



Delaware Tercentenary  
1638-1938

THE ROCKS

*or*

THE FOUNDING OF NEW SWEDEN

★

A PLAY

*by*

JOHN MCGEE

## DELAWARE TRICENTENARY

1638 - 1938



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ELLIOT FIELD, *Chairman*

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C. R. KASE

#### ART

RACHEL W. TAYLOR

#### MUSIC

GLENN GILDERSLEEVE

#### DANCE

GEORGE W. AYARS



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## "THE ROCKS"

(MARCH 29, 1638)

*(The scene is the deck of the ship Kalmar Nyckel, anchored at "The Rocks" on the Christina River, March 29th, 1638. At the rise of the curtain, Hendrick Huygen and Jacob Sandelin are looking over the rail of the ship toward the audience, as if scanning the river.)*

HUYGEN

It is good to stand and watch the shore after so long a time at sea.

SANDELIN

Aye, the last few weeks I thought would never pass. I would have been glad to sight even a desert island. But this beautiful haven is really a goodly sight.

HUYGEN

What a wonderful natural wharf is that ledge of rock yonder. No matter if the exploring party should find twenty other landing places on the river, they'll not find one better suited to our purposes.

SANDELIN

A block house there on the rocks would command this kill nicely.

HUYGEN

"The Minquas Kill." Too much of a mouthful for me. I think we should propose a new name for it. Amsterdam Creek, or—

SANDELIN

No, no. If the stream is to have a new name it should be Swedish. Even though you are a Dutchman, my friend, do not forget that your service now is for the flag of Sweden.

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I say it should be the Christina River, in honor of our blessed Queen Christina.

HUYGEN

*(Laughing good naturedly.)*  
Well, let it be Swedish. I'll not quarrel with you about one little river. My countrymen have plenty of rivers, though few as lovely as this.

SANDELIN

Then when our Commander returns, let us bid him name it Christina

HUYGEN

Peter Minuit is not likely to hold out for a Dutch name either. He has little to thank the Netherlands for, even though it be his homeland

SANDELIN

I am growing uneasy because of the long absence of the exploring party. The sun is getting low in the sky.

HUYGEN

What puzzles me more is the absence of any savages. How many times have we fired guns this day to rouse them?

SANDELIN

A score or more.

HUYGEN

Perhaps they fear the guns. Perhaps we shall have to use other means of coaxing them out.

SANDELIN

I have an uneasy feeling that the savages are lurking there in the woods. They must have heard the guns, and several times during the day I could swear I saw swift figures dart from tree to tree like shadows racing before the sun.

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HUYGEN

*(Laughing again.)*  
You are an easy prey to nerves, Sandelin. 'Tis lucky for you Peter Minuit did not choose you for the exploring party.

SANDELIN

I do not relish this business of exploring a new country. I am a sailor, and so long as I am on the sea, no matter how uncharted, I fear nothing. But in this wilderness, who knows what men and monsters there may be.

HUYGEN

Well, the Dutch have been here before you—

SANDELIN

And after two years were heard from no more. That is no tale to make me sleep more easily.

HUYGEN

Then you may stay aboard the good ship *Kalmar Nyckel* when the others land to plant your Swedish Flag.  
*(His attention caught by something on the land.)*  
Look! There are some savages now!

SANDELIN

I don't like their manner.

HUYGEN

Nonsense! They are lifting their arms in token of welcome. Wave back at them.  
*(He calls out.)*

Ho!  
*(Several soldiers and sailors come on deck.)*

SOLDIER

Have they returned?

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HUYGEN

No. It is savages at last. We've routed them out.  
*(There are excited comments from the soldiers and sailors.)*

SOLDIER

How dark they are!

ANOTHER

And naked as babes.

ANOTHER

I'm glad there's water between us.

HUYGEN

For men with civilized weapons in hand you're all lilly livered.  
Fire a gun and watch them run.  
*(As one is about to do so, there are shouts from the bow of the ship.)*

SOLDIER

*(Running on.)*  
Minuit is returning down the river.

HUYGEN

Then hold your fire. Don't frighten the savages back into the bush. Peter Minuit will want to parley with them.  
*(The soldiers and sailors crowd toward the bow of the boat.)*

SANDELIN

*(Calling to those in the other boat.)*  
Ho!  
*(There are answering cries.)*

HUYGEN

*(Going forward.)*  
Throw them a line.  
*(Several sailors reach for ropes.)*  
Welcome back!  
*(There are more answering cries.)*

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SANDELIN

What did you find?

VOICE

Not a white man in all the country for miles.

HUYGEN

No sign of settlement?  
*(To the sailors.)*  
Help them aboard.  
*(Several move forward to do so.)*

MINUIT

*(Coming into view.)*  
Not a man white or red did we see 'till those on the bank over there. Have you gone ashore to talk with the savages?

HUYGEN

They have just now shown themselves. I could swear they have been waiting for you to return.

MINUIT

Let us waste no time in talking with them. This is the best place for landing.

SANDELIN

Look, some of them are putting out in their little boats!  
*(Several soldiers raise their guns.)*

MINUIT

Put down your guns, fools! The savages are unarmed.

SANDELIN

Do you think it is safe to let them come aboard?

MINUIT

Of course. They look as friendly as children.

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HUYGEN

I would not be too easily assured of their peaceful purpose.  
They may have weapons we know nothing of.

SANDELIN

Now it is you who are imagining things.

MINUIT

*(Laughing.)*  
They have few clothes to hide any weapons.

HUYGEN

See how easily their little boats slide through the water. I must  
have me a craft like that.

SANDELIN

They seem to be made of bark.

MINUIT

*(To the soldiers.)*  
Take posts to the fore and aft. Watch the savages carefully,  
but do not make a move unless I order it.  
*(The soldiers obey.)*  
Where is Andres Luccasen?

SANDELIN

I'll fetch him.  
*(He exits.)*

MINUIT

He may be able to understand some of their gibberish.

HUYGEN

Didn't you learn their language when you were Governor of  
New Amsterdam?

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MINUIT

I learned little enough of it. And there are many dialects.  
But Luccasen made quite a study of them. He may be able  
to converse with these.  
*(Calling to the Indians.)*  
Ho!  
*(He waves to them.)*  
Come aboard! We are friends!

LUCCASEN

*(Coming in view.)*  
Did you want me?

MINUIT

Yes. Can you speak to them?

LUCCASEN

I shall try.  
*(He calls over the side.)*  
The Great White Chief bids you come aboard as friends.  
*(There are answering shouts.)*  
He offers you gifts and wishes to smoke with you the pipe of  
peace.  
*(There are other shouts. Several Indians come into view.)*

MINUIT

Tell them who we are.

LUCCASEN

The Great White Chief is from across the sea. He comes from  
the Great Queen and wishes to be friends with you and your  
people.

MINUIT

*(Bringing forward a pile of trinkets.)*  
Give them these presents.

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LUCCASEN

These tokens we give you of our esteem and friendship.  
*(The Indians take the tokens and pass them around, nodding in approval.)*

Will you smoke the pipe of peace?

MITATSIMINT

We say welcome. Be friends.

*(Waving an arm toward the shore.)*

This is the land of our people. We make you welcome. Come ashore and we smoke the pipe of peace.

*(The lights die away. When they come up again, the scene is on the rock landing. The Indian Chiefs and Minit, Luccasen, Huygen, and Sandelin are sitting in a circle. Slowly and without a word, they pass the pipe around the circle, each puffing a few times and then passing it to the one next. After the circle has been completed, Mattahorn speaks.)*

MATTAHORN

We wish to be friends with you and your people. But why do you come?

LUCCASEN

He wishes to know why we have come to this land.

MINUIT

Say to him that we come for friendly trade. Tell him that our ships are filled with fine goods to trade with them for skins.

LUCCASEN

The White Chief wishes to give you more of these fine presents in exchange for skins from animals.

*(The Indians nod approval.)*

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MINUIT

Ask them how much of this land they own?

LUCCASEN

Will you sell this land to the White Chief?

*(The Indians look at each other.)*

How much of it is yours?

MITATSIMINT

My people possess the land from this river many miles to the South.

LUCCASEN

He says many miles to the South.

MINUIT

Offer him goods.

LUCCASEN

Goods we offer you in exchange.

*(Mitatsimint nods as if pleased.)*

MINUIT

Tell him to put his mark on this deed.

*(He passes over a paper.)*

LUCCASEN

Put your totem mark here.

*(The Indian holds back.)*

Ah, he wants the presents first.

MINUIT

*(To some soldiers.)*

Bring those trinkets.

*(The soldiers bring in a pile of trinkets. The Indians smile and Mitatsimint puts his mark on the paper.)*

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LUCCASEN

What other land do you own?

MATTAHORN

*(Pointing to the North.)*  
All the land North a day's journey and more.

MINUIT

What does he say?

LUCCASEN

All the land many miles to the North he owns.

MINUIT

Well, get his mark.  
*(To the soldiers.)*  
Bring more gifts.  
*(They do so and Mattahorn signs his totem mark on the paper.)*

MINUIT

Now do I declare this land the rightful property of the Great Christina, Queen of the Swedes, the Goths, and the Wends. Erect the pole, and place thereon the Coat of Arms of Sweden.  
*(The soldiers start to obey.)*  
May this land be forever vassal to the crown of Sweden and in token of the sovereignty of our gracious Majesty, I christen the land New Sweden.  
*(The light dies away as there is a salute from the guns on the ships.)*