburgh, Virginia exhibition include:

- A selection of Monongahela Indian artifacts, which provide a glimpse into the predominant culture in the region prior to the arrival of Europeans;
- An early rifle manufactured for American Indians and traded at sites like Fort Pitt; and
- An 18th-century Ohio Indian basket of the type often traded to early settlers.

The exhibit will also take a close look at the diverse community of Pittsburgh before the American Revolution, and will feature early handwritten documents highlighting the practice of slavery in Western Pennsylvania during, and after, the Virginian occupation.
**Rare Artifact to Debut in Pittsburgh, Virginia Exhibit**

A carved powder horn making its debut in the *Pittsburgh, Virginia* exhibit is an important historic object that every Pittburgher should see.

Likely made within days of the British capture of Fort Duquesne, the powder horn (used by soldiers to safely carry gunpowder) is believed to be one of the earliest objects made in Pittsburgh.

Marked with the initials “G.B.” and the name “G. Biler,” this powder horn bears an extremely rare firsthand depiction of Fort Duquesne as it appeared when General John Forbes and his British army captured the Point on Nov. 25, 1758.

Fort Pitt Museum curators determined the undated powder horn’s approximate age based on the configuration of Fort Duquesne in the carving and the style of the horn itself.

This rare artifact was recently acquired by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission with the generous support of the Friends of Fort Pitt Museum and is now a permanent part of the commission’s Fort Pitt Museum collection.

**Fort Pitt Speaker Series to Commemorate 245th Anniversary of Dunmore’s War**

On Saturday, Oct. 12, the next installment in the Fort Pitt Speaker Series will commemorate the 245th anniversary of the Battle of Point Pleasant and the end of Lord Dunmore’s War.

Guest speaker Dr. Glenn Williams of the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., will examine the decisive battle and diplomatic conclusion of Dunmore’s War. He will pay special attention to the role of Fort Pitt, the Battle of Point Pleasant, the military stand-off at Pickaway Plains, and the Treaty of Camp Charlotte that brought the war to an end.

Admission to this event is $15 for adults and $10 for students and History Center members. Tickets are available online at heinzhistorycenter.org/events.

The *Pittsburgh, Virginia* exhibition is generously supported by the Laurel Foundation, the Allegheny Regional Asset District, and Brian and Mary Roman.

**Pittsburgh, Virginia** will be on display through fall 2020.

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, 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 heinzhistorycenter.org/fort-pitt.
Opening Saturday, Oct. 5, the Fort Pitt Museum’s new exhibition, *Pittsburgh, Virginia*, will explore how Pittsburgh nearly became a permanent part of Virginia. (Pictured: An illustration of 18th-century Pittsburgh, Archives & Special Collections Department of the University of Pittsburgh.)

A carved powder horn bearing a rare firsthand depiction of Fort Duquesne will make its debut in the Fort Pitt Museum’s new *Pittsburgh, Virginia* exhibit. The artifact is likely one of the first objects created in Pittsburgh.

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