



# Independence: The Best Park in History

## New Exhibits Open in Kosciuszko Memorial

The Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial in Philadelphia has opened its new permanent exhibit to celebrate the life and legacy of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, hero of two continents.

Thanks to an exciting international loan project, the new exhibits feature objects on loan from the Kosciuszko collection of the Historical Museum of the City of Cracow in Poland. Loaned artifacts from the Cracow Museum's Kosciuszko collection include a pistol and sword, a variety of 19th century paintings, and one of the three remaining original copies of Kosciuszko's famous 1794 call to arms against Russian rule. The museum collection is on loan for two years. The park is arranging to borrow Kosciuszko artifacts from other museums in Poland, including the National Museum of Poland.

At the Memorial's opening event on March 20, Museum Director Michal Niezabitowski and curator Klaudia Kaczmarczyk traveled from Cracow, Poland as special guests of the park. Park neighbors, partners and guests gathered for a special ceremony just across the street from the Memorial in historic St. Peters Church. Deputy Superintendent Darla Sidles provided an official welcome and talked about Kosciuszko's important link to 18th century Philadelphia. Also at the opening event were

Thomas Jefferson (portrayed by actor Steve Edenbo) and noted historian and author Gary Nash. A reception sponsored by the Friends of Independence concluded the celebration.

The new exhibits, which replace those installed in 1976, feature four interpretative themes: Kosciuszko's lifelong struggle for liberty for all; his military engineering expertise; his memorialization throughout the world; and his reasons for returning to Philadelphia. An interactive kiosk on the first floor allows visitors to locate monuments, cities, ships, even mountains named in Kosciuszko's honor. The unit includes a virtual tour of the second floor bedroom rented by Kosciuszko. In his bedroom, new spotlights identify objects in the room associated with the Polish patriot, including a tomahawk like the one given to him by Chief Little Turtle of the Miami Nation. Nearby exhibits tell the little known story of Kosciuszko's will, which intended to leave his estate in order to free and educate enslaved African Americans.

The Memorial, the smallest unit in the National Park Service, is now open Wednesday – Sunday 12pm – 4pm. For more information visit: [www.nps.gov/thko](http://www.nps.gov/thko).



IVS Chief Sitarski with Polish guests Kaczmarczyk and Niezabitowski



Displays include a rare copy of Kosciuszko's call to arms against Russian rule



Newlin Grist Mill Blacksmith Kelly Smyth and her volunteer crew forged a replica chain link using a coal-fired forge, ten-pound sledge hammers and an anvil to shape the replica out of old iron. The original link was designed by Kosciuszko during the Revolution.