

My presentation showed how New Sweden contributed to the development of American law. New Sweden's contribution began at the blockhouse court at Fort Christina (now Wilmington, Delaware), as Peter Minuit and his successors brought the rule of law to the Delaware River Valley. Governor Johan Printz moved New Sweden's court to his home, the Printzhof, at Nya Gothenburg (now Tinicum Island, Pennsylvania), where he carried out *The Instruction to Johan Printz* by establishing a working court system. Governor Johan Risingh returned that court to Fort Christina, and began a process that resulted in multiple courts addressing disputes after the Dutch and English conquests of the Delaware River Valley. Archaeological excavations, seventeenth century documents, and the layout of a contemporaneous (circa 1650) Swedish manor house, the Bergsmansgården at Skansen, provide a basis for reconstructing the appearance of the Printzhof courtroom during the years when Governor Printz presided over it.

The first jury trials in Delaware and Pennsylvania occurred in New Sweden's courts. International cases concerning the colonial furs, tobacco, and goods trade along the Delaware River produced North America's first international tribunals, including the 1643 trial and 1644 appeal of New Haven fur trader George Lambertson, charged by Governor Printz with failure to pay duty on furs purchased from local Indians. New Sweden's last Factor (Financial Officer) Heinrich van Elswick engaged in a successful inter-colonial mediation that resolved serious differences with the New Haven Colony. Litigation in New Sweden foreshadowed the modern American legal system, featuring powers of attorney, petitions for attachment of goods, legal summonses, bond forfeitures, and rulings regulating the transnational trade in alcoholic beverages.

Armegott Printz, the daughter of Governor Johan Printz, was a litigant who exemplified the transition in the Delaware River Valley from Swedish to Dutch to English control. Acquiring her father's Printzhof land when he returned to the Swedish fatherland in 1654, she successfully litigated her right to recover an unpaid debt under Dutch law, crossing the Atlantic several times. She sued in her own right to recover unpaid debts under English common law in a lawsuit that continued until 1676 and involved a ruling by New York Governor Richard Nicolls. One of the first women to win a case and an appeal in an English colonial court, she eventually returned to Sweden, where she lived her last years in Läckö Castle.

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