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# THE DELAWARE FINNS AND JOHN MORTON

## Seeking to Legitimize the Immigrant Experience in America

> In most Finnish settlements, it could be said that Finns were one-hundred-percent Americans.[1]

Let the above statement from a Finnish-American publication of 1922 serve to illustrate what is meant here by seeking to legitimize the immigrant experience in America. The goal of such an effort is to convince others that one's own immigrant group consists of "one-hundred-percent Americans" whose loyalty, devotion, and fidelity to the United States are beyond question. The need to demonstrate such qualities is variable; it is particularly during times of national crisis that the question of immigrant group legitimacy becomes significant, for it is then that it may be most thoroughly questioned and stringently demanded. It is the times of "clear and present danger" to the nation that evoke the challenge to prove commitment to American ideals and institutions -- to submit to the tests of allegiance. Hence, it is no wonder that the prefactory statement above refers specifically to the behavior of Finnish-Americans during World War I -- a period thought to be one of supreme crisis, not only for America but also for the values she espoused, e.g., democracy, freedom, and peace.

Because 80 percent of the Finnish immigrants to the United States arrived after 1900, they had comparatively little time to legitimize themselves prior to the national crisis of World War I. This fact created some serious difficulties for those Finns who sought acceptance as "one-hundred-percent Americans." According to once recent observer:

> The reception accorded the Finnish immigrant by America was not a friendly one. The height of Finnish immigration ... coincided with a growing public fear of and hostility toward the foreigner.
> ... He (the Finnish immigrant) was rated as a foreigner, sharing the low social esteem accorded the "new" immigrants and was barely tolerated as a resident of the country ... He was poor, his occupations were manual, and, though literate in his native language, was uneducated. He lacked the culture and poise of the more acculturated groups. He was in the lower social strata; his social and political influence was minimal.[2]

As suggested by the above, one dimension of the legitimacy problem for Finnish immigrants was environmental. The bulk of them came at a time when alien European ideologies began to challenge the prevailing American belief system. Syndicalism and anarchism, socialism and communism were systems of thought that had been tolerated, or at least treated with relative indifference, as long as they were only an intellectual curiosity.[3] However, as they produced

organizations that attracted members and programs that generated action, expressly on the labor front, they called attention to their fundamentally radical or revolutionary nature. Moreover, as the turmoil of war and revolution in Europe intensified and as American interests appeared to be increasingly involved, ideological pluralism came to be seen as a luxury that could and should be sacrificed to the imperative of national unity. The victims of this hardening process were the supporters of the ideologies of the left -- many of whom were recent immigrants, including the Finns. Interacting with the growing rigidity of American politics were characteristics common if not unique to Finnish immigrants themselves -- physical separateness, social insularity, and linguistic peculiarity. Finns were, for the most part, non-urban immigrants who worked in mines, lumber camps, quarries, small farms, or their environs, apart from others.[4] But even those who lived in urban areas tended to interact socially with fellow Finns to an extent that may be unparalleled in American immigrant history.[5] A major stimulant to this high level of social interaction was doubtless the Finnish language. Finns were slow to learn English -- a language that was for them as strange as Finnish was to English-speaking Americans. Awkwardness with the language contributed to the syndrome described above: the Finnish worker advanced slowly, remained in the lower social strata, had minimal political influence, and, if Reino Kero is correct, thus became susceptible to precisely those ideological alternatives that were coming under increasing attack.[6]

Given the relative hostility of the environment to the "new" Finnish immigrants and the almost politically self-destructive propensity of a number of them to embrace the very ideological sources of that hostility, it should be evident why the task of legitimizing the Finnish immigrant experience was a hard one. It required, first of all, that those who claimed to be "one-hundred-percent Americans" divorce themselves from the unpopular "isms" of the day and then engage in positive acts designed to assert that claim. The techniques used in pursuit of this strategy were directed primarilty against socialism, since it was this ideology that had greatest appeal to Finnish immigrants. Beginning as early as 1908, anti-socialist rallies were organized, particularly in areas where there had been strikes or other labor unrest, and anti-socialist resolutions were passed.[7] Later, especially after the outbreak of the Copper District Strike in Upper Michigan in 1913, anti-socialist activity became more systematic, and included the establishment of local antisocialist leagues and an abortive attempt to link them together at the national level. The intent of these activities was to demonstrate that Finnish socialists were not representative of the immigrant group and that Finns generally abhorred socialism as anti-American as well as anti-Christian.[8] Whatever the effects of this strategy outside the Finnish immigrant group, its effect within was to increase the already high level of tension between socialists and non-socialists. As the Finnish Socialist Organization stepped up its opposition to the European War and later on to United States participation in it,[9] the anti-socialists broadened their activities to include joining in a national Lincoln Loyalty League[10] and giving support to proclamations of loyalty to the Government of the United States.[11] The War itself provided many opportunities to perform acts of good citizenship. As *Koti-Home* boasted:

> Finns saved, bought bonds, contributed to the Red Cross, gladly gave their sons to the battlefront, and were so exemplary that many third-generation Americans who regarded themselves as true Americans expressed amazement at the Finns' endeavors.[12]

Accompanying these patriotic activities was the flowering of which might be called "Finnish-American nationalistic literature," e.g., plays, poetry, novels, soldiers' journals, and historical works emphasizing immigrant dedication to American values and govern-

ment. All these literary forms were used to enhance the legitimacy of Finnish-Americans; however, this article will focus on the last. The specific function of historical literature was to show that the Finnish immigrants' claim to legitimacy in America rested on the record of the past and that record established that Finns had played a significant role during America's colonial period and first great crisis -- the struggle for independence. Virtually all efforts to establish this link with America's vital historical past involved treatment of the Delaware Finns and John Morton.

The Delaware Finns were originally inhabitants of New Sweden, a colony established in 1638 by a joint Dutch-Swedish company and chartered by the Swedish Crown. However, the Swedes, as latecomers to the colonization of North America, encountered numerous obstacles to successful operation of their colony. There was no difficulty in obtaining the land; local Indians were willing to sell a stretch along the west bank of the Delaware River. But the colony, strategically situated as it was between Dutch claims to the north and English claims to the south, was more difficult to defend, and finally had to be surrendered to superior Dutch force in 1655 after only 13 years of existence. During those years there were other impediments to success -- erratic leadership, insufficient and uncertain supplies, and, not least, recruitment of colonists. Swedes themselves were reluctant to leave their homeland for an uncertain future on the other side of the Atlantic. The voyage was long and hazardous and the work hard in the Delaware wilderness. Stories of shipwreck, hostile Indians, and destitution filtered back to Sweden, further slowing the work of obtaining colonists in a country where, as Queen Christina herself recognized, there was no shortage of land.[13]

It was, in a very direct way, the relative abundance of land in Sweden that had brought thousands of Finns there beginning about 1580 and continuing throughout the 17th century. Initially repelled by local wars in Finland and encouraged by the Swedish Crown to which they were subject, Finns, especially from the Savo region, migrated into Northern and Central Sweden to practice their slach-and-burn agriculture. Gradually, however, they came under criticism for their destruction of forests for farmland and their hunting of game for hides and meat.[14] Their numbers increased by men seeking to avoid conscription during the Thirty Years War, the Finns in Sweden became a growing source of irritation which ultimately found expression in a series of official measures aimed at dealing with "forest destroyers," poachers, vagrants, and other offenders. To such miscreants, the Swedish Crown was willing to allow and encourage immigration to New Sweden, with the promise of eventual freedom and free land.[15] The application of this policy was fairly successful in the case of the Finns, for they came to constitute approximately a third to a half of the European population of the New Sweden colony, although this estimate also includes Finns who were recruited directly from Finland.[16] Had the colony continued in Swedish hands, it is quite likely that a clear majority of its colonists would have become Finns, for there were a number of them willing and waiting to make the trip when the Dutch took control of the colony.[17]

As it turned out, the Dutch rule of Delaware was also short-lived, and by 1664 it was lost to England. The colonists --- generally treated well by the English administration -- were rather rapidly Anglicized. Indeed, when the Finnish naturalist, Peter Kalm, visited the area in the 1748-1750 period, he found that most of those colonists who had spoken Finnish were dead and "their descendants changed into Englishmen."[18] This observation is corroborated by Professor John Wuorinen who concludes that by the close of the American Revolutionary War,. "Finn and Swede alike had become English in speech and American in

manner of living."[19] Yet, tradition has had it that the most famous of the Delaware Finns had been a key figure in the Revolutionary period.[20] He was John Morton -- Pennsylvania delegate to the Continental Congresses, tie-breaker in the vote of his delegation on the side of independence, and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Despite the claims of the Finnish-American nationalists, the ancestry of John Morton has been a matter of dispute.[21] Indeed, there is much of Morton's life, particularly his youth, that is unknown. He was born in Ridley, Chester (now Delaware) County, Pennsylvania in 1724, a few months following the death of his father, John Morton, Sr. His widowed mother, Mary Archer Morton, married again, this time to an English surveyor, John Sketchely. Young Morton learned his step-father's trade and practiced it in the locality. In addition, he managed the family estate upon coming of age and apparently acquired some knowledge of the law. In 1754, he married Anne Justice (Justis) and they had eight children. Morton's public service began in 1756 when he was elected to the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly, a position he held for ten consecutive years, lost from 1767 to 1769, and regained from 1769 until his death in 1777. It was during this second period as a legislator that Morton was chosen speaker of the Assembly. Locally, he was a justice of the peace, high sheriff, and common pleas judge in the county. The epitome of his judicial career was appointment as associate judge of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court of Appeals in 1774. Morton's first experience in inter-colonial politics came when he represented Pennsylvania at the Stamp Act Congress of 1765. Later, he was elected to both the First and Second Continental Congresses, and it was while a delegate to the latter that he was required to decide how to vote on the issue of independence in July, 1776. With the Pennsylvania delegation evenly divided, Morton cast his decisive vote for independence, and, accordingly, signed the Declaration of Independence. He continued to serve in the Continental Congress and was chairman of that body's committee to adopt the Articles of Confederation. However, he died before the Articles were ratitied and was buried in the cemetary of the Church of St. James in Chester, Pennsylvania.[22]

A study of the historical literature of the Finnish-American nationalist indicates how they have made the Delaware Finns and John Morton instruments for furthering the cause of Finnish legitimacy in America. This effort required that these subjects of largely historical interest be treated in such a way as to reflect positively upon the Finns of the "new" immigration. The result is a reconstructed history that exhibits certain definable characteristics. In that history, John Morton and the Delaware Finns are 1) symbolized, i.e., they are made symbolic of all Finns who migrated to America without regard to lapse of time and disparity of conditions; 2) idealized, i.e., they are posthumously endowed with superior qualities in the absence of evidence that they consistently and universally exhibited such qualities, and 3) magnified, i.e., they are ascribed an historical importance that cannot be verified by disinterested scholarship. Clearly, these three characteristics are related, but for the sake of analysis they will be treated separately.

*Symbolization.* We have already seen that the Delaware Finns came to America about two-and-one-half centuries earlier than the immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the interim, decendants of the Finnish Delaware colonists had Anglicized their names, forgotten their language, lost their unique folk customs and skills, and, in many cases, become una ware of their national origins.[23] In short, they had become quite thoroughly assimilated. So much so, in fact, that there were no Delaware Finns as such in the decades when most Finns were coming to America. The two groups lived in two

quite different worlds. The Delaware Finns, many of whom had actually come from Sweden where they had lived for as much as a century, did not go to the United States, but rather to a Swedish colony in North America, which later passed to Dutch, and then English hands. Virtually all of them had come more than a century before the American Revolutionary War and were nearly totally de-ethnicized by the time the War was over. There were probably few consciously *Finnish* Delaware colonists who ever regarded themselves as Americans in the sense of belonging to an American nation. The political arena of their time was dominated in turn by Sweden, Holland, and England.

Despite the disjunction then between the Delaware Finns and the Finnish immigrants of more recent times, the Finnish-American nationalists sought to span the gap solely on the basis of common national origin. An illustration of this is found in the preface to Salomon Ilmonen's book, *Amerikan ensimmäiset suomalaiset* (The First Finns in America):

> Despite their small numbers, those Finnish immigrants who arrived in Delaware in the 17th century were the first representatives of the Finnish people in America. Coming as they did at the time when the foundations were laid for the settlement of this country, they were accounted as colonial immigrants, who have an honorable reputation and important significance in American history. Only a few of the European peoples have been participants in the early settlement of North America. The Finnish people is one of the few.[24]

The relationship between the "old" and the "new" immigrants described above is clearly symbolic -- the Delaware Finns are made representative of all Finns who subsequently immigrated to America. Why? Ilmonen himself provides an answer: the former possess "honorable reputation" and "important significance" by virtue of their participation in laying the foundations of the nation in colonial North America. They are unlike later Finns in two important respects -- they have a positive history in America and, therefore, enjoy a favorable reputation. They have, in other words, been legitimized. The aim of the Finnish-American nationalists in using the Delaware Finns as a collective symbol if to generalize legitimacy enjoyed by the former to all Finns. Note, for example, this passage by Akseli Rauanheimo, who together with Ilmonen was a major literary force among the nationalist writers:

> Contemporary Americans, of whom many know nothing of Finland and contemptuously treat Finns as latearriving interlopers, might well observe that the Finnish nationality has an older basis than that here, and many of them are descended from it and on that basis have received their right to settle here.[25]

The doctrine implicit in this statement is that the right of an immigrant group to settle in the United States is based upon some prior claim established by earlier immigrants representative of the same national origin. Rauanheimo apparently endorses this rather exclusivistic standard; his only complaint seems to be that it has not been very fairly applied. The result is that while the descendants of early English colonists are accorded "the status of a virtual aristocracy," other national groups, like the Finns, have not had sufficient recognition of the "special status" of their early colonists here.[26]

Part of the work of the Finnish-American nationalists, then, was to see to it that information about the Delaware Finns was more widely circulated in order to popularize this symbol of Finnish claims to legitimacy. But there was also work to be done in substantiating the relationship between the symbol and the symbolized. In this regard, Rauanheimo urged fellow Finns to follow the example of Ilmonen in tracing the genealogy of the Delaware Finns. By so doing, not only could the Finnish origins of these early colonists be established, but perhaps even familial relationship to later American Finns might be proved to exist.[27]

Primary attention in the genealogy of the Delaware Finns has been focussed

on the Marttinen line, for it is this family tree that is claimed to have produced John Morton -- the most important individual symbol of Finnish-Americanism among the nationalist writers.[28] The significance of this symbol is clarified by Ilmonen in his essay on Morton:

> Through this signer of the Declaration of Independence we, too, Americans of Finnish descent, are made to share in the important early historical events of America. Morton leaves his nationality, as it were, a precious certificate of nobility.[29]

Once again, we see the emphasis the Finnish-American nationalists placed on the commonality of national origins, which they perceived as a major link between the Finns of their day and the Finns of American history. It is Morton's nationality -- his Finnishness -- that is his "certificate of nobility." Accordingly, efforts are made to create of Morton a national prototype with which all Finns can easily identify. Here, for example, is a description of Morton from a historical novel:

> Every movement of the youth revealed strength. His hair was a light as flax. Eyes blue as the sky into which he gazed. Nose and mouth in perfect symmetry. Face completely beardless, so that it appeared at first glance almost too feminine if one did not take into account a characteristic look of determination around the mouth and the broad shoulders and otherwise giant trunk.[30]

Morton as the quintessent Finn, is the means by which all Americans of Finnish descent can vicariously share "in the important early events of America." As such, he is the object of an attitude approaching veneration among some of them. Ilmonen, one of his most ardent admirers, has written that "for us, the Finns of America, interest and admiration for John Morton is ever increasing the more we learn of know of his noble personality and his commendable political services."[31]

For Ilmonen, it was "a truly remarkable thing" that a group as small as the Delaware Finns had produced "a renowned statesman like John Morton."[32] This was an obvious source of pride to the Finnish-American nationalists who sought to keep up with other nationalities in securing acceptance as good citizens. Competition for legitimacy clearly existed in Rauanheimo's estimation, for he saw America as a "field of contest for the nationalities of the world."[33] Such a metaphor is indicative of a zero-sum conceptualization of immigrant legitimacy according to which one group gains at the expense of others in competition for the limited resource of national acceptance. In the contest, symbols are an important source of strength, and may provide one contestant with an advantage over others.[34]

*Idealization.* We know little about the personal qualities of the Delaware Finns, and the information we do have is quite impressionistic and rarely segregates Finns from other national groups.[35] For these rasons, stereotypes of the Delaware Finns are probably even less reliable than most generalizations about national character.[36] The stereotype of the Delaware Finns presented by the Finnish-American nationalists is a case in point. As extracted from their historical literature, this stereotype consists of a complex of superior qualities, expressed most commonly in the men. Accordingly, Delaware Finns are regarded as industrious, harmonious, honest and fair in their dealings with others, brave, and above all, libertyloving. These qualities are especially prominent in the historical fiction concerning the Delaware Finns. In this respect, the similarities between O.E.Djerf's novel, *Ensimmäiset Suomalaiset Amerikassa* (The Fist Finns in America) and Rauanheimo's *Uuteen maailmaan* (Before William Penn) are striking.[37] In both cases, Finnish settlers have built homes, farms, and villages in the Delaware wilderness through hard work and sacrifice. They get along well together and with others, including the Indians whose language they have often been able to learn. Cordial relations with the Indians are based upon the fair and honest treatment given them by the Finns. Others, however, are not so

virtuous (Swedes, Dutch, and English are most likely to be villains),[38] and thus provoke the Insians to unrest and warfare. When forced to defend themselves or to protect the innocent, the Finns are supremely courageous. But for them, the maintenance of their freedom is worth any price. It is significant that it is in their love of liberty that Delaware Finns are seen to excel, for this is the most typically American of virtues, The nationalist novelists show how that virtue has taken root with movement to American soil. In his novel, Rauanheimo has his characters compare the old country with America. The consensus is that the settlers have "taken a step forward" in moving. One of them says:

> We have done much and learned much in this country ... I know that it has lifted us to a higher level, taught us to know our human worth. We need no longer wear the slave-mark on our foreheads.[39]

And another expresses a similar sentiment:

> Our world was too small, too narrow in the old country. ... It wasn't possible for a man to live so independently there. I do not know how large America is, but there is room wnough. A man may be worthy of himself.[40]

In the same vein, one of the Delaware Finns in Djerf's novel prophecies that "this is the land which will surely come to be an example to old Europe."[41]

As might be expected, John Morton -- the ultimate friend of liberty -- is a particularly idealized figure in the works of the Finnish-American nationalists. He conforms completely to the positively stereotyped Delaware Finn. Indeed, he is the one character in whom those superior qualities mentioned above are most fully exemplified; he is the personification of the national stereotype. In Djerf's novel, for example, this "young giant" helps to make a "paradise" of his father's farm, accords equanimity and respect to the Indians, hesitantly takes up arms against them when they are stirred to uprising, cheats death at the hands of an envious British officer, and is called by George Washington to organize local colonists into a fighting force in support of independence.[42] Djerf's heroic portrayal of Morton does not touch upon his political career and the public act for which he is most heralded -- the vote for independence at Philadelphia in 1776. Nevertheless, this dimension of Morton's life is similarly, if less obviously, idealized by Ilmonen, who makes him the focus of his narrative on the voting. All other delegations having voted affirmatively, only the seven delegates from Pennsylvania remained to be polled. Two declined to participate, two voted for, and two against. When the time came to cast the deciding vote, Morton was absent from the hall. He appeared after a short time, "his face pale, his lips quivering from internal emotion, and his hands clenched as if ready for a fight. His steps were firm and measured, however, as he strode before the speaker's rostrum and responded 'aye' in a clearly heard voice to the speaker's question."[43] Later, "having given his vote, his anxiety was spended, his face was again enlivened by ruddy color, his lips no longer quivered, and his arms swung freely as he walked. He experienced deep inner peace, for he had discharged his duty as a representative justly and conscientiously."[44] This same spirit of reverence pervades Ilmonen's summary of Morton's life as a politician, judge, and statesman:

> By his intelligence, nobility of character, and honorable behavior John Morton rose to a position among the best known and greatest statesmen of America of his age. Since comparatively little can be related from the early decades of his life, the attention of historians and his biographers is centered on the acts that he performed during the last twelve years of his life. From them we learn of Morton's character of unreserved honesty and consclentious punctuality in all his actions. Craftiness, so often resorted to by inferior statesmen, was foreign to him in his domestic life as well as in his political activities. He regarded honesty and justice so highly that he could turn away from his

> best friend, if he became a stumbling block in the performance of his duties.[45]

In assessing the validity of this praise, one thing is clear: Ilmonen, like the other Finnish-American nationalists, had a vested interest in idealizing Morton, since he, more than any other single person, symbolized all Finns aspiring to acceptance in America. It was important, therefore, that he be a symbol worth identifying with.

*Magnification.* In his essay on the Delaware Finns, John Wuorinen appraises the significance of the New Sweden colony for Sweden-Finland as well as for colonial America. His conclusion in the first instance is that the colony "did not at anytime play an important role in the economic growth of Sweden-Finland."[46] As for its impact on emerging America, Wuorinen does not give a categorical answer, but does note several things: 1) the population of New Sweden "represented only a small item in the colonial world of seventeenth century America," since no more than one person in two thousand was Finnish or Swedish;[47] 2) "the Finns and the Swedes assume a greater significance in the early history of Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey than in the broader domain of general colonial history" both in terms of establishing settlements and providing population,[48] and 3) "the extraordinary growth of the population" in America during the half century preceding the Revolytionary war "had submerged minority groups such as the Finns and the Swedes and had speeded their amalgamation with the dominant English element."[49] Wuorinen writes in summary that by the end of the Revolutionary War, "New Sweden had become only a historical incident, largely lost in the greater, more compelling and more dramatic story of a new nation in the making."[50]

The Finnish-American nationalist historians find a great deal more significance in the Delaware Finns than is reflected in Wuorinen's assessment. We have already seen how important it was to writers like Ilmonen and Rauanheimo to show that the Finns could hold their own in competition with other nationalities seeking to establish an historical right to settle in America. Therefore, it was necessary to prove that the position of the Finns in colonial America was superior, or at least similar, to that of other national groups. Louhi saw in the Finnish settlement of the Delaware colony "the foundation of American civilization."[51] Ilmonen, for his part, contends that the Finns were "the first permanent settlers in Delaware," and bases his contention on the interpretation that "other who had preceded them came here as traders or soldiers or officers in the employment of the Swedish government and returned to Sweden after a period of shorter or longer duration."[52] In describing the motivation of the Finnish settlers, Ilmonen compares them to the English Puritans, French Hugenots, and other persecuted minorities who came to America to escape "social injustices"[53] -- a reference to the efforts of the Swedish Crown to recruit colonists from those Finns that had run afoul of Swedish law. At the same time, Ilmonen argues that Sweden, like the British Isles, Holland, and Germany, was a country in which "democratic ideals had been developing for a long time," with the result that its colonists in New Sweden, like the English, the Dutch in New York, and the Germans in Pennsylvania and Georgia, developed "an independent and self-reliant spirit" fostered by "isolation ... from their European kinsmen" and "conquest of primitive nature."[54]

Ultimately, the test of this "independent and selfreliant spirit" came with the American Revolutionary War -- a conflict in which many of Finnish descent participated, according to Rauanheimo.[55] The most notable of them was, of course, John Morton. Some of the Finnish-American nationalist literature pays virtually no attention to historical fact or even probability in an effort to put Morton in the forefront of the defenders of liberty. The

most identifiable example is Djerf's novel which, as indicated earlier, has Morton called by Washington to organize a Finnish-Swedish company from the Delaware to do battle against the British in Boston.[56] Later, as Morton is about to be hanged by his cowardly British nemesis, Washington chances by just in time to rescue his friend. "A few seconds later," writes Djerf, " and America would have had one less man in that noble struggle the fruits of which we are now able to enjoy, namely, liberty."[57] Admittedly, this is an exceptional case of historical reconstruction in order to magnify the significance of a figure, but even in less blatant instances, the results are similar, as we have seen in the Ilmonen description of Morton's performance of the great drama played out in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. In discussing the aftermath of that occasion, Ilmonen writes that the immediate response to Morton's "heroic act" was both "praise and honor" and "severe criticism."[58] Morton himself is said to have uttered the following words on his deathbed:

> Tell them they will live to see the hour when they shall acknowledge it to have been the most glorious service I ever rendered to my country.[59]

For Ilmonen, these words were "prophetic" for "later generations have given John Morton ... unanimous approval and esteem."[60] But the Finnish-American nationalists do not see Morton's influence only in terms of his vote for independence. He was also "among those illustrious leaders whose lives meant so much in the history of the United States,"[61] "among the best known and greatest statesmen of America,"[62] "a truly significant person" whose "name is one of the most honored in the history of the United States"[63] and one of America's "most noble sons."[64] For all this, "the American people are eternally grateful to John Morton" and "are proud that such a man has arisen in their midst."[65]

Their magnified treatment of Morton perhaps reveals most clearly the reconstruction of history by the Finnish-American nationalist writers. Such reconstruction is frequently the result of utilizing history in order to achieve political objectives. For the nationalist historical writers, the political objective was a fundamental one -- acceptance of Finnish immigrants as full-fledged Americans. There was little reason for readers of the time to examine critically the products of these writers, since their claims to significant Finnish participation in America's past served to support Finnish immigrants in the prevailing inhospitavle environment. In time, the national crisis attending the period around World War I passed, and gradually the environment became less hostile. Furthermore, the flow of incoming immigrants was cut by severe immigration quotas, and the immigrants already here began to overcome barriers to social integration and economic achievement. With this change, there was less concern for immigrant legitimacy and, correspondingly, less need for reconstructing history. As a consequence, the history of the Delaware Finns was gradually freed from some of its nationalistic bias, particularly as seen in the case of Wuorinen's balanced essay, which made its appearance in conunction with the Delaware Tercentanary in 1938.

What, then, were the effects of the historical record left by the Finnish-American nationalists? In the first place, there is little evidence that their efforts to elevate the level of public consciousness regarding the significance of the Delaware Finns and the Finnish ancestry of John Morton had much effect on the improving position of Finnish immigrants. Even the United States Government only belatedly recognized participation by the Delaware Finns in colonial history by issuing an eleventh-hour invitation to representatives of the Finnish Government to attend the Delaware Tercentanary celebration. As the House of Representatives rather perfunctorily debated the matter of issuing an invitation, there were kind references to Finnish-Americans and Finnish contributions to America's past, but the ultimate argument for the invitation was that Finland should be rewarded for paying

her financial obligations to the United States.[66] As suggested, legitimacy for Finnish-Americans came largely as a result of environmental change and improvement in their education, occupations, and income. With an increase in their standard of living, Finns broke the barriers of identification with the lower class and advanced into middle-class respectability. In so saying, there is no criticism of nationalist historical writers intended. One reason they failed to have broad positive impact was the difficulty they had in getting their message to large numbers of Americans or, more especially, to influential Americans. The nationalist literature had to be written in English, or translated from Finnish, and then distributed widely in order to reach a wide audience. This simply did not happen. In most cases, the nationalists were only preaching to the converts.[67]

This leads to the second major point to be made about nationalist history. It apparently did hasten the Americanization of the Finns, although the extent is difficult to determine. They came to feel more entitled to acceptance as Americans on the basis of the histories of Morton and the Delaware Finns. A valuable link was established between the rootless "new" immigrants and the stable colonists of the past. The history of the United States became more personal to the immigrants, and they developed greater emotional proximity to it. In the process, they also became more familiar with the political symbols and processes of America, and, thereby, were more thoroughly socialized into the political system.[68]

Today, Finnish-Americans are under no pressure to assert that they are "one-hundred-percent Americans." By implication, this means that they have no further need for past techniques for claiming and defending their legitimacy as a national group in America. It may be appropriate, therefore, to re-examine the historical literature of the Finnish-American nationalists, to explore its assumptions, its approach, its content. Since so much of it embraces the role of the Delaware Finns as colonizers and John Morton as a revolutionary patriot, the Bicentennial Anniversary of the United States offers an opportune time for such a review. This article suggests that a re-examination may be far more revealing of the period *during* which the nationalists were writing than the period *about* which they were writing. If so, perhaps new value can be found in their work.[69]

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5. For a description of the Finnish immigrant "associative spirit" in America, see A. William Hoglund, *Finnish Immigrants in America*,

*1880-1920*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960, pp. 37-58. Also see Sulkanen, pp. 40-51.

6. Reino Kero, "Suomenruotsalaisten vaiheita Amerikassa" (A review of Anders Myhrman, *Finlandsvenskar in Amerika* Helsinki: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1972), *Historiallinen Aikakauslehti*, 3 (1974), p. 258.

7. A laudatory description of early anti-socialist activity, including a copy of an anti-socialist resolution passed in Hancock, Michigan, in 1908 may be found in *Amerikan suomalaisten taistelu sosialisteja vastaan*, Hämeenlinna: Hämeenlinnan Uusi Kirjapaino, 1908. Also see Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten Sivistyshistoria*, I, Hancock Suomalais-Luterilaisen Kustannusliikkeen Kirjapaino, 1930, pp. 182-184.

8. A brief, generally favorable history and assessment of the anti-socialist leagues is found in Ilmonen, pp. 186-187.

9. Sulkanen, pp. 217-223, discusses the ideological basis of socialist opposition to the War.

10. The Lincoln Loyalty League was organized on November 11, 1917, in Duluth "to educate its members to become aware of civil rights and responsibilities and to foster fidelity to the United States." (*Siirtokansan Kalenteri*, 1919, p. iii.)

11. On July 6, 1918, a pledge of loyalty was sent to President Woodrow Wilson by participants in the Seventh Annual Musical and Temperance Festival gathered in Warren, Ohio. The pledge is in *The Finland Sentinel*, I:2 (August 1, 1918), pp. 57-58.

12. Warren, p. 25. Also see Ilmonen, II, pp. 6-10.

13. Amandus Johnson, *The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware*, I, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1911, pp. 31-32.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 147. For a description of slash-and-burn agriculture, see *Ibid.*, II, pp. 527-529.

15. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 148-150 and 238-239.

16. John Wuorinen, *The Finns on the Delaware, 1638-1655*, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966, pp. 22, 131-135, and 156.

17. Johnson, II, p. 670.

18. Peter Kalm, *Travels in North America* (New Edition), II, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966, p. 717.

19. Wuorinen, p. 118

20. Like all traditions, the tradition that Morton was a descendant of Delaware Finns is difficult to trace. Ilmonen reported in 1937 that "a conception that John Morton was of Finnish ancestry had persisted much like a tradition for fifty years." (Salomon Ilmonen, *John Morton*, Hancock: Suomalais-Luterilaisen Kustannusliikkeen Kirjapaino, 1937, p. 36.) Ilmonen does not specifically locate the source of the tradition, but writes that a book of essays by the noted Finnish historian Yrjö Koskinen "singles out the signer of the American Declaration of Independence as a possible descendant of Murtonen who migrated into Delaware from Sweden." (*Ibid.*) However, an examination of the Koskinen book by this writer failed to produce the reference. (Yrjö Koskinen, *Opiksi ja huviksi. Lukemisia Suomen perheille*, I, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Kirjapaino, 1863.)

21. Some biographical entries assert that Morton is of Swedish ancestry. See, for example, M. Atherton Leach, "John Morton," *The American Scandinavian Review*, III:4 (July-August, 1915), pp. 226-232; Adolph B. Benson, "John Morton," *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIII, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, p. 256-257, and "John Morton," *Webster's Biographical Dictionary* (First Edition) Springfield: Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1951, p. 1060. Since it is not the purpose of this article to resolve the problem of Morton's national ancestry, the matter will be treated as briefly as possible. There is apparently no disagreement as to Morton's ancestry being tracable to New Sweden. The question is whether his great-grandfather was a Swede, Morten Mortenson (Morton Mortonson), who came with the Tenth Swedish Expedition in 1654

(Benson, p. 256 and Leach, p. 226), or whether he was a Finn, Martti Marttinen (Marten Martens son), who had lived in Sweden and later immigrated from there to New Sweden in 1641. (Ilmonen, *John Morton*, pp. 36-41) It may be of interest to persons wishing to pursue this tangle that Johnson provides a "List of Officers, Solidiers, Servants and Freemen in the Colony, 1654-1655," in which are found the names of Mårtinsson (Martensson) Glasare, Mårtin (Morten) and Mortens son, Morten (Mårtin Mårtinsson), both freemen. (Johnson, II, p. 721) As the reader can readily see, much of the confusion relating to Morton's ancestry results from the similarity of names of the two alleged great-grandfathers, both of which appear to have a number of variations in spelling.

22. There are some apparent errors in the biographical information furnished by Ilmonen. For instance, he has Morton elected to the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly beginning in 1764 (rather than 1756), and has him appointed Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court of Appeals (rather than Associate Justice). (Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 29)

23. The loss of ethnicity and nationality by the Delaware Finns is sometimes used by Finnish-American nationalists writers as a warning for 20th century Finnish immigrants. In his novel on the Delaware Finns at the time of the American Revolutionary War, O. E. Djerf has fictional characters urge Finns against loss of language and name changes. (O. E. Djerf, *Ensimmäiset suomalaiset Amerikassa*, Astabula, Ohio: Amerikan Sanomat, n.d., pp. 6-7 and 38-39) An even stronger attack on name changes comes from Akseli Rauanheimo (who, incidentally, changed his own last name from the Swedish Järnefelt to Rauanheimo). Rauanheimo writes, "Finns still have the very bad habit of changing their names on this continent. And thus they disappear into the great unknown as early as the next generation. Their descendants might even become President of the United States, and yet posterity would never be aware that the Finnish race had been capable of giving birth to such a person on this soil." (Akseli Rauanheimo, "Sananen suomalaisen sukututkimuksen merkityksestä Amerikassa," in Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan suomalaisten historia*, I, Hancock: Suomalais-Luterilaisen Kustannusliikkeen Kirjapaino, 1919, p. 10.)

24. Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan ensimmäiset suomalaiset eli Delawaren siirtokunnan historia*, Hancock: Suomalais-Luterilaisen Kustannusliik8een Kirjapaino, 1916, p. 3.

25. Rauanheimo, p. 9.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

28. Ilmonen describes how he became interested in the Marttinen line and where that interest led in Ilmonen, *John Morton*, pp. 36-41. Compare with Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten historia*, I, pp. 36-38, and with Akseli Rauanheimo, "Rautalammin lahja Amerikalle," *Kansanvalistusseuran Kalenteri*, 41 (1921), pp. 32-40.

29. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 24.

30. Djerf, p. 5.

31. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 24.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Rauanheimo, "Sananen suomalaisen sukututkimuksen merkityksestä Amerikassa," p. 10.

34. Hoglund describes the importance of the Delaware Finns to their Finnish successors in America in his book. See Hoglund, pp. 145-146.

35. Contemporary reference to Delaware Finns in letters, reports, journals, etc., are cited in Corinne L. Olli, *References to the Finns in Delaware in Seventeenth* Century Records, Brooklyn: New Yorkin Uutiset, 1937. While these selected narratives are generally laudatory in tone, they seldom refer specifically to the Finns, but nearly always include collective references to the Swedes *and* Finns and often to other national groups as well.

36. Stereotyping of Finns in America by others has been common. For illustrations, see Opas, pp. 13-22, and Richard M. Dorson,

*Bood-Stoppers and Bear Walkers*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 123-149. One of the most persistent stereotypes is Finnish propensity for witchcraft. This stereotype apparently existed in the Delaware colony (Johnson, II, pp. 544-545) as well as in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan some three centuries later (Dorson, pp. 131-143).

37. Rauanheimo's novel was published in both Finnish and English. See Akseli Järnefelt-Rauanheimo, *Uuteen maailmaan. Romaani Pennsylvanian ensimmäisistä uutisasukkaista*, Porvoo: WSOY, 1921, and Akseli Järnefelt-Rauanheimo, *Before William Penn. The Story of the First Settlers in Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1929. The same superior qualities are attributed to Delaware Finns in E. A. Louhi, *The Delaware Finns*, New York: The Humanity Press Publishers, 1925, pp. 43-44, 233, and 172-173.

38. The major villain in Djerf's novel is a malevolent British officer, in Rauanheimo's novel a cruel Swedish renegade.

39. Järnefelt-Rauanheimo, *Before William Penn*, p. 252.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

41. Djerf, p. 7.

42. *Ibid.*, passim.

43. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 21.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

46. Wuorinen, p. 112.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

51. Louhi, p. 44. Louhi, while a nationalist historian, does not have the confidence of Ilmonen, who criticizes him for borrowing too heavily from him and Johnson. Ilmonen also has his suspicions about the origin of the Louhi book. (Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten Sivistyshistoria*, II, p. 124.)

52. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 3.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

55. Rauanheimo, "Rautalammin lahja Amerikalle," p. 40.

56. Djerf, p. 41. Benson reports that Morton was offered the colonelcy of a volunteer corps in Pennsylvania after the battle of Lexington, but that he declined because of other duties. (Benson, p. 257.)

57. Djerf, pp. 45-46.

58. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 23.

59. Leach, p. 232.

60. Ilmonen, *John Morton*, p. 23.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

63. Rauanheimo, "Rautalammin lahja Amerikalle," p. 37.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

65. *Ibid.*

66. "Three-Hundredth Anniversary of First Settlement in Delaware River Valley," *Congressional Record*, August 21, 1937, pp. 12309-12312, in Wuorinen, pp. 140-142 and 147-150.

67. It is impossible to know just how many Finnish-Americans were reading the works of the nationalist historical writers, but Ilmonen suggests that Rauanheimo's novel was a popular as well as a critical success. He reports that 1,500 copies were bought from the Finnish publisher and sold by Hancock's Finnish Lutheran Book Concern alone. (Ilmonen, *Amerikan Suomalaisten Sivistysbistoria*, II, pp. 123-124.)

68. The Americanization of Finnish immigrants has been a subject of some interest to Finnish-American writers. A sample of such writing includes Clemens Niemi, *Americanization of the Finnish People In Houghton County*, Duluth: The Daily Publishing Co., 1921; John Wargelin, *The Americanization of the Finns*, Hancock: The Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1924; "Lukijalle," *Siirtokansan Kalenteri*, 1919, pp. 7-8, as well as Warren, pp. 25-27.

69. A short critique of Ilmonen's work is found in Hoglund, p. 145.