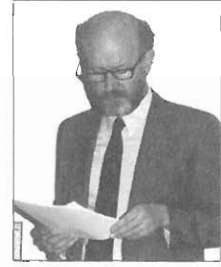


Richard H. Hulan

## After the King: The Future of New Sweden in American Scholarship



In English, as spoken in the United States, we have a cliché that originally entered the language as the title of a manual on First Aid for the injured. The expression is, "What to do 'til the Doctor comes". A number of humorous parodies of this have been made by altering the last noun. For example, when I was in seminary we referred to the introductory part of the liturgy – the Voluntary, Introit, Kyrie, lectionary readings and congregational hymns – as "Spiritual First Aid; or, what to do 'til the Preacher comes". We seminarians, of course, were training to be the Preacher. And one hears the same parody applied to the anticipated arrival of the plumber, the Marines, Jesus, the income tax refund, or just about any other person or thing one might anticipate with unusual urgency or pleasure.

For a short while – five years for a few people, but less than two years for any sizeable community – last year's tour through America by the Swedish royal couple became the focal point of New Sweden commemorative events. Thus, by extension, the early weeks of April, 1988 served as a loose kind of deadline for serious preparatory work by historians,

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librarians, curators, builders of exhibits, editors and publishers of books. It was assumed (and, I am sorry to report, the assumption was correct) that the crowds and the media attention associated with the visit of their majesties would offer the best opportunity to reach the public with a New Sweden message.

Some few of us wanted that message to teach history. Our resources included artifacts, pictures and words. The primary task was to generate, among the rather poorly informed Delaware Valley public, feelings and memories that might improve their knowledge of, and attitude toward, the first European colonists of their area. We hoped to, we attempted to, and in some degree we actually did, teach those festive and momentary audiences something positive about the seventeenth century settlement of America by Swedes and Finns.

So it was that the period of greatest activity in New Sweden research during my lifetime came to be viewed, by several groups and institutions I was assisting, as a kind of "Royal First Aid: or, what to do 'til the King comes". We did what we could; and he came; and he went. Then there was the rest of 1988, and now we must face the future.

As an American speaking in Finland I can't help mentioning that both of our

countries have forgotten more or less used to getting along, somehow, after the King leaves. We are fond of the kings of other countries; and we are likely to turn out for a royal parade, as long as that parade ends back in England, or Sweden, or somewhere. Our feeling of loss is tempered by our feeling of liberation, or at least of detachment.

A similar kind of liberated detachment goes with the career mistake specializing in a field of study – in this case, New Sweden – that lies well off the beaten paths of academe. I should like very much to be chairman of the department of New Sweden Studies at a large university. But, alas, there is no such department; no such research institute; nor even a course taught with such an emphasis. The good side of this is that no academic monarch may tell me to drop my important work, in order to do those things that increase and celebrate his magnificence. The bad side is that I don't make any money.

Nevertheless, New Sweden remains on our side of the Atlantic a fruitful area for further study, so long as the fruits are not measured by economic terms. I am not ashamed to say that I have been a leader in the effort to get the seventeenth and eighteenth century source documents out of the archives; into English; and into print if they deserve it. It is especially important to get the evidence into the hands of a wider variety of users, because they will naturally use the sources in different ways. Even if Amandus Johnson had by 1911 learned everything there was to know about these records – and, clearly, he had not – it would be a serious mistake to go on forever taking his unsupported word for what the records contain, what they mean, why it matters, and so on.

This work is very far from complete. Much of the new scholarship that was actually finished before the royal visit of

1988 has yet to reach the public in printed form. It is still too early to say what permanent impact these studies will have. I am among those who remain hopeful; and I shall have a good bit to say about unfulfilled hopes, unwritten books, untold tales, unmade movies, and that sort of things. The optimistic heading for such projects is "Works in Progress".

Many of you in this audience have not visited New Sweden since the King did so last April. I want to begin, therefore, with a review of some of the milestones we have passed during that intervening year. Most of these milestones came on the shape of books, sometimes in the company of a visible but more transitory phenomenon, such as a temporary museum exhibition.

Because their largest audiences, in the spring of 1988, were so very short-lived, a handful of early books came to be perceived in the New Sweden region as the cream of the crop. Some of you who were over for the celebration may have purchased them. There were two new paperback books by C.A. Weslager: *The Swedes and Dutch at New Castle*, published in 1987, and *New Sweden on the Delaware, 1638–1655*. The latter book, which hit the market during the first week of March, 1988, was commissioned by the history subcommittee of the Kalmar Nyckel Commemorative Committee in Wilmington. Another popular (but more expensive) item was the profusely illustrated English edition of Algot Mattsson's book, *New Sweden: the Dream of an Empire*. Alf Åberg was a bit late in reaching the American market; but his little book, titled *The People of New Sweden* in its English version, appears to have been especially popular with recent immigrants from Sweden. I noticed several people buying multiple copies of the Weslager and Åberg books, in order to give them away.

Without intending to detract from the works of these three authors, I must point out that in the early spring of 1988, much of the crop had yet to reach the barn. Among the high-quality publications in English that have come out since then, one should mention Hans Norman and Stellan Dahlgren's bilingual edition of Governor Johan Rising's journal, published as *The Rise and Fall of New Sweden*. I myself was a major contributor to a special New Sweden issue of *The Church in New Sweden*. Another very good book is the beautiful anthology from the Swedish publisher Wiken, edited by Rune Ruhnbro; its English version, titled *New Sweden in the New World*, was intended for the American market but not sold as well as the edition in Swedish.

Useful catalogs of exhibitions were produced by the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia; two years by the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton; and one by the University of Delaware Library in Newark. The Swedish Council of America produced a traveling exhibition that was relatively light on New Sweden and heavy on the later migration; its title was "Sweden and America 1638–1988; A History Celebrated". Its Minnesota provenance was evident; and the catalog, such as it was, was a "special" issue of the Council's quarterly magazine, *Sweden and America*. Here at the Institute of Migration an excellent exhibition and catalog were produced, with substantial input from our side of the ocean, for extensive circulation in both Finland and America.

Quite a number of exhibitions were produced in Sweden for export to us, but only two of them emphasized the colony of New Sweden. The more scholarly one was from the Jönköping County Museum, and had very limited circulation. It contrasts in almost every way with "The Fab-

ric of a Friendship", an expensive but superficial advertisement for the Swedish Tobacco Company. This traveling exhibition comes with a video movie, and large dioramas of pioneer and Indian life; it is still in circulation among museums, shopping malls and other large spaces. Incidentally, I only learned last month (while reading a fairly strange novel by Lars Gustafsson) that there is a "Calmar Nyckel" brand of pipe tobacco. I don't believe this fact was mentioned in "The Fabric of a Friendship".

I should also say, parenthetically, that the New Sweden documentary exhibition at Riksarkivet, prepared in large part by the previous speaker, must have been excellent and certainly was about the colony. Furthermore, his catalog is available in English. However, that exhibition did not travel, and my talk is about what could be seen on our side of the Atlantic.

We were also treated, or subjected, to a variety of more or less historical Swedish traveling exhibitions of portraits, pottery, silver, glass, and the loot captured by the Finnish cavalry during the Thirty Years' War. Most of this antique grandeur had little or nothing to do with New Sweden, and was either ignored or actively resented by the Swedish American community. The best of the lot was a fine display of artifacts from the seventeenth century warship *Kronan*. This major effort from the Kalmar County Museum came with a small catalog in English, a large one in Swedish, and a variety of supplementary monographs in one or both languages.

Incidentally, the *Kronan* wreck yielded a virtually intact trumpet, made in Nuremberg in 1654. Several replicas of this instrument were built, by a Swiss craftsman, and a seventeenth century military brass ensemble was recreated for the occasion of the King's American tour. The guiding

spirit behind this ensemble, the "Johan Printz Trumpeters", was Hans Åstrand, of the Royal Musical Academy.

This was one of a surprisingly large number of musical organizations from Sweden and Finland that toured and performed in America during the past couple of years. Of all these groups, so far as I know, only the two supervised by Åstrand (the Johan Printz Trumpeters, and an associated reconstruction of a 1699 worship service) emphasized the seventeenth century, or tried in any meaningful way to relate their performances to the people whose 350th anniversary was being observed: namely, the colonists of New Sweden. Wherever the trumpeters performed for a seated, indoor audience, or the church service was held, a factual but quite modest publication in English was available.

From Finland we got one spectacularly good maritime exhibition, "Sea Finland". This important aspect of Finnish culture actually has some bearing upon the New Sweden colony and, by extension, the curators of "Sea Finland" were (and still are) unaware of these facts; and the exhibition was presented in a large hall in Philadelphia that has no American maritime specialists on its staff. So, there is another area in which further international collaboration ought to bear fruit.

Another fine exhibition from Finland dealt with the career of Pehr Kalm. Several years and important aspects of that career transpired in the former New Sweden colony. Kalm's wide-ranging interviews with children and grandchildren of the colonists are our best source of information about the acculturation process, as this group interacted with later English and other settlers. The Kalm exhibition had a small catalog in English; I have seen a much larger one from Helsinki, in Swedish and Finnish.

This brings me, at last, to the part of my paper that looks forward. The forthcoming volume of proceedings from the March, 1988 New Sweden conference at the University of Delaware promises to be quite substantial. I have some hope that the volume will be published before the end of 1989. Some of the papers have been substantially rewritten; and, with a couple of exceptions, the material from the conference will now for the first time be available for interdepartmental or international debate.

Several of the two dozen papers presented there by Swedish, Finnish and American scholars have the potential to open new doors into the past shared by Americans and northern Europeans. I think this potential is especially strong in the footnotes, which were not available even to the few hundred people who had the good fortune to attend that conference. My own paper dealt with the documentary record of maritime trades practiced by the Nordic colonists, their immediate descendants, and their neighbors of Dutch and English background. Good and original studies were presented in aspects of both aboriginal and Nordic ethnology. There were substantive contributions also in the areas of cultural geography, family history, linguistics, and other fields that our colonial historians have investigated only casually, if at all.

I want especially to call your attention to the work of one of these conference speakers, Terry G. Jordan. His recent publications in cultural geography have been weighted strongly on the side of the Finnish element in the population of New Sweden. Before the conference, and with no particular reference to the 350th jubilee, Jordan authored or coauthored several articles and a book titled *American Log Buildings: An Old World Heritage*, in which he argued that Nordic or "Fenno-

Scandian” traditions from New Sweden came to dominate American frontier architecture. That is, in his view at least, they eclipsed in significance the building practices brought to our shores by the numerically dominant British and German colonists, not to mention those of French, Spanish, African or aboriginal American derivation. Early this year another major book by Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups was published by Johns Hopkins University Press; its title is the *The American Backwoods Frontier*.

A number of other American scholars have significant works still in progress or in press. I am sure there are some that I haven't heard about, but I try to keep in touch with the worthwhile people and I can tell you about a few.

A cultural geographer who works independently of Jordan and Kaups, and has the advantage of living in the Delaware Valley, is Peter S. Wacker of Rutgers, the state university of New Jersey. Much of Wacker's most recent work has focused upon the southern counties – which used to be called West Jersey – encompassing the early Swedish and Finnish enclaves. He has done interesting analytical work, strongly grounded in the occupational data available in eighteenth century documents. These include wills and inventories; tax assessments; newspaper advertisements; damage claims against England after the Revolutionary War; and the Swedish church censuses of household examinations, which I translated a few years ago. To my knowledge Wacker's reports on this research are not yet in print.

Michael Metcalf at the University of Minnesota has published translations of a few old Swedish manuscripts. If he retains any interest in New Sweden after 1988, he is one of several Americans capable of useful contributions in that field. Met-

calf's academic field is Swedish economic history, but his translations were of letters written by Swedish priests who served in Wilmington and Philadelphia at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Marshall Becker, an archaeologist at West Chester College in Pennsylvania, may keep getting grants to dig until there is no soil left on Tinicum Island. More serious work will be done by Ron Thomas' firm, Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research (MAAR), or by the academic group under David Custer at the University of Delaware. Both are based in Newark, Delaware, and have demonstrated their competence as well as their interest in New Sweden. However, the latter groups are more likely to work on severely threatened sites; for example, if a Federal highway is being cut through an early settlement. In such cases the funding is guaranteed, and is more likely to be adequate to the task.

I shall finish this litany of works in progress with those being done by C.A. Weslager, Peter Craig, and myself. I have, among other projects, several translations in different stages of completion. Two examples are the records of the voyage of *Kattan* in 1649, and the first volume of the Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) church book from Wilmington, Delaware. The shipwreck of *Kattan*, and the rather terrible fate of her Swedish and Finnish passengers in the West Indies, has been explored by historians in these countries much more than by those in the States. That is because our historians are so dependent upon Amandus Johnson; if he didn't translate and publish the source, nobody else did either. When he wrote his major study, the Virgin Islands still belonged to Denmark; Puerto Ricans were unknown in New York; and the island of Culebra – perhaps the actual site of the shipwreck – was a naval artillery

range. As the twentieth century winds down, the *Kattan* story appears to be another missing link in the history of our country that can only be replaced from the records of ours. Karl-Gustav Olin will scoop me on this one, because he leaves next week for the Virgin Islands, but I have been collecting the documents, and working on the background.

Some of you may know that the records of Holy Trinity church were already published in English, in 1890. Since 1983 it has become increasingly clear, to those of us who use the records, that Horace Burr's nineteenth century translation was incomplete, inaccurate, rearranged, creatively spelled, and so on. A few weeks ago I was approached about doing a new translation of Book I, the part kept by Pastor Eric Björk through 1714. That project is fairly likely to happen.

A version of the daybook of Pastor Anders Sandel, rather heavily edited by Frank Blomfelt, was published last year in Sweden. (Sandel served the Philadelphia Swedish congregation between 1702 and 1717.) I translated this, but many alterations are necessary now that I have had access to the original text. A reliable English text will be published, probably this fall, in the monograph series of the *Swedish American Genealogist*. Nils William Olsson, who edits that quarterly, is personally interested in New Sweden topics and has already published several good articles.

Two or three contributors in Sweden have sent him material, and so have I. But his busiest and most prolific author on New Sweden families has been, and will be for some time, Peter S. Craig. An article that is currently in press, for instance, presents for the first time an accurate transcription of the very important list of parishioners of the Swedish Church, in former New Sweden, compiled in 1693

and sent to the postmaster of Gothenburg along with the people's request for clergymen. This list is very well known, and often published. However, it happens that every version printed so far has relied on a rather poor copy of the original, made in Stockholm by Pastor Anders Rudman and taken back to America in 1697. Israel Acrelius, Pehr Kalm, Jehu C. Clay and others copied Rudman's version from the records at his church, Gloria Dei, in Philadelphia.

I think Olavi Koivukangas was the first to reproduce the original list. Peter Craig and I noticed how many mistakes there were in Kalm's transcription (also reproduced in the *Delaware 350*; and Craig deducted the fact that most of the errors could be traced to Rudman. So I did a new transcription, and Craig annotated it. The article will give the modern American form of these old family names, as well as that found on the original document. By the way, this list is in the handwriting of Carl Springer, a literate native of Stockholm who came to Delaware in the 1680s.

Peter Craig has a number of other works in progress. All of them cater in some degree to the widespread interest in genealogy and family history. This is a sword that cuts two ways: on the one hand, there is a steady and growing popular demand for his research; on the other, there is virtually no support from major funding sources. These sources, governmental or private, require the applicant to demonstrate some academic blessing; and academe does not bless genealogy, however well it may be disguised. Fortunately, both of Peter and for the public that waits for the publication of his research, he is retiring in less than two weeks.

Another April event of some interest in these circles is the eightieth birthday of our colleague C.A. Weslager, who was

cutting his teeth as a Delaware historian and archaeologist when New Sweden's 300th jubilee was celebrated, in 1938. My first argument with him was in 1975. It had to do with New Sweden. Like most of our debates since then, it took place by mail; neither of us conceded the other's point; and we both learned something. I am happy to report that this relationship continues to thrive; Weslager's forthcoming book, on *Peter Minuit and the Kalmar Nyckel*, will contain several documents I found or translated for him.

Early in this paper I mentioned, under the general heading of works in progress, that there are movies yet to be made. That was an allusion to a little saga from my personal life. Four years ago it appeared

that Finnish TV 2 was going to make a documentary about New Sweden, directed by Heikki Ritavuori (then of Tampere), and starring me. The preliminary treatment, which I had no hand in writing, included a story line about some attractive, intelligent young American scholar looking for his roots in various archives, first in the Delaware Valley and later over here, in Sweden and Finland. A friend of mine at the Finnish Embassy suggested me the role, and Heikki agreed with him. He said, among other things, that there was no way a Nordic TV audience would associate my way of speaking with that of an actor, so I would sound authentic.



*Mr. Malcolm McKenzie from the American-Swedish Kalmar Nyckel Foundation with a flag from the Delaware 300th Anniversary. Photo: Ismo Söderling (SIIVA 3014/USA)*

Well, several things went wrong with the plan. The American TV station that was supposed to put up matching funds for some location shooting on our side of the ocean, didn't. Heikki Ritavuori decided to become a farmer. The cost of such a program became higher, as the time for screening it grew closer. Perhaps the

deadline would not have been the King's visit last April, but it certainly was to be on the air during 1988. The opportunity passed, to make matters worse, I am daily becoming less young. Nevertheless, I have long felt that it was basically a good idea, so I bought a video camera last month, and I am making the film myself.