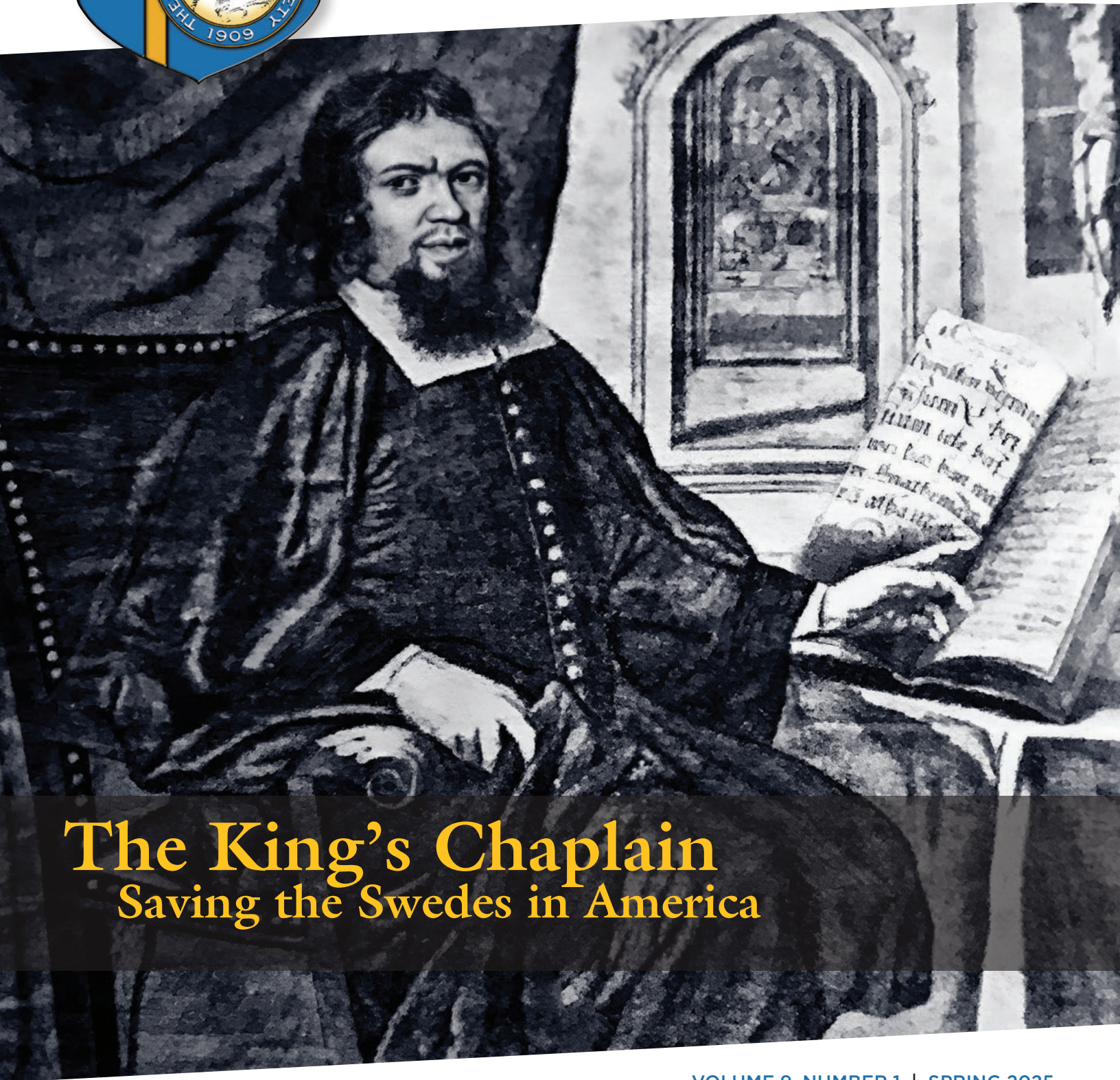




THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY

JOURNAL



The King's Chaplain

Saving the Swedes in America

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2025

PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF THE NEW SWEDEN COLONY IN AMERICA



THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY

THE LAZARETTO, 97 WANAMAKER AVE., ESSINGTON, PA 19029-1424

A Letter from Our Governor

We seem to be living in tumultuous times, so it feels right to explore our heritage as members of this Society. Likewise it feels right to continue to settle in here in Tinicum. As Governor I labor somewhat over the details of our annual events, considering alternatives, but the main points are already laid out for me to follow: Julmiddag most likely at the Corinthian, Forefathers Luncheon at a venue in one of the three “Swedish” states on the Delaware (leaving aside Virginia & Maryland for a moment), and an excursion to the motherland in the summer.



The Corinthian is the Corinthian Yacht Club, the legendary locale right next door to Governor Printz Park. We held our Julmiddag there this past December 21 in its sunny dining area with a view of the Delaware River. Britt Apell’s glögg sets a fine mood as does the delicious food followed by Ken Alexy’s fun raffle, all taking place in the Corinthian’s elegant yet unpretentious surroundings. Being in this warm environment is a great way to prepare for Christmas.

Then suddenly it’s February and the annual Forefather’s Luncheon is not far off. This year it will be hosted by the Delaware Swedish Colonial Society (DSCS) and held on Landing Day, March 29, in the Tilton Mansion of the University and Whist Club of Wilmington. The program will actually start at 10:30 with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Rocks of the Christina River where the Swedes landed in 1638. Then the Luncheon will start at 11:30. Betsy Christopher author of Old Swedes Church and Historic Site: Images of America, will be our speaker.

We have our events, but it’s also a good thing to visit other Swedish and Finnish heritage sites nearby: Fort Christina, Old Swedes Wilmington, and the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, then Gloria Dei in Philadelphia, and so on. The New Sweden Legacy Lecture Series hosted by the American Swedish Historical Museum seems to be a popular and new virtual venue. And of course we’re excited about the Finnish-American Society of the Delaware Valley’s plan to bring the beautiful pink granite Finnish Settlers Monument to Governor Printz Park. Just a block away the Philadelphia Lazaretto Quarantine Station adds its gravity to the historic fabric of Tinicum. What a wealth of history! I couldn’t escape it if I wanted to. I was born and raised in the Swedish village of Kingessing in SW Philadelphia and live now in the Dutch/Swedish near-wilderness of Maurice River Township, South Jersey.

This summer I hope to visit both familiar and new places in Sweden and possibly Finland and Estonia, depending on how enterprising I can be. Maybe you have read my travelogues in this Journal over the past few years. I hope they have piqued your curiosity about these wondrous countries. I travel at my own expense out of curiosity and a drive to learn, and I’m thankful to be able to do so as Governor of our beloved Society.

Please feel free to write me at jpmathews1@aol.com or at the email address below.

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THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY
JOURNAL

HIGHLIGHTS

The Swedish Colonial Society Journal

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Contributors to this issue: Joseph Mathews, Kim-Eric Williams, Amy Grant, Betsy V. Christopher and Larry Backlund. (PHOTOS AS CREDITED)

On the Cover: Detail from engraving on page 4 of this issue. Professor Jesper Svedberg pointing out a Bible verse at Uppsala University.

EDITOR'S NOTE

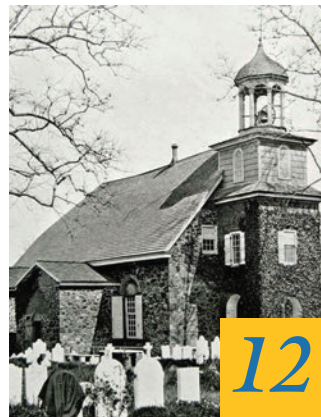
In this issue of the SCS *Journal* we explore the life and times of Jesper Svedberg, the Swedish clergyman who was critical to the Church of Sweden's continued service to descendants of the New Sweden colony in the 18th century. The article uses the term "Priest's Estate"—a reminder that the Swedish *Riksdag* was organized by class. The "Priest's Estate" was one of them. Betsy Christopher discusses her book on Wilmington's Old Swedes Church and Historic Site, Amy Grant describes the search for Peter Rambo's grave at Philadelphia's Gloria Dei Old Swedes Church, and we begin a "conversation" on DNA studies devoted to John Morton and his Finnish background. Of course, our regular features on Society members can also be found here. Hopefully, these features will make reading both educational and interesting.



St. Jesper:

*The Patron Saint
of New Sweden*

by Kim-Eric Williams



Tracing the Legacy of Holy Trinity Church

by Betsy V. Christopher



John Morton:

A DNA Study

St. Jesper: The Patron Saint of New Sweden

By Kim-Eric Williams

In 1714, nine church wardens of the two original Old Swedes churches, Holy Trinity (Christiana, Wilmington, DE) and Gloria Dei (Wicacå, Philadelphia, PA) wrote and personally signed the following letter to Sweden:

...when we consider how far distant, we are from Sweden and also our inability to render any service, we cannot enough praise the Right Reverend Father's great kindness toward us, that it has pleased the Right Reverend Father to have such care, labor, and expense unspared for the salvation of our souls. Honorable and well-educated pastors have been sent to us....We have received Bibles, and hymnals and many other godly books, one time after another...¹

Who was this “Right Reverend Father” to whom the letter was addressed? It was none other than Jesper Svedberg, who rather grandly signed himself as “Bishop of Skara and of the Swedish congregations in London, England, and in Pennsylvania in America.” Actually, the title is correct. He had founded the Swedish Ulrika Eleonora congregation in London in 1710 and, without his leadership, the Swedish congregations in America would not have survived.

Svedberg's service in relationship to the American mission has been neglected by scholars. He was so active in Sweden, in Bible translation, and in production of the first truly national hymnal, that his activities to support the mission in America have received little notice. The Swedish Colonial Society's translations of six letters between the priests in America and their Skara bishop have now shown a passionate desire on Svedberg's part to assure the personal integrity and success of the three original Swedish congregations in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.² In America, he is totally forgotten. Only a vague remembrance of his son, Emanuel, is recalled as a religious philosopher, with the noble surname Swedenborg.



ABOVE: Professor Jesper Svedberg pointing out a Bible verse at Uppsala University.

IMAGE CREDIT: GERMAN ENGRAVING BY H.C. FEHLINGH (PRE-1702).

The story of Svedberg and the American mission begins with the famous letter from the Swedes in America, written in 1693. In this letter, the Swedes requested the Church of Sweden to renew its mission along the Delaware River and send two pastors, Bibles, hymnals, Catechisms, and Swedish-language ABC books.³ The letter was sent to Johan Thelin, the Postmaster in Gothenburg. He sent it on to King Carl IX. Numerous delays followed. At first, a lawyer, Lars Riddenmark, composed a proposal for the Priests' Estate of the Parliament to send pastors and books to America, but no action was taken. Then came the untimely death of the beloved and pious Queen Ulrika Eleonora, the Elder, on 26 July 1693. The King declared two years of mourning at Court. However, he did manage to investigate whether he needed to procure Finnish books for the America mission in a letter to Bishop Johannes Gezelius of Åbo, but found that everyone in America spoke Swedish.⁴

It was natural for the King to communicate with Gezelius, since this well-known cleric had studied in England at both Oxford and Cambridge in 1672. Gezelius had earlier, as Bishop of Ingermanland, even convinced King Carl IX to grant permission for the English merchants in Narva to obtain an English priest and to use their *Book of Common Prayer* for worship. English merchants, who were in what is now Estonia but was then Swedish territory on the border of Russia, would not have understood worship in either Swedish, Estonian, or the Church Slavonic of the Orthodox Church. The need had been real indeed. To further convince the King, Gezelius wrote a description of the Anglican Church as not being Calvinist at all but very similar to the Church of Sweden, with similar sacramental and liturgical reforms of the Western catholic tradition, having university-educated clergy and episcopal government.⁵

The King also wondered about who this Anders Prinz was who had given the first verbal reports about the Swedes across the sea. The matter of sending pastors to a land

where another king was ruling also gave him pause. Well should this have made him delay. After the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformations, Protestant churches did not send out missionaries.⁶ They were concerned with strengthening their own doctrinal identity and with finding a way to live with strong princely powers. And there was the question of funds. Where was the money for such a venture to be found? Certainly, poor harvests in both 1694 and 1695 made resources thin. Added to these difficulties was that the then Archbishop, Olaus Svebelius, was elderly, overburdened, and ill.

The person to solve all of these difficulties was the King's favorite Court Preacher and the Dean of Uppsala Cathedral, Jesper Svedberg (1653-1735). Since he taught homiletics at Uppsala University, he knew all the theological students. And, in 1696, he agreed to oversee the new mission in North America.



ABOVE: Gloria Dei Church, Wicacā, now known as Queen's Village, South Philadelphia, PA. Dedicated in 1700.

IMAGE CREDIT: J.C. CLAY, *ANNALS OF THE SWEDES ON THE DELAWARE*, 1835.

THE PATRON SAINT OF NEW SWEDEN

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Svedberg was remarkably well-prepared for the task. Born on an estate called Sveden in the copper mining area near Falun, he had very pious parents and a long line of clergy in his mother's family.⁷ Soon after his studies at Lund and Uppsala, and his Ordination in 1682, he became a Chaplain for the Royal Cavalry regiment in Stockholm. While there, his dramatic and personalized sermons became a quick favorite of soldiers and civilians alike, since he often preached in the Royal Chapel, as well as the adjacent Great Church, *Storkyrkan*. He was soon selected as a Court Preacher. The next year, he married Sara Behm and, since her father was a District Judge, he suddenly had enough resources for the usual noble's "Grand Tour" of Europe.⁸

His junket was not the usual trip for budding theologians, who routinely visited Wittenburg and the German Lutheran facilities. Instead, following up on his friendship with John Robinson (1650-1723), the pastor at the English Embassy in Stockholm, he went to England.⁹ Very few people in Sweden knew English and there were few contacts with the Anglican Church. Most Swedish clergy read German theological tomes and were suspicious of the influence of Calvinism and sectarianism in England. Svedberg, however, came home impressed with a "Sister Church" and came to know very well Bishop John Fell at Oxford.

His next stop was Paris, where he admired the social work of the local Roman Catholic diocese. It was then on to Strasbourg and Frankfurt-am-Main, where he hoped to meet the great early Pietist leader Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705). Sadly, Spener was too ill to receive him. But we can be certain that he had already read Spener's most famous work, *Pia Desideria* (1675). His last stop was in Hamburg, where he spent two months with

the famed Hebrew Bible scholar and mission advocate Esdras Edzardi. There Svedberg imbibed more enthusiasm for the "living faith" of German Pietism, together with a zeal for foreign missions and accurate translations of Scripture.¹⁰

This year abroad proved to be the perfect preparation for his life's work.

The funding problem for the American mission was the simplest to solve. Svedberg knew about a trust fund in the German town of Stade in Swedish-ruled Bremen. His friend Esdras Edzardi had told him about it. The funds had been designated for the "conversion of the heathens," but since no one seemed to fit that definition, the money was used to help Swedish nobles' sons make their European tours. Svedberg corrected that. His plea is given in full in the history of New Sweden written by Israel Acrelius in 1759:

"In America, most gracious Sovereign, where there are many Swedes who now need and desire Priests, Bibles, Hymnals, and various other works of devotion, there is now a good opportunity to convert the heathen. Yes, to see to it that the children of Sweden do not become heathen as they dwell among them. Thus can those means be used in accordance with the wills of the deceased; otherwise, His Majesty would



ABOVE: Holy Trinity Church, Christina, now Wilmington, DE, in the First State National Park. Dedicated, 1699.

IMAGE CREDIT: BENJAMIN FERRIS' HISTORY, 1846.

find it hard to answer to God for the violation of those wills.”¹¹

The King agreed and asked Archbishop Svebelius to name two candidates. The Archbishop named the already ordained Magister Andreas Rudman from Gävle. He turned to Svedberg for the second. Svedberg named Erik Björk, from Västmanlän, who was not yet ordained but who had finished his studies and had actually lived in Svedberg’s home as a tutor for his nephews. The King added a third—Jonas Aurén, a mathematician and geographer from Värmland, who received a special assignment to map the area and then report back to the King about the entire area. Although his theological training was not complete, he was considered sufficiently educated to assume the duties of a parish priest. Björk was soon ordained and also Aurén. This was to dispel any suspicion from the English government, since maps were at the time considered state secrets!

The three priests then appeared before the King, who paid their outstanding academic loans and gave them funds for the journey. They also received a large number of books including 300 Small Catechisms by Martin Luther, 100 copies of the new Svebelius Catechism, 400 ABC books, 30 large Bibles, and many other devotional books.¹²

Two special editions also were in their baggage. The first of these was 500 copies of the *Indian Catechism* by Johan Campanius, who had

returned to Sweden in 1649 with the unpublished manuscript. His grandson, Tomas Campanius, knew of the manuscript and succeeded in having it finally published. The second was 500 copies of the original 1694 *Svedberg Hymnal* that had not circulated but had been stored unbound at the Stockholm naval base at Skeppsholmen.

This reminds us of the most painful event in Svedberg’s career. King Carl IX had asked him to assemble the first national hymnal. He completed the work with an outstanding group of poets in 1691. The Priest’s Estate in Parliament and the National Bible Committee had given their approval. It contained 482 hymns, plus all the Scripture lessons for Sundays and holidays, as well as the Small Catechism. It was almost a thousand pages long in a small hand-held format.

The printing began and, with it, a major literary/theological controversy erupted. The discussion illuminated the traditional Lutheran struggle between doctrinal orthodoxy and a pietistic

renewal of individual faith. Svedberg was already strongly in the camp of the newest pietism; others disliked the personal and emotional themes of some of the hymns and some of the prayers that they found doctrinally unsound. After the country’s bishops had examined it, changes were made and it was published in 1695 in revised form—eliminating 78 hymns, along with many small changes.¹³

Svedberg took the rejection of his diligent work very poorly. And he suffered a financial loss. Yet, in fact, the final version was still very much like his first. He was himself a talented hymn writer and musician, recommending congregations sing in *alternatim*, that is, singing different stanzas by different groups, i.e. men, women, children, etc. Fourteen of his original hymns made it into the revised hymnal.¹⁴

History proved him correct. Even with the changes, his hymnal became immensely popular. Even 200 years later, reprints of it were given to at least some confirmands in southern Sweden.¹⁵

The 1986 *Hymnal* of the Church of Sweden has sixteen hymns written by Svedberg.

By October 7, 1696, all three priests were in London and, being assisted by the resident Ambassador Carl Lejoncrona, applied for permission for themselves and their books to go to Pennsylvania. While they waited, they began their language practice and were able to meet William Penn personally.¹⁶ They finally left on February 4, 1697, for a ten-week voyage to

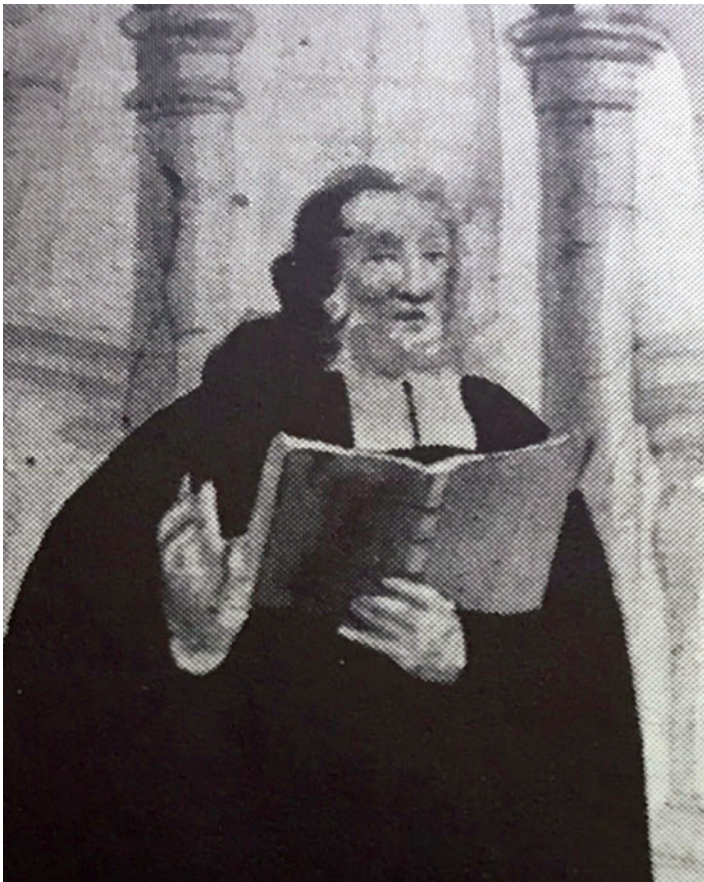


ABOVE LEFT: Bible printed at a reduced sale price and in a hand-held size for American Swedes.



ABOVE RIGHT: A *Godly Catechism for Children* prepared for Swedish-American youth. It included *Martin Luther's Small Catechism*.

IMAGE CREDIT: BENJAMIN FERRIS' HISTORY, 1846.



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the Chesapeake Bay. On the same ship were five English clergy on their way to Maryland with whom the Swedes must have had much in common. The Swedes stopped for four days at the new capital of Annapolis, where they were royally welcomed by the Maryland Governor, Sir Francis Nicholson.¹⁷ On Midsommer Day, the Nativity of St John the Baptist, June 24, 1697, they reached the Elk River.

Björk wrote to Carl Wikström four months later, describing their reception there by their future parishioners:

“I cannot fully describe the joy of the people over our arrival. They were in great distress in regard to their salvation, and on all sides overrun with Quakers, now especially since the last pastor they had to depend upon, Magister Fabritius, died here, at the time we were appointed in Sweden. The people immediately came up to us from a distance of 60-70 miles to take us farther up where the members of the congregations are less scattered.”¹⁸

ABOVE: Svedberg teaching at the theological Faculty of Uppsala University.

IMAGE CREDIT: WATERCOLOR BY F.J. THELOTT, SR., 1698, NATIONALMUSEUM. IN AMERICA ILLUMINATA: SVEDBERG, 1792.

After paying their respects to Vice Governor Markham, Rudman took responsibility for the church at Wicacá/Philadelphia and Björk went to Crane Hook/Wilmington. Aurén was to be a general assistant and relate to the Lenape, but since King Carl IX had died while they journeyed, no report was now necessary to take back to him.

The three priests carried out their duties with great zeal. In short order, Björk convinced the southern congregation to leave their log church at Crane Hook and move across the Christiana River to a site near the original Fort Christina. Here they dedicated their Holy Trinity stone church in 1699. It remains the oldest Christian church in the Delaware River Valley. The city of Wilmington, erected north of it, soon enclosed it in its borders. The very next year, the same construction crews erected Gloria Dei's brick church on the site of the log church at Wicacá (now South Philadelphia). Meanwhile, Jonas Aurén did have many contacts with the Lenape, especially in Canestoga—a rural area near today's Lancaster, PA. In 1706, Aurén founded a congregation called St. Mary's in North East, Maryland, erecting a log church the next year, 1707.¹⁹ While we do not have Aurén's diary, we know a number of Lenape graves are in this church's cemetery, testifying to at least some Lenape baptisms and presumably the use of the *Indian Catechism*.

Thus, the three Swedish pastors were extremely busy with building new churches, erecting or finding rectories, and taking a census of possible participants and the property available for ministry. The last Swedish pastor had been Lars Lock, who had died in 1688. His successor, the Dutch/German Jacob Fabritius had died in 1696. The America mission pastors began their service by encouraging the people to sing hymns again. The imported hymnals helped. Rudman even was encouraged to write two small paperbound collections of eight hymns to jumpstart their enthusiasm. He was thus the first hymn-writer in America. He also re-wrote several well-known hymns in the Svedberg hymnal, explaining that they had been “improved.”²⁰

While Björk was to have a long tenure at Holy Trinity, until 1713, and a further career in Sweden at Falun, Rudman's health was failing and he asked to be relieved by 1702. Hearing of his resignation, the Dutch Lutherans in New York begged him to come for a year at least to help revive their three congregations in Manhattan, Albany, and Hackensack. Their former pastor had died eleven years earlier. Since Rudman's health had improved, he agreed, seeing that they needed a full time pastor who could handle the challenge of a three-point parish. When he was ready to return to Philadelphia, he remembered a German theological student, who had often attended worship at Gloria Dei, since

no German Lutheran church had yet been founded in Pennsylvania. This student was Justus Falckner.

Falckner had completed his university training in theology and came from a family of Lutheran pastors. He had come to Philadelphia in 1700 to work with his brother in real estate in Germantown, but was horrified at the multiplicity of religions in America. Rudman convinced him to be ordained, making sure the King and Svedberg would approve. This was done when King Carl XII made Rudman a Superintendent or Suffragan Bishop.²¹ He was the only Swedish pastor to ever bear this office. The Ordination was arranged at Gloria Dei, with its new pastor, Andreas Sandel, being the celebrant of the High Mass. Björk preached, while Rudman led all three doing the Laying-on-of-Hands. The date was November 24, 1703. It was the first Lutheran Ordination and one of the first ordinations in any church in America.

Following Falckner's ordination, Rudman spent the remainder of his life in English ministry at Christ Church in Center City, Philadelphia, and a new mission, Trinity Church in Oxford. Before his untimely death in 1708, he preached the dedicatory sermon for the Anglican church in New Castle, giving it the name "Immanuel." He was buried before the altar of Gloria Dei, not quite forty years old.

After Rudman's death, Erik Björk was appointed Dean of the Mission. And in the following years, a *Probst/Prost* or Dean was regularly appointed to lead the Mission which was considered as a *Kontrakt* or District of the Church of Sweden. Its priest received extra salary for the position, which was similar to the "Commissary" appointed by the Bishop of London for the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.²²

Over the 18th century, the relationship between the Swedish and Anglican Churches deepened. Because Svedberg knew the Church of England well, he encouraged all his pastors to cooperate with the Anglican mission in America. This turned out to be a wonderful opportunity to share ministry in areas lacking sacramental churches. Swedish pastors described their two churches as "wheat among weeds," or as Pastor Andreas Hesselius commented, like "roses among thorns, entirely healthy and lively."²³ Indeed, Swedish clergy attended all the meeting of the local Anglican clergy and very often led worship due to a lack of English clergy. Their language skills were good enough to do this. But the Anglican clergy never learned Swedish and so could not assist the Swedes, who assumed that their pastors could lead five or six hymns at each service and chant part of the liturgy.

When Swedish priests returned to Sweden, they were recommended by the local joint clergy associations. And, passing through England on their passage, they received a pension from the Bishop of London for their valuable work in America. In 1713, Svedberg was even made a member of the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.²⁴

Thus, when the Church of Sweden ceased to send priests to America after the American Revolution, it was natural for all eight of the Old Swedes churches to join the Episcopal Church. They had all been using the *Book of Common Prayer* for two generations by that time, had forgotten their Swedish hymns, and knew that the German-only



ABOVE: The Cathedral of Skara, the ancient city in Västergötland where Svedberg was bishop, 1702-1735.

IMAGE CREDIT: SVECIA ANTIQUA, ERIK DAHLBERG, 1730.

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Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania would not accept them.²⁵

Long before the ecumenical convergence of the Porvoo Declaration of 1993, these two churches had had a common and complimentary ministry during the entire 18th century, a relationship that could be traced back to the life and times of Jesper Svedberg.

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²Williams and Craig, *Colonial Records*, Volume 3 (2007) and 4 (2008).

³Peter Stebbins Craig, *The 1693 Census of the Swedes in the Delaware Valley* (Winter Park, FL.: SAG Publications, 1993), p. 159.

⁴Otto Norberg, *Svenska Kyrkans Mission vid Delaware/Nord Amerika* (Stockholm: A.V. Carlsons Bokförlag-Aktiebolag), p. 13.

⁵Lars Österlin, *Churches of Northern Europe in Profile* (Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1995), pp. 120-122.

⁶It was later Pietism which finally saw the need to travel with the Gospel to foreign lands. The Danish-Halle Mission to India, led by Bartolomäus Zigenbalg, baptized its first convert in 1707. While the English Society of the Propagation of the Gospel was founded in 1701, it was a private charity, as was the case in most Protestant countries until the 19th century. The Church of Sweden's Mission as a national organization was not founded until 1874.

⁷Henry Williams Tottie, *Jesper Svedbergs Lif och Verksamhet*, Förre Delen (Uppsala: Akademiska Boktryckeriet, 1885), p. 6.

⁸*America Illuminata, Skriven och utgiven av dess biskop år 1732. Med anledning av Robert Murray om biskopen som vägrade att glömma svenskarna på andra sidan havet* (Stockholm: Samfundet Pro Fide et Christianismo samt Propius Förlag, 1985), p. 14.

⁹John Robinson spent 30 years in Stockholm, often acting as Ambassador. He even accompanied King Carl XII at the

memorable battle at Narva in Estonia. He later returned to England first as Bishop of Bristol, then Bishop of London. In 1718, he proposed a union of the Swedish and Anglican Churches, but only Bishops Svedberg and Gezelius approved. Other Swedish bishops were still suspicious of the ravages of the English Civil War and Calvinism in the Church of England. The proposal was weak on theological clarifications and the political situation was no longer seen as advantageous. For a more thorough description of the situation, cf. Österlin, pp. 124-137.

¹⁰*America Illuminata*, p. 16.

¹¹Israel Acrelius, *A History of New Sweden, or The Settlements on the River Delaware* (Stockholm: Harberg & Hasselbeeg, 1759). Translated with an Introduction and notes by William Reynolds (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1874), p. 196.

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¹³Allan Arvaston, *Den Svenska Psalmen* (Stockholm: Gleerups, 1960), pp. 104-105.

¹⁴Arvaston, p. 105.

¹⁵A late 19th century reprint of the 1695 *Hymnal* is in the collection of the Swedish Colonial Society.

¹⁶Williams and Craig, *Colonial Records*, Volume 2, p. 29.

¹⁷Williams and Craig, *Colonial Records*, Volume 2, p. 73. Erik Björk's letter about the journey gives more detail than Rudman's travel account. Cf. p. 71-2.

¹⁸Williams and Craig, *Colonial Records*, Volume 2, p. 73.

¹⁹Kim-Eric Williams, *The Eight Old Swedes Churches of New Sweden* (Wilmington: The New Sweden Centre, 1999), pp. 10-11. The name of the congregation was changed to "St. Mary Anne's" after the receipt of a large Bible, Chalice, paten and *Book of Common Prayer* from the estate of Queen Anne in 1714

²⁰Kim-Eric Williams, "America's First Hymnals by Andreas Rudman, Pastor, Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1697-1702," *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Volume 69, Number 3 (July 2018) and Kim-Eric Williams and Paul Fejko, *The Rudman Hymnals, 1700* (Philadelphia: Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Trust, 2019), with the original Swedish texts and possible new melodies.

²¹Kim-Eric Williams, *The Journey of Justus Falckner* (Delhi, NY: ALPB Books, 2003.) *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

(Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006), p. 17, suggests November 24 as a Commemoration of Falckner rather than his death day.

²²This position has been wrongly translated by many scholars as “Provost,” a title unknown in Sweden.

²³Nils Jacobsson, *Svenska Öden vid Delaware* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelsens Bokförlag, 1938), p. 262. For more information, see Kim-Eric Williams, “Roses Among the Thorns,” *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Volume LXXIV, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 3-22.

²⁴*America Illuminata*, p. 145.

²⁵The Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States adopted the following resolution following the exodus of a large number of members from St. Michael’s Church to found St. John’s Lutheran Church in 1806: “That the present Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States must remain a German speaking ministerium, and that

no regulation can be adopted, which would necessitate the use of another language besides the German in its Synodical Meetings and Business.” In Helen E. Pfatteicher, *The Ministerium of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: The Ministerium Press, 1938), pp. 41-42.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Kim-Eric Williams taught Swedish at Penn for 15 years. He retired two years ago and lives in Exton, PA. In addition to the work as Curator of the Augustana Museum at the Philadelphia campus of the United Lutheran Seminary, Dr. Williams is the Historian for the Swedish Colonial Society.

PHOTO CREDIT: RUTH NELSON RIZZI

Cultural Remains Discovered in “Rambo” Grave

By Amy Grant

Peter Gunnarson Rambo (1611-1698) was one of the most famous and prolific Swedish settlers on the Delaware. When he was buried, his congregation was at a point of transition. The wood building they had been using as their church was falling apart. Plans were in place to build a permanent structure nearby, but it would take a few years to complete its construction.

It’s said that Rambo was laid to rest in a prominent place fitting his legacy ... next to the front door of the new church. However, no documentation survives to confirm this story. And, if he had a gravestone, it was missing in 1877 when all tombstone inscriptions were recorded.

Todd Compton, a Rambo descendant, lives in Texas. He grew up hearing stories about his ancestor and had long dreamed of visiting his grave. Todd finally made it to Philadelphia’s Gloria Dei (Old Swedes’) Church in the spring of 2024. While wandering the graveyard, he met Cynthia Temple, a volunteer who helps preserve the historic property. She showed Todd the unmarked grave where Rambo was reportedly buried.

Turns out: Todd is the Geo-Environmental Division Director of Colliers Engineering & Design. Ground penetrating radar is one of many services that his firm provides. Todd and his firm offered to scan the “Rambo” grave and other sections of the graveyard pro-bono. And, sure enough, the scan indicated the presence of cultural remains in the “Rambo” grave.

Did we find Peter Gunnarson Rambo’s long lost grave? It’s possible but, without further exploration, we won’t know for sure. In the meantime, let’s honor his memory by sharing his remarkable story and preserving the relics connected to him.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Grant is a Councillor of the SCS and President of the Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Preservation Corporation.

PHOTO CREDIT: AMY GRANT

Tracing the Legacy of Holy Trinity Old Swedes Church

and Historic Site in Wilmington, Delaware

by Betsy Christopher

On March 29, 2025, at the Annual Forefathers' Day Luncheon hosted by the Delaware Swedish Colonial Society and the Swedish Colonial Society at the University & Whist Club in Wilmington, DE, Betsy V. Christopher discussed her book, *Old Swedes Church and Historic Site*, Acadia Publishing, 2023. A shortened version of her talk appears below.

Our connections are why we are interested in New Sweden. Many of you – most of you - have a connection with Old Swedes, or going even further back, to the settlers of New Sweden. Though the New Sweden Colony was relatively short-lived, it was the source of an influential and enduring legacy here in the Delaware Valley and beyond.

What encouraged me to produce this new book was the opportunity to relate Holy Trinity Old Swedes' history with the legacy of New Sweden, primarily through images; to gather in one place the best available means of showing the church and its setting.

Our book is intended to commemorate this unique and inspirational treasure, which last year celebrated the 325th anniversary of its consecration, by gathering up some of the wealth of material in our archives and making it accessible to

the public as widely as possible, since 2015 as one of the sites included in the First State National Historical Park..

Beginning the process required thoughtful consideration not only of what to include, but also the arrangement of sequential chapters and their natural progression. A chronological approach was the obvious framework, but then where to fit in artwork from various decades and the parallel histories of the historical Hendrickson House (1722-46) and the Holy Trinity Parish House, which became the Christina Community Center. These two buildings deserved their own chapters.

The book was also a means to document other aspects of the story of Old Swedes that go beyond its colonial history—works of art associated with it, community outreach, stories of some of our “permanent residents” and neighbors, and the regular visits of Swedish royalty.



We feature a few of the many artists who have been inspired by the old church, including Howard Pyle, a young Andrew Wyeth, Peter Hurd, Robert Shaw, and Bayard Taylor Berndt. Howard Pyle loved Old Swedes, representing it in a number of illustrations in *Harper's Magazine* in the 1890s.

The folks at the Christina Cultural Arts Center in downtown Wilmington proved a valuable resource for mid-20th century photos of the building and its programs. First based in the Old Swedes Parish House, the Christina Community Center was founded in 1945 by the Women's Club of Trinity Episcopal to provide social and educational services to the children and families in the neighborhood.

There were many vintage photos of the Hendrickson House, both in its original location in Pennsylvania and its reconstruction at Old Swedes in 1959. It now houses a museum gift shop and the Archives of the Old Swedes Foundation.

Many of the photos in our archives are undated, so we guesstimated their age, based on a number of factors: what type of photograph, was it a tintype, glass negative, cyanotype, lantern slide, and so on. The church building offered clues as well: before and after the stained glass windows were installed, for instance. Another clue was the location of the pulpit in the church--it was moved several times. The pulpit had been painted white for some reason and relocated to the east wall next to the altar. The Breck window had been installed in the east wall of the church, a fact which dated one of the photographs to at least 1886. In one photo there are still benches instead of the original

pews, indicating that it predates the renovations of 1899.

We have a vintage plan of the church which is kind of a seating chart.

The diagram and the list show the distribution of pews as of Midsummer's Day 1699, women seated in pews on the north side, men in the south side pews. Now our visitors can sit in the same pew their ancestors once occupied. This makes for a very special moment.

The first pews on each side are marked "For Visitors." The names we see throughout – both men and women - include Stalcop, Peterson, Stedham, De Foss, Walraven, Johnson, Anderson, Peterson, Hendrickson, Reynolds, Mink and Erickson, to name a few.

Inventories like this were apparently a regular feature. In the Records of Holy Trinity in the year 1750, on November 13, "It was decided (by the vestry) that the seats in the church should be numbered and a list be made of them with names of those who rightly possess them."

I hope that in some way our new book adds to the richness of your experience as descendants of the first Swedish settlers. I'm sure many of you have been to Old Swedes, but I hope you will pay us a visit again soon. We are open Thursday through Saturday, 10 am – 3 pm.

INSET: Holy Trinity Old Swedes Church, Wilmington, 1894.

PHOTO CREDIT: Old Swedes Church and Historic Site, Betsy V. Christopher, 2023.

LEFT: Betsy Christopher discusses her new book at the Annual Forefathers' Day Luncheon on March 28, 2025.

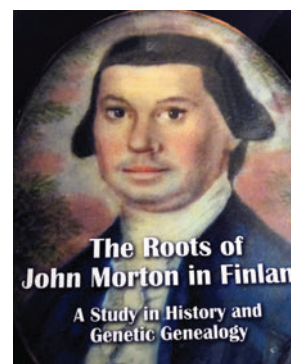
PHOTO CREDIT: JOE MATHEWS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Betsy V. Christopher is a writer and photographer who has worked in communications, development, and outreach for the Old Swedes Foundation since 2013. The Foundation's extensive archive provided much of her volume's content, augmented by the generosity of Old Swedes parishioners, current and former, who have contributed memories and photographs previously unpublished, and the fellowship of Trinity Episcopal Church, Wilmington.



A DNA STUDY: JOHN MORTON DECLARATION-SIGNER AND FINLAND



A new book has appeared dealing with the question of John Morton's genetic connections with Finland (Auvo Kostiainen, *The Roots of John Morton in Finland: A Study in History and Genetic Genealogy*, Turku: Hatialax, 2024; available at North Wind Books, 437 Quincy Street, Hancock, MI 49930). The author was kind enough to send us an extended overview of the project and our resident genealogist Ron Beatty has submitted his review which I present excerpted below—*editor Lawrence Backlund*.

Auvo Kostiainen wrote:

“In 1776, among the signers of the Declaration of Independence was John Morton (1725-1777), representing Pennsylvania. Contemporary records argued that he became the decisive factor in the vote. He descended from the settlers of the Nya Sverige (New Sweden) colony on the Delaware River (1638-1655), a fact widely known since the late 19th century. Morton's great-grandfather was Mårten Mårtensson, Senior (1607-1706), who had been born “in Finland in Sweden,” according to the available records. This assertion has given rise to much debate—Finland was a province of the Swedish Kingdom at the time—regarding his ethnicity. Who was he? Where did he come from? Was he Swedish or Finnish?

A popular claim was that Marten Martensson—as his name was later spelled—had had a Finnish name, Marti Marttinen, and that he came from the province of Savo and the parish of Rautalampi in Eastern Finland. The controversy over Morton's background heated up in 1938, when the 300th anniversary of New Sweden was commemorated with celebrations, a royal visit, memorials, books, visits by Swedish and Finnish officials. The U.S. Post Office printed a stamp celebrating “The Landing of the Swedes and Finns.” Yet, despite the best efforts of historians and genealogists, no convincing documentary evidence could be found to prove Morton's family lineage in any detail, although it was known that Martensson, Senior, had moved with thousands of

Eastern Finns to Central Sweden and had engaged in slash-and-burn farming. That made him a “Forest Finn.” We believe he was among the Finns who departed in 1654, arrived on the *Örn (Eagle)*, and is listed as swearing a loyalty pledge in June 1654.

Genetic genealogy, or DNA research, has developed rapidly in the last decades and has offered new research opportunities and novel methods to study human inheritance and family relationships. Efforts have been made to trace the genealogy of some of the Signers, such as Thomas Jefferson.

John Morton has also now been studied. His genome differs from other Signatories, representing the haplogroup N, commonly found in Eastern Finland. In our project, we used the resources of FamilyTreeDNA and concentrated on the male line Y-DNA analysis and the SNP snips. Of great help were two male descendants of Marten Martensson, R. and W. Morton, who participated in project testing. R. Morton is a male line descendant of John Morton. Another descendant, in Finland, Pekka Haikkala, was vital to our research as well, providing access to the research carried on by the Marttinen Family Association in Finland. Essential support was delivered by the Turku University's Migration Institute and the United States Embassy in Helsinki. The Association published a Finnish-language version of the project in 2021, but recent developments now have made it necessary to publish an English-language version, since new test results have changed some of our conclusions. These conclusions make use of important reference groups, including Finland DNA group, the Norwegian-Swedish ForestFinnDNA group, and the Swedish Colonial Society DNA Project.

The results of our research show that the family roots of John Morton's great-grandfather, Marten Martensson, Senior, can be traced to the provinces of Southern Savo, Southern Karelia, and the Karelian Isthmus, although

no exact location has been possible to define. Thus, John Morton belongs to the male DNA haplogroup N (subhaplo N1c1/N1a1). We believe Marten Martensson, Senior, carried this male lineage to Central Sweden and to the Delaware River Valley, initially settling in what is today Prospect Park, Pennsylvania. Morton established his farm southwest of Philadelphia. In Finland today, the closest people to the Marten Martensson haplo lineage are the Lindstrand, Haapiainen, and Himanen families.”

Ron Beatty reviewed this interesting book, calling it “an update to the perpetual debate whether New Sweden was populated by Swedes or Finns.” Kostianen’s project was “far ranging and thorough...an interesting read requiring good concentration.” He argues, however, that the burial statement “born ‘in Finland in Sweden’” is inconclusive regarding ethnicity. Beatty agrees that DNA studies do show John Morton’s ancestors were Finnish, yet this sheds little light on how Marten Martensson identified himself nor what language he spoke, Finnish and Swedish being so different. Nonetheless, some evidence pointing to a Finnish ethnic identity does exist, according to Beatty, who cites Peter Craig’s 1998 series in the *Swedish Colonial News* series “New Sweden Settlers.” There Craig stated: “Johan Grelsson settled in Ammansland with two other Finnish families, that of Mårten Mårtensson and Matthias Mattsson.”

Beatty sums up his comments, writing “Auvo Kostianen’s DNA studies are enticing but fell short of enlisting enough participants to determine a specific locale for researching John Morton’s early life or ancestors. Part of the problem is the very nature of the Forest Finn slash-and-burn lifestyle.... Future DNA studies should prove more precise, especially if patrilinear descendants of John Morton order the more definitive Big-Y test.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Auvo Kostianen teaches History and Archaeology at the University of Turku, Finland, and is the author/editor of *Finns in the United States* (2014).

Ronald S. Beatty and his wife Cynthia Forde-Beatty are SCS Councillors and the Genealogists of the SCS. Ron is also the author of the 5-volume *History of the Rambo Family*.

Lawrence Backlund is an SCS Councillor and editor of the SCS Journal.

IN MEMORIAM

Max Don Dooley, 87, of Wilmington, DE, loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away on June 9, 2024, after a life well lived. Loved by his friends and family and a man of faith, he was at peace with his death.

Born to Mettie Lou (Stokes) and Albert Warren Dooley in Ranger, Texas, he graduated from Ranger High School, studied at Ranger Junior College, and the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied pharmacy and met and married his life-long sweetheart Eleanor Siemer in Organic Chemistry. Following service in the U.S. Coast Guard’s Public Health Service in Staten Island, NY, and Springfield, MO, he moved to Cleveland, OH, working at St Luke’s Hospital, Eli Lilly, and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. The family grew to five children and lived on a farmette fondly known as Groundhog Hill.

Max’s career brought him to the Delaware Valley in 1984, when three Wilmington hospitals joined together as the new Christiana Hospital. He ended his career at Nemours Children’s Hospital, renown for his calm and kindness which sometimes worked better than the medicines he dispensed.

Retirement afforded Max more time for his interests. These included the baritone saxophone. Max played in several bands. He also became interested in and committed to Old Swedes, Trinity Episcopal Church, Wilmington. He educated visitors and school children on the history of the church and the Colonial Swedish settlements on the banks of the Christina River. He undertook genealogical research, tracing his lineage to the 16th century but failed to find any Swedish links. This did not discourage him. He became an active member of the Swedish Colonial Society and served as editor of its publication, *Swedish Colonial News*.

Max leaves his devoted wife, Eleanor, his five children, seven grandchildren, and a new great granddaughter as his legacy.

The family requests that any tribute gifts be made in Max’s name to the Old Swedes Foundation.

[Http://oldswedes.org/donate](http://oldswedes.org/donate)

SCHEDULING ARCHIVE VISITS

To make an appointment at the Archives, please email Kim-Eric Williams at wkimeric@gmail.com.

Regular Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. the first Saturday of each month. All research must take place at the Archives—no materials can be removed.



RUTH MARIE RIZZI

RECIPIENT OF THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY'S FELLOW'S AWARD

On December 21, 2024, at the Society's annual Julmiddag, held at the Corinthian Yacht Club, we presented Ruth Marie Rizzi with the Fellow's Award for extraordinary service to the Society. Ruth worked in various ways over the course of months to get the the New Sweden History Gallery in the Historic Lazaretto ready for its Grand Opening on May 4, 2024.

It proved to be an auspicious Grand Opening with Swedish Ambassador Urban Ahlin and his wife Jenni Ahlin joining us for the festivities. Thanks to Ruth and Kim-Eric Williams, we have a History Gallery that tells both the history of the New Sweden colony and the Swedish Colonial Society itself.

Here is the Resolution enumerating her contributions:

Whereas Ruth Marie Nelson Rizzi, with her 100% Swedish heritage, has served as Co-Curator of the New Sweden History Gallery for eighteen months, being heavily involved in planning, physical removal, and the purchase of many items now on display, including finding the manufacturer of the steel hanging devices that were necessary for our historic brick walls; and

Whereas, with her Montessori background, she advised a ground plan that makes the Gallery wheelchair accessible, so that the Americans with Disabilities Act is followed; and

Whereas she has visited numerous antique shops in Adamstown and Devon to secure affordable, attractive, and sturdy furnishings for the Gallery and Archives; and

Whereas she has faithfully attended all meetings of the Lazaretto Preservation Trust at Tinicum township, expanding our visibility and making common cause with our Italian cohorts; and

Whereas she advocated for the restoration of the Amandus Johnson chairs And found a reliable firm to do the work, and also contributed her family's 19th Century copper coffee pot for display in the Amandus desk, and also purchased an antique large wooden ship model of the 17th Century Vasa Ship and provided it with a specially designed plexiglas case and base;

Now, therefore, The Swedish Colonial Society gratefully awards Ruth Marie Nelson Rizzi status as a Fellow of the Society together with a certificate and medal to that effect.

Adopted this 17th day of October, 2024.



PHOTO CREDIT: BRITT APELL

The History Gallery has Open House every first Saturday of the month, from 11 a.m. to 2 p. m.

Finnish Monument Move: An Update

By Marja Kaisla

The campaign to move the Finnish Monument in Chester to Governor Printz Park is proceeding. The 11-foot-high granite monument was sculpted by Wäinö Aaltonen, using a stone base quarried in Rautalampi, the ancestral home of the family of John Morton, signer of the Declaration of Independence. It was a gift from Finland in 1938, part of the 300th anniversary celebration held that year. Locally, the Finnish American Society of the Delaware Valley (FASDV) has taken the lead in the effort to finance the move from Chester to the Park in Tinicum Township.

A new home has been planned and laid out for the monument in Governor Printz Park, the site of the Swedish Farmstead, which is open to the public every first Saturday of the month, from 11 to 2, with members of the Swedish Colonial acting as docents and tour guides.

For information on the monument and the fundraising campaign, contact FASDV President Marja Kaisla at mjkaisla@yahoo.com. To contribute, send donations to Finlandia Foundation, 254 North Lake Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101 marked "Finnish Settlers 1938 Fund."

TOP: Finnish Monument Today

BOTTOM: Finnish Monument Present Condition

PHOTO CREDIT: BILL EATON



FROM THE HISTORY GALLERY

The Swedish Colonial Society's portrait of Johan Printz (1592-1663) is probably our most prized possession. It was painted by Swedish King Gustaf V's private painter as a gift to us soon after the Society was organized in 1910. At that time, many Americans did not know what this famous 10-year Governor of New Sweden really looked like. They only

knew that his 400-pound weight and stature were remarkable. The King charged his painter to travel down to Småland to the small village of Bottnaryd, where Printz was buried in the church that his father had served.

There, in the rectory, was a life-sized portrait attributed to Daniel von Rohlen, thought to date to 1660. It was

faithfully copied and sent to the Society.

For many years, this royal gift hung in the reading room of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. After a number of years, it was placed in storage. Now Governor Printz is home in Tinicum at the Lazaretto.

—Kim-Eric Williams. Curator



PHOTO CREDIT: KIM-ERIC WILLIAMS

THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY'S MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____

Applicant Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

- ☐ Single (\$45)
- ☐ Family (\$52.50)
- ☐ Organization (\$52.50)
- ☐ Life Membership (\$600)

Is this the first time you are applying for membership? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you purchasing an Organization membership? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, Organization name: _____



☐ Yes! This membership is a Gift.

If this membership is a gift please indicate the gift recipient's contact information below. If this is NOT a gift membership, please leave the contact information below blank.

Applicant Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Mail application and check to:

Registrar
The Swedish Colonial Society
The Lazaretto
97 Wanamaker Avenue
Essington, PA 19029

Or mail application and make payment online using PayPal on our website www.colonialswedes.org

Or make payment online and send the required information in the application form via email to TerryBrasko@mindspring.com

Forefather Members are active members who can prove descent from a Swedish or Finnish colonist in the US prior to the Treaty of Paris, marking the end of the Revolutionary War in 1788. The one-time application fee for Forefather membership is \$60.00.

Membership dues and donations to the Swedish Colonial Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, are fully tax deductible.



Forefather Director, Beverly B. Walker

NEW FOREFATHER MEMBERS

Kathrine M. Manker of Phoenix, AZ, has proven her descent from her ancestor, Knut Martensson, through his son, Marten Knutsson (Martinsson) and his wife, Maria Stidham Knutsson/Martensson. The line continues through grandson, Mortenus (Martin) Morton and his wife, Judith Johnson Morton.

Arthur Vincent O'Neill of Bluffton, SC, has proven his descent from his ancestor, Peter Gunnarsson Rambo, and his wife, Brita Mattsdotter Rambo. This line continues through his daughter, Gertrude Rambo Bankson and her husband, Andreas Bankson and grandson, Jacob Bankson and his wife, Margaret Cock Bankson.

Theresa Brasko - Registrar

NEW MEMBERSHIP NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

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James Henry Clay Crouse-Trussell
Lacenter WA 98629

Tristan Peterson
Clarksville TN 37042

Wade Richard Sjögren
Bridgeton NJ 08302

Rudolf and Jean Soderlund
West Deptford NJ 08086

Bradley Gearhart
Buffalo NY 14201

Dr. Elizabeth Zakarison Hall
Natchitoches LA 71457



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As of April 17, 2025

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His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf
King of Sweden

Deputy High Patron

Her Royal Highness
Crown Princess Victoria

Patron

His Excellency Urban C. Ahlin
Ambassador of Sweden

Associate Patron

Lauren Swartz
Honorary Consul of Sweden

Honorary Governors

John B. Tepe, Jr., Esq.
Margaret Sooy (Sally) Bridwell, LNO
Herbert R. Rambo, RNO
The Rev. Dr. Kim-Eric Williams, LNO
Ronald A. Hendrickson, Esq., RNO

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THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Swedish Colonial Society
The Lazaretto
97 Wanamaker Avenue
Essington PA 19029-1424
www.ColonialSwedes.net



Please consider including The Swedish Colonial Society in your will or living trust by sharing this sample bequest language with your estate planning attorney: *"I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ to The Swedish Colonial Society, 97 Wanamaker Avenue, Essington, PA 19029-1424 (Federal Tax ID 23-6251086)."*

Such a gift will guarantee you leave a legacy at the SCS.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

THE SWEDISH COLONIAL SOCIETY welcomes new members. No Swedish relative or ancestry is required – only an interest in colonial history.

Contact our Registrar:

Theresa Brasko, *The Swedish Colonial Society*, 97 Wanamaker Avenue, Essington PA 19029-1424 or visit us online at: www.ColonialSwedes.net.

The annual membership fee for an individual is \$45. An annual family membership, which includes two adults and minor children, is \$52.50.

Our Mission is to preserve and promote the history, genealogy and culture of the New Sweden Colony in America

Our Purposes are:

1. To collect, archive, and publish materials
2. To make colonial genealogical records broadly available
3. To acknowledge members' proven descent from colonial forefathers
4. To encourage awareness and preservation of monuments at historic sites
5. To celebrate historic and cultural events and accomplishments relating to the Colonial Swedes and Finns in America