



NEWS RELEASE

Abigail Seldin
Flying With the Fourth Crow:
A Reflection on Curating *Fulfilling a Prophecy*
The Past and Present of the Lenape in
Pennsylvania and Delaware

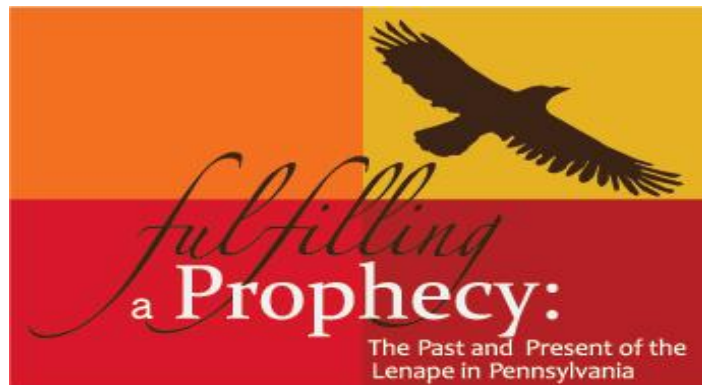


Image Courtesy the Penn Museum

Chase Center
Dravo Auditorium
March 19, 2009
6:00-8:00pm

Wilmington, Delaware, February 2, 2009 – The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, in keeping with its new educational mission to enrich the lives of students of all ages, announced the initiation of a new lecture series today. The Foundation’s Director of Education Samuel Heed will present Abigail Seldin, the University of Pennsylvania’s celebrated young anthropologist and Rhodes Scholar, at the Chase Center’s Dravo Auditorium March 19, 2009. “We are delighted to be bringing Abigail Seldin to the

greater Wilmington community,” Mr. Heed said, “helping to sponsor her extraordinary work with the Lenape Nation, promoting the astonishing and poignant Lenape survival-story which she has brought to light after two centuries of cultural secrecy and neglect.”

“This is a story for our time, for all time, and for all Americans,” Heed said while describing the significance of Abigail Seldin’s work. “We at the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, dedicated ‘to preserving and promoting the cultural and maritime heritage of Delaware for the education and enrichment of all,’ feel a special obligation to raise awareness about the Lenape’s on-going history within our midst, to recognize and further a reconciliation that Abigail’s work has done so much to foster.”

Abigail Seldin became the first Penn anthropology undergraduate to curate an exhibit at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology – “Fulfilling a Prophecy: The Past and Present of the Lenape in Pennsylvania” (which runs from Sept. 13, 2008 to Sept. 13, 2009). Working with co-curators Chief Bob Redhawk Ruth, currently serving his second term as Chief of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, and Shelley DePaul, Language Director of the Lenape Nation, Abigail Seldin has overturned the conventional histories of our region. Most accounts present the Lenape people as being driven completely from Pennsylvania and Delaware by the early 19th century, with any local survivors expiring shortly thereafter or becoming fully assimilated into the prevailing Euro-American culture. In working on an undergraduate project entitled “Native Voice,” which originally planned to focus on the Lenape people’s trek from Pennsylvania to their current locations in the Midwest and Canada, Abigail discovered otherwise. Many Lenape, in turns out, often children of Lenape-European marriages, stayed here in secret. Hiding their tribal heritage for more than two hundred years, they consciously avoided discovery by both the government and their neighbors.

How it was that Abigail Seldin, college undergrad, gained the trust of so many Lenape descendants and eventually the Tribal Council is a worthy and interesting story all its own – one that she will be happy to relate to her audience on March 19th at the Chase Center Auditorium. Over time Abigail was able to draw out extraordinary oral histories, family heirlooms, photographs, ethnographic records, and archaeological objects. This led Abigail to join co-curators Chief Bob Redhawk Ruth and Shelley DePaul in a fully collaborative exhibition, “Fulfilling a Prophecy,” organized by the Penn Museum and the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania. The curatorial team “deliberately organized the exhibition in a way that acknowledges and respects both Western and Native American approaches to learning and storytelling.” They consciously framed the exhibition’s timeline by using an ancient Lenape story, “The Prophecy of the Fourth Crow.” Chief Redhawk Ruth relates the current interpretation of the Prophecy on the Exhibition’s website (see, www.museum.upenn.edu):

“We now know that the First Crow was the Lenape before the coming of the Europeans. The Second Crow symbolized the death and destruction of our culture. The Third Crow was our people going underground and hiding. The Fourth Crow was the Lenape

becoming caretakers again and working with everybody to restore this land.”

Abigail Seldin says her “Fulfilling a Prophecy” is a story about “the endurance of a culture, and the faith of a people waiting for a better time, for the Time of the Fourth Crow. That time is *now*.”

Don't miss it.

- ❖ **A Reception in honor of Abigail Seldin will be held at the Chase Center's Dravo Auditorium from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.**
- ❖ **The Lecture, with time for questions, will be from 7:00 to 8:00 pm.**
- ❖ **Ticket price \$8.00 for members, \$10.00 for non-members**
- ❖ *Student rate with Student ID: \$5.00 Doors open to students at 7:00PM*

The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation preserves and teaches Delaware's unique maritime history and multicultural legacy as it relates to the region's economic, industrial, ecological, and cultural development. The recreation of the Kalmar Nyckel, a 10-year project undertaken by local volunteers, was directed by Master Builder Allen Rawl and launched in May 1997. The recreation was made possible in large part by the vision and generosity of the Delaware General Assembly, then Governor (now Senator) Thomas R. Carper, Tatiana Copeland, and Wilmington's Riverfront Development Corporation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Samuel W. Heed, Esq.
Senior Historian & Director of Education
The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation
1124 East Seventh Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 429-7447
sheed@kalmarnyckel.org