

# AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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## ***Colony to Community: The Story of New Sweden*** **Delves into the Local Legacy of the Early Swedish Settlement**

***Colony to Community: The Story of New Sweden*** describes the journey of Swedes and Finns who came to the Delaware Valley in 1638 to establish the New Sweden Colony, an outpost to give Sweden a foothold in the growing fur and tobacco trades. **The exhibition opens at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton on Saturday, January 24, 2009.**

From landfall in Wilmington, Delaware in 1638 and cultivating peaceful trade relationships with the Lenape and Susquehannock Indians, to suffering relentless pressure from the Dutch and eventual abandonment by the Homeland, this exhibit explores the countless obstacles that New Sweden colonists endured. Although this small colony ultimately fell to the Dutch in 1655, Swedes and Finns continued to visit and settle in the area. Settlers old and new looked to Sweden to sustain their cultural traditions, especially their religion. In 1697, the first of a succession of Church of Sweden ministers arrived. They kept coming from Sweden until the last pastor from the Swedish Mission, Nils Collin, arrived in 1770. Swedish artists Gustavus Hesselius (1682-1755) and Adolph-Ulrich Wertmüller (1751-1811) also came to live and work in the Delaware Valley. Hesselius painted the portraits of Lenape Chiefs Lapowinsa and Tishcohan. He was widely considered the leading painter of the Middle Colonies. In 1794 Wertmüller, a court painter in Sweden, painted General George Washington's portrait. These artists, with their Old World artistic techniques and sensibilities, helped establish a fine arts tradition in the New World.

Through rare collection objects, historic documents and images, this traveling exhibition explores the origins of the New Sweden Colony, the cultural endurance of the settlement that made it possible for Swedes and Finns to continue to immigrate to the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and how we preserve the past by commemorating New Sweden's legacy today.

This new exhibition will be on view at the New Jersey State Museum through May 17, 2009. The American Swedish Historical Museum features *Colony to Community: The Story of New Sweden* June 7 to November 22, 2009 and the exhibition's final venue will be the Historical Society of Delaware in Wilmington from December 18, 2009 through March 20, 2010.

***Colony to Community: The Story of New Sweden*** is organized by the American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia, by Carrie Hogan, Curator, in conjunction with the Delaware Historical Society and the New Jersey State Museum.