



# HGDPC

Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')  
Preservation Corporation

*A Subsidiary of Gloria Dei  
(Old Swedes') Church  
Philadelphia*



# Here's What's Inside

// Fall 2018

With the exception of "A Letter From The Chair," the articles below were previously published in QVNA Magazine. They have been reprinted with permission. Front and back cover image by the Community Design Collaborative.

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# A Letter From The Chair



*Candace Roberts, Chair of the Board*

Dear Friends,

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church is many different things: the oldest continuous congregation in existence in America, a place of solace and comfort for the bereaved, a landscape of exceptional beauty, an oasis of tranquility in Philadelphia's busy urban environment, a nationally recognized historic space surrounded by a National Park, and a place that preserves the New Sweden history and the stories of the over 6,000 people buried here. Whether you come to participate in services of the Episcopal Church, attend a performance event, enjoy a contemplative moment among the trees and open space, admire the monuments or look for ancestors, Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church is open to everyone 365 days a year.

This inaugural issue brings together the many wonderful articles written about Old Swedes' for the Queen Village Neighbors Association Magazine. These stories highlight our fascinating history (pp. 4-11) and will introduce you to the master planning process (pp. 12-15) we engaged in through a grant from the Community Design Collaborative.

The Collaborative worked with us to create a master plan that charts a future where we preserve the historic character in this evolving landscape, while enhancing our connection to the community and the waterfront. Our work will respect the amazing vision and skills of our founders, who selected this "quiet place" in 1695, and imagined a place of beauty and tranquility to found a church to provide comfort and inspiration to the living, and accommodate the burial and commemoration of the deceased.

In 1942, Reverend John Craig Roak obtained a "National Historic Site" designation for Gloria Dei from the Department of the Interior and transferred the surrounding lands to the Federal Government. These National Park lands were never fully realized as a community park space. This master plan offers a 10-30 year vision (pp. 13-15) to gradually establish a small woodland, create an accessible pathway, areas of play, new lighting and benches. It is a truly inspirational plan.

Finally, you will find some delightful and entertaining history stories (pp. 16-21) and learn more about our renewal and restoration work in the churchyard (p. 22).

I am deeply grateful to our Historic Gloria Dei Board members for their unflagging commitment, and particularly, Amy Grant, for pioneering and designing this publication and our website ([www.preserveoldswedes.org](http://www.preserveoldswedes.org)).

The importance of this property and grounds cannot be over-estimated. I hope that as you read these stories you will want to explore this welcoming urban oasis and discover for yourself why we love this historic and sacred space and are dedicated to protect, preserve, and improve this special place.

On the back, inside cover, you will find a request to support us in this work – we hope you act today to sustain Old Swedes' for generations to come. Thank you in advance!

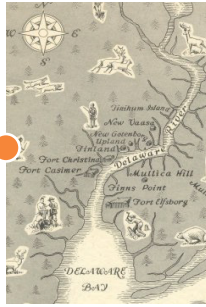
Respectfully submitted,

**Candace Roberts**

# Colonial Swedes On The Delaware

**1638**

After a 4-month voyage from Gothenburg, the Kalmar Nyckel arrives in Delaware Bay. Fort Christina is built at present Wilmington.



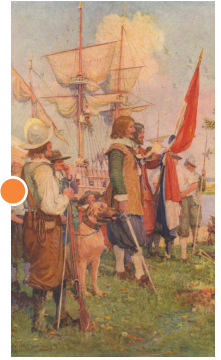
**1644**

A Swedish settlement is established at Kingsessing and the first gristmill is built on Mill (now Cobbs) Creek.



**1654**

New Governor Johan Rising captures Fort Casimir, restoring Swedish control. Rising introduces reforms to protect Swedish settlers' property rights.

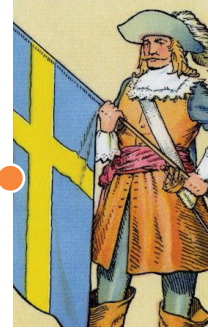


**1642**

The first Swedish settlements in "Pennsylvania" were likely established this year at Techoherassi, Upland and Finland.

**1651**

The Dutch build Fort Casimir at present New Castle. The Christina River becomes the de facto boundary between New Sweden and the Dutch.



**1656**

The Dutch are persuaded to grant self-government to the Swedes in the area north of the Christina River.

**1638**

**1648**

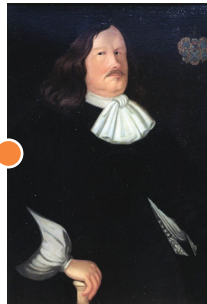
**1658**

**1668**

**1678**

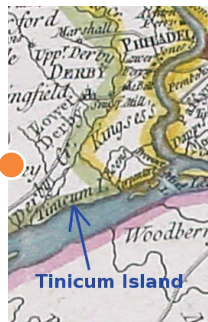
**1640**

Kalmar Nyckel, on its second voyage, brings the first families to New Sweden, including **Sven Gunnarsson** and **Peter Rambo**.



**1643**

Johan Printz, the first royal governor of New Sweden, arrives and builds a manor house and a fort on Tinicum Island.



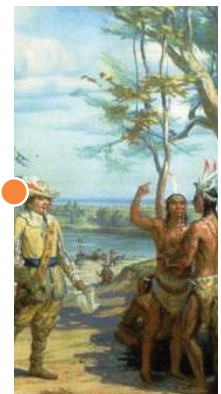
**1646**

The first Swedish log church is built on Tinicum Island.



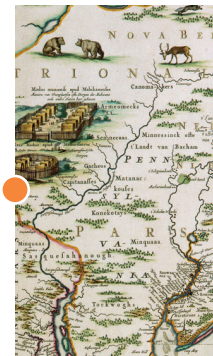
**1655**

In September, Dutch soldiers invade New Sweden. The Swedes surrender the colony and decide to stay in America, pledging allegiance to the Dutch.



**1652**

Printz seizes a plantation in Upland, claiming that the owners practiced witchcraft. Angered Swedes move to Fort Casimir to live under Dutch rule.



**1660**

The Dutch governor asks the Swedes to supply soldiers in his war against the Indians. Swedes refuse, citing their non-aggression policy with the Indians.



1664

Peter Rambo, Sven Gunnarsson, and others receive land patents from the Dutch and move from Kingsessing to Passyunk, Wiccaco and Moyamensing. The English seize the American colony from the Dutch.

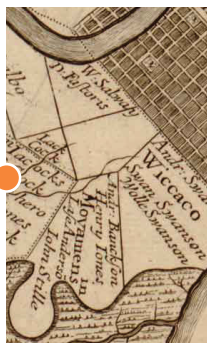


1681

Former New Sweden is granted to William Penn, who secures an English patent for Pennsylvania.

1684

William Penn sets aside 5,000 acres in present Upper Merion Township for future Swedish settlement. Many Swedes sell their land and move to West Jersey.

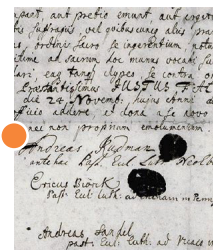
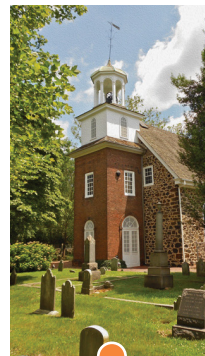


1695

Swedish settler Anders Bengtsson sells one of his Passyunk plantations to church wardens at Wiccaco.

1699

Holy Trinity Church is dedicated at present Wilmington to replace a log church previously used for worship.



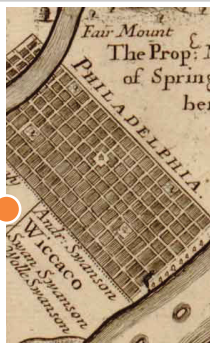
1701

Andreas Rudman negotiates an agreement with William Penn, setting aside 10,000 acres near Manatawny Creek for future Swedish settlement.

1688

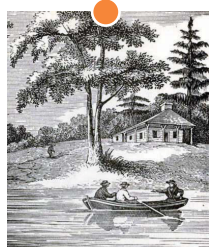
1677

A new log church is dedicated on land given by the family of Sven Gunnarsson. Pastor Jacobus Fabritius serves as minister.



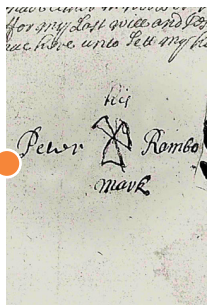
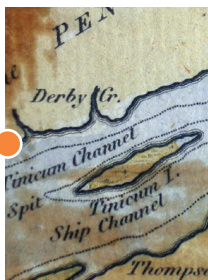
1682/83

Swedes are required to be naturalized as English subjects. Sven Gunnarsson's sons surrender 300 acres for the City of Philadelphia.



1688

The church at Tinicum is abandoned and part of the congregation begins worshipping at the church in Wiccaco.



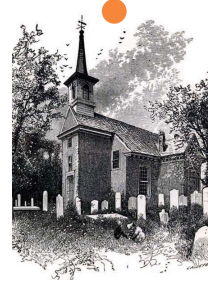
1698

Peter Rambo's son and grandson become the first settlers of the Swedes' tract at Matsunk in present Upper Merion Township.

1718

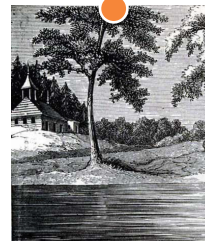
1700

Gloria Dei Church is dedicated at Wiccaco and replaces the old log church.



1704

Side porches added to Gloria Dei Church. Settlement begins at new Swedish tract at Manatawny (present Douglassville, Berks County).



This is an abridged version of a timeline created by historian Dr. Peter Stebbins Craig for the Swedish Colonial Society. The full version was originally published in Swedish Colonial News, Volume 2, Number 5 (Fall 2001).

# The Country Church Of Wiccaco

By Michael Schreiber

What is the most distinctive building in Philadelphia? Gloria Dei, commonly called Old Swedes' Church, has a just claim to the title. The enchantingly pretty church is Pennsylvania's oldest structure. The building and its churchyard provide a visible link with the early settlers who came to New Sweden over three centuries ago.

Gloria Dei stands on ground donated by the First Family of Queen Village — the Swansons. The progenitors of the family in America, Sven and Brigetta Gunnarsson, sailed on the *Kalmar Nyckel* with two small children, arriving in New Sweden in 1640. Brigetta was pregnant when she boarded the ship in Gothenburg, and gave birth to their son Olle while still at sea.

The Swedish Crown sought to obtain settlers for its American colony by making use of men who had been rounded up for alleged crimes — such as poaching or desertion from the army. Sven Gunnarsson was one of these cast-offs from the mother country. He arrived in the New World in servitude, laboring for close to five years on a tobacco plantation in what is now the state of Delaware.

Around 1645, soon after becoming a free man, Gunnarsson moved with his family to Kingsessing, today a neighborhood in southwest Philadelphia. He operated the newly built gristmill on Cobbs Creek — the first in the Delaware Valley — and became known as “Sven the Miller.”

Within a decade, New Sweden came to an end after Dutch forces defeated the Swedes in several skirmishes on the Delaware. Governor Peter Stuyvesant took over administration of the colony, ruling it from New Amsterdam (now New York City). But even with the addition of new settlers from the Netherlands — and soon from the British Isles — for a number of years Swedes and Finns remained the majority of the population. (Finland at that time was incorporated into the Swedish state.)

In 1664, Sven and his three adult sons — Sven, Olle, and Anders — received a patent from Stuyvesant's successor for a large tract of land that extended west from the banks of the Delaware. Only months later, the Dutch were forced to yield their colony to the English, but the English governor confirmed the patent in 1671.

The property Gunnarsson and his sons received formed a significant portion of land that had originally been “sold” by a sachem of the Lenape people to the Dutch West Indies Company in 1646: “A piece of land called by their people *Wiquachkoingh* [Wiccaco], located on the South River of New Netherland. . . . The land extends from the south end of a marsh (running between the thicket and the forest) . . . to a small stream, forming there a round and rather high point nearly opposite the south point of Schutter's Island [later known as Windmill Island and Smith's Island], and inland five or six miles.” Sven Gunnarsson and his sons, who took the last name Svensson (later Anglicized to “Swanson”), established their homesteads on high ground close to where the small Wiccaco Creek flowed into the Delaware. The Lenape people had used the land for centuries as a camp. After the death of Brigetta in 1671, Sven Gunnarsson



Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church in Philadelphia.

Photography by Amanda Hall Studios

resided with the family of his youngest son, Anders, in a house that lay several dozen yards north of the creek (the stream now flows in the sewers beneath Christian Street). The family of the eldest son, Sven, lived further south, close to where Washington Avenue is today.

In May 1675, the English Governor Lovelace authorized the Swedish settlers living above Darby Creek to construct a new church in their vicinity, which would be located at Wiccaco. Sven Gunnarsson's children granted a plot of land to the north of Sven's house for the purpose. Their father did not sign the grant; he was approaching 70 and might have been infirm, since he died a few years later.

The church building, according to several accounts, was fortified in order to withstand any attacks from Native American warriors. It was probably constructed of logs, which at a certain point were covered with wooden siding.

The church was consecrated on Trinity Sunday, June 5, 1677, and the congregation was entrusted to a minister named Jacob Fabritius, born in Silesia (now in Poland), who mostly preached in a dialect of low Dutch (also called low German). Fabritius was well educated, but considered a “turbulent” fellow, subject to violent outbursts. The Lutheran elders in New York City wrote about him in 1670: “He is very fond of wine and brandy and knows how to curse and swear, too. In his apparel he is like a soldier, red from head to feet. He married a woman here with five children and has dressed them all in red.”

Four years later, his wife, Annetje (Anna), complained in a New York court that Fabritius had forced her “the whole winter to sleep in the garret under the roof of the house, which truly is a very hard thing to happen to an old woman, and all this for a drunken and constant profaner of God's name, a deviant Lutheran preacher.” The court ordered Fabritius to hand over the key to the house to his wife, and in the future “not to presume to molest her in any way.”

But the husband and wife soon reconciled and moved to what is now Delaware. Fabritius was embroiled in several more court suits there, including on charges that he had acted as the ringleader of a group of rioters. However, he settled down once he became established at

Wiccaco, and preached there for close to 15 years — even though he was blind for most of that period and often complained of not having enough money. During his early years at Wiccaco, the minister lived upriver at Shackamaxon (now the Fishtown neighborhood of Philadelphia), and like many of his parishioners, had to travel to the church by canoe.

Fabritius retired due to old age and ailments in 1693 (he died three years later), and for the next few years the Wiccaco congregation had no minister — despite their entreaties to the Lutheran authorities in Sweden to send one. Finally, in 1696, King Carl XI commanded the archbishop in Stockholm to send two clergymen to his country's former colony.

The new ministers, Eric Biörck and Andreas Rudman, both 28 years old, had studied at seminary together, and this was to be their first major assignment. After traveling to England, they set out from Plymouth on March 23, 1697, for the three-month journey across the Atlantic. For the use of their new parishioners, they carried a chest of Bibles, hymnals, and prayer books — though many of the pages were still unbound. The ship endured at least five heavy storms along the way, and was compelled to drift for days with its sails torn and its masts broken.

The ministers finally disembarked in Maryland on June 24. Four days later, they met with the vice governor, William Markham, who resided, in Biörck's words, in "a pretty little city, Philadelphia, built and inhabited by those weeds, the Quakers." Rudman later noted that Philadelphia was no more than the length of "two musket shots" north of the church at Wiccaco. The city had over 3000 inhabitants at the time and had been carved out of the forest on land that was purchased from the Swanson brothers.

A couple years later, Rudman described Philadelphia again in a letter he sent to Sweden: "If anyone were to see Philadelphia who had not been there [before], he would be astonished beyond measure [to learn] that it was founded less than twenty years ago. Even Uppsala, etc., would have to yield place to it. All the houses are built of brick, three or four hundred of them, and in every house a shop, or Gatbodh [a house with a shopfront], so that whatever one wants at any time he can have, for money."

But he also expressed reservations about the people from England who had settled in Philadelphia and the surrounding area: "When the English arrived, they did not all come empty-handed. Some were wealthy capitalists, who usurped property the Swedes held, especially along the water, cleared the land and made it bald, and crowded the Swedes, who had neither the will nor the understanding to strive with them. Therefore, they sold their precious land along the water and had to go up into the country. For the most part, they were cheated."

The ministers decided that Biörck would take charge of the church at Christina (today's Wilmington, Del.), while Rudman would officiate at Wiccaco. He preached for the first time in Wiccaco's wooden church on July 4, 1697.

Immediately, it became apparent that the church buildings required extensive repairs and were also too tiny for the size of their congregations. About 1200 people were listed as members

of the two churches, with 529 at Wiccaco alone. Rudman wrote to one of his professors in Sweden, "The churches are old and decrepit. Therefore we, with the help of the Lord, will exert ourselves to build new ones."

While Biörck began right away to hire workmen for his new church at Christina — which was to be located in the churchyard not far from the old one — Rudman discovered that the issue was more controversial in his district. Parishioners who lived in Kingsessing and other areas along the Schuylkill wanted the new church to be built nearer to their homes. People who lived along the Delaware insisted that it remain at Wiccaco. Rudman was exasperated by the dispute — which delayed construction for close to a year — and at one point threatened to go back to Sweden. Finally, the congregation agreed to leave the decision to the ministers, who decided that the new building would be built next to the old one at Wiccaco.

A number of parishioners helped with tasks during the construction of both churches. But the major work was performed by a group of top Philadelphia craftsmen, mainly trained in England. They included mason Joseph Yard, John Smart for much of the carpentry, and master carpenter John Harrison (who likely apprenticed at the Carpenters' Company in London) for the finishing and interior work. Yard and Harrison brought their sons as assistants, and Yard used the services of a free black man, Dick, on both churches "as he knew best how to prepare and carry the mortar."

Yard began laying the foundations at Christina in May 1698, and foundation work at Wiccaco began the following October. As he and the other craftsmen completed a task on one church, they moved on to the other.

Who designed the two churches? It is doubtful that any single person served as the architect. In that period, master carpenters engaged in construction work generally carried out their own designs. Despite its smaller size, Gloria Dei resembles in several respects some of Sir Christopher Wren's churches, such as St. James Piccadilly (1684), and the memory of similar buildings in England probably influenced carpenter John Harrison or mason Joseph Yard when they sketched out their plans for the churches along the Delaware.

It took just a year to complete the church at Christina, which was consecrated on Trinity Sunday, June 4, 1699. The church at Wiccaco was consecrated one year later — June 2, 1700. A large crowd of people came from the city of Philadelphia and from farms up and down the river to attend the Wiccaco ceremony, join in the songs, and share the afternoon banquet. It's possible William Penn was present, since he was residing in Pennsylvania at the time. Eric Biörck gave the morning sermon, first in Swedish and later (on request) in English, and the Anglican minister of Christ Church in Philadelphia spoke at noon. Biörck christened the new church Guds Åra Hus, (the House of God's Glory) or Gloria Dei.

A few years later, rooms were constructed on the north and south sides of the church, and a cupola was added later for its bell. Over the centuries, many additional generations have been buried in the churchyard — some with visible gravestones, but most without. Visiting this shrine today, it's still easy to imagine it as the country church at Wiccaco, surrounded by river, woods, and fields, when "the pretty little city" of Philadelphia lay two musket shots to the north.

# Sven's Woods: Bringing More Wildlife To Gloria Dei

By Michael Schreiber

The proposal to restore a portion of land at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church in Philadelphia to help attract wildlife is very timely. Its status as a National Historical Park and location within a big city can help make Gloria Dei a prominent example of ecological land management others can copy.

The new project has been dubbed "Sven's Woods," after Swedish settlers Sven Gunnarsson and his son Sven Swanson, who both lived there in the 17th century. The new wooded area would extend efforts at nearby Washington Avenue Green to transform former industrial properties along the Delaware River into parkland, restoring them with native plants and trees.

On the whole, habitat for wildlife continues to erode in the Philadelphia area as woods and farmland are bulldozed for housing, highways and shopping centers. Moreover, contemporary architectural practices — taller buildings, increased lighting of buildings and the current style of using large areas of plate glass — are responsible for the deaths of a great number of birds. An estimated 40,000 birds a year collide with buildings while migrating in the skies over Philadelphia.

Increased flooding is another consequence of the steady process of covering our landscape in concrete. This coincides with climate changes during the last half-century, in which average annual precipitation from heavy storms has increased 70 percent in the Northeastern U.S. Rising temperatures in the future will melt snow earlier in spring and dry the soil during the summer — intensifying flooding during the cold season, while bringing drought in the hotter months of the year.

Some agencies estimate that because of climate change, and the fact that the Delaware Valley is sinking, the river could rise as much as four feet by 2040, inundating large areas of Philadelphia. (The EPA, more conservatively, estimates "by the end of the century." But of course, the amount and rapidity of sea level rise will depend on the degree to which people are able to mitigate the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.) Large areas of Philadelphia close to the waterfront — such as the Navy Yard and the airport — could be submerged, and even the area adjacent to Gloria Dei Church could encounter heavy flooding.

There is a corresponding threat that the rise in salinity of Delaware River water will endanger our drinking supply and destroy much of the tree life along the river. This underlines the importance of conserving green areas on the riverbanks, and of protecting the habitat of wildlife that will be under increasing stress.

## On The Atlantic Flyway

Although the proposed woodland at Gloria Dei would be fairly small in area, it lies strategically along the Atlantic flyway and at the juncture with a branch flyway from the upper Midwest. Nearby areas like the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge are a magnet for migrating waterfowl and songbirds.

08 Fall 2018



The passenger pigeon was a dominant bird species in the Philadelphia area two centuries ago.

Plate 23 in Volume 1 of *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and Bahamas* by Mark Catesby and George Edwards published in 1754.

Nevertheless, the number of birds has declined markedly from when the region was still mainly rural. Two centuries ago, for example, the passenger pigeon was the dominant bird species in the area; flocks sometimes contained over a million birds. Now the species is extinct.

During their semi-annual migration to and from South America, bobolinks (known as "reed birds" in this region) regularly stopped to feed in the marshes and meadows that existed just south of Gloria Dei. In fact, their numbers probably multiplied in the 18th century as the forests were cut down for farm fields — but now they are much rarer. Mechanical threshers kill legions of young bobolinks each year in the Pennsylvania hayfields.

Yet all is not bleak. The Audubon Society's 2016 Mid-Winter Bird Census points out that Philadelphia, despite the fact that it is heavily developed, has one of the most diverse bird populations of any county in Pennsylvania. Although a few species are declining in numbers in the city, mainly due to habitat loss, the census still recorded 107 species of birds last year, including a few rare ones. Enhancing the habitat at Gloria Dei can help feed and protect the birds and keep their numbers up.

## Looking Backward Through The Centuries

To begin to restore the land, it is useful to understand what it looked like before it was built upon. To do that, we must look far back — over 350 years ago, when Swedish and Finnish farmers began to settle the area. The Swedes called the area "Wicaco," their abbreviated version of the name given to it by the Lenni Lenape people, who had lived in the region for thousands of years.

Since that era, at least two generations of buildings were constructed in the area of the Gloria Dei property being ecologically restored. In the 18th and early 19th century, a number



of houses were built there. Later, most of the houses were replaced by industrial buildings. A lye works and a soap manufacturer operated there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. About 40 years ago, the remaining buildings were cleared by the National Park Service, and trees and grass were planted.

Of course, it is not possible to restore the area to its appearance in the 17th century. Too many radical changes have taken place in the interim — the creeks covered over, wetlands drained, and forests cut down. The shores of the river have been moved much further east, and the land covered with buildings and parking lots. Gloria Dei is now surrounded on three sides by heavily trafficked streets and highways — including the elevated I-95 expressway. Noise from trucks is a constant factor, and we might expect to find a significant amount of pollution in the soil and air.

Another example of modern landscape adaptations is the presence of a large ginkgo tree on the Gloria Dei grounds. The tree was probably planted with good intentions by the National Park Service, but ginkgos are native to China, not Pennsylvania.

Nevertheless, it would be useful to try to recreate in the selection of plants a representation, a small glimpse, of what used to be. For a National Historical Park, education in history is obviously a key part of the mission. Identifying labels might indicate, for example, which plants were used by the Lenape people or early European colonists for food, medicines, basket weaving, etc.

### A Narrow Ridge Along The River

Gloria Dei Church was built towards the northern end of a low ridge paralleling the Delaware River, just south of the outlet of Wicaco Creek (the creek ran close to what is now Christian Street). The current church building, begun in 1698 and consecrated in 1700, is at the highest point of the ridge, sitting perhaps 15 feet above the high tide of the river. In his “Annals of Philadelphia in the Olden Times” (first published in 1830), John Fanning Watson said that the hill where the present church sits was lowered about eight feet from its original height, while the ground surrounding the hill was raised in height. He pointed out that the stone foundations of the church, which are now exposed on the Swanson Street side, used to be completely underground.

Nevertheless, most of the ridge probably remains fairly close to its original height, since graves in the churchyard that predate the church building remain buried. The oldest date that is still readily visible on tombstones close to the church is 1708, but the first burials probably took place on the property over three decades earlier. (A fortified wooden church was established there in 1677, and it is thought that Sven Gunnarsson, who died around 1680, was one of the first to be buried in the churchyard.)

The Wicaco ridge extended south almost half a mile to about where Wharton Street is today. At that point, the land dropped into a valley, through which a small creek ran into the Delaware (just south of what became Reed Street in 1829). Continuing along the river to the south, the land was relatively flat and open (this was called Wicaco Meadows in the second half of the 18th century), and it became marshy further south in the vicinity of Hay Creek (also called Moyamensing Creek, around present-day Oregon Avenue).



An artist's conception of Sven Gunnarsson's farmhouse.

In 1654, the Dutch governor granted the 1125-acre tract of Wicaco — all the land above Hay Creek, extending two and a half miles to the north — to Sven Gunnarsson and his sons, the “Swanson” family. That was one of the governor’s last acts, since the English conquered the Dutch at New Amsterdam during the same year, and the Delaware Valley was put under English rule.

### Wicaco Creek

What remains of Wicaco Creek now runs in a large sewer under Christian Street. In earlier times, the little creek and its valley afforded a relatively clear route through the forests for the Lenape people to travel from the west. And the Swedish settlers followed the same route to attend their church at Wicaco.

Families living near the small village and trading post at Kingsessing, on the west bank of the Schuylkill, or in the vicinity of the Lutheran parsonage (glebe house) on the east bank, took the paths that later became the Passyunk Road and the Moyamensing Road. They then met another path following Wicaco Creek, which they followed to the banks of the Delaware.

The historic creek valley was lower and steeper as it descended to the river than Christian Street is today. John Fanning Watson pointed out in his mid-19th-century “Annals of Philadelphia” that some older houses along Christian Street, just north of Gloria Dei, showed definite signs that the land around them had been raised. It could be seen, said Watson, that their current underground cellars were once used as ground-floor parlors, and people were now obliged to enter the houses through what used to be their second floors.

Watson indicates, from conversations with elderly residents of the district, that there once was a wide inlet where Wicaco Creek flowed into the Delaware — deep enough so boats could float in it. But that “fact,” based on people’s childhood memories, is difficult to verify. Maps of the 18th century show neither an inlet nor the creek itself — suggesting that the creek had been both shallow and narrow, and that whatever inlet might have existed was soon covered over by the Swanson Street causeway and wharves in the Delaware. However, a pond at Second and Queen Streets, which

probably was linked to the creek, does appear on maps even at the end of the 18th century.

The valley of Wicaco Creek was connected to the small stream valley in the south (near Reed Street) by a gully or ravine, just to the west of Gloria Dei, where Water Street is now located. This ravine appears on maps even at the end of the 18th century (see John Hill's 1796 map, for example). Watson, writing in the early 19th century, pointed out that the "remarkably low ground" to the west of Gloria Dei still existed and that it had a pebbly surface, suggesting that it once communicated with the Delaware River.

Thus, it appears that the land on which Gloria Dei sits might once have been a small island, surrounded by water. It is doubtful, however, that this condition still existed by the time the Swedish settlers, now under English governance, built their fortified church there. Yet the fact that the high ground at Wicaco not only commanded the river, but was surrounded on three sides by a gully, must have had distinct advantages for defense against invaders. In the next century, Benjamin Franklin and others built a battery on the ridge to protect the city of Philadelphia.

On the western side of the Water Street depression, the land rose again, with a hilltop around present-day Fifth and Federal Streets, where the mansion of the Wharton family, Walnut Grove, was built in the early 18th century. That hill was a continuation of a ridge that extended northeast, with its highest point at Society Hill (now Front and Lombard Streets).

According to J. Thomas Scharf's and Thompson Wescott's "History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884," the city's bluffs and ridges along the Delaware were formed partly by movement of glaciers. That does not seem correct to me, since the glaciers did not penetrate this far south in the Delaware Valley (stopping on a line more or less directly west of New York City). It was likely the action of the river itself, as it cut its way along the western edge of the sandy and gravelly soil of the Atlantic coastal plain, that was largely responsible for the series of parallel ridges characteristic of southeastern Philadelphia.

### What Trees Were At Wicaco?

It is not unlikely that the Wicaco ridge was forested, since we know that deep forest covered the high ground just to the north, where William Penn purchased land from Sven Gunnarsson's sons to build his city of Philadelphia. Early settlers reported that the land was covered by vast stands of tall and ancient trees — perhaps over a million trees just in the area within the boundaries of Penn's city. There was a relatively small amount of younger undergrowth, permitting people to often walk unobstructed through the forest. Although diverse species of hardwood (deciduous) trees predominated, coniferous trees were also there in abundance. The Lenape name for the area was "Coaquannock," the "place of pines" or "grove of tall pines," which we might assume was a notable feature of at least one portion of what became Penn's land.

Penn wrote: "The soil is good — air serene and sweet from the cedar, pine, and sassafras." And Penn referred to other trees on the land: Black walnut, chestnut, poplar, gumwood, hickory, ash,

beech, oak (white, black, and red), white and red mulberry, etc. Some of these trees gave their names to east-west streets in the new city.

Deeds for land to the south of the city, where meadow predominated, mentioned some of the same trees as landmarks. Thus, a 1684 patent that Penn gave to Lasse Andrews and other farmers maps out the boundaries by stating: "Begin at an oak by the side of Hollander's Creek ... SW to an oak by Hay Creek, NW to an ash by swampside parcel of meadow ... poplar by Hay Creek ... to oak by Rosemond Creek." The same species of large trees probably appeared on Wicaco ridge.

The map of the Delaware River Valley produced by Swedish engineer Peter Lindstrom in 1654-1655 notes a place called "Wichqua Coing" in the Lenni Lenape language. Thomas Campanius Holm, in his "Description of the Province of New Sweden" (1642, translated 1834), uses a similar name, "Wiquakonich." That is sometimes translated as being derived from "wikquek" ("head of creek") and "kuwe" ("pine tree"), or "the grove of pine trees next to the head of a creek." And many believe that Europeans shortened "Wiquakonich" into "Wicaco," in a reference to the land around what is now Gloria Dei.

But this is merely speculation. For our purposes, it is not possible to definitely conclude from Lindstrom's map or Campanius's manuscript that a specific grove of pines stood next to Wicaco Creek, although pines and other conifers, such as Atlantic white cedars, were numerous in the area.

The only definite reference I could find concerning the trees at Gloria Dei appeared in Watson's "Annals." Watson states from his conversations with people who could remember how the area appeared in the mid-18th century that "an old stand of large water-beech or buttonwood trees" stood near Sven Gunnarsson's house and also by "the Swedes Church." He said that one was still standing in his own time (around the 1830s).

Watson's tree identification is confusing, however. Buttonwood trees are a popular name for sycamores, not water beeches. And water beeches are a species common in the American South, not in Pennsylvania. So were these ancient trees sycamores, water beeches, or perhaps a native species of beech tree? In another confusing example, Penn refers to "a wild myrtle of great fragrance" that he found in Philadelphia. However, no true myrtles are native to the Americas.

It will take quite a few more years until the new Sven's Woods is planted, and many years after that until the trees are mature. Before any planting takes place, we can expect that arborists will carefully review what species of trees might be best for the area. They will naturally take into account the fact that this is no longer a pristine portion of "Penn's Woods," but a neighborhood within a large, noisy, and polluted city. Also, trees will have to be chosen to withstand the effects of climate change. And finally, the new woodland will have to be designed to encourage the visits of people — and their four-footed companions (on a leash, of course) — along with wild creatures such as birds, butterflies, chipmunks, salamanders, and bats.

# A Peach Of A Botanist

By Peter Ross and Amy Grant

Portions of this article were adapted from a report prepared by Lori Aument for the Community Design Collaborative.

Many local residents may not realize Queen Village is actually older than the City of Philadelphia. “Philadelphia’s First Neighborhood” was settled by Swedish immigrants in 1654, 28 years before William Penn founded Pennsylvania.

These early Swedish settlers laid the foundation for a residential community that continues to thrive today. Yet, walking the densely-packed streets of Queen Village, one would be hard-pressed to find evidence of their time here. Centuries of development have turned grassy knolls into streets and intersections. The vast wilderness that once lay to the west of the Delaware River is now a thicket of buildings. Long gone are the large parcels of land dotted with wooden structures and fruitful gardens that our predecessors called home.

What we know about this long lost landscape can be gleaned from the journal of Swedish botanist and explorer Pehr Kalm (1716-1779). When Kalm traveled to Philadelphia in 1748 and 1751, he wrote extensively about the people he encountered, the places he visited, and the nature he explored. Because he used the modern Latin binomial nomenclature system, we have a thorough historical record of the plants, trees, shrubs, and vines that once filled our terrain.

Kalm’s initial observations of Philadelphia were made from the ship that brought him to the city. At a great distance from the shore, he marveled at the thick forest of oak, hickory and fir trees that lined the riverbanks. Closer to land, he delighted at farm houses “surrounded with corn fields, pastures well stocked with cattle, and meadows covered with fine hay.”

Shortly after disembarking, Kalm compiled a listing of the bountiful foliage indigenous to the area. White, red, and Spanish oaks, hickory, and blackberry shrubs were the five most common plants he catalogued. He also discovered that red maple, smooth sumac, elderberry, willow oak, and multiple kinds of grape vines, such as the fox grape and frost grape, grew in abundance.

Gloria Dei Church, located in what was then called “Weekacko,” figured prominently in Kalm’s writings as did its surroundings. Sycamore trees that grew “on the shore of the river” and near homes and gardens provided “pleasant shade in the hot season.” Mulberry trees, which are a fixture at Gloria Dei today, were “planted on some hillocks near” houses or inside courtyards. Black walnut and chestnut trees also grew in the woods and in fields near the church.

Kalm was impressed by the abundance of fresh fruit that “every countryman, even a common peasant” was able to produce. He



*Kalmia latifolia*, commonly called mountain laurel, calico-bush or spoonwood, was identified by Pehr Kalm during his travels in North America. It is the state flower of Pennsylvania.

described local peach trees as “covered with such quantities of fruit, that we could scarcely walk . . . without treading upon those peaches which were fallen off.”

During his botanical excursions, Kalm identified the “Spoon tree,” a species ostensibly used by Native Americans for forging spoons. He noted that “the fine branches of this tree, which are then thick covered with leaves” served as decorations at “churches on christmas day or new-years day.” Carolus Linnæus, Kalm’s mentor and friend, later named this new genus *Kalmia latifolia* to honor Kalm’s discovery.

The “very pleasant country” town of Philadelphia measured no “more than an English mile in length” with a breadth of “half a mile or more” during Kalm’s visit. However, he noted that the wooded areas located west of the city were rapidly being cleared for construction and industrial purposes. Cedar trees, commonly used for roofing material, were starting to become rare as early as 1748. “Swamps and Morasses formerly were full of them,” he wrote, “but at present these trees are for the greatest part cut down, and no attempt has as yet been made to plant new ones.” The increase in brick kilns and iron works also placed a high demand on wood for fuel. Kalm noted that “in the space of a few years [fuel has] risen in price to many times as much again as it had been.”

As a result of the rapid growth noted by Kalm, Philadelphia and its close suburbs was fast becoming the largest urban concentration in Britain’s North American colonies.

# Gloria Dei 3.0: Greener And More Glorious

By Jim Murphy and Amy Grant

The proposed Christian Street Garden Park reclaims dead space along Columbus Boulevard, improves Gloria Dei's visibility and makes it easier for pedestrians to connect with the riverfront. Other features include:

- 1 Planting tall trees to create shaded areas
- 2 Installing pathway and overhead lighting
- 3 Building a rain garden and fountain
- 4 Adding underplantings along the path
- 5 Creating seating areas
- 6 Building a pathway out of pavers
- 7 Increasing visibility of the church building
- 8 Creating space for programming



Images Courtesy of the Community Design Collaborative

Get ready, get set and grab your popcorn.

Interesting things are happening at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church. A gorgeous new design concept to revitalize the grounds and provide more public green space has already been developed. **So let's take a look.**

If the plan ever gets accepted and funded, the end result will be a wonderfully serene and pleasant spot for everyone in the Queen Village area to enjoy.

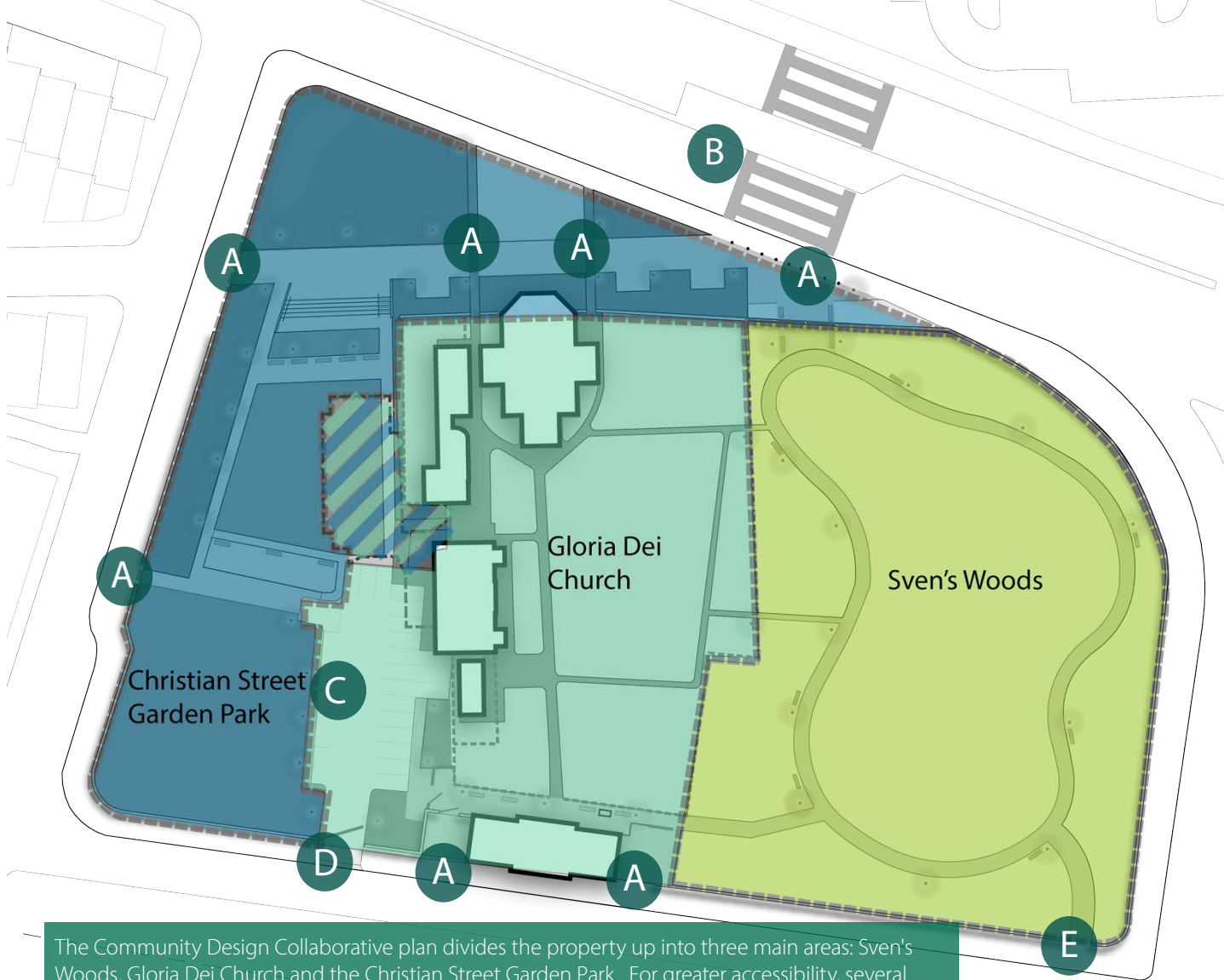
Among the obvious advantages: more woodland, a bird

sanctuary, easier entry from Water Street and more public and community space along Columbus Boulevard.

## Here's the plan:

Developed by a volunteer team of architects, engineers, historians and other skilled professionals from the Community Design Collaborative, the plan recommends dividing the site into three main areas:

- Sven's Woods to the south
- The Gloria Dei Church site at the core



The Community Design Collaborative plan divides the property up into three main areas: Sven's Woods, Gloria Dei Church and the Christian Street Garden Park. For greater accessibility, several new entrances are indicated: A pedestrian entrance, B crosswalk to future Delaware River trail, C parking with subsurface stormwater, D main vehicle entrance, E vehicle maintenance entrance.

- Christian Street Garden Park on the north fronting Columbus Boulevard

and burial grounds, the plan includes a low wrought iron fence around the church portion of the site. Higher wrought iron fences would enclose the private yard space of the two residences there.

**Part 1: Sven's Woods**

The plan proposes gradually establishing a small woodland, removing the old amphitheater and replacing lawn areas with trees and understory plantings. It also includes handicapped accessible paths, a nature play station, and interpretive signage.

**Other changes here:** a new granite entry plaza as you approach from Water Street, plus a two-way driveway for easier turnarounds. It replaces the current one-way driveway from Christian Street. The parking lot also includes subsurface stormwater management.

In addition, new lighting and benches would be placed along the path. The brick wall along the east side of this area would be pushed out to the edge of the site, recovering what's now dead space outside the wall. Plus a new entrance would connect directly to the Delaware River and the park proposed for the adjacent wharf there.

**Part 3: Christian Street Garden Park**

**Part 2: Gloria Dei Church Site**

Here, the plan reclaims space along Christian Street, now under-used, to accommodate dog walking, free play and picnics. Relocating public, community space along Christian Street will provide better access to the whole site, improve Gloria Dei's visibility and make it far easier for pedestrians to connect with the riverfront area.

To preserve the peaceful atmosphere of the church site



The plan also includes new plantings, paths, seating, lighting and signage in that section.

In addition, a decorative screen and plantings will shield the park from the proposed nearby parking lot. The plan allots space for a potential new building here, incorporating that area into the garden in the meantime.

### Fixing A Dead Zone

Moreover, the plan helps solve a dead area at the northeast corner, where the current plaza is about 2 ½ feet below the grade of the Christian Street green space. Using a new stairway and ramp to overcome the grade change, it extends the plaza through to Columbus Boulevard and will improve connections with the waterfront.

A new rain garden will manage stormwater and supply a new fountain that will serve as a focal point along Columbus Boulevard. Light bollards will line the plaza along the street, too.

### Unique Site Opportunities ... And Challenges

The site includes both the oldest church in Pennsylvania and a National Historic Park – with significant architectural and historic treasures.

Plus, renowned ornithologist Alexander Wilson is buried here, and his work could be presented and explored with supported programming.

However, the less-than-5-acre property is surrounded by highly trafficked roads on three sides, making pedestrian access difficult. And an elevated highway isolates it from residences west of Front Street. The result: Visitors rarely venture here. Gloria Dei may be the best-kept secret in Queen Village, and is the neighborhood's largest underutilized open space.

Unfortunately, years of wear and tear have also taken their toll – the church building and churchyard need significant repairs and upgrades. And while the church has an active congregation, like



The plan for Sven's Woods features: 1 trees, 2 benches, 3 nature play stations, 4 understory plantings, 5 handicapped accessible pathways.

many other religious institutions these days, it operates under a tight budget.

### The Players Involved At Gloria Dei

The National Park Service  
 Gloria Dei Church  
 Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Corporation  
 Community Design Collaborative  
 The City of Philadelphia

### Historic Timeline:

1942: The church building is designated a National Historic Site. The newly formed National Park Service (NPS) signs an agreement with the congregation that same year to turn the property into a living landmark and surround it with green space. NPS also builds a concrete amphitheater to host outdoor concerts and lecture series.

2014: After years of dwindling crowds and seeing the need

for repairs, local preservationists form the Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Corporation (HGDPC). Its task: restore, maintain and protect the site's historic elements.

2016: HGDPC applies to the Community Design Collaborative (Collaborative) for assistance and wins a design grant. The Collaborative suggests developing a site master plan that ties into the master plan of the Central Delaware.

2016 to 2018: The Collaborative volunteer team meets with HGDPC representatives on-site; it also facilitate two community task force meetings, and meets with HGDPC and NPS to ensure coordination and discuss possible ways to move forward.

### That's Where We Are Now

What do you think? Do you like what you have heard and seen? Can you imagine how much enjoyment the site portrayed here could bring to Philadelphia?

**Then stay tuned.** We will update you on progress and tell you how you can become involved.

# Swede Spots

By Amy Grant and Peter Ross

Do you want to explore the Delaware Valley's Swedish colonial heritage? If so, visit these locations. Unless otherwise indicated, these sites are publicly accessible or can be toured via special request. Want to learn more? If so, reach out to Consulate of Sweden in Philadelphia by calling (610) 812-9134 or writing to [philadelphia@consulateofsweden.org](mailto:philadelphia@consulateofsweden.org). The consul promotes cultural awareness, goodwill, and business and investment between Sweden and Philadelphia, Harrisburg and the rest of Pennsylvania.



## Pennsylvania

### American Swedish Historical Museum

1900 Pattison Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19145  
(215) 389-1776  
[americanswedish.org](http://americanswedish.org)

Founded in 1926, the museum is the oldest Swedish museum in the United States. Architect John Nydén, a Swedish-American from Chicago, designed the building to reflect both Swedish and American architectural elements. The museum's interior features twelve exhibition galleries with rotating exhibits.

### Bartram's Garden

5400 Lindbergh Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA 19143  
(215) 729-5281  
[bartramsgarden.org](http://bartramsgarden.org)

When John Bartram purchased this property in 1728, it contained an old stone cottage dating from an early Swedish settlement. Although he expanded the building in subsequent years, remnants of the cottage remain in the present kitchen, as evidenced by a fireplace and other artifacts.

### Boelson Cottage

2110 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Philadelphia PA 19131

Built sometime between 1678 and 1684, this 17th century Dutch/Swedish style cottage is the oldest extant structure in Fairmount Park. Although the building currently serves as an office for the Friends of Philadelphia Parks, the grounds are still accessible.

### Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church

916 S. Swanson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147  
(215) 389-1513  
[old-swedes.com](http://old-swedes.com)

Consecrated in 1700, Gloria Dei is the the oldest church in

Pennsylvania and second oldest Swedish church in the United States. The sanctuary houses a number of artifacts, including a 1731 marble baptismal font. The churchyard dates back to 1677 and features several recently restored 18th century markers.

### Governor Printz Park

101 Taylor Avenue, Essington, PA 19029  
(610) 521-3530

Johan Printz, the third governor of the colony of New Sweden, established this location as its capital in 1643. Stone foundations from "the Printzhof," a two-story log structure that served as the governor's home, remain on the property. Plans are currently underway to create a New Sweden Theme Park on this site.

### Lower Swedish Cabin

9 Creek Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026  
(610) 237-8064  
[swedishcabin.info](http://swedishcabin.info)

This historic log cabin was built between 1638 and 1655 by Swedish immigrants who were part of the New Sweden colony. It stands relatively unaltered from its original construction and may be one of the oldest log cabins in the United States. The cabin is open for tours on Sundays, May through October.

### Morton Homestead

100 Lincoln Avenue, Prospect Park, PA 19076  
(610) 583-7221  
[norwoodpahistorical.org](http://norwoodpahistorical.org)

The homestead was founded in 1654 by Morton Mortenson, a Finnish immigrant, when the area was part of the New Sweden colony. The original structure dates back to 1698 and is one of the few surviving examples of 17th century Swedish log structures in the Delaware Valley.





Mouns Jones House

### **Mouns Jones House**

31 Old Philadelphia Pike, Douglassville, PA 19518  
(610) 385-4762  
[historicpreservationtrust.org](http://historicpreservationtrust.org)

Built in 1716 by Swedish settler Mouns Jones, this structure may be one of the earliest remaining buildings in Berks County. The building was recently restored by the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County. It is open to the public periodically during the year as part of the Morlatton Village historic site.

### **Delaware Block House**

1 Naamans Rd, Claymont, DE 19703

The Block House was constructed circa 1654 by Johan Risingh, the last governor of the colony of New Sweden. It was intended for defense against local Indian tribes and was later captured by the British Army during the American Revolution. It is the only house remaining of the original settlement on Naaman's Creek.

### **Fort Christina**

1110 E. 7th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801

This site marks the approximate location where Swedish colonists from the ships Kalmar Nyckel and Fogel Grip landed on a natural wharf of rocks in 1638. It was the first Swedish settlement in America and the first permanent non-native settlement in Delaware.

### **Hendrickson House**

606 N. Church Street, Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 652-5629  
[oldswedes.org](http://oldswedes.org)

Swedish farmer Andrew Hendrickson built this house in Chester, Pennsylvania during the early 18th century. In 1958, the house was moved to Wilmington, Delaware and placed on the Holy Trinity Church property. It is one of the oldest surviving Swedish-American homes in the United States.

### **Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church**

606 N. Church Street, Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 652-5629  
[oldswedes.org](http://oldswedes.org)

Holy Trinity is one of three churches with similar architecture built by Swedish communities during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.



Kalmar Nyckel

Consecrated in 1699, Holy Trinity is the oldest Swedish church in the United States. There reportedly are over 15,000 burials in its churchyard.

### **Kalmar Nyckel Foundation Museum and Shipyard**

1124 E. 7th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 429-7447  
[kalmarnyckel.org](http://kalmarnyckel.org)

Completed in 1998, this ship is a full-scale and faithful re-creation of Peter Minuit's original flagship that founded the colony of New Sweden on the Delaware. The "good will ambassador" for the state of Delaware sails daily from April to November, voyaging over 3,000 nautical miles each year.

### **New Sweden Centre**

1124 E. 7th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801  
(302) 429-0464  
[colonialnews sweden.org](http://colonialnews sweden.org)

This "museum without walls" showcases the Delaware Valley's Colonial history with a special emphasis on New Sweden. Re-enactors use costumes and artifacts to engage the public with tales about Swedish sailors, the Swedish Governor's Guards and Governor Johan Printz.

### **New Jersey**

#### **C. A. Nothnagle Log House**

406 Swedesboro Road, Gibbstown, NJ 08027  
(856) 423-0916

The Nothnagle log house was built sometime between 1638 and 1643 by Finnish settlers in the New Sweden colony. The house features a number of artifacts, including 1590's Scandinavian ironware around the fireplace. Although privately owned, the house is available to tour by appointment.

#### **Mortonson-Schorn Log Cabin**

1208 Kings Highway, Swedesboro, NJ 08085  
(856) 467-1227

Built by Morton Mortonson in the 1600s, this structure is one of the oldest original log cabins of early Swedish-Finnish architecture in the United States. Before and during the Civil War, it was used as a station for the Underground Railroad. The cabin was moved to the Trinity Episcopal Church property in 1989.

# Aggressively Cute, The Sjupp Story

By Duncan Spencer

Carolus Linnaeus is considered the father of modern taxonomy. To remember Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species, say: King Philip Came Over From Germany Sick. Or in Australia: Keep Ponds Clean Or Frogs Get Spacko. Linnaeus created a system for classifying and naming nature. The basis of this system is still used by scientists around the world. The adage is "God Created, Linnaeus Classified." Linnaeus was born in Sweden in 1707.

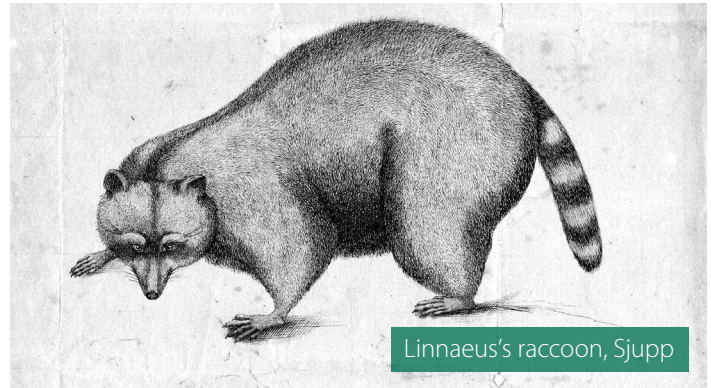
Being a world renowned Swedish scientist has its perks; people send you things, things from the New World. Sometimes even shiny, big-eyed creatures with little black hands with almost opposable thumbs, and mischief in their hearts. Sjupp the raccoon was given to Linnaeus as a gift from crown prince Adolf Fredrik – known to Swedish school children as the "king who ate himself to death" after he died in 1771 from eating too many helpings of Swedish pudding. While early Swedish and Dutch settlers battled it out in a 30-mile stretch of the Delaware River known as New Sweden for what was considered one of America's major early commodities – raccoon fur – Sjupp was moving from a small zoo in the Royal Gardens of Stockholm to Linnaeus' manor in Uppsala Sweden.

Linnaeus, who loved the mischievous little creature, installed him in his walled gardens and took him on as a household pet. Linnaeus reveled in Sjupp's exploits and laughed as he ripped apart clothing, cupboards and landscaping in pursuit of snacks. According to Linnaeus, "What he liked best were eggs, almonds, raisins, sugared cakes, sugar and fruit of every kind ... if a student came in who happened to have raisins or almonds on him, he at once attacked his pocket and fought until he had captured the spoil. On the other hand, he could not bear anything with vinegar on it, or sauerkraut, or raw or boiled fish." Note: Due to their omnivorous diet, procyonids have lost some of the adaptations for flesh-eating found in their carnivorous relatives. While they do have carnassial or shearing teeth, these are poorly developed in most species, especially in raccoons.

Sjuup was originally classified in 1747 by Linnaeus as *Ursus cauda elongata* or "the long-tailed bear." By his tenth edition of *Systema Naturae*, he was revised to *Ursus lotor*, or "the washing bear," then later *procyon lotor* or "before the dog (hand) washer."

Alas, Linnaeus loved Sjupp in the way only a scientist can. One day in 1747, the always-curious Sjupp climbed out of his walled garden home only to be mauled to death by dogs on the other side. Through his tears, Linnaeus, ever the scientist, managed to throw Sjupp's mangled body up on the slab, dissect the remains, and publish a detailed description of his friend's insides, to complement his already published description of his friend's outsides.

Pehr Kalm, a Swede and a Linnaeus representative sent to the New World to "gather riches" reported that raccoons, their skins at least, were an important part of the early North American economy. "The hatters chase their skins, and make hats out of their hair, which are next in goodness to beavers ... The tail is worn around the neck



Linnaeus's raccoon, Sjupp

*With kind permission from the Linnean Society of London.*

in winter and therefore is likewise valuable," Kalm reports in his "Travels into North America" (1772). Interestingly, Kalm spent his winters of this expedition in the town of Raccoon, which is today known as Swedesboro.

## Now Onto The Gold, Raccoon Gold

Not much happened in the raccoon world for 230 years after Sjuup's death in 1747. Then in January 1977, pay dirt. Based on a 1963 American children's book, "Rascal: A Memoir of a Better Era," the Nippon Animation Company released "Rascal the Raccoon," a 52-episode Anime cartoon series that told the story of a young boy and his ever-present animal sidekick Rascal. The show was so popular amongst Japanese children that the country began importing an estimated 1,500 of these aggressively cute creatures to Japanese shores every year. (Look up "Raccoons Gone Wild," "Raccoons Take Big Bite Out of Crops," "Rascal's Raccoon Invasion," "How the Children's Cartoon Destroyed Japanese Agriculture," "Pet Raccoons in Japan; It Happened," "Reproductive Characteristics of the Feral Raccoon," "5 Reasons Not to Get a Pet Raccoon.")

The show featured early work by Studio Ghibli co-founder Hayao Miyazaki, who is responsible for some of the greatest Anime films ever made: "Princess Mononoke," "Spirited Away," "Howl's Moving Castle" (ask a kid if you don't know what any of these words mean). Rascal the Raccoon was the beginning of the Anime, and Anime is everything.

Do you see where I'm going with this? What Pehr Kalm missed? It's not the raccoon or its skin that held the value, it's raccooness. When Linnaeus described Sjupp he made him the 'Type specimen' for his species. He made Sjupp into Raccooness. And Raccooness is cuteness; aggressive, unbridled, raw cuteness. Sjupp was cuteness at the id level. Dangerously adorable. And I'm willing to go one step further and say that Rascal the Raccoon softened the ground for and foreshadowed the popularity of franchises such as Hello Kitty and Pokémon, which took the world by storm several decades later. And further still, I'm claiming that the Pokémon character Pikachu is a Raccoon (Sjupp= Rascal= Pikachu). Sjupp, is the godfather of cuteness of Anime. He is why your daughter's backpack, and your son's lunch box look the way they do.

# The Legend Of St. Lucia

By Amy Shelanski and Amy Grant

How did a nice Italian girl who was born in 283 in Sicily wind up in Sweden with candles on her head?

St. Lucia was a devout Christian who went against her widowed mother's wishes to marry. Fearing for her fatherless daughter, Lucia's mother arranged a marriage with a wealthy young man. Lucia refused, knowing from the time she was five years old that she was destined for martyrdom and sainthood.

During what is known as "The Great Persecution," the Roman emperor Diocletian issued a series of edicts rescinding the legal rights of Christians, forcing them to adhere to Roman practices. Forbidden to assemble for worship, those who refused to comply were threatened with death by fire. Fearing the wrath of the Roman Empire, many Christians took refuge in the system of underground tombs called catacombs. According to legend, Lucia donned a candle-lit wreath to bring food and aid to "light her way and leave her hands free to carry as much food as possible" to those in hiding.

Lucia's spurned fiancé denounced her to the authorities, who ordered her to burn a sacrifice in honor of the Roman Emperor. Legend says that when Lucia refused, they sentenced her to be defiled in a brothel. When the guards came for her, they were unable to move her, even with a team of oxen. They tried to burn her, but she would not burn. She was then tortured, and is said to have died in 304.

So how did Lucia inspire a Swedish celebration?

Before Christianization became complete around the 12th century, the Swedes practiced forms of Norse religion. The pre-Christian holiday of Yule, or jól, was the most important holiday in Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Originally the observance of the winter solstice and rebirth of the sun, it brought about many practices that remain in the Advent and Christmas celebrations today. The Yule season was a time for feasting, drinking, gift-giving, and gatherings, but also the season of awareness and fear of the forces of the dark.

In the old Julian calendar, December 13 was the winter solstice. Pagan rituals to ward off darkness were common. As Christianity spread north, Christian missionaries brought the story of St. Lucia with them. The story of the martyred young woman who wore a crown of candles to light the darkness must have had a powerful appeal to the Swedes and other Nordic peoples during their long dark winters. In earlier centuries, the Norse celebrated the winter solstice with large bonfires to scare off evil spirits and alter the course of the sun. After converting to Christianity sometime around 1000, the Norse incorporated the legend of St. Lucia into their celebration. The modern festival of light combines elements of both pagan and Christian traditions. Today, it marks the beginning of the Christmas season in Scandinavia, and it is meant to bring hope and light during the darkest time of the year.

The Lucia celebrations include traditional foods - ginger snaps (pepparkakor) and sweet, saffron-flavored buns (lussekatter) shaped



This artistic rendering of a young woman portraying Lucia appeared on the cover of the Finnish paper Allers Familj-Journal in 1927.

like curled-up cats with raisin eyes. You eat them with glögg (hot mulled wine) or coffee.

Here in Philadelphia, we honor the life of Lucia at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church. This beloved event has been going strong for over 80 years, and weaves together a number of Swedish holiday traditions into a colorful musical pageant.

At Gloria Dei, young men and women of the congregation pay homage to Lucia's fabled trip to the catacombs. Small children are dressed as either 'Stjärngossar' (star boys) or girls (tärnor) – like Lucia but without the candles. The heart of the celebration is Lucia herself, a young woman in white with a red sash, wearing an evergreen wreath with seven candles on her head. All the participants sing songs in Swedish culminating with "Sankta Lucia," which is roughly translated as:

*Night walks with a heavy step  
Round yard and hearth,  
As the sun departs from earth,  
Shadows are brooding.  
There in our dark house,  
Walking with lit candles,  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!*

*Night walks grand, yet silent,  
Now hear its gentle wings,  
In every room so hushed,  
Whispering like wings.  
Look, at our threshold stands,  
White-clad with light in her hair,  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!*

*Darkness shall take flight soon,  
From earth's valleys.  
So she speaks  
Wonderful words to us:  
A new day will rise again  
From the rosy sky...  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!*

# A River Runs Through It

By Eleanor Ingersoll

Reverend Patricia Cashman doesn't actively search out the presence of water. Yet it seems to have found her at each one of her major stops in life, including now, as the rector of Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church overlooking the Delaware River. This theme of living next to water fits like a puzzle piece into her calling. "There is a deeper spiritual energy guiding us, it will come forth naturally to arrange conflict and challenge [us] into a great life," says Cashman. She didn't start out in the church, instead her path took a nonconventional flow from motherhood to healthcare to counseling to priesthood.

Reverend Cashman, a mother of three, earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Widener in 1983, after which she became a psychiatric nurse at the Philadelphia Psychiatric Center. She also did a stint at the SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) Center here in Philadelphia and became a certified Bereavement Counselor.

But that didn't fulfill a nagging feeling that she had to do more. It was fulfilling to help the families in need, devastated by loss, "but the yearning did not go away, and I realized the yearning was a calling to become a priest." That was 1986. And it would be 10 more years before the calling became a reality.

In 1995, Cashman earned a Masters in Divinity at The Lutheran Seminary in Mount Airy, all while raising a family and working full time. In 1996 she was ordained an Episcopal Priest.

In 1999, she joined Emmanuel Resurrection Episcopal Church in the Holmesburg section of Philadelphia as the first woman rector. "It was a dream job," Reverend Cashman explains. There was money for many community ministries, such as children's after school programming and she was even able to start a nonprofit for the church, The Cedar Tree.

"It was a dream come true," she explains, "the location to reach out into a vibrant city facing challenges. And there was money for programming to balance the challenges. It felt like my purpose realized." But by 2001, the grants and aid had dried up, and the Twin Towers had come down. "The church couldn't keep me full time and thus began my walkabout."

A 'Walkabout' is an Aboriginal (native Australian) term associated with a period of wandering to inform a rite of passage to the next stage of life. For Cashman, the events of September 11, 2001 set her off on her journey, both physical and spiritual. "Post 'the Towers,' I went on a spiritual odyssey, a walkabout. It was such a radical thing that had happened, I felt I needed to be radical, too."

From 2003-2016, Cashman allowed the ebbs and flows of her walkabout to determine her course. In 2003 she went to the Episcopal Monastic Community of the Holy Spirit on the Upper West Side of New York. In 2005, she moved further up the Hudson River, serving with the Order of St. Helena's convents in New Windsor as well as Augusta, Georgia, on the Savannah River.



*Photography by Amanda Hall Studios*

In 2010 she left St. Helena's to work with the Lamb Institute in Tegucigalpa, Honduras to serve the capital city's most vulnerable.

Reverend Cashman returned later that year and in 2011, became the priest of Ascension Episcopal Church on Lake Ontario in Rochester, NY, where she hosted refugees from Thailand and Nepal and African countries.

The next stop was Burlington, Iowa, where she was the Rector at Christ Episcopal Church along the Mississippi River from 2013-2015.

When Cashman returned to the Philadelphia area in 2016, she was hoping for a full-time religious post, but none was available. So, she became recertified and worked as a Nurse Navigator at NHS Community Mental Health organization.

In her free time and on weekends, she served at Holy Trinity in Lansdale, then at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Norwood. It was while at St. Stephen's that she saw an advertisement for the rector position at Gloria Dei. "I thought I was set, nursing and leading the ministry at St. Stephen's. But I saw the advertisement and I felt I should just let them know I'm here."

That feeling set in motion Cashman's appointment at Gloria Dei. "I think after all that I have seen, heard and felt, I find hoping and believing in a divine purpose is what makes life worth living, and I'm so happy to be sharing the journey with Queen Village and the people at Gloria Dei, which has so many resources."

While she may be physically settled, Cashman's mind is still on an odyssey of sorts; in her hopes for the next stage of service to Gloria Dei. "Alongside prosperity, there is still a need for a sanctuary for healing. I want to focus on people's needs. It is vital for me, being a Pastor to the congregation at Gloria Dei. I'd like this to become the center of healing for our neighborhood, and I'm wondering who is here to help me do it?" If you think you might be one of those people, just call Reverend Cashman. She'll boil some water for a cup of tea and a conversation.

# Jenny Lind Sang In Gloria Dei Church

By Michael Schreiber



Portrait of Swedish singer Jenny Lind (1820-1887), retouched Calotype photo, probably 1840s.

*Courtesy of Nordiska museet (Nordic Museum) Stockholm, Sweden.*

Jenny Lind was the first international superstar of the musical world. The frenzy over her visit to the United States in 1850 even surpassed that of the "British Invasion" by the Beatles a century later. Yet those who met the "Swedish Nightingale" described her as being incredibly modest and generous. She donated large sums to charities and the poor, and gave free concerts at Swedish churches in America – including one at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church in Philadelphia.

Lind's visit to this country was arranged by master showman Phineas T. Barnum. He offered Lind the unheard-of sum of \$1000 for 150 concerts, plus a share of the profits. Barnum was at his newly opened museum in Philadelphia in February 1850 when he received word that Jenny Lind had agreed to his terms. But the showman had difficulty raising capital for Lind's tour. A Philadelphia minister, the Rev. Abel C. Thomas, lent Barnum the final \$5000 that was needed.

Barnum initiated a massive publicity campaign. He devised a contest with a \$200 prize for a theme song, "Greeting to America," that Lind would sing upon her arrival. Several hundred librettos were submitted, and Chester County poet Bayard Taylor won the prize.

The Philadelphia Public Ledger headlined one article, "The Jenny Lind Fever," and indeed, the newspapers steadily stoked the mania surrounding her U.S. tour. Jenny Lind perfume and hair pomade, available at Bazin's perfumery on Chestnut St., were examples of products that took advantage of her fame. Printed music for her songs cost "only six cents the sheet" at Ferrett & Co. on Eighth St.

Lind arrived in Philadelphia on Oct. 16, 1850, after a grueling journey following concert appearances in New York and New England. She took passage on a ship down the Delaware River, disembarking north of Philadelphia at Tacony. There she boarded a steamer Barnum had chartered, the Edwin Forrest, which traveled only as far as Kensington, where a carriage waited to take her to Jones's hotel on Chestnut Street. To avoid notice, she entered the hotel by the back door.

In the meantime, a huge crowd had gathered to greet her at the

Walnut Street Wharf – her expected landing place. When fans learned that Lind had managed to avoid them, they packed the street in front of the hotel. Although it was late at night, they shouted for the singer to make an appearance.

The Philadelphia North American reported, "The clamor was kept up until Jenny Lind herself appeared upon the piazza, led by Barnum. She walked up to the railing, waved her handkerchief to the mob for a minute or two, covering her face with another." In his later autobiography, however, Barnum revealed that he had staged a deception: Lind's traveling companion, Katrina Ahmansen, had masqueraded as the singer on the balcony.

The Inquirer described the scene on opening night, Oct. 17, at the Chestnut Street Theatre: "The spectacle was, indeed, fairy-like. The splendid dresses, the bright eyes, the flushed cheeks, the eager expectation depicted on every countenance, the brilliant gas-lights, and the whisperings and buzzings of many voices served to produce an unwonted excitement."

The music critic for the North American reported that the audience cheered as Jenny Lind entered and approached the footlights. After a number of low bows, her recitative to Bellini's "Come per me sereno" began. However, "whether from a cold or the excitement of the occasion, there was a want of purity and clearness in Jenny Lind's first utterances, which was evidently noticed by the whole house."

In the second part of the concert, Lind and baritone Giovanni Belletti sang a duet from Rossini's "Turco in Italia." The North American stated, "It is in this piece that the first evidence was given by Miss Lind of those powers to which her eminence as a vocalist is due. . . . We felt for the first time how versatile were her vocal gifts – for here was a legitimate and artistic power, no trickery, no mere clap-trap."

In his 1851 commemorative book, "Jenny Lind in America," C.G. Rosenberg wrote: "On the following Sunday [Oct. 20], a sensation, of no common character, was created amongst the congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Gloria Dei, in Swanson street – better known as the 'Old Swedes' Church – by Mdlle. Jenny Lind's attendance on Divine worship within its walls. At the close of the service she received the greetings of numerous descendants of the pioneer emigrants from her own native land, who had settled on the banks of the Delaware, and were the original founders of the aged edifice, within whose walls she had bent in supplication." It is said that Lind climbed into the upper gallery of the church, constructed five years earlier, from which she sang, "I know that my redeemer liveth," from George F. Handel's "Messiah."

In December, Lind returned to Philadelphia for a series of concerts at Musical Fund Hall. At that time, the pastor at Gloria Dei, the Rev. Jehu Curtis Clay, helped arrange a donation from the singer to the Southwark Soup Society on nearby Hancock St.

Jenny Lind's 1850 visit to Gloria Dei was commemorated on June 8 by a concert at the church.

# Churchyard Renewal and Restoration

By Amy Grant

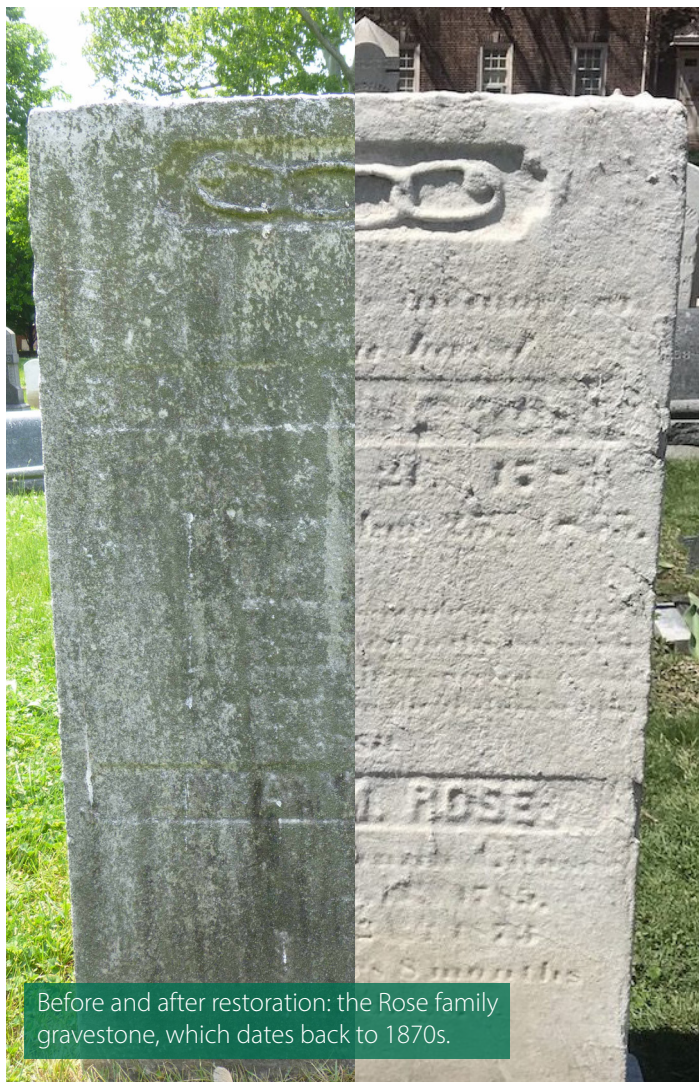
After over 300 years of continuous use, the churchyard at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church was in desperate need of repair and restoration. Trees and shrubs had overrun the burial ground and needed pruning and thinning. Gravestones were badly broken, headpieces were missing or had sunken into the ground. Family tombs had been sealed for decades and were in danger of collapsing.

When The Rev. Joy Segal became the rector at Gloria Dei in 2006, she encouraged regular clean up events to help beautify and restore the churchyard. Parishioners worked many hours trimming healthy plants, removing tree stumps and overgrown bushes, and planting grass seed. Sadly, the beautiful Biddle family commemorative boxwoods — which were planted like a maze throughout the graveyard — were afflicted with root rot and could not be salvaged. But, as volunteers removed the brush, they made a fantastic discovery; several gravestones, long thought to be lost or stolen, were found underneath the overgrown shrubbery.

Surprisingly, the gravestones were in excellent condition as the boxwoods had provided years of protection against the elements. Unearthing these well-preserved stones inspired the parish to start a churchyard restoration program in 2010. An annual fundraiser was created and support for the project was gained through private donations and proceeds from church events. Thanks to these efforts, over 40 severely damaged stones were repaired and restored and a number of others were raised, leveled, and cleaned.

Around the same time, the parish began looking into upgrading and repairing other historic elements on the church property. The sanctuary, residences, and communal buildings all needed significant repairs and updates. Although major funding opportunities are available for historic preservation, religious institutions like Gloria Dei do not typically qualify. Non-profit organizations, on the other hand, are considered eligible. This spurred members of the parish to form the Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Corporation (HGDPC) in 2011. With a blessing from the vestry, HGDPC assumed the mission for maintenance and preservation of the entire church property.

The first act toward churchyard preservation: commissioning an inventory of all of the visible gravestones in burial ground. Materials Conservation Co, Inc. — who assisted with the recent restoration work — was tasked with this project. Their master artisans assessed the condition of the stones, tested and analyzed materials, and made recommendations



Before and after restoration: the Rose family gravestone, which dates back to 1870s.

for prioritizing repairs. The result: the stones in the worst condition were quickly and efficiently cleaned and restored.

Although the churchyard restoration project has made great strides so far, it will take many years to raise the funds needed to restore the entire graveyard. Burial records indicate that the church has over 6,000 interments, though the locations of many of these graves have been lost over time. By comparing the churchyard inventory against plot maps and gravestone transcriptions, we have been able to locate and identify many of these missing interments. As this information is uncovered, we post it on our website. Our hope is that these discoveries will benefit parishioners, historians, genealogists and lovers of Swedish history.

As the project commences, consider lending your support to help revitalize and rejuvenate this important historic treasure.

# Save The Date

For a full calendar of events, please visit [www.preserveoldswedes.org/events](http://www.preserveoldswedes.org/events).

sept  
27<sup>th</sup>

and

oct  
25<sup>th</sup>

## JAZZ 'N JOE

This popular monthly concert series features the musical stylings of the Jazz Sanctuary. Coffee and tea and sweets are served. You can also BYOB. Additional performances in 2019: January 24th, February 28th, March 28th, April 25th and May 23rd.

dec  
7<sup>th</sup>

thru

dec  
9<sup>th</sup>

## 81ST ANNUAL LUCIA FEST & ST. ERIC'S FAIR

This colorful musical pageant celebrates Sankta Lucia, the 3rd-century martyr who brought food and aid to Christians hiding in the catacombs. It features "Lucia" wearing a crown of candles and singing alongside other young women and children of the Gloria Dei parish.

oct  
4<sup>th</sup>

## FEAST OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

In honor of 13th-century Saint Francis of Assisi, you can have your favorite two-legged or four-legged friends blessed inside Gloria Dei's sanctuary. All animals are welcome but must be leashed or caged.

may  
3<sup>rd</sup>

## SPIRITS & HISTORY

This annual event features a guided churchyard tour, where stories about select permanent residents are shared. Inside Riverside Hall, sample spirits from local distilleries, hors d'oeuvres from local chefs and enter a wine auction to help raise funds to restore the property.



**HGDPC**  
Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')  
Preservation Corporation

A Subsidiary of Gloria Dei  
(Old Swedes') Church  
Philadelphia

The Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Preservation Corporation (HGDP) was established to fund, support, and supervise the restoration, renovation, and ongoing maintenance of the Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church buildings, grounds, and graveyard so that future generations may share in this historic and architectural treasure. **All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.**

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