



Contact:  
Mindy Weinberg  
Communications Liaison  
University of Pennsylvania Libraries  
215-746-1342

### **The National Museum of American Jewish History and Penn Libraries Join Forces in Philadelphia**

PHILADELPHIA, PA (December 14, 2012) - The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) and the University of Pennsylvania Libraries have initiated a unique partnership to enhance public access to the Arnold and Deanne Kaplan Collection of Early American Judaica. This extraordinary resource, donated to Penn through the Kaplan's generosity and interest in Judaic scholarship, contains over 11,000 artifacts, dating from the 16th century through the period of Jewish mass migration at the end of the 19th century. Museum-quality colonial and early Federal era oil paintings, presentation silver, and Jewish ritual objects will be made available for exhibit by the Museum through its partnership with Penn. The Collection's panorama of documents, books, maps, broadsides and other treasures create a context for material and intellectual culture that the NMAJH and Penn will celebrate for years to come.

Through this special alliance, first envisioned by Arnold Kaplan, the Penn Libraries will make the art and artifacts from the Collection available to the NMAJH on long-term loan. This extended loan arrangement will encourage creative curatorship, dynamic exhibition opportunities, and long-term strategic planning for both institutions. At the same time, the security and accessibility of the Kaplan Collection will be maintained for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania, less than four blocks from the Museum, is home to the Kaplan Collection and one of the most extensive assemblies of primary sources in the field of early American Jewish History. The geographical proximity of the two institutions will facilitate research and teaching opportunities for those wishing to explore the Kaplan Collection in greater depth. "This latest effort with the Museum — our most ambitious collaboration to date —" remarked Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries at Penn, "underscores the centrality of the City and its cultural institutions to scholarship at Penn. In its complementarity it's the kind of relationship that's greater than the sum of its parts."

A strong tradition of cooperation exists between the NMAJH and Penn. The Director of Penn's Jewish Studies Program, and current Chair of Penn's History Department, Professor Beth Wenger, initiated a Museum internship for Penn students over a decade ago. More recently, the two institutions teamed up for a public lecture series and symposia and organized a series of special events at the Museum for the general public. The latest partnership, thanks to the Kaplans, will deepen those ties and advance the missions of both institutions.

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The extraordinary depth and range of the Kaplan Collection speaks to the history of multiple communities, subjects and personalities. For those interested in understanding how religious liberty took root in the United States, how regional differences shaped local cultures within a national framework, how commercial and social relationships transcended national and even hemispheric boundaries, they will find much to discover and learn from this Collection and the programs envisioned by the partners.

“This is a perfect collaboration between a research university and an exhibiting institution,” stated Dr. Josh Perelman, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections at NMAJH. “The availability of this magnificent Collection will enhance our exhibitions and provide opportunities to share important, and sometimes unknown, stories of Jewish life in America.”

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 350-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all heritages to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

Building on a tradition that began with the University’s founding in 1750, the Penn Libraries serve a world-class faculty and the students of Penn’s twelve schools. The collections comprise more than seven million volumes, a million of which are in electronic form, over 100,000 journals, and extraordinary rare and unique materials that document the intellectual and culture experience of civilizations ancient and modern. These resources are organized into fifteen separate libraries that serve the humanities, social and physical sciences, and Penn’s programs in medicine, nursing, dentistry and veterinary science. Today, the Libraries play an instrumental role in developing new technologies for information discovery and dissemination, and are noted for groundbreaking work in digital library design.

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