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Pittsburgh –or the settlement that would develop into it – made its first appearance in history in 1753, in defiance of the young George Washington. At that time, colonial English speculators from Virginia were engaged in competition with the French for control of the Ohio Valley, with its lucrative fur trade and strategic waterways. As part of that struggle, the 21-year-old Washington traveled to the Ohio Valley in 1753 under a commission from the governor of Virginia to order the French to leave. They did not. Instead, they built an outpost, Fort Duquesne, to command the spot where the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers meet to form the Ohio. The ancestor of Pittsburgh was born.

The importance of this development can hardly be exaggerated. A skirmish that erupted the following year some 40 miles from Fort Duquesne--in which Washington saw battle for the first time, and suffered his first defeat--touched off the French and Indian War, which in turn sparked the worldwide Seven Years' War, which helped to foment the War of Independence (and a victory at last for Washington). Philadelphia was the site for debates and proclamations; but Fort Duquesne (Fort Pitt after 1758) lay at the strategic heart of the conflict.

Early on, Pittsburgh was known for its military significance; later, it became famous as an industrial dynamo. In that context, it seems all the more remarkable that this city should have established itself as a cultural center, almost from the start. Pittsburgh made the transition from military outpost to civilian settlement in 1784, when it was laid out as a town. Only three years later came the founding of Pittsburgh Academy, a forerunner of the University of Pittsburgh.

Economically, Pittsburgh owed its growth to an extraordinarily fortunate location. Nearby were large deposits of iron ore, coal and oil (the latter discovered in 1859). Anything that could be made with iron, coal and oil could therefore be shipped through Pittsburgh's waterways to a large part of North America. All that was needed was an appropriate product, which presented itself in the 1850s, when William Kelly (born in Pittsburgh) and England's Henry Bessemer independently developed a low-cost method for manufacturing steel. Pittsburgh quickly grew to be the steel capital of the United States. Other industries followed: aluminum, glass, packaged food. By the late 19th century, "Pittsburgh millionaire" was synonymous in common speech with "industrialist" (and, in some cases, "monopolist").

Of the Pittsburgh millionaires, the most important for both industry and culture was Andrew Carnegie, whose parents brought him to America at age 11 in 1848 from Dunfermline, Scotland. His father, William Carnegie, found work in a textile factory in Allegheny City (now Pittsburgh's North Side). Margaret, his mother, found a job with an Allegheny cobbler; and young Andrew started out as a bobbin boy in a cotton mill at $1.20 a week. By 1900, he was making $25 million a year as head of a partnership that produced one-fourth of the Bessemer steel in America.

Andrew Carnegie not only made money; he also gave it away, out of the conviction that "the man who dies leaving behind him millions" will be "disgraced" in the public's eyes. Carnegie eventually disembarrassed himself of some $350 million; in so doing, he founded Carnegie Institute and The Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh (1895), while establishing many other libraries throughout the United States.

Andy Warhol was born into the Pittsburgh that Andrew Carnegie helped to

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create--a city of industrial enterprise, but also of the arts, letters and sciences. Pittsburgh already had been the birthplace of figures such as songwriter Stephen Collins Foster, artist Mary Cassatt, journalist and playwright George S. Kaufman, film star Gene Kelly, jazz master Art Blakey and novelist, poet, philosopher, psychologist and all-around avant-gardist Gertrude Stein. Today's Pittsburgh still bears traces of their legacy, and of the legacies of the founders of a multitude of cultural institutions.

Among the North Side neighbors of The Warhol is The Mattress Factory, a contemporary art exhibition space located in the historic Mexican War Streets, a preserved zone of about 300 houses built between the 1850s and the 1890s. Also located on the North Side is the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, an inner-city, minority-directed arts education and presenting organization; the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, located in the Old Post Office built in 1897; and, next to the Children's Museum, a garden of architectural and sculptural fragments from old Pittsburgh buildings, including bronze reliefs from the Manchester Bridge (designed by Beaux Arts sculptor Charles Keck). The North Side is also the site of the National Aviary; The Carnegie Science Center and the Allegheny Branch of the Carnegie Library system.

Warhol's childhood home was in the Oakland area. There he attended Carnegie Institute of Technology (which was founded as the Carnegie Technical Schools in 1906 and became Carnegie Mellon University in 1968). Oakland is also home to the University of Pittsburgh and its medical center and to the Phipps Conservatory, designed by Lord & Burnham in 1893.

Downtown Pittsburgh features a 14-square-block Cultural District, including three theaters. Heinz Hall is the home of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts (built in 1928 by Warner Brothers as a movie palace, and renovated in 1987 at a cost of $42 million) hosts the

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Pittsburgh Opera, the Ballet Theater and the Civic Light Opera. Nearby are several commercial art galleries, as well as the Wood Street Galleries, operated by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Among the notable buildings in downtown Pittsburgh are Henry Hobson Richardson's Allegheny County Jail and Court House (1884-88) ("Richardson's and the era's masterpiece," and "one of the greatest buildings of the nineteenth century," according to G. E. Kidder Smith in The Architecture of the United States); the U.S. Steel Building (1970; Harrison & Abramovitz and Abbe), which "epitomizes steel construction," writes Smith, "as...Richardson's County Court House and Jail heralded the zenith--and the swan song--of masonry"; and the corporate headquarters of PPG Industries (1982; Philip Johnson/John Burgee Architects), whose neo-Gothic spires of reflective glass bear tribute to another of Pittsburgh's industries.

The Warhol now takes its place among the artistic and academic resources that have helped make Pittsburgh a city of distinction.

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