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SOURCES AND QUESTIONS IN THE STUDY OF FINNISH MIGRATION TO DELAWARE

1. Finns in Delaware

The role played by Finnish colonists in the Delaware River Valley has been widely discussed during the 350 anniversary of the "New Sweden" colony.

The Finns to Delaware comprised two segments: (1) the burnbeating Finns - or the forest Finns - from the Finnish settlements in the backwoods of Sweden and (2) the other Finnish settlers coming mainly from Ostrobothnia and the towns along the southern coast of Finland including the Åland Islands.

During the 17th century around 500 Finns settled on the banks of the Delaware River. Considering that the total number of emigrants to the "New Sweden" was about a thousand, the proportion of Finns was considerable. According to many scholars, the majority of the permanent settlers were Finns. One reason for this could be that after the Dutch invasion many Swedes returned to their native land. The most important Governor of the colony, Johan Printz, lived in Finland before his departure for Delaware in 1642 and recruited quite a number of settlers from Ostrobothnia.

The Finnish settlements in Delaware were widely scattered- over an extensive area, and especially after the English invasion of 1664 many Finns moved further north. The majority of the Finnish settlements were in the territory of what is now Pennsylvania. The most significant settlement was "Finland", which was situated near present-day Chester about 10 miles north of Wilmington. The place is nowadays known as Marcus Hook. There were also major Finnish settlements in the Schuylkill River Valley. The third area settled by Finns was on the eastern side of the river, in present-day New Jersey and included the settlements of Finns Point and Mullica, which are still known by these names. The Finns built their log cabins in the Delaware Valley and practised slash and burn farming as well as cattle breeding. They got along well with the local Indians, and the acts of violence were rare.

There is not much left of the original Finnish settlements. In addition to a few log cabins half a dozen stone churches, built together with the Swedes, remain as permanent monuments. Gravestones with Finnish names can be found in the churchyards. When professor Pehr Kalm from the University of Turku visited the former colony of "New Sweden" in 1748-51 he found that the

Finnish language was no longer spoken. By the early 19th century the Swedish language, too, had died out. (1)

The most renowned descendant of the Finnish settlers in Delaware was John Morton, who, as Chairman of the Pennsylvanian Assembly, was a Signer of the Declaration of Independence. According to the church register, his great grandfather, Mårten Mårtenson Sr., who died in 1706, had been a native of Finland.

The three hundredth anniversary of immigration to Delaware in 1938 was marked by the erection in Chester of a monument sculpted by Wäinö Aaltonen.

2. Sources of Finnish Emigration to Delaware

The identification of the Finnish settlers and their descendants in Delaware is a difficult, indeed an impossible task.

The major sources from which information on, the migration of Finns to Delaware can be gathered are at the Swedish National Archives (Fyrverkarbacken 13-17, 10026 Stockholm), and are the following:

1. Rolls and registers of passenger lists from the ships which brought the settlers over, and the surveys, carried out in the colony, notably the catalogue of original Swedish and Finnish settlers drawn by the colonists themselves in 1693.
2. The Accounts of New Sweden Company, especially the Great Book for 1637-57, where all economic transactions are recorded.
3. The Parish Registers, kept by the Swedish pastors sent out to Delaware from the 1690's. The earliest of these are obviously lost - although the valuable notes which Pehr Kalm made do survive. But the later ones have, survived from the Swedish parishes at Penn Snec and Raccoon Creek for 1713-1831. Parish registers for the Swedish congregations in America are also extant from the 1750's at the Cathedral in Uppsala.
4. Other sources, such as letters, reports, etc. containing references to the colonists. The most important source of information on this point consists of letters from Lars Riddermark and Johan Thelin, dated October 1, 1691 and based on information from Anders Printz.

All these sources require a careful and a different kind of source criticism by asking for what purpose each source was drawn up. (2)

In the period of the colonization of Delaware Finland was an integral part of Sweden, administered from Stockholm. Consequently the major sources can be found there, but some more information can be traced in other parts of Sweden and Finland notably at the Archives of the Lutheran Church in Uppsala and in the provinces of Central Sweden, from where the most forest Finns to Delaware came. Presumably the most important source will be the Archives of Vermland, including local church, parish and court records. Similar sources may be in existence also on the Norwegian side of the border, where Finnish settlement had expanded in the early 17th century.

None has as yet investigated sources in Finland, nor has any Finnish scholar taken up the study of the Finns in Delaware. Only a few articles have been written from published sources. Professor Martti Kerkkonen considers that there is not much additional material to be found in Finland; I am not that pessimistic, however.

At the National Archives (Rauhankatu 17, 00170 Helsinki) I found two contemporary documents relating - at least indirectly - to the Delaware emigration. Governor Johan Printz name appears in a pay roll for the Province of Ostrobothnia in 1644 (VA Läänintilit 9114 pp. 64-65). Printz received some of his income from Finland while in Delaware.

In an other document, a roll of officers and soldiers in 1641, the name of Lieutenant Sven Skute was discovered. (VA Läänintilit 9109 pp. 264-265). Skute had served for many years on the battlefields in Europe under Major Johan Printz and it is no surprise, that Skute followed his master when Printz was appointed the Governor of the colony. Lieutenant Sven Skute came from the parish of Kronoby in northern Ostrobothnia. Skute was second in command during most of the period of the colony. He was also sent back to Sweden to make an oral report to the Queen and the Council of the State. Skute played also a key role when the colony fell into the hands of the Dutch in 1655. (3)

But people from Ostrobothnia had left for Delaware even before Printz. In the history of Korsholm there is recorded one Mårten Knutson, who had left for Sweden and went in 1641 in one of the first ships the Charitas, to Delaware, (4) probably recruited by Måns Kling. In Delaware there were Finnish settlements known as "New Korsholm" and "New Vaasa". The old church records of the Vaasa region located in the parishes, the Provincial Archives or at the National Archives should be investigated. Probably there would not be many - if any - direct references to the Delaware emigration. But having names of emigrants from the Swedish and American sources it would be interesting to try to find the places these people came from.

As indicated by the study of K-G. Olin more emigrants to Delaware obviously came from the Swedish-speaking coastal area of Ostrobothnia than has previously been thought.

Another place of origin of Finns for colonial America was Savolax and Northern Tavastland in Central Finland. From here some 12 000 ethnic Finns had moved to Central Sweden in 1580-1630 and a few hundred of these later moved on to Delaware. Did this major group of the Finns to Delaware include the friends and relatives of the burrbeating Finns directly from Savolax? There has not been any attempt to trace the family names found in Delaware on the map of Central Finland. Although many Finnish names were Swediscized, and later Anglicised, it might be possible to find some clusters of places of origin by using old parish and taxation records. The nucleus of the Savo emigration is the large Rautalampi parish, and it has been suggested that John Morton's greatgrandfather Morten Mortensson originated from the- Marttinen family in

Rautalampi. In 1938 a monument was erected here to commemorate the Tricentenary of the Delaware emigration.

Although the Finnish emigration to Delaware stands on two legs, one in Ostrobothnia and other in Savolax (mainly via Central Sweden), a few settlers originated from southern Finland and even from Karelia. The Finnish born Director of the New Sweden Company Admiral Klaus Fleming, suggested that some minor criminals from Turku (Abo) should be transported to Delaware. (5) Unfortunately the early Court proceeding of Turku were destroyed in the big fire in 1827, but perhaps in the archives of other major towns courts, or in the correspondence with the officials in Stockholm, some supplementary information could be found. The best place to start from would be the National Archives in Helsinki. But other material concerning the Åland Islands is at Provincial Archives in Maarianhamina. It is recorded that there was at least one transported seaman from Åland in the second expedition that arrived in 1640.

In Delaware there were two early settlements or stockades called Torneå and Lapland. This might well suggest that some of the colonists originated from northern Finland.

One very important source of information at the Helsinki University Library (Unioninkatu 36, 00170 Helsinki) dating from a century after the Delaware colonization is the original diary of Professor Pehr Kalm, who visited North America in 1748-51. He frequently copied old church records and interviewed old people. His famous diary has been published in many languages. But for a real scholar only the original will do. The editors may have left something out, or misspelled the handwriting. This a relevant point, even though the most of the diary was published in Kalm's lifetime. In the great fire of Turku, in 1827, these valuable documents survived intact as they happened to be loan out of the town. In Kalm's diary from December 1748 there is interesting entry; he had heard that the English, and especially William Penn, were in the habit of collecting the old Swedish church records and other early documents in Delaware. (6) Presumably Penn took these papers back with him to England. It would be marvellous if these valuable documents could be found somewhere in England.

3. Former Studies

In the 17th century the Finnish presence in Delaware was well recognized; but then, until the 20th century, the Finns were more or less "forgotten". Even the great Amandus Johnson in his magnum opus from 1911 did not give the Finns their fair treatment. As Richard H. Hulan points out, Johnson was not especially interested in the Finns, although evidence of their numerical significance can be found in the lists which he published. (7) In a way it is a pity that Johnson immediately became such authority, because his seemingly exhaustive study perhaps has discouraged later American, Swedish or Finnish scholars from taking an interest in the topic and tackling the original and laborious archival sources of Delaware migration.

Similarly, only a few American historians of Finnish origin have studied the Delaware Finns. The Rev. S. Ilmonen studied for yers the history of Finns in North America, and published a book on the Finns in Delaware in 1916 in the U.S.A. His book was published in Finland in 1938. (8) He was quite a good scholar, although he did not give detailed information concerning the sources of his data. Then, in 1925, E.A. Louhi published in English an extremely Finnish nationalistic book on the Finns in Pennsylvania and adjoining colonies. (9) In conjunction with Tercentenary celebration of

the New Sweden colony in 1938, Prof. John O. Wuorinen wrote a small book, which was, however, to a great extent based on the works of Amandus Johnson. (10)

In addition to the above mentioned "histories" there have been a few literary works, such as Akseli Järnefelt-Rauanheimo's novel "Before William Penn", published in 1921 in Finnish and in English in 1929.

4. Questions for Investigation

As appears from the above historiography, there is no systematic and methodologically sound investigation of the Nordic Delaware immigration from the Finnish perspective. A major target in the future should be to write a comprehensive history of the Finnish, factor in migration to and settlement in the Delaware River valley. Naturally this study should be placed in the right historical context and background.

Then, as chapter of a comprehensive study - or as separate topics - I would like to suggest the following themes:

a. The Places of Origin

As appeared from the discussion about the relevant sources, the Finnish settlers in Delaware were an extension of the expansion of burnbeating settlement, first in the unpopulated areas of Central Finland, then in the hilly forest of Western Central Sweden, and finally in the fertile Delaware River valley. This emigration of some 12 000 persons from Finland to Vermland and other Swedish provinces has been studied to some extent. **Dr. Kari Tarkiainen from the National Archives in Stockholm has recently launched a project to write a history of the Finns in Sweden before World War II.** An interesting problem concerning the Delaware Finns is how long they have lived in Sweden before their departure for America and to what degree they had become acculturated to Swedish life and language. Much of this settlement took place in the 1620s and 1630s, including some on the Norwegian territory. Because the Finns were quite isolated in the great forests, they were able to maintain their tongue and traditions for decades.

The large number of Finns migrating from Sweden to Delaware has perhaps contributed to the fact that those who moved directly from Finland have received less attention. It now seems that more Finnish immigrants to Delaware either came directly from Finland or left Sweden after only a short stay than had been previously thought. Many Finnish men, especially those from Ostrobothnia were in the habit of going to Sweden to work during the winter months. As mentioned earlier, Governor Johan Printz lived in Korsholm near Vaasa before his departure for America. He recruited emigrants to travel with him, and during his 10 years in Delaware he had contacts with Ostrobothnia. At present there is a considerable interest in Ostrobothnia in genealogical research into the emigrants to Delaware.

b. The Numbers of Finns to Delaware

There are only estimates of the numbers of Finns who went to Delaware. These vary considerably depending whether is meant the period under the Swedish rule, 1638-55 (2) plus the period under the Dutch rule, 1655-64; or (3) the whole 17th century. S. Ilmonen counted 295 Finns in Delaware in 1638-64. Considering that many Swedes left the colony after the Dutch occupation, he estimated the number of permanent Swedish settlers to be somewhat over 100. (11)

A Swedish scholar, Ivan Bill estimated in 1983 that during the Swedish and Dutch periods, 1638-64, about 1000 colonists arrived in New Sweden. These were mainly burnbeater Finns from Sweden and the Finns made some 75 % of all the settlers. (12) Until more accurate information becomes available, we can therefore estimate the number of Finns moving to Delaware in the 17th century to be 500-600 persons. (13)

c. Settlements, Adjustment and Acculturation

The Finns often settled in the outbacks, apart from the Swedes. They lived at peace with Indians. In the extensive forests of Delaware, they continued their ancient agriculture by burnbeating. Quite early the Finns started to disperse to Maryland (14) - as well as to the other adjoining colonies. In addition to better economic opportunities, one reason for this migration was the harsh rule of Governor Printz. The Finns also settled early in New Amsterdam - later New York. Måns Stack from Turku was a founder of Harlem and his three sons, Peter, Matthew and Israel, settled the permanently using the name Stuck. (15) How far north and west this internal migration reached would be another interesting topic.

Concerning acculturation, the second generation adopted the Swedish language, mainly because the Lutheran Church and the schools operated in that language. An open question is whether the Rev. Mr. Lars Lock, regarded as the Pastor to the Finns conducted Divine Services in Finnish. Finally the third generation - both the Swedes and the Finns - adopted English. How this transition took place would make a topic for a separate study. Did the colonial Finnish language disappear so completely in America as this reading of the evidence indicates? (16) A scholar with a command of the Finnish and Swedish languages might well find some interesting new information.

d. Genealogical research

Almost all the Finns who migrated settled permanently in Delaware, although a few returned. According to Ilmonen, Lieutenant Måns Kling, who arrived in the first expedition in 1638 and was left in command of Fort Christina, was a Finn. He returned to Sweden in 1640 and was sent to recruit Finns from Central Sweden to Delaware. In 1641 he set out again for New Sweden with number of colonists but then returned permanently to Sweden with his family in 1648. (17) The question to be asked is: was he really a Finn? There are good reasons to believe so. He was a good friend of Klaus Fleming, and as he was sent to recruit Finns to Delaware he must have spoken Finnish. Peter Hollander Ridder, who was the first "Governor" of the colony 1640-43, was a son of Dutch merchant Hans Hollander Ridder and his wife Anne Robertsdotter from Tammisaari (Ekenäs). There would be many interesting characters from Finland to Delaware to be studied. This group would include both those who returned and the descendants of the Finnish colonists who became the early builders of future nation.

5. The Conclusion

To promote the Delaware research - not only the Finnish but also in general - the following proposals:

- 1) An up to date Bibliography on the "New Sweden" immigration and settlement in the Delaware River Valley, including also information on research - in-progress.
- 2) A List of Original Material in various archives and libraries in Europe and America could be the major finding aid and the basis for plans to have the most important sources translated from Swedish and Dutch to English.
- 3) The next Conference on the Delaware 350-project should be held e.g. in 1993. If resources available, a Delaware 350 Newsletter, would be most useful, but also the existing journals could be utilized.

Especially I hope that a Finnish historian would take up the study of the Finns in Delaware and their contribution to their new home country. This would be both part of the history of the Finnish people and at the same time also of the world history in the redistribution of European population to the overseas continents in search of better opportunities for the emigrants themselves and for their unborn children.

NOTES

1. This summary of the Finns in Delaware is based on Olavi Koivukangas, Delaware 350, Turku 1988; and "The first Finnish settlement DELAWARE", LOOK AT FINLAND 1, 1988.
2. Kari Tarkiainen, "The Emigration of Swedish - Finnish Burnbeaters to Delaware", SIIRTOLAISUUS MIGRATION 2, 1989.
3. Karl-Gustav Olin, "Delaware 350 - A Finnish View", Siirtolaisuus Migration 2, 1989, p. 19. See also Olin, Våra första amerikafarare; Historian om finlandssvenskarna i Nya Sverige (Our first America emigrants; A History of Swedish Finns in New Sweden), Jakobstad 1988.
4. K.V. Åkerblom, Korsholms historia I (The history of Korsholm I), Vaasa 1941, pp. 236-238.
5. Amandus Johnson, The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware, their History and Relation to the Indians, Dutch and English 1638-1664, New York 1911, p. 239.
6. See Martti Kerkkonen, "Delawaren siirtokunta ja Pietari Kalm (The Delaware Colony and Peter Kalm)", Historiallinen Aikakauskirja (The Historical Journal), 1938, No 2, p. 4.
7. Richard H. Hulan, "New Sweden Bibliography, a manuscript, 1985.

8. S. Ilmonen, Amerikan ensimmäiset suomalaiset eli Delawaren siirtokunnan historia (The First Finns in America), or the History of Delaware Colony, Hancock, Mich. 1916.
9. E. A. Louhi, The Delaware Finns, or the First Permanent Settlements in Pennsylvania, Delaware, West New Jersey and the Eastern Part of Maryland, New York 1925.
10. John O. Wuorinen, The Finns on the Delaware, New York 1938.
11. S. Ilmonen, Delawaren suomalaiset (Finns in Delaware), Hämeenlinna 1938, p.52.
12. Ivan Bill, "Svedjefinnar koloniserade Delaware" (Burnbeater Finns Colonized Delaware), Folkets Historia (People's History), 11:1, 1983, p. 37.
13. KOIVUKANGAS, 1988.
14. George Ely Russell, "The Swedish Settlement in Maryland, 1654", The American Genealogist, vol. 54, 1978, pp. 203, 210.
15. John O. Evjen, Scandinavian Immigrants in New York 1630-1674, Baltimore 1972, p. 342; and LOUHI 1925, p. 188.
16. A.R. Dunlap - E. J. Moyne, "The Finnish Language on the Delaware", American Speech, May 1952, vol. XXVII, No 2, p. 86.
17. ILMONEN 1938, pp.176–178.