

Two Brothers in a Wood: Colonial Swedes and Native Americans in North America

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This is a course based on archival research that I have been carrying out in Philadelphia, Wilmington (Delaware), Stockholm, Uppsala, and Dalarna (in Sweden) for the past several years. It all started when I was visiting the Philadelphia Museum of Art and was captivated by two extraordinary portraits from 1735. They were Lenape men, the only portraits of Native Americans in a long corridor of portraits of colonists, and the accompanying labels identified the painter as an “American, born in Sweden.” There was no Swedish immigration to America during the 1700s as far as I was aware, and so a cascade of questions started me down this research path: “Who was the painter, and why and how did he come to America in the 1700s?” “Who were the men in the portraits, and how did they come to be painted?” “Who commissioned the portraits?” As I started to look for answers to these questions, I found that the painter had come to America with his brother, a pastor sent by a Bishop of the Swedish Church to serve the Swedish congregations settled in the Delaware River Valley. And the pastor had written a diary of his experiences in America.

Course materials (will be made available as pdfs):

Roland Fleischer, Carin Arnborg, and Gustavus Hesselius, “‘With God’s Blessing on Both Land and Sea,’ Gustavus Hesselius Describes the New World to the Old in a Letter from Philadelphia in 1714,” *The American Art Journal* 21:3 (1989), pp 4-17.

Gunlög Fur, “Different ways of seeing ‘savagery’: Two Nordic travellers in 18th-century America,” *History of the Human Sciences*

Andreas Hesselius, *The Journal of Andreas Hesselius*, trans. Amandus Johnson, *Delaware History* vol 2 (1947).

Andreas Hesselius, *Short Account of the Present Circumstances of the Swedish Church in America*, trans. Linda Rugg, excerpts.

Peter Lindström, *Geographia Americae*

Carl Linnaeus, *Dalaresa (Journey to Dalarna)*, short excerpt, tran. Linda Rugg

Week One: Why would a Swede come to the British Middle Colonies in the early 1700s?

New Sweden, colony in the Delaware River Valley from 1638-1655. History of the colony and the colonists’ relationship to Native Americans and other European colonists. Writings by colonists.

Read: *Geographia Americae*

Week Two: Why did this painter end up in Philadelphia?

Remaining Swedish congregations on the Delaware and their relationship to the Swedish Church. Swedish pastor Andreas Hesselius sent by Jesper Svedberg, Bishop of Skara and North America, to

relieve returning pastor. Religion in Sweden and in Pennsylvania at that time, the life and duties of Swedish pastors. The Hesselius family, its roots in Dalarna, the two brothers who traveled together.

Week Three: Andreas Hesselius as settler colonist

His relationship with the Swedish church in America and Native Americans, interest in the natural world and plants, relationship with the English church and Quakers, problems with Bishop. Forced return to Sweden.

Read: *The Journal of Andreas Hesselius*

Week Four: Gustavus Hesselius as settler colonist

Gustavus' early commissions, his varied attempts to make a living, marriage to an English-speaking wife, letter home, the Walking Purchase and the Brothers Penn, portraits of Tishcohan and Lapowinsa, Gustavus' guilt and later association with the Moravians

Read: "With God's Blessing on Both Land and Sea"

Week Five: Afterwards, Andreas

Life in Gagnef (parsonage in Sweden), planting the American garden, his report on the churches of Pennsylvania, Linnaeus comes to Dalarna, Andreas' son Andreas Americanus and his career

Read: *Journey to Dalarna*, short excerpt, *Short Account of the Present Circumstances of the Swedish Church in America*.

Week Six: Afterwards, Gustavus and the Swedes of New Sweden

Visit of Linnaeus' "disciple" Per Kalm, Gustavus' son John as painter and his John's mentorship of revolutionary painter Charles Willson Peale. New Sweden's significance for modern Sweden and for Lenape people. The Colonial Swedes and the Lenape people today.

Read: "Different ways of seeing 'savagery'"