



-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

## A fresh look at Philadelphia's origins

Opening of the *Sven Gunnarsson and Jonas Nilsson New Sweden Gallery*

Open to the public from Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Museum hours: Tu-Fri 10-4, Sa-Su 12-4, closed Mondays & major holidays

**Before there was Philadelphia, there was New Sweden. The American Swedish Historical Museum announces the opening of the *Sven Gunnarsson and Jonas Nilsson New Sweden Gallery*, on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The gallery is dedicated to the New Sweden Colony and the earliest European settlements in the Delaware Valley. Central themes are Sweden's colonial vision, contact and trade with Lenape and Susquehannock Indians, leadership and expansion in the colony and the personal stories of Swedes and Finns who came to New Sweden between 1638-1700. The exhibition also explores the question of why the colony ultimately fell to the Dutch in 1655; the impact of William Penn and the influx of English Quakers on Swedish and Native American land; and the important role of former New Sweden colonists in laying out the city of Philadelphia.**

The new exhibition was made possible through a generous gift from Mrs. George C. (Esther Ann) McFarland, who is descended from Sven Gunnarsson who came in 1640 on the *Kalmar Nyckel* and Jonas Nilsson, a soldier who came in 1643 with New Sweden Governor Johan Printz. The *Sven Gunnarsson and Jonas Nilsson New Sweden Gallery* will be the ASHM's first major gallery re-installation in over 20 years, and it features rare and original artifacts from the museum's collections.

The Virginia-based firm Design 3, our accomplished partner in the realization of this project, was selected based on their successful track record of exhibition projects which include Montpelier and Dabbs House Museum in Virginia and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. They applied their in-depth knowledge of Swedish design heritage in incorporating a modern Swedish aesthetic, and they tell the story of New Sweden in a highly visual and visitor-friendly way.

The new exhibit includes several interactive components, including an animated, computer-based map detailing the location of New Sweden that visitors can use in the gallery and "New Sweden in Profile", a hands-on activity offering a look into the lives of individual settlers.

An exciting educational component of the gallery will expand the New Sweden Colony experience beyond the walls of the museum. ASHM will debut a Google Map of New Sweden Landmarks in conjunction with the gallery's opening in the beginning of June. The map includes museums, churches, and historical sites which still survive today, telling the story of the Swedes and Finns who settled along the Delaware River in the 17th century. A link on ASHM's website will guide virtual visitors on their journey back in time to New Sweden!

From collections and education to programming and PR, this single gallery project benefits all aspects of the museum and is an important step in renewing the core theme of the American Swedish Historical Museum: the presentation of New Sweden colony. "It has been a central goal to create a space where visitors and school groups can explore New Sweden in a single gallery," says Curator Carrie Hogan. "We envisioned art and artifacts, models, hands-on and interactive opportunities that will bring New Sweden to life." We hope that you will join us and experience this important, yet little known period in our region's history.

## Swedes In Deed!

See Philadelphia's fascinating origins at the American Swedish Historical Museum. The New Sweden Gallery opens June 7, 2011.



Call 215-389-1776, email [info@americanswedish.org](mailto:info@americanswedish.org) or visit [www.americanswedish.org](http://www.americanswedish.org) for more information, or for additional opportunities to support the American Swedish Historical Museum.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia, five blocks west of the Sports Complex. The Museum is easily accessible from Route 95 or 76 and has free parking. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street subway AT&T station, or SEPTA's Route 17 bus is within walking distance of the Museum.

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