



**FORT PITT
BLOCK HOUSE**

Fort Pitt Block House
601 Commonwealth Place - Building C
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
tel/fax 412.471.1764
www.fortpittblockhouse.com

Contact: Maureen Mahoney Hill
Email: mmahoneycfre@gmail.com
Cell: (412) 780-4708

Curator Named at Historic Fort Pitt Block House

Point State Park, Pittsburgh, PA – June 18, 2014 – James Halttunen has been named Interim Curator of the [Fort Pitt Block House](#), Pittsburgh's oldest architectural landmark. Owned and operated by [the Fort Pitt Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#) as a historic site and small museum since 1894, the Block House is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year. As curator, Mr. Halttunen will be responsible for greeting visitors to the Block House, providing tours and maintaining the archives as well as assisting the members of the all-volunteer Fort Pitt Society with administration and operations of the site.

James completed his master of arts in public history at Duquesne University this past May and he has a bachelor's degree in history from Willamette University in Oregon. Prior to accepting the position of Interim Curator, James served as an intern/tour guide at the Block House in the fall of 2013 as part of his studies at Duquesne. During his coursework he also worked as a research assistant conducting deed research in county offices and as an archival intern at the James Van Trump Library of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

Prior to moving to Pittsburgh, James spent time working at the New Haven Colony Historical Society in New Haven, Connecticut; the Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History in Eugene; and the Mission Mill Museum in Salem, Oregon. Originally from the West Coast, James and his wife now reside in Mt. Oliver Borough.

"I enjoyed my time as an intern at the Fort Pitt Block House, I learned so much and gained a true appreciation for the incredible history represented by this small building. I am honored to step in as curator, especially in the midst of the 250th anniversary celebrations," said Halttunen. "I am excited to welcome visitors to the Block House and share with them the story of this fascinating building and the critical role the Pittsburgh region played in early American history."

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The Fort Pitt Block House was originally constructed in 1764 as a defensive redoubt for Fort Pitt, a key British fortification during the French and Indian War. After the conflicts on the Pennsylvania frontier ended, the brick-laid building served as a trading post for wares and munitions, and in the nineteenth century, it played host to families and even a candy shop. In 1894 the Block House was gifted to the Fort Pitt Society of the [Pittsburgh Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#) by then owner, Mary Schenley. Thanks to their efforts, the Block House remains in its original location in the heart of modern-day Point State Park with much of its bricks, stone and woodwork still intact from 1764. Operated as a historic site and museum, the Block House is celebrating its 250th anniversary throughout 2014. For more information and hours of operation, please visit www.fortpittblockhouse.com.

Owned and Operated by The Fort Pitt Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

