

South Side FACTS

“Bare Bones” Facts

Boo! Let's uncover some “bare bones” facts about the South Side. These “bare bones” are the important events that shaped the South Side. If you want to dig up “bare bones” on your own, do so at the South Side Branch of the Carnegie Library.



John Ormsby, the “Father of the South Side,” is buried in Trinity Cathedral burial ground in downtown Pittsburgh.



The South Side Market House is now a community center.



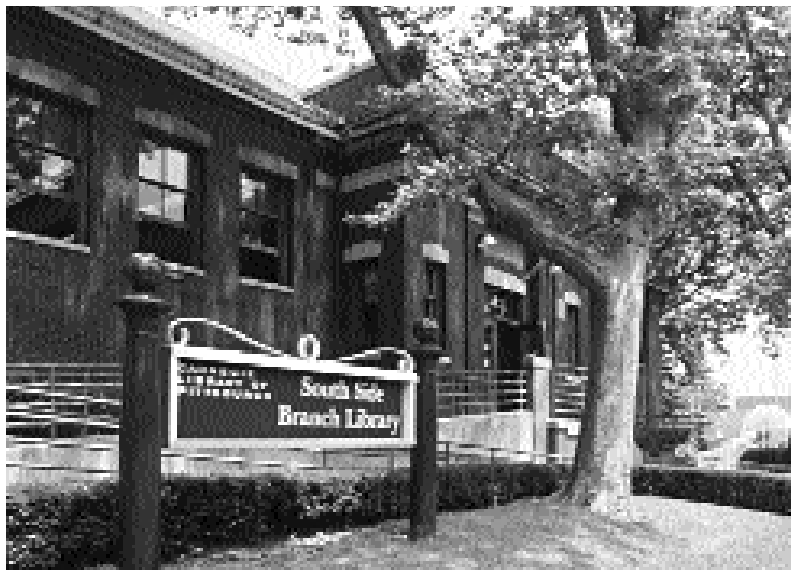
- 1758** Pittsburgh is founded and is named for William Pitt, Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- 1763** King George III gives Major John Ormsby 3,000 acres of land. This land later becomes the South Side.
- 1811** Nathaniel Bedford, Ormsby's son-in-law, lays out the village of Birmingham, now the South Side Flats.
- 1850** Bedford School opens. Originally Birmingham No. 1, the school building has survived and is the oldest public school building in the City of Pittsburgh. However, it is no longer a school. It has been renovated and people now live there in condominiums.
- 1854** Benjamin Franklin Jones and James Laughlin become business partners with the founding of the American Iron Works, which later becomes J&L (Jones & Laughlin) Steel. By the 1940s, the J&L steel plant covers 100 acres — that's about 80 football fields — on the South Side.
- 1872** The South Side Flats, previously the boroughs of South Pittsburgh, Birmingham, East Birmingham, and Ormsby, are added to the City of Pittsburgh.
- 1889** South Side Hospital, now UPMC South Side, is founded.
- 1909** The South Side Branch of the Carnegie Library opens, and 10,000 people visit during the first week.
- 1915**
- The Oliver Bath House opens.
 - The Market House of 1891 re-opens. It was remodeled in 1915 after a fire.
 - John Alfred Brashear (1840-1920) is named Pennsylvania's most distinguished citizen. The skilled millwright from the South Side became a famous amateur astronomer and maker of scientific instruments, including telescopes and spectroscopes.
- 1917** The Brashear Association, Inc. is founded. One of the oldest continuously operating social service organizations on the South Side, it offers after-school tutoring, summer day camps, and senior citizen activities, among many other services.
- 1967** The South Side Local Development Company is founded. The neighborhood group works to make the South Side a better place by fixing up the old buildings, attracting new businesses, and helping people who live on the South Side.
- 1968**
- LTV purchases J&L Steel. About 8,000 people work in the aging steel plant.
 - The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation begins working with South Siders to help them fix up the old buildings and find new uses for some of the vacant ones.
- 1985** The first annual South Side Summer Street Spectacular is held.
- 1986** The LTV plant closes, due in part to old machinery and because other countries are making steel and selling it at cheaper prices. The name Jones & Laughlin disappears from American business.
- 1996** East Carson Street is recognized as a “Great American Main Street” by the nation's Main Street Center.
- 1998–2008** The South Side participates in the Neighborhood Assistance Program/Comprehensive Service Program. As a result, school students are able to participate in field trips and special educational programs featuring local history and architecture, and creating neighborhood pride.

South Side Library

Where would you go if you wanted to find out more about the South Side? Or if you needed to do research on a school project? What if you just wanted a good book? Go to the library, of course.

The South Side Branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh opened in 1909. When the library opened over 90 years ago, 10,000 people visited during the first week and borrowed all the books! The librarians had to borrow books from other libraries so they could keep up with the demand. Also, since the people on the South Side spoke many languages, books were available in a variety of languages.

Today, most books in the library are in English, and if the book you want isn't there, ask a librarian to order it for you. Even though the library contains computers that are wired to the Internet, it still boasts original oak counters and a cabinet phone booth. The children's room even has an alcove where you can read and relax! So, take a trip to the South Side library, whether you're looking for more "bare bones" facts, or for a book for school, or for a book to read just for fun!



The library is located at 2205 East Carson Street.

Questions (Refer to the timeline information to answer these questions.)

1. How many years ago did the King of England give John Ormsby the land we now call South Side?

2. How many years after Ormsby received his land did the City of Pittsburgh annex the South Side Flats?

3. How many people visited the South Side Branch of the Carnegie Library the first week it was open?

4. In what year did the Oliver Bath House open?



Megan Heilmann, an intern with the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, wrote this fact sheet for students participating in educational programs offered through the Neighborhood Assistance Program/Comprehensive Service Program. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development sponsors the Neighborhood Assistance Program in partnership with the South Side Local Development Company and PNC Bank. For details call the SSLDC at 412-481-0651.



Help us protect the places that make Pittsburgh home.

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