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Kalmar Nyckel Sails Again

A 375th anniversary celebration of the voyage that founded New Sweden

BY SAM HEED

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“Sail back with us to the year 1638. Climb aboard the original Kalmar Nyckel as she embarks on her first storm-tossed crossing of the Atlantic – destination, somewhere in the middle of the “New World.” You’ll have time to “learn the ropes” along the way, and, while you’re at it and hauling line, you may enjoy having a “deck’s-eyed” view of the ship that launched New Sweden. Join Governor Peter Minuit and the “away team” as they step off at “the Rocks” landing site, soon to be famous as the first permanent European settlement in the Delaware Valley. Parley with the sachems of the local tribes, and then begin to build that crude little stockade, which will soon be called Fort Christina in honor of your twelve-year-old sovereign queen. Construct the first log-cabin structures on American soil, and then stay behind to hold the fort – quite literally. As one of the first 24 soldier-settlers, wave goodbye as Peter Minuit sails away with the Kalmar Nyckel, and wonder if – not just when – you will ever see him, the ship, or beloved Sweden again.

Kalmar Nyckel Sails Again is a new educational resource – part history, part story – for teachers and students in Delaware and beyond. Intended as a “meditation” on the challenges of transatlantic voyaging in the 17th century, the essay was written for the 375th anniversary of the founding of New Sweden. The online version of the booklet serves the Delaware Department of Education as part of the state’s high school curriculum. By including the stunning photography of Andrew Hanna, an extraordinary volunteer and *Kalmar Nyckel* crew member, my

hope was to produce something that would serve the needs of teachers and students at the secondary level while perhaps exciting the interest of the general public.

For those unfamiliar with us, the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to “preserving and promoting the cultural and maritime heritage of Delaware for the education and enrichment of all” – a significant portion of which is Swedish! Yes, we fly the Swedish flag atop the mainmast for a reason, and we are rightfully proud of our Swedish heritage.

The Foundation is a volunteer-based organization that built, owns, and operates the modern-day *Kalmar Nyckel*, which is a full-scale and faithful reproduction of Peter Minuit’s flagship. We have over 300 active volunteers, who provided more than 49,000 volunteer hours of service in 2013. We couldn’t sail off the dock, let alone maintain our magnificent ship or deliver much of our educational programs, without the volunteers. The ship serves as a floating classroom and inspirational platform for variety of sea- and land-based education programs, and we reach tens of thousands of students of all ages each year. We are a special place, with a special ship, a ship that draws to it a community of special people. We like what we’re doing at the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, living in the 21st century and sometimes working in the 17th, and we hope it shows.

I’m pleased to be able to announce that we’re also in the midst of building a new education center and ship maintenance facility, which, together with a new dock and much-improved shipyard, will help make us a pre-

mier educational destination in the Delaware Valley. The new 18,000 square foot, 3-story facility and shipyard improvements will address many needs of our growing organization, allowing us to extend the reach of our educational programs and keep the *Kalmar Nyckel* in shipshape condition.

We will be holding a “Grand Opening” gala and weekend celebration Saturday and Sunday, October 18th & 19th, 2014. So, please consider this an open invitation, and we hope you’ll come visit us soon! We’re located on Wilmington’s historic 7th Street Peninsula, immediately adjacent to Fort Christina State Park and 200 yards downstream from “the Rocks” – which were used as the actual landing site and still exist.

Softbound copies of the *Kalmar Nyckel Sails Again* booklet are available for order (\$12.00 + 3.00 shipping). If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation office at 302.429.7447 or e-mail us at info@kalmarnyckel.org.

The online version is freely available, see *link on p. 30*.

This 375th anniversary educational resource is supported by grants from the Swedish Council of America and the Delaware Humanities Forum. It gets used as part of the state curriculum in Delaware and is distributed freely to history teachers throughout the state.

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