

HISTORICAL MARKER NOMINATION FORM

Review Policies for Approval, and then complete this form. Please type or print, using font size no smaller than 10 point.

1. Subject of Marker / Marker Title
State name of person (include birth and death dates), event, innovation, or site to be commemorated.

Simon Girty (1741-1818)

2. Please use the space below to provide a historical overview and specify fully the historical significance of the person, event, innovation, or site. **Be sure to explain why this marker will have meaning for people from the whole state or country, not just from your own community. If of broader significance, be sure to describe the subject's Pennsylvania connection.** Be thorough, but concise, and try not to exceed the space provided.

Simon Girty was born near the Susquehanna River in 1741. Following Braddock's Defeat near Ft Duquesne in 1755, Indians and their French allies increased attacks along the British colonial frontier. Simon was captured at Ft Granville, Mifflin County, in 1756, along with his mother, Mary Turner, stepfather, 3 brothers, and an infant half-brother. The family was separated, and the Seneca Nation adopted Simon. He was raised as a tribal member. Following a treaty between the British and Indians on the Tuscarawas River in Ohio, Simon was reunited with his family at Ft Pitt, now Pittsburgh, in 1764.

The family settled on land near the fort and Simon began working for the British as an interpreter and emissary to the Indians. His knowledge of Indian languages, his familiarity with the uncharted lands of the Ohio Valley, and his ability to travel and survive in the wilderness made him particularly valuable. Working at Ft Pitt, he lived on a farm on nearby Squirrel Hill, now an urban Pittsburgh neighborhood, and the proposed site of a PHMC marker.

From 1764, when he was reunited with his family, until 1778, Pittsburgh was Simon Girty's home. At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, he was an officer serving as interpreter and scout for the Virginia militia. He became acutely aware of the difference between American and British policies towards Indians. The British honored their treaties in order to maintain trade with the Indians; the Americans were more aggressive in acquiring or simply occupying native land.

In 1778, Girty transferred the ownership of his farm to his half-brother John Turner and clandestinely departed Fort Pitt to join the British at Detroit. Even after his departure, he continued to visit the area to see his family and gather intelligence. He became the chief military representative of the British among the Indians fighting along the western frontier in what is today Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana and Michigan.

Pittsburgh played a pivotal role in the struggle between France and England for control of the Ohio valley. Braddock's Defeat (1755) and the capture of the Forks of the Ohio, (1758) as well as subsequent British restrictions on white settlement of the Ohio country all provided the framework to establish Pittsburgh as the western outpost of the American Revolution. These events shaped Simon Girty's life, and a PHMC marker near his Pittsburgh farm would serve as a valuable reminder of this era of Pennsylvania history.

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3. Please provide a draft of the text for the marker. (Note: A final text will be written in collaboration with PHMC staff.)

Simon Girty (1741-1818)

In 1756, Girty was captured and adopted by the Seneca Indians. He grew to manhood as a tribal member but a 1764 treaty demanded his repatriation. Reunited with his family, he claimed a farm here while working as an interpreter and scout at Fort Pitt. Increasingly aware that the Americans coveted the Indian lands, he “eloped” in 1778 to join the British and fight alongside the Indians on the western frontier. Vilified by Americans, he was valued by the Indians as a trusted friend and military leader.

4. Are you requesting a city type marker (27” x 41½”, approx. 40 words, approx. cost \$975.00) or a roadside type marker (45¼” x 45¾”, approx. 70 words, approx. cost \$1625.00)?

√ **Roadside type**

5. Bibliographical data — From which publications/sources did you obtain your information and/or can information be secured to understand the historical background, to evaluate historical significance, and to prepare appropriate marker text? Feel free to attach a list, utilizing the format below for referencing them. At least 3 or 4 sources (primary and secondary) are ideal. If completing this form as a Word document, you may delete the underlines or type over them using the “insert” key on your computer keyboard.

-- SEE ATTACHED LIST OF SOURCES --

6. Describe the suggested marker site. Are there any surviving features, built or topographical, that relate to the proposed commemoration? (While survival of such features is not a determining factor in the approval of markers, a suggested marker should be close enough to the site described to take advantage of any features that do survive. It should also be located so as to maximize visibility and accessibility to the public.) If possible, please attach a photograph. The final location will be subject to PHMC approval.

The proposed site will be in the 15th Ward of the City of Pittsburgh near the intersection of Beechwood Boulevard and Federal Hill Street. The marker would be situated on land that was once part of Simon Girty’s farm and adjacent to the part of the farm that was set aside as the burial ground for his mother, Mary Turner, and his half-brother, John Turner. Beechwood Boulevard is a main artery through the neighborhood, and there is street parking at that location.