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David Miles Vardiman
707 Fullview Avenue
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Dear David,

This is to acknowledge and try to answer your inquiry of January 13th about the origins of the Vardeman family of New Castle County.

I myself have puzzled over this question and believe that John Vardeman who died in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, in 1714 was not Swedish, although two of his children did marry into the Swedish congregation at Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington.

That church was a Swedish Lutheran church, open to persons born in Sweden, descendants of the same and also persons who intermarried with members of the church. Others could be baptized or married there, but they were not considered members. In the case of two of John Vardeman's children – William and Margaret – they became members by such intermarriage.

The name Vardeman – or variations thereof – did not appear in the records of Holy Trinity Church until 21 April 1720 when William Vardeman married Magdalena Peterson, daughter of Peter Petersson and his wife Karin. William and Magdalena Vardeman took communion together at that church on 15 May 1720, 24 May 1724 and 18 October 1724. Their only known child was Maria, born 1 April 1724, who was baptized in the church on 5 April 1724, with Pastor Samuel Hesselius, Jacob Vandiver, Maria [Stalcop] Smith, and Erasmus Stedham's wife Helena appearing as sponsors. The name of William Vardeman disappears from church records after 1724. He may have died.

William Vardeman's sister Margaret married James Sinnicks [variously spelled] at Holy Trinity Church on 20 January 1730. She was called Margaret or Margareta in church records, but in one deed (New Castle County deeds, B-2:313) she was referred to as Joanna Margaret. She had many children, and in the 1764 church census taken by Pastor Anders Borell, she was described as "Swedish," a term which generally meant that she was of Swedish extraction. She was then (in 1764) reported to be 56 years old (born c. 1708), able to read the Swedish Bible and knew the Swedish language "completely."

Borell's description of her makes me wonder if John Vardeman's wife Margaret, at the

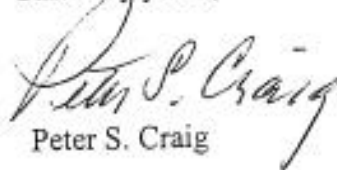
time of his death, was Swedish. Margareta or Margaret was a common Swedish name, and there was a Swedish widow by that name in the early 1700s. She had been the wife of Paul Peterson, an uncle of the Magdalena Peterson who married William Vardeman. (See my book, *The 1693 Census of the Swedes on the Delaware*, 117.) For this to be the case, however, Margaret could not have been the mother of John Vardeman's eldest son John (who was of age in 1714). It would also seem unlikely that she could be the mother of the other two sons, Christopher and William (the latter marrying in 1720).

I tend to reject this thesis, however, since John Vardeman's will (witnessed, I observe, by three Englishmen) mentions his wife Margaret as being the mother of his eldest son John. (New Castle wills, Misc. 1:472.)

Borell was not particularly accurate in his census of 1764. I tend to think that Margareta [Vardeman] Sinnicks' "Swedish" label was the result of her having learned the language well as the wife of a Swede. I believe her Swedishness was acquired, not inherited from her mother. But certainly not from her father who, it seems, never stepped foot in the Swedish church.

Finally, I should note that most of the Swedes lived close to present Wilmington, in Brandywine, Christiana and New Castle hundreds. Very few were to be found at the southern end of New Castle County in Appoquinimink Hundred prior to the death of John Vardeman.

Sincerely yours,



Peter S. Craig