

The Origin of John Vardeman

Research by Genealogist Tone Halverson Dec 2020 – Jan 2021

Hired by David Vardiman

The objective of the Vardeman project has been attempting to locate the origin of John Vardeman. The first known record of John is from his will in 1714, written in New Castle, Delaware. The will leaves no information as to his place of birth or country of origin. The settlement of New Castle was at the time in constant change of ownership, and was home among others to: Swedes, Finns, Dutch and Germans. John Vardeman and his wife did not appear on any Swedish church records in Delaware at the time, nor are there any Vardeman's in the 1693 census record of Swedes in Delaware. Despite leaving property at his death in 1714, no mention has been found of John Vardeman prior, as a property owner or receiving property. The first names of John's children give no indication of nationality and are fairly universal. It is said that the area he resided in was not a predominant Swedish area, however, his two sons both married Swedes and belonged to the Swedish church in New Castle. John's daughter Margarita was known in her middle ages to read her bible in the Swedish language, which would indicate that her father, mother or both were of Swedish descent. Even though her husband was of Finnish descent, it is in my opinion unlikely that her language skills came from him. Her husband was born in Delaware, and even if his family spoke the language of their native country, it could just as well have been Finnish as Swedish.

Entertaining the notion that John Vardeman could have had other family members come with him to the U.S., or that Delaware was not his first destination in his American venture, several books of the early American colonies in addition to Delaware books were researched at the library, and have been listed separately. They include among others: colonial records from North Carolina, Virginia and English wills of colonial families. Several books from Delaware and New Castle County were pulled as well. The Delaware books included history books, books on the Swedish and Dutch settlement, court records and land records. No result came of this research. Additional research was done in the land warrants and surveys in New Castle County from the year of 1671 to 1769¹

The following research has focused on an assumption that John Vardeman was of Swedish descent, and the below research was by enlarge conducted in Swedish repositories.

Research in early Scandinavia is not only difficult due to the lack of records, but also because of the lax practices in the naming system. It was common practice when enrolling in the military to be given a non-patronymic last name, and with the exception of nobility last names which were protected by law, it was not uncommon to adopt a last name with connections to an area, a farm or in cases of emigration; one that was easier to pronounce in the new country. The military last names would many times only last while in active service, and in some occasions, the person taking over a military position after death or retirement would also inherit the last name. It was not until 1901 that a law came into effect which encouraged Swedes to carry the last name of their fathers. It is, therefore, completely possible that the Vardeman last name was adopted after leaving Sweden or shortly before, and that the family could have gone by patronymic last names in Sweden. There is also a small chance that the Vardeman last name could have been added in Delaware at a later time.

Emigration from Sweden was not commonplace in the 1600's. Families travelling during this time period were usually people with means, either connected to trade, sailing, military or in some cases revered tradesmen. There were however several Finnish people living in the Swedish forest (Finnskogen), who were extradited to the Swedish colony due to their burnbeating methods of deforestation. In 1649, about 300 Finns petitioned Her

¹ New Castle County land warrants and surveys, 1671-1769 Author: New Castle County (Delaware). Recorder of Deeds

Majesty the Queen, requesting permission to leave their country for Delaware. Finns with good reputation and standing were able to bring their families. Some were convicts and had to work off their sentence in the colonies. If John Vardeman was among the Finns making his livelihood in the Swedish forest, it would be hard to trace him down in Sweden during this time period.

The time during the Delaware Swedish colony and shortly after, is in Swedish history called the “era of great power.” Sweden was at the time considered a key player in land conquests and military sovereignty, and as such had widespread military presence as well as trade. There is no indication that John Vardeman had a skilled trade, since he was mentioned as a yeoman in his will. Research into Swedish Nobility last names, and prominent Swedish citizens in Sweden during this time period gave no result. Records during this time period predominantly involve the upper echelon of the population, with land records, tax records and probates. With a much smaller population than in today’s Sweden, many of these records have now been indexed or put into book forms. The Vardaman last name was not found in any of these books.

Most of the research done was conducted at the Family History Library in Salt Lake, due to the vast majority of books available. A separate list of resources searched has been submitted with the report and involves county books of family names as well as registers of taxes, probates, non-patronymic family name registers, in addition to military books. Military rolls of commonly enlisted people are impossible to access without further knowledge of the geographical area; however, Vardeman does not fall under the category of common Swedish military last names. Military last names would normally include names of animals, weapons, nature, place names or personal characteristics. In Swedish, the name Vårdman means caretaker, most often connected with land. Vårdman can mean a host, as in a restaurant or an inn. There is certainly a possibility that John could have taken the last name of Vardeman due to his profession. In that case, he was not born a Vardeman, and would have most likely taken on the name as an adult.

Under Gustav Wasa’s reign, travel passports were implemented and mandated for anyone moving within and outside of the country. These were accessed in the Swedish National Archives, but not many during the desired time period have survived. The few accessible records do not contain the Vardeman last name.

A fraction of the research was spent proving or disproving a family tree in Ancestry, that gives the parents of John Vardeman as Johannes Vardaman and Margaret Pire (I have also seen her last name as Pahr, which would make more sense). According to the family tree, John’s parents were born in Sunne parish in Jämtland, and his children were born in Delaware. It is unsure where this information came from and contacting the owner of the tree proved less successful. There are no sources connected to the information posted. The tree itself is interesting, seeing that efforts to disprove the information incorrect has failed. It is often the case that connections are assumed without any supporting documentation and will be copied from the original owner. Such information can then spread like wildfire on the internet, which seems to have happened in this case. There are a large number of trees on ancestry with the same information without supporting documentation. Unfortunately, there is no way to prove that John was born in Sunne, since birth records only start in 1691. Sunne birth records have been indexed in Family Search, and there are no other births showing with the last name of Vardeman in the area. Of course, as mentioned before, this could be a last name adopted later on by John Vardeman. None of his children were born in Sunne parish, according to birth records with or without the Vardeman last name. I often see assumptions made in error because patronymic last names are so common, and children are paired with parents solely due to similarity of names. I am unable, however, to see why in this case the connection has been made, and that is a bit intriguing. It is also worth mentioning that there is a Sunne in Värmland county as well, which is the county of the Finnish forest. The Ancestry information gives Sunne parish in Jämtland.

While there is a possibility that John's children were born in Sweden, the chances of John arriving earlier to the Delaware area and having children in the U.S is in my opinion greater. It would also explain why we have been unable to locate him in Sweden. It is far more difficult to trace a single man, than a whole family.

There is a small possibility that the reason John was not found in the Swedish census was that he did not adopt his last name of Vardeman until later on in life. If the information in the Ancestry tree is correct, John's patronymic name would have been John (Johann Wilhelm in said tree) Johannesson (many times written as Johnson in the US). It is also possible that he may be of German or Dutch descent, and that wife Margreta is Swedish. This scenario is not likely if the marriage was performed in Sweden, since multi-cultural marriages were not commonplace in the 1600's.

Millions of vital records have to date been indexed in familysearch, and the list is growing. A random search of the last name Vardeman with different spelling variations shows a large presence in the town of Dulmen, Westfalen, Germany, then Preussen in the 1600's and early 1700's. The last name is spelled most commonly as Wardeman, but several variations in the Westfalen area is showing up, such as Woerdeman, Wardemann and Woerdeman.

Conclusion: The research done in this research block has been unable to prove the origin of John Vardeman in Sweden, but the following observations have been made: It is unlikely for the Vardeman last name to have a presence in Sweden as a family last name (one carried down from generations) during the time of John possibly living there. The chances that his oldest children were born in Sweden are not great. Since efforts to locate births during the years they were born matching their names failed, even on a first name basis. (there may be parishes without indexed birth records, but the majority of them have been indexed). A family with the means to travel to America during this time period would have been noted in some records. It is however a lot easier to slip away as a young man.

There are so many unknowns and possible scenarios with this project. I believe at this point, doing a YDNA test would be the best option. The YDNA test allow tracking of a paternal line and is very accurate even many generations back. It can only be performed through a direct male line. YDNA is very popular in Europe, due to the amount of illegitimate births, and I believe connecting with people with the same YDNA might pin down a country of origin for John. The largest YDNA database is familytreedna.com. This website is used all over Europe and may very well give an answer of the origin of John Vardeman.

Since this puzzle has consumed me for the past couple of Months, I would love a follow up if any new information is gathered. On that same note, I am available for questions if any arise.

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Research Log

Name Researching: Vardeman

Date	Where look (call no?)	Source Description	What I was looking for	Scope of results recorded	Doc # or Ref.
12/4/2020	948.5 D2L	Ny svensk släktbok Author: Leijonhufvud, Karl Axel Karlsson; Leijonhufvud, Gustav Carlsson	Any information on variations of the last name Vardeman	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D25sh	Släkt och Hävd - 1972-1973	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D25sh	Släkt och Hävd - 1984-1989	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D25ss vol 1-7	S:t Nikolai kyrkas i Stockholm vigselbok 1609-1700 Author: Wrangel, F. U.; Svenska Autograf Sällskapet; Svenska kyrkan. Sankt Nikolai (Stockholm)	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D25sk index	Svenska slätkalendern – index	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D3m vol 8	Svenska män och kvinnor: Biografisk uppslagsbok Author: Bohman, Nils Axel Erik; Dahl, Torsten	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D3vv vol 1-5	Vem är Vem? Author: Harnesk, Paul, 1903-	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D3vv vol 1 1962	Vem är Vem? Author: Harnesk, Paul, 1903-	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	948.5 D36b	Biographiskt lexicon öfver namnkunnige svenska män	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	Film 1364921 it 3	Item 3: Annals of the Swedes on the Delaware Author: Clay, Jehu Curtis; Henschen, Henry S.	Any records of John Vardeman	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 F2s	Annals of the Swedes on the Delaware: from their first settlement in 1636, to	Ditto	NIL	

		the present time Author: Clay, Jehu Curtis			
12/4/2020	974 H2ac 1972	A history of New Sweden, or, The settlements on the river Delaware Author: Acrelius, Israel, 1714-1800	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 F2d	The Dutch & Swedes on the Delaware, 1609-64 Author: Ward, Christopher (Christopher Longstreth), 1868-1943	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 H2j	The Swedes on the Delaware, 1638-1664 Author: Johnson, Amandus, 1877-1974	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 H2j 1911	The Swedish settlement on the Delaware, 1648-1664 Author: Johnson, Amandus, 1877-1974	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 H2j 1969 Vol 1,2	The Swedish settlements on the Delaware, 1638-1664 Author: Johnson, Amandus, 1877-1974	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	974 H2j 1914	The Swedes on the Delaware, 1638-1664 Author: Johnson, Amandus, 1877-1974	Ditto	NIL	
Not done yet	975.1 A1 no 14	Delaware church records: a collection of baptisms, marriages, deaths and other records and tombstone inscriptions, from 1686-1880; five important religious groups: Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Quaker with historical sketches of the churches or groups ...	Ditto	NIL	
Not done yet	975.1 A1 no 20	Delaware tombstone inscriptions: 700 revolutionary soldiers in three counties; 600 in small church & family cemeteries, chiefly in Sussex County	Ditto	NIL	

online	6616 it 2	Land titles in Delaware commonly known as the Duke of York record : being an authorized transcript from the official Archives of the State of Delaware, and comprising the letters patent, permits, commissions, surveys, plats, and confirmations by the Duke of York and other high officials from 1646-1679	Ditto	To be done by client	
12/4/2020	975.1 D2w 1-10	Colonial families of Delaware Author: Wright, F. Edward (Frederick Edward), 1934	Ditto	NIL	
12/04/2020	975.11 V2w	New Castle County, Delaware: marriage references & family relationships Author: Wright, F. Edward (Frederick Edward), 1934-	Ditto	NIL	
Online	6611 and 6612	Deed books of New Castle County, Delaware, 1673-1886, 1952-1953; general index, 1640-1920 Author: New Castle County (Delaware). Recorder of Deed	Ditto	To be done by client	
12/4/2020	975.11 A3i 1994	Inventory of the county archives of Delaware, no. 1, New Castle County Author: Historical Records Survey (Delaware); United States. Work Projects Administration (Delaware)	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 H2ws	The Swedes and the Dutch at New Castle Author: Weslager, C. A. (Clinton Alfred), 1909-	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 K22a	Index to records of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting, Pencader Hundred, New Castle, Delaware, 1701-1828 Author: Anderson, Joseph L., Mrs.	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 K2e	Crane Hook on the Delaware, 1667-1699: an early Swedish Lutheran Church and community with the	Ditto	NIL	

		historical background of the Delaware River Valley			
12/4/2020	975.11 K2w	Early church records of New Castle County, Delaware Author: Wright, F. Edward (Frederick Edward), 1934-; Burr, Horace, 1817-1899	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 P2c	Records of the court of New Castle on Delaware Author: Colonial Society of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 P2w	Orphans' Court proceedings of New Castle County, Delaware Author: Wright, F. Edward (Frederick Edward), 1934-; Delaware. Orphans' Court (New Castle County)	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11 R29n	New Castle County, Delaware land records Author: Bryant, Carol; Garrett, Carol Taylor, 1932-	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11/N2c	350 Years of New Castle, Delaware Author: Cooper, Constance J.	Ditto	NIL	
12/4/2020	975.11/N H2s	Swedish construction at Fort Trinity/Fort Cassimir, 1654-1655: Comments on decisions made Author: Stallcup, Larry Spencer	Ditto	NIL	
12/3/2020	7834353	New Castle County land warrants and surveys, 1671-1769 Author: New Castle County (Delaware). Recorder of Deeds	Ditto	NIL	Completed by client
12/3/2020	7834354	New Castle County land warrants and surveys, 1671-1769 Author: New Castle County (Delaware). Recorder of Deeds	Ditto	NIL	Completed by client
12/11/2020	975.6 N2c vol 1,2,3	North Carolina charters and constitutions, 1578-1698 Author: Parker, Mattie Erma Edwards	Ditto	NIL	

12/11/2020	975.6 N2n	The Colonial records of North Carolina: published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the General Assembly Author: Weeks, Stephen B. (Stephen Beauregard), Dr, 1865-1918; Clark, Walter, 1848-1924; Saunders, William Laurence, 1835-1891; North Carolina. Trustees of the Public Libraries; North Carolina. General Assembly	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.6 M28b	North Carolina Confederate Militia and Home Guard records Author: Bradley, Stephen E., Jr.	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.6 H2dn vol 1,2	History of North Carolina Author: Ashe, Samuel A'Court, 1840-1939	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.6 K2cr 1699-1741	The Church of England in North Carolina documents: 1699-1763 Author: Cain, Robert J.	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.6 B2s v.1-23	North Carolina Genealogical Society journal	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 N2fb 1-3	Acchawmacke, Accomacke, Lancaster, Northumberland, Northumbria, Essex, Westmoreland, King, Queen, Charles, Henrico, Huntington, Lower Norfolk, York – court records	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 R2g	Virginia Land Office inventory Author: Gentry, Daphne S.; Salmon, John S.; Virginia State Library and Archives (Richmond, Virginia)	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 R2n	Cavaliers and pioneers: abstracts of Virginia land patents and grants Author: Nugent, Nell Marion; Grundman, Claudia B.; Virginia State Library	Ditto	NIL	

12/11/2020	975.5 P3h 1967 index	Personal names in Hening's statutes at large of Virginia, and Shepherd's continuation Author: Casey, Joseph J.	Ditto	Result but not early enough to be relevant	
12/11/2020	975.5 P22t vol 1-5	Virginia wills and administrations, 1632-1800: an index of wills recorded in local courts of Virginia, 1632-1800, and of administrations on estates shown by inventories of the estates of intestates recorded in will (and other) books of local courts, 1632-1800 Author: Torrence, Clayton, 1884-1953; National Society of the Colonial Dames of America Call Number: 975.5 P22t	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 P2cu	English wills of colonial families Author: Currer-Briggs, Noel	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 V2w vol 1-6	Virginia vital records: from The Virginia magazine of history and biography, the William and Mary College quarterly, and Tyler's quarterly Author: McGhan, Judith	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 D36m	Virginia immigrants and adventurers 1607-1635: a biographical dictionary Author: McCartney, Martha W. Call Number: 975.5 D36m	Ditto	NIL	
12/11/2020	975.5 P3h 1-8	Personal names in Hening's statutes at large of Virginia, and Shepherd's continuation Author: Casey, Joseph J.	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.8 B4s	Böter och fredsköp : Jämtlands och Härjedalens saköreslängder 1601-1645 : utgivna av Olof Holm, Georg Hansson och Christer Kalin Author: Holm, Olof, 1973-; Hansson, Georg; Kalin, Christer; Jämtlands läns Fornskriftsällskap; Landsarkivet i	Ditto	NIL	

		Östersund			
1/19/2021	948.81 D2s	Släktregister, [ca. 1638-1971] Author: Brandén, Tora Kristina Persson, 1917-	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.81 H2jh	Jämtlands och Härjedalens historia : person- och ortregister Author: Wichman, Holger	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.81 M2	Kungliga Jämtlands Fältjägerregementets historia	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.81/S3	Sunnebygden	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.5 A3	Härjedalen heritage Author: Lindberg, Kathie	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	948.81 D3f	Jämtlands läns porträttgalleri Author: Fontell, Ernst	Ditto	NIL	
1/19/2021	ArkivDigital.se	Slektsnamsregister inkludert utenlandske slektsnamn	Ditto	NIL	