

2021

# New Sweden History Conference



Conference Schedule and Speakers

October 23, 2021

Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library

# *B*ridging Many Worlds: Exploring Concepts of Changing Cultural Identities in the New Sweden Colony

The colonial Mid-Atlantic region was home to Lenape, Susquehannock, African, Swedish, Finnish, English, Dutch, and other European peoples. This theme invokes exploration of physical, sociopolitical, and environmental impacts on cultural practices.

How did experiences of migration affect traditional customs and concepts of identity during this period, 1638 - 1776, and how do they continue to exert influence today?

# Conference Schedule

**9:30 a.m.**

Registration opens at Winterthur Museum,  
Gardens, & Library  
Copeland Hall in the Visitor's Center

**10:00 a.m.**

Opening Remarks from Tracey Beck,  
Executive Director, American Swedish Historical Museum

**10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Keynote Speaker: Magdalena Naum  
“Becoming Colonial in New Sweden and the late  
Seventeenth-Century Delaware Valley”

Introduction by Tracey Beck

**10:50 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Jean Soderlund  
“Swedes and Finns, Lenapes, and Quakers: Defining Ethnic  
Identity in West New Jersey, 1665-1720”

Introduction by Kim-Eric Williams

**11:30 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.**

Michael Lucas  
“Bowls, Beads, Buttons, and Gaming Pieces Found on New  
York Archaeological Sites, ca. 1630-1666”

Introduction by Lu Ann DeCunzio

**12:10 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Lunch (Boxed lunch provided)

# Conference Schedule

**1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.**

**Roundtable Discussion**  
**Anna Wik, Chief Dennis Coker, John Cox**  
Current environmental restoration and community building  
work being undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of  
Delaware

Introduction by Lu Ann DeCunzo

**1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

**All-Speaker Q&A Panel Discussion**  
Magdalena Naum, Jean Soderlund, Michael Lucas, Anna Wik,  
Chief Dennis Coker, John Cox

Moderated by Lu Ann DeCunzo

**2:45 p.m.**

**Closing Remarks**

**3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Optional Winterthur Tour\***



\*If you would like to take the "Garden & Galleries" tour, please purchase tickets in the Visitor Center. Tickets are \$15. Galleries at Winterthur are open until 5:00 p.m. and the Garden is open until dusk for members and ticket holders. The "Gardens & Galleries" tour is self-guided.



Magdalena Naum, Ph.D

Associate Professor  
Department of Archaeology  
and Heritage Sites  
Aarhus University, Denmark

“Becoming Colonial in New Sweden and the Late  
Seventeenth-Century Delaware Valley”

Magdalena Naum is an Associate Professor at the  
Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Aarhus  
University, Denmark. She received a PhD degree in

historical archaeology from Lund University in 2008. In 2016, after completing postdoctoral research at the University of Cambridge (UK), Lund University (Sweden) and the University of Oulu (Finland), she joined the faculty in Aarhus. Her research focuses on Scandinavia's colonial past, medieval and early modern migration, and diaspora. In 2012-14, she led a project entitled “Sweden in Delaware Valley. Everyday Life and Identities in New Sweden,” examining Swedish settlement in America, interactions with the native peoples and other European colonists, as well as construction of identities and cultural difference in the colony. In 2017-20, she co-led a project “Beyond curiosity and wonder—understanding the Museum Stobaeum,” which studied the emergence of the cabinet of curiosity and its transformation into a museum in Lund, and the origins and histories of individual objects at the cabinet, including those that arrived from North America. Currently, she leads a project that studies Native American collections in Danish museums and their connections to colonialism. She has co-edited *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity* with J. Nordin (Springer, 2013), *Facing Otherness in Early Modern Sweden: Travel, Migration and Material Transformations, 1500-1800* with F. Ekengren (Boydell, 2018), and *Collecting curiosities. Eighteenth-century Museum Stobaeum and the development of ethnographic collections in the nineteenth century* with G. Tarnow Ingvarsson (Lund University, 2020; open access publication). She was a guest editor of a special issue of the journal *Itinerario* on ‘Colonial Entanglements: Crossroads, Contact Zones, and Flows in Scandinavian Global History’ (vol. 43.2, 2019). She has published numerous articles and book chapters on the subject of New Sweden.

#### SUGGESTED READING:

Naum, M. 2016. Displacement and emplacement in New Sweden and colonial Middle Atlantic (1638–1750). In: Gustin, I. et al. (eds), *Mellan slott och slagg: Vänbok till Anders Ödman*. Lund: Lund University, pp. 177–82.

Naum, M. 2018. “... how it would be to walk on the New World with the feet from the Old” – facing the otherness in colonial America. In: Naum, M. & F. Ekengren (eds), *Facing Otherness in Early Modern Sweden: Travel, Migration and Material Transformations 1500-1800*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, pp. 243–260.

Smolenski, J. 2010. *Friends and Strangers: The Making of a Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.



In the first half of the seventeenth century, several hundred Swedish and Finnish settlers arrived in the Delaware River valley to serve the colonial government of New Sweden or to settle. Regardless of the circumstances of their move, migration to America had a significant impact on their lives. The majority of them arrived to America with little prior knowledge about the continent. Before 1650, very few first-hand accounts about America reached Sweden. The popular images of the continent were vague and influenced by reports published in the first Swedish newspaper *Ordinari Post Tijdender*, as well as stories supplied by foreign travelers and prints. In these stories, America was imagined as a confusing place of amazement and horror. It is therefore not surprising that many voluntary and forced migrants regarded the trans-Atlantic journey and the prospects of life in America with considerable anxiety. Like the pastor Erik Björk, who arrived in America in 1697, many must have wondered "how it would be to walk on the New World with the feet from the Old."

What ensued after the arrival in America was a series of complex and ongoing processes that can be characterized as 'becoming colonial' – to use a term of Robert Blair St. George (2000). One of the facets of that process was the exploration and negotiating of identity, otherness, and sameness in diplomatic and everyday contacts with Native American groups, Europeans, and Africans. Here, the preconceptions, prejudice, and theoretical-philosophical musings on the nature of non-white and non-European peoples were projected and confronted in actual meetings in America. The questions of what it means to be Swedish in the culturally and linguistically diverse Mid-Atlantic America engaged the minds too. Another process that characterized the colony was that of place-making. Turning alien and unpredictable surroundings into recognizable and comfortable spaces was achieved through material means of house building, place naming, appropriating the landscape for agriculture, and by connecting the farmsteads through the network of pathways and neighborly ties. Although informed by Swedish customs and traditions, this process was also influenced by local circumstances bridging the different ways of perceiving and existing in the colonial world.

The processes of negotiating identity and homemaking went beyond a simple matter of transplanting the well-known and tested cultural solutions and understandings. The new environments challenged the settlers to constantly elaborate new practices, learn and adopt from others with whom they shared the colonial space, and rework their self-image. These processes can be fruitfully explained by the concept of 'becoming' (rather than 'being') colonial advocated by Robert Blair St. George (2000) and John Smolenski (2010). Becoming colonial involved continuous and protracted adjustments and negotiations between conflicting value systems, perceptions of the surrounding world, ways of organizing work and household; between the definition of same and other; civility and savagery; properness and transgression. The realities of New Sweden and later Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties – its increasingly multicultural character, ideologies and policies coloring daily decisions and attitudes, and economic currents connecting local and global markets – affected the daily lives of the Swedish settlers. They lived in a rapidly changing world, in which Atlantic connections and colonial inequalities and entanglements were very tangible and materialized in consumption patterns, practices, and household arrangements. In this world, new objects and ideas made their way into daily routines and found their place next to carefully guarded customs of the old country.



Jean Soderlund, Ph.D

Professor of History Emeritus  
Lehigh University, Pennsylvania

“Swedes and Finns, Lenapes, and Quakers: Defining  
Ethnic Identity in West New Jersey, 1665-1720”

Jean Soderlund is a professor of history emeritus at Lehigh University whose book *Lenape Country: Delaware Valley Society before William Penn* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) won the Philip S. Klein Book Prize from the Pennsylvania Historical Association. She received her PhD in history from Temple University. She has published numerous articles and books on the history of women, African Americans, Lenapes, and Quakers in early Pennsylvania and New Jersey, including *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton University Press, 1985) and, with Gary B. Nash, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (Oxford University Press, 1991). Soderlund's paper is based upon several chapters from her forthcoming book, *Separate Paths: Lenapes and Colonists in West New Jersey*, in publication by Rutgers University Press.

## SUGGESTED READING:

Craig, Peter Stebbins. *The 1693 Census of the Swedes on the Delaware*. Winter Park, Fla.: SAG Publications, 1993.

Craig, Peter Stebbins and Kim-Eric Williams, eds. *Colonial Records of the Swedish Churches in Pennsylvania*. Vols. 1-4. Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Society, 2006-2008.

Hoffecker, Carol E., Richard Waldron, Lorraine E. Williams, and Barbara E. Benson, eds. *New Sweden in America*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995.

Naum, Magdalena and Jonas M. Nordin, eds. *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity*. New York: Springer, 2013.

Soderlund, Jean R. *Lenape Country: Delaware Valley Society before William Penn*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

In April 1690, near Mantua Creek, the Swedish farmer Peter Mattsson alias Dalbo accompanied the Lenape man, Wissomick, to bury his deceased child. A subsequent Gloucester County court case of hog theft, to which both men gave evidence, highlighted the ways in which the lives and identities of Swedes and Finns, Lenapes, and Quakers intersected in early West New Jersey.

By the early 1690s, one-third of Swedish Lutheran households in the Delaware Valley had built farms east of the Delaware: near Salem River, between Oldmans and Mantua Creeks, on the Pennsauken Creek, and near the Atlantic shore. Most Swedes and Finns rejected the English colonization model in which settlers sought to expel Lenapes from their territory and exploited enslaved Africans. Instead, the Swedes, Finns, and other Europeans with whom they intermarried maintained their decades-long alliance and trading partnerships with Lenapes, sharing land and resources. At the same time, these "old settlers" recognized the need to protect their communities under the Quaker West Jersey government by participating in county courts. They also preserved (and created) ethnic identity by establishing the Swedish Lutheran churches at Raccoon (Swedesboro) in Gloucester County and Penn's Neck in Salem County.







Michael Lucas, Ph.D

Curator of Historical Archaeology  
New York State Museum, New York

“Bowls, Beads, Buttons, and Gaming Pieces Found on  
New York Archaeological Sites, ca. 1630-1666.”

Michael Lucas’ research is broadly focused on the history and archaeology of the early colonies in North America from the last quarter of the seventeenth century to the American Revolution. He is particularly interested in the exploitation of labor during the eighteenth century. New York is replete with archaeological sites where indentured servitude, slavery, and wage labor were employed. Examples include mills, farms, city docks, and many other sites of production and distribution. Studying the material objects recovered and the arrangement of buildings and other landscape features documented at these sites is important for understanding how laboring families constructed their lives. Museum collections and archaeological field data are used to explore the material realities of life on the economic margins of society. This research contributes to our understanding of the consequences of slavery and other exploitative labor practices in colonial New York during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Tobacco pipes, beads, gaming pieces, and clothing buttons could be broadly categorized as personal objects. They are all portable, and each has aesthetic and presentational qualities. These artifacts are important to people of Indigenous, European, and African descent who lived in the Hudson River valley during the 17th century. Similar objects within diverse cultural contexts present interpretive challenges for archaeologists to be sure. Examples from the collections at the New York State Museum will illustrate the dynamic nature of these personal objects at regional and household scales and their place in “bridging many worlds” in and around the New Netherland colony.

## Current Environmental Restoration and Community Building Work being Undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware

In this presentation, Principal Chief Dennis Coker and professors Jon Cox and Anna Wik from University of Delaware will describe current environmental restoration and community building work being undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware. The Fork Branch site in Cheswold, Delaware is, at present, the only half-acre of ancestral lands owned collectively by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware.

Before the Lenape took ownership, it was used as a homestead and later as a dumping ground for construction rubbish, automobile parts and tires, and other household items. The site has cultural significance for the Lenape, as it sits adjacent to the location of the original Fork Branch Indian School for the Lenape community in Cheswold, and the Little Union Church and cemetery where ancestors of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, the Lenni Lenape of New Jersey, and the Nanticoke are interred. Over the past three years, Dennis Coker, Principal Chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe, has been spearheading efforts to clean up the site, eradicate invasive species, restore the Eastern Temperate Forest biome, and protect the Fork Branch, part of the St. Jones watershed through planting native species and other regenerative practices. In addition, this work has led to a collaborative visioning process for a Cultural Resource center for the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, guided by a steering committee made up of Tribal Elders, GSBS, a landscape architecture/ architecture firm, and interns from University of Delaware.

Out of these efforts a guiding document has emerged, which includes architectural and site plans, as well as programmatic desires for the center, using best practices in regenerative design, and guided by the community vision. Cross disciplinary collaboration on both of these projects has engaged tribal and community members of all ages, UD students and faculty representing multiple colleges, volunteers from the tri-state area, and leaders of preservation efforts around the state.

## Roundtable Speakers



Anna Wik, PLA, ASLA, SITES AP

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture  
Plant and Soil Sciences Department  
University of Delaware

“Current Environmental Restoration and Community Building Work being Undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware”

Anna Wik is a registered professional landscape architect in Delaware and Pennsylvania and an Associate Professor in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Delaware. She has designed, documented, and managed construction of many landscape projects in the Delaware Valley region, working with community and non-profit partners including Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, the Philadelphia Water Department, Delaware State Parks, and numerous community groups. Anna’s courses investigate the relationship between the cultural practice of design and the built environment. She is passionate about equitable design and is interested in historical, social, and cultural influences upon the urban and rural landscape. Other research areas include children's outdoor learning environments, coastal resilience related to cultural landscapes, and edible forest gardens. Anna has a Masters of Landscape Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design.

# Roundtable Speakers



Dennis J. Coker, Principal Chief

Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware

“Current Environmental Restoration and Community Building Work being Undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware”

A lifelong resident of Kent County, Delaware, Dennis J. Coker has been honored to be elected Principal Chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware since 1996. During his term, through successful collaborations with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Census Bureau, his Tribe was awarded a Census Designation Area allowing Tribal members to include their ethnicity as Lenape on the 2010 Census for the first time in history. On August 3, 2016 Delaware's Governor, Jack Markell, signed legislation officially recognizing the long and continued history of the Lenape Community in the state of Delaware.

Chief Coker's service as a past Chairman of the Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes of the Delaware Bay has allowed him to effect progress towards recognition of the Indigenous human rights of all member Tribes. His membership in the National Congress of the American Indian (NCIA) and founding membership in the Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes (ACET) has brought recognition, furthered understandings, and developed collaborations for the betterment of Delaware's Indigenous population.

As a respected public speaker and story teller, Chief Coker has helped educate diverse leadership as well as the public leading to Delaware's General Assembly proclamation that all residents celebrate November as Native American Heritage Month and learn to honor “The First People of the First State.” In his keynote address at Delaware's First Annual Environmental Justice Conference, Chief Coker challenged educators to learn and pass on the Lenape view of the interconnectedness of all living things, the sanctity of place, and the concept that man is but one small part of the web of life, not the center of it.

Collaborating with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Renewable Energy Initiative, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of the Oceans (MARCO), and his membership on the Chesapeake Bay Advisory Council, Chief Coker's rare sensitivity for the balance of ecology, economy, and ethnicity makes him a valued member of many committees and task forces where he continues to work diligently with federal, state, and local governments to improve the health and wellbeing of the Lenape People remaining in their original homeland, Lenapehoking, now known as the State of Delaware.

## Roundtable Speakers



**Jon Cox, M.F.A.**

Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Design  
University of Delaware

“Current Environmental Restoration and Community Building Work being Undertaken by the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware”

Jon Cox is president of the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research (ACEER

Foundation) and an assistant professor in the Department of Art & Design at the University of Delaware. He serves as a Board Member of the Dorobo Fund for Tanzania, is a 2015 National Geographic Explorer, and Full Fellow of the Explorers Club. Cox has directed twenty-three photographic study abroad programs across the globe, including destinations to Antarctica, Vietnam, Cambodia, Tanzania, Australia, Tasmania, Argentina, and Peru. He was a pioneer in the field of digital photography, served as the adventure photographer/writer for Digital Camera Magazine, and authored two Amphoto digital photography books. Cox is a co-recipient of a National Geographic Society Grant to support a collaborative cultural mapping initiative with the Ese'Eja Indigenous community living in the Amazonia basin of Peru. He co-authored a book titled, *Ancestral Lands of the Ese'Eja: The True People*, and co-created a traveling exhibition to accompany this project titled, *The Ese'Eja People of the Amazon: Connected by a Thread* that is currently on tour across the United States. Cox co-authored *Hadzabe, By the Light of a Million Fires* with an accompanying traveling exhibition titled, *Hadzabe: Roots of Equality*. Cox is currently working with the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware on a cultural mapping and land restoration project supported by the Delaware Humanities, University of Delaware, and the National Geographic Society. His ongoing project titled *ARRIVALS: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead*, is a collaborative, multidisciplinary project recording and disseminating the stories of refugees and immigrants that are living in Idaho and the Native Americans that have been displaced from their ancestral lands.



Sponsored by the  
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## Program Partners

American Swedish Historical Museum, The  
Swedish Colonial Society, Delaware  
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McNeil Center for Early American Studies,  
The New Sweden Centre, Trinity Episcopal  
(Old Swedes) Church, Swedesboro, NJ,  
Finnish American Society of the Delaware  
Valley, The University of Delaware,  
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