“AS IS HIS RIGHT,” SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SCANDINAVIAN COLONISTS AS AGENTS OF EMPIRE IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY

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This paper seeks to understand how the Seventeenth-century Lenape Indians were pushed off their Delaware River land by Europeans, starting with the so-called good colonists: the Swedes and Finns. From the time of earliest Lenape and European contact in the 1630’s through mid-century, the Lenape held power in their homeland, Lenapewhittuck, along the Delaware River. By 1700, English colonizers had succeeded in removing many Lenape from this area. A closer examination of this period reveals how the Swedes and Finns of New Sweden who in some current historiographies are promoted as ‘good colonizers,’ were anything but as they acted in their own self-interest through their focus on daily survival and individual land acquisition around the Delaware River. Their presence created conditions that attracted increased numbers of European colonizers to the area, and these colonizers through the creation of a market in land pushed the Lenape away from their homeland.

Recent historiography has revealed how the Seventeenth-century Lenape Indians were a powerful group who controlled their land. By understanding the Lenape in this way, Swedish and Dutch accounts of Indian and European violence and peacemaking coalesce to reveal Lenape power in the region. ‘Seeing’ Lenape power reveals how the creation of a European land market along the Delaware was key in tipping this balance in power that ensured Lenape departure. Swedish and Finnish possession of the area, when combined with the ability to securely own the land one farmed and pass that land to heirs, invited increasing numbers of settler colonists into the area.
Translated land treaties made between the Lenape, the Dutch, and the Swedes and later English land survey deeds provide evidence of the establishment of a market in land along the Delaware River. Court records from the 1650’s recorded land transactions that demonstrate the incursion of individual European settler colonists through a newly established economic condition: individual land ownership. As more Europeans entered the area to possess land through their understanding of land use, these individual settler colonists challenged former Lenape land ‘sale’ treaty terms that had included the condition of shared usufruct rights. Overtime, this understanding changed as European land owners grew to regard their possession of land as ownership, to the exclusion of other Europeans and the Lenape.
This MA Thesis is dedicated to:

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Colonial accounts and land deeds from the Delaware River show that in the seventeenth-century Europeans purchased Lenape Indian land with trade goods including glass beads, iron knives, copper kettles, cloth and other portable small goods. This characterization of Native to European land sales might seem as if the Lenape Indians were naive and sold their land cheaply and that Europeans got a good deal, but this is not an accurate assumption about the nature of these exchanges. At the beginning of Indian and European contact, what the Lenape sold along the Delaware River was not the land itself, but the right for Europeans to occupy the land and share its fruits with the Indians. Overtime, this idea of land ownership changed as increasing numbers of Europeans invaded Indian lands and changed treaties for land use into measured and mapped land deeds that turned land into a commodity, thus creating a market in land. A deeper understanding of these first land sales reveals a conflict between Lenape intensions and European desire, as well as the development of a process for relatively peaceful but no less effective native removal through the development of a land market. A closer examination also reveals how the Swedes and Finns of New Sweden who in some current historiographies are promoted as ‘good colonizers,’ were anything but as they acted in their own self-interest through their focus on daily survival and individual land acquisition around the Delaware River.

Ideas about Lenape land sales and Swedes as ‘good colonizers’ are artificially paired in recent historiography and are, upon closer scrutiny, obfuscating a sad and
untidy history. What remains hidden is precisely how the Lenape were pushed off their Delaware River land by Europeans, starting with the so-called good colonists: the Swedes and Finns. Understanding Lenape and Swedish relations has been complicated by three centuries of Eurocentric interpretation of Lenape regional power. Since the late 1970s, the history of New Sweden has been reexamined by anthropologists, archaeologists and historians who have been combining colonial history with North American Algonquin and Iroquois Indians history in general, and with the history of the Lenape diasporas in particular. Scholars portray Indians as diverse actors, reacting to “a complex set of historical forces, both local and wide ranging, both deeply rooted and of recent origin.”¹ In the past fifteen years historians have gone further to place the Lenape at the center of Delaware Valley colonial history, an approach that offers a coherent vision of Lenape power, logic, and agency that arises from fresh combinations of recent archaeology with reconsiderations of European primary sources. For example, some historians counter assertions that the Lenape lived in small, weak, politically disorganized bands of by claiming Lenape numbers and political organizations “were consistent with those of many other Native societies of eastern North America.”² Despite the great value of this approach, it is flawed when historians accord too much parity between Lenape and Swedes and make these two groups out to be, in the words of historian Dr. Carl Weslager


who focused largely on early modern Lenape and European history in the Delaware Valley, “always the best of friends.”

One source for the overstatement of Swedish and Finnish amity with the Lenape arises from the Middle Colony school of thought that promotes the idea of a place: the Middle Colonies, with an ethos: ‘diversity’ and ‘tolerance’ between colonists and Indians. American scholar of colonial and Native American history, Daniel K. Richter, recently asserted that the idea of pluralism is “inherently problematic as a unifying concept for colonies composed of countless fractious local communities and groups.” He declared the “zombie idea of the Middle Colonies as a coherent and distinctive region that continues to roam the historiographical landscape” should be put “out of its, and our, misery.” By clearing the Middle Colonies of ill-fitting, conceptually stultifying categories of unity, diversity, and tolerance, the field lays bare and ready for a new history that invites a fresh evaluation of the colonizing activity of the Swedes and Finns along the Delaware.


6 Ibid, 261.
Chroniclers and historians writing about New Sweden since the eighteenth-century of New Sweden have generally depicted the Swedes and Finns rustic and hardy settlers who were quiet, loyal, and honest. Characterizations of this kind of have trapped the Swedes and Finns in amber as a homogenous Nordic group who were devoid of strife. A look into primary sources belies this image. Some accounts of the earliest historians offer contradictory views of Swedes and Finns, at once leading small rebellions against English rule then shortly thereafter professing obedience and piety. A fresh, dynamic view of Swedish and Finnish colonizers shows they did not cling to isolationist tradition but adapted readily to cultural change as an active group of colonizers, as desirous of power as the queens, kings, nobility and high born colonial administrators who used them to achieve their own ends.

7 Israel, Acrelius, A History of New Sweden, or the Settlements on the River, Delaware, trans. William M. Reynolds (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1874), 129. In his 1759 history, Acrelius reinvented the image of the formerly troublesome Finns and Swedes as docile, law abiding, and homogeneous. Acrelius got this idea from the Swedish Reverend Rudman, who in 1700 characterized his parishioners in this way to William Penn in his effort to convince the proprietor to preserve their farms along the Delaware and lower Schuylkill rivers.
CHAPTER 2
THE MYTH OF SWEDISH AMITY WITH THE LENAPE

Lenape Relations with the Swedes

Overstated ideas of Lenape and Swedish amity originate from Swedish primary sources written two generations after the colony’s founding. Thomas Campanius Holm wrote his 1702 history of New Sweden, based on his grandfather’s 60-year-old notes from when the elder Holm served as the chaplain for New Sweden’s third governor, Johan Printz. The elder Holm had been assigned the mission to convert the Lenape to Lutheranism, and he recorded ethnographically valuable observations about the local Indians and their language. The younger Holm misinterpreted treaty language of ‘friendship’ from his grandfather’s notes as a wish filled perception of ‘amity’ that persisted into contemporary historiography of New Sweden.

The misperception of amity fails to recognize the true power dynamic at play with the Swedes and has added weight to assertions that the Lenape exercised tenuous control over their territories along the Delaware. Quaint imaginings of Lenape and Swedish friendship are belied by official reports and correspondence of New Sweden’s governors, written when these men struggled to keep the colony intact against both Lenape and competing European colonizers. One violent incident recorded by Governor Printz has proven difficult for historians to reconcile: in June of 1644, governor Printz reported that despite his repeated assurances to his Lenape neighbors that Swedish ships would arrive at any time bearing more people and trade goods, the Indians, “murdered a man and a
wife on their bed, and a few days afterwards they killed two soldiers and a workman.”

In a colony of 63 men, five women of marriageable age, and eight children, five murders or roughly seven percent of the colony’s population, was a terrifying loss. Later in this communication, Printz fumed, “Nothing would be better than to send over here a couple of hundred soldiers, and [keep them here] until we broke the necks of all of them in this River … They are a lot of poor rogues.” Although Printz understood there was a connection between his lack of trade goods and Lenape displeasure, he did not explain why this lack of goods posed a problem beyond his assertion that he was dealing with “poor rogues.” He failed to admit that the Lenape had attacked his colonists to demonstrate their power to enforce terms of the first 1638 land purchase treaty made with the Lenape by the colony’s founder, Peter Minuit. Minuit’s land treaty deed had promised, but failed to deliver, regular gifts of trade goods and half the tobacco crop grown in exchange for permitting the establishment of New Sweden further south, on today’s Christina River.

8 Johan Printz, Instructions for Johan Printz, trans. Amandus Johnson. Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Society, 1930), 116. Amy Schutt, Peoples of the River Valleys, The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 3. Schutt points out that “no term should be used to imply political or tribal unity across an extensive homeland region in the seventeenth century.” For the sake of this paper, I refer to local Lenape landholders in particular who interacted with the Swedes and not a larger ‘Lenape’ or ‘Delaware’ Nation of Indians in general.

9 Soderlund, 60. Soderlund derived her numbers from the work of the Swedish Colonial Society’s genealogist, Peter Stebbins Craig.

The violence of 1644 gave undeniable proof of the deterioration of the relationship between the Lenape and the Swedes since Minuit’s unfulfilled treaty of 1638. Shortly after the 1644 attack, a group of Lenape sachems arrived at Printz’s home and told him and his assembled company that on that day, the Lenape would not wipe out their underfunded and half-starved colony but accept the Swedes as their clients in exchange for access to European trade goods. A 1646 treaty at Printzhof remedied the underlying cause that created the Lenape threat, and represented the first of two treaty renewals made between the Lenape and the Swedes that openly recognized Indian hegemony that helped New Sweden survive as a colony.11 Printz’s 1646 treaty with the Lenape guaranteed regular Swedish payment of tribute to local Indians and revealed the source of the 1644 conflict: the Swedes had failed to recognize Lenape sovereignty in their homeland, Lenapewihittuck.12 Governor Risingh’s 1654 treaty with the Lenape included an additional provision that some Swedes should move to Passyunk, as recorded in Thomas Holme’s history of New Sweden, “where there lived a great number of Indians, that they might be watched and punished if they did any mischief.”13

11 Thomas Campanius Holme, Description of the Province of New Sweden: Now Called by the English, Pennsylvania, trans. Peter DuPonceu (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1834), 74. The terms of Printz’s 1646 treaty were recorded by the colony’s Lutheran pastor and the author’s grandfather, Campanius Holm. The younger Holm published a conversation from this treaty, “[The Lenape] they should not exterminate the Swedes, but … they should love them, and trust them as their good friends, because it might still happen that they would send ships laden with all kinds merchandise, wherewith they might trade.”

12 Soderlund, 6. Soderlund names Lenapewihittuck as a region encompassing both sides of the Delaware River, stating how in the seventeenth-century, the Lenape “controlled the country stretching from what is now central and southern New Jersey though Eastern Pennsylvania to Cape Henlopen in Delaware.”
remainder of Holm’s account asserts European dominance for a continental Swedish audience, as the author who was fully convinced of Lenape and Swedish amity, missed the point that the Swedes were the ones who were to be watched and punished for mischief.

Swedes as Lenape Clients

By understanding the Swedish and Lenape power dynamic as that of a client to a patron, the formerly inexplicable violence of the Lenape gains a clear motive: the Lenape had the will and the ability to enforce the terms of treaties they made with the Dutch and Swedes along the Delaware River. They would defend their claim to Lenapewhittuck against European incursions as long as their power held out. The Lenape had subjugated the Swedes and incorporated them as clients to maintain their control of Lenapewhittuck, and the Swedes submitted to survive.

Lenape actions and their reactions to the Swedes, as recorded by the first Swedish observers (mid seventeenth-century governors and officers) and other chroniclers (Thomas Campanius Holm, 1702 and Israel Acrelieus, 1759), seem exotic and sometimes incoherent, reflecting the bewilderment, fears, and prejudices of their observers. These

13 Ibid, p. 78.

14 Per Lindstrom, Governor Risingh’s engineer and secretary based his account, Geographica Americae on notes he recorded for Risingh. Lindstrom’s account mixes fabulist bluster with astute observations, and was written to boost his finances. Reverend John Campanius Holm was Printz chaplain in 1642 in New Sweden, and his grandson, Thomas Campanius Holm used his grandfathers notes to write his 1702 history of New Sweden, titled “Description of the Province of New Sweden: Now Called by the English
early Swedish accounts fail to see larger connections behind isolated incidences of Indian land sales, Indian gift acceptance, and sporadic episodes of Indian and European violence. Land sale agreements reflected Indian power when hunting and fishing rights were “retained by the seller at the time of the deeding.” The Swedes inability to see the Lenape power at play was either a failure to understand or a refusal to acknowledge the larger implications of Lenape sale treaty deeds.

Despite European misunderstanding of Lenape intentions, pretended or real, historians working from the Middle Colony perspective on Pennsylvania history have recognized Lenape hegemony in the way “the Natives determined the limits of colonization,” and in how Europeans tacitly understood that the Lenape controlled their land. The Lenape held power over the Swedes, and to a lesser extent the Dutch along the Delaware through their “fickle patronage – their decision about who their ‘good friends’ would be … [that] fostered the colonial rivalry in the first place.” By controlling their territory, the Lenape maintained their independence, as by how they remained in Lenapewhittuck for over one hundred and fifty years after the first European

(note 14 continued) Pennsylvania, in America. This book stands out for its ethnographic focus on the local Lenape.

15 Schutt, 32.

16 Soderlund, 58, 205. In her conclusion, Soderlund states her “methodology involves immersion in all available documents, maintaining close attention to chronology to detect political, economic, and diplomatic exchanges within the context of broader developments in Eastern North America.”

contact.\textsuperscript{18} Along the Delaware River, the Lenape allied with the Swedes to slow the intrusion of less sympathetic and more aggressive Dutch and English colonizers into Lenapewihtuck.

In New Sweden, the Lenape and Swedes began their alliance with controlled land sales, and over the years, treaties were backed up with documented gift payments, as evidenced by Printz grumblings in 1653 about keeping up his expensive side of the treaty: “With the Savages we have hitherto practiced peace, as long as our cargoes lasted, but when they run out there is no friendship any longer with the Savages either,”\textsuperscript{19} The word ‘friendship’ represents a conditional relationship of good faith between two groups or nations that was demonstrated and maintained by keeping bargains, and not a more personal sense of friendship based on emotion, affinity, or rapport between individuals. Understood in this way, the relationship between the Lenape and the Swedes was an early modern international relationship and not a set of personal relationships between individuals. This clearer understanding illuminates how, when Lenape power waned and the logic of their actions lost meaning and power, the Swedes were quick to realign themselves with the Dutch, the next power to come to rule the lands along the Delaware.


\textsuperscript{19} Printz,188, 189.
CHAPTER 3

USUFRUCT RIGHTS AND THE LANGUAGE OF DUTCH OWNERSHIP

Usufruct Rights and Land Treaties

In the first years of European occupation of Lenapewhittuck, the land itself was not clearly or simply ‘real estate’ or ‘property’ or a commodity that could be bought and sold. When the seventeenth-century Dutch and Swedes first purchased land in the 1630’s from the Lenape in today’s New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, they were creating contracts for usufruct rights. “Usufruct” combines the Latin idea of property, or ‘usus’ (use) with ‘fructus’ or (fruit). Together, these terms mean preserving the right to use or enjoy something. Natives maintained their influence upon European buyers by reserving usufruct or “food-getting rights upon the sold lands.”\(^{20}\) When the Lenape preserved usufruct rights in land treaty deeds with Europeans, they expected to inhabit the landscape, harvest food, and move freely through any territory they ‘sold’ in Lenapewhittuck. Indians extracted saleable products from the land that Europeans desired including beaver, other peltry, and corn, while Europeans farmed tobacco. The land itself was not yet part of this economic system.

Early modern Europeans understood the value of land ownership or implications of lacking land ownership from their experiences in their home countries, and over time they realized the ideal of land ownership for themselves in colonial North America. Colonizers, colonial land companies, and their respective European nations changed the dominant, Native-held concept of land as a living theater for shared usufruct rights into

\(^{20}\) Grumet, 27.
the European idea of land as an object with value that could be bought and sold on a market.

The Delaware River land market began when individual European colonists were permitted by the laws of their nations to purchase land from their colonial government and from individual colonizers. This new legal condition was created in 1638 in New Netherlands, and in 1654 in New Sweden when their colonial governments, backed by their respective European imperial powers, granted individual colonists the freedom and the right to purchase and own land in North America. The freedom was granted to attract more landless Europeans to these sparsely populated colonies. These colonizers could expect from their colonial government a level of protection and redress in the event of Lenape hostility whenever it could be provided. As more colonizers arrived to take up land, this pressured Lenape when usufruct rights were negotiated then ignored, or when an individual colonizer practiced a primitive form of land enclosure that rendered Lenape usufruct right as undesirable Indian trespass upon European property.

The Lenape asserted their conception of land use along the Delaware River, as represented by their negotiated usufruct rights, as long as they had the power to do so. Increasing numbers of European colonizers immigrated to North America and took up land, then fenced it in to exclude the use of other colonizers and the Lenape when they had the power to do so. A profound shift in population, brought on by European immigration encouraged through land sale, realized an even greater shift in ideology from Native to European conceptions of land use when informal assertions of a colonizer’s land enclosure were backed by colonial power. The ability for Swedish, Dutch, and finally English colonizers to purchase land became essential to European empire-building
in North America because it provided a legal instrument that when backed with imperial power, encouraged European immigration that hastened Indian removal from their land.

**Disease and Lenape Logic**

Although European diseases profoundly changed North American Indian populations and cultural continuity, these changes did not lead to Lenape exodus from Lenapewhittuck. Archaeologists and historians agree that in the seventeenth century, the Lenape endured significant population loss, cultural loss, then displacement because of the importation of European diseases, including smallpox and measles, malaria, and influenza. Thomas Sugrue used firsthand accounts from primary sources to demonstrate how seventeenth-century Lenape populations decreased then were displaced because of disease brought in by the Dutch and Swedes. Daniel Richter maintains “it is reasonable to speculate” that European diseases struck Indians living around the “lower Delaware and Susquehanna regions” first. As proof of the devastation and depopulation that resulted from European disease, Richter provides an account from Adrien van der Donck,


a Dutch officer from New Netherlands, who recorded a Munsee Indian’s complaint that there had been ten times as many [Munsee] before the outbreaks of small pox.24 Historian Richard Veit notes a similar statistic from another Dutch source. Jasper Danckaerts, a seventeenth-century missionary, reported, “I have heard tell by the oldest New Netherlanders that there is now not 1/10th part of the Indians there once were, indeed not 1/20th or 1/30th.”25 Archaeologist Jay Custer, a Middle Atlantic specialist, maintains “there can be no question that these population reductions crippled local Native American cultures.”26 Although scholars agree that actual population loss is difficult to know with certainly, Lenape population devastation is supported in written and archaeological records. Yet, inherent in this examination of population devastation is the idea that Lenape loss of life resulted in European territorial gain. Stated simply, as the Lenape died, Europeans moved in to occupy the space they vacated. This simple idea leads to a simple conclusion that the Lenape lost control of their land by dying and vacating their territory, echoing an old American literary trope of ‘the vanishing Indian.’ By decoupling the idea that Lenape population loss resulted in European territorial gain along the Delaware River, a question arises: how then did the Lenape lose control of their land?

Recent scholarship has demonstrates separately how the Lenape, despite significant population decline, remained in power during the first half of the Seventeenth-

24 Richter, 31. The Munsee Indians were a northern Lenape group, located near Manhattan Island in middle New Jersey.


century by forging new alliances with the Munsee and the Swedes. These alliances thwarted Dutch and English efforts to control Lenape territory from the peripheral areas of Lenapewhittuck that these Europeans had purchased.\textsuperscript{27} Indian land sale agreements with Europeans reflected Lenape logic, in which they controlled where the Swedes, Dutch, and English could travel and settle in their homeland. These land sale terms required regular payments for the land to create subject status for Europeans while maintaining Lenape usufruct rights. Overstating the deleterious effect of European disease on Lenape population occludes the possibility that Indian agency, or Lenape logic, was at play during this period of territorial contest. As long as the Lenape controlled their land, they retained their autonomy and their traditional life and food ways.\textsuperscript{28} This logic sought to preserve Lenape presence in their homeland.

Although disease reduced the Lenape population, they remained in control of Lenapewhittuck by making local alliances. The Lenape sold “carefully chosen small tracts of land at cheap rates,” to control the incursion of both the Dutch and the Swedes. In return they expected Europeans to pay tribute to the Indians, or give periodic “gifts [of European goods] to display affection and trust.”\textsuperscript{29} By selling their land cheaply, the


\textsuperscript{28} Soderlund, 18.

\textsuperscript{29} Grumet, 33 and 32.
Lenape purchased “both the gratitude and forbearance of the land hungry Europeans.”

To bolster their control of Lenapewhittuck against the Dutch, the Lenape succeeded in making the weaker Swedes their clients and aligned with the Munsee near New Netherland. After 1655, the Lenape began losing control of Lenapewhittuck along the Delaware River when the Dutch took New Sweden, ousted the Swedish government, and interfered with the previous Lenape and Swedish alliance by questioning the loyalty of their new Swedish and Finnish colonizers who maintained relationships with local Indians.

The Power of Words in Deeds: From Usufruct

Contracts to Deeds of Ownership

The Dutch Patroons of New Netherlands were the first Europeans to make treaties for land that were written as land deeds with the Lenape. A Patroon was a wealthy Dutchman given land by the New Netherlands Company and granted certain manorial privileges in New Netherland. The language of land possession differed from treaty to treaty, indicating different levels of ownership. Consider these three deeds recorded by a Manhattan court in 1630:

\[30\] Ibid, 33.
• Patroon Michiel Paauw’s deed for land purchased in today’s Hoboken, NJ stated he could “enter upon, peaceably possess,” and “act and dispose, as he would do with his own and other lawfully acquired lands and estates…”


• Patroon Samuel Godyn’s land purchase on the Delaware River uses less absolute language, as it is characterized as land “surrendered and conveyed as lawful, true and free possession …”

32 Ibid, 2.

• Patroon Crol’s deed reveals a temporary land use condition, “the land located near Fort Orange … was sold by the natives only for as long a time as he, Crol, should continue to live at the Fort.”

33 Ibid, 4.

All three deeds do not reflect European ideas of land ownership. Instead, they reveal Lenape logic of how these Indians controlled their land to preserve their power and their usufruct rights. In achieving these early terms through land treaty deeds with Europeans, the Lenape accommodated Europeans and benefitted for a time from the relationship as they controlled Lenapewhittuck and preserved their way of life.

New legal conditions for granting new rights of land ownership along the Delaware River began in New Netherlands with the Dutch in 1638, several years before their 1655 conquest of New Sweden. One year before the Dutch took New Sweden, Swedish Queen Christina had granted individual colonizers land ownership rights, with
the added ability to buy land directly from the Lenape, formerly a right held only by the governors. Governor Rising permitted individual colonists to purchase land from the New Sweden Company, and he confiscated abandoned colonial land and sold this to colonists, however the Swedes were not yet buying and selling land amongst themselves or from the Lenape. When the Dutch took over, Swedish colonizers stayed and became Dutch citizens, and came under the jurisdiction of Dutch law. Land patents granted to Swedes and Finns on the Delaware followed the Dutch model. Thus, Dutch law laid the foundation of a land market along the Delaware.

Back in New Netherlands in 1638, the governor granted land ownership to individual colonizers through land patents. A land patent was an exclusive land grant made by the Company to an individual colonizer for a specific tract of land. The language of these patents from 1638 contrasted with language found in earlier Lenape deeds, conferring total ownership of the land to Dutch purchasers:

- “by virtue of the Freedoms and Exemptions granted to Patroons, Masters and Private Persons,” in which “he and his successors shall acknowledge the aforesaid lords directors as their masters and patrons, (emphasis mine)” in exchange for one tenth of his yearly produce from the land.34

The phrase ‘and his successors,’ indicates this land owner could pass his land on to his heirs, echoes land ownership as we know it today. A 1639 Dutch deed recorded a land sale, termed ‘conveyance’ in Dutch land records, between two colonists on Manhattan:

• “and that with all the right and title which appertained to the aforesaid Corler. (emphasis mine)”35

One year later, Dutch land deeds began to record the dimensions of surveyed properties, measured by the lengths of a surveyor’s rod and situated among other area properties as shown in these land patents from 1640:

• “extending in breadth from the land of said Tienhoven to Bestevaer's thicket 40 rods of 12 feet to the rod, west south west and east north east, and in its length from the beach 68 rods, north by west and south by north to the land of the aforesaid Davit Provoost…”36

The language of ownership when combined with more exact measurement of the land that was sold gave Dutch colonizers confidence that land in New Netherlands belonged to them, as long as they paid their taxes to the company in whatever form agreed upon between colony and colonizer. Measuring land in this case secured ownership against other Dutch claimants. Later, along the Delaware during the English period, more meticulously measured and recorded land patents secured ownership against both competing European claims, and against Lenape claims of land ownership. In New Netherlands and later along the Delaware River, the increased security of land patents may have planted the seeds of land speculation in this early market as bounded land with secured ownership grew scarce, and this in turn increased the value of the land as it colonizers sold it to one another. Secure land patents, backed by the authority of The New Netherland Company encouraged landless Dutch and other favorable immigrants to


36 Ibid, 12.
risk their fortunes and their lives in the sparsely populated yet growing North America colony.

The English took the Delaware River colony from the Dutch in 1664, and brought similar land ownership language that stressed land ownership rights with phrases like, “obtain his right,” “having made over his right title,” “having transferred his rights,” “as of right belonging unto him,” “said piece of land is now in … occupation of Jan Erickson as his proper right.”
CHAPTER 4

SETTLER COLONIZERS ON THE DELAWARE RIVER

The Swedes and the Dutch

Along the Delaware River, the Swedes and Dutch built “settlement colonies … premised on the elimination of native societies … the colonizers come to stay [and] invasion is a structure not an event.”\textsuperscript{37} Swedish, Dutch, and eventually English settler colonies sought control and possession of the land and were premised on “displacing indigenes from (or replacing them on) the land.”\textsuperscript{38} To get in the way, all the Lenape had to do was stay in Lenapehoking. At first, Europeans encouraged Lenape confidence in their occupation under the aegis of land purchase with shared usufruct rights to obtain occupation and trade with many Indian nations, including the Susquehannocks and Iroquois. Once entrenched in greater numbers, an increasingly European landscape encouraged immigration of more colonizers who, instead of soldiers and armies, increasingly challenged Lenape for control in the area.

Europeans gained physical control of Lenape territory in stages. From 1638 until 1655, although few Swedes owned their land, they began creating a European space of permanent houses, churches, livestock, and crops. This space had clusters of Finnish and Swedish habitation, but the Lenape moved freely in the area enjoying their usufruct


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid,163.
rights. When Swedish structures were unused or wholly abandoned, the Lenapes would sometimes remove them.\(^{39}\) In Passyunk, Swedes lived alongside the more prominent Lenape, so that the Indians could keep a closer eye on their new Swedish clients and both groups could maintain local peace to ensure mutual survival.

In 1655, the Dutch took control of the Delaware River and enacted laws for land ownership that let Swedes, Finns, and Dutch colonists own Dutch-controlled land and pass it down to heirs, or sell it to other colonists. The Dutch permitted the Swedes a form of self-rule by appointing their men as officers of the Upland Court, perhaps reminding them of the power, wealth, and prestige that could be gained through connections with European masters. Together, the Dutch and Swedes further altered the landscape through manufacturing and then using bricks for house building, improving roads, erecting fences, and appointing tobacco inspectors.\(^{40}\) The Dutch closely measured Delaware land that was bought and sold and through the Upland Court. The court also confirmed old Swedish land grants made by Governor Rising, made new ones, and collected taxes from the colonizers for the general maintenance of the area. The colony opened up to incorporate “the Lenape, African servants, and Swedish, Dutch, Finnish, French, and English settlers.”\(^{41}\)

Indians made frequent appearances in court records, albeit often

\(^{39}\) Amandus Johnson, *Swedish Settlements on the Delaware, Volume 1* (Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Society, 1911), 315. Johnson reports an incident when Indians burned unattended Swedish building materials “but the construction was delayed on account of the illness of the carpenters and later "the Indians set fire to the island during the night and burnt some of the timber."

\(^{40}\) At the time of Dutch takeover, Printz had returned to Sweden but his daughter and son-and-law still lived on family land, granted to Printz by the Queen of Sweden. Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, 663.
recorded as drunken, violent, threatening, and nuisances. However, Dutch officials encouraged trade with them if it did not involve alcohol or firearms. Records from this Dutch period do not show regular payments of tribute to the Lenape, and the Dutch were on constant vigil against their attack. The English were peripheral figures during this period of Dutch rule, traversing the area from the British colonies of New England to Maryland and Virginia, conducting trade in the colony. Dutch control scoured away Native presence and influence, replacing it with brick buildings, fences, a developing land market, all of which encouraged more European colonizers to seek their fortunes along the Delaware River.

**English Settler Colonists**

When the English took the Delaware from the Dutch in 1664, they perpetuated Dutch land ownership laws but added survey maps of individual land holdings to further strengthen colonizers’ ownership claims. These English survey drawings may have developed from earlier forms of colonial mapping used by empires to claim vast territories in North America. English land deeds combined with survey maps increased the confidence of land purchasers that their new holdings belonged to them and could not be challenged by either the Lenape or by previous European owners. The English survey drawings were the basis of a series of maps drawn by William Penn’s surveyor general, Thomas Holme, that were used to sell land in Pennsylvania to English Quakers back in

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England. This brisk, well-advertised market inland encouraged English settler colonists to immigrate to the Delaware River in numbers far greater than their Swedish and Dutch predecessors.

William Penn’s first land purchasers quickly enclosed their land, removed more trees, and built more houses, mills, roads, and towns, changing Indian territories into landscapes that served European needs. English land possession along the Delaware River diminished Indian autonomy, and life and food-ways for those Lenape who chose to stay. For William Penn’s English Quakers who struck an uneasy balance between pacifism and land hunger, English deeds and survey maps provided a face-saving way they could politely invade and possess Lenapehoking along the Delaware River at first, then the entire Lenape territory by the mid-eighteenth century.

English settler colonists used land deeds and survey maps as an instrument to push the remaining Lenape out of Lenapewhittuck. For example, a 500-acre parcel of land deeded to the Okehocking group of Lenape came over time to be completely surrounded. In 1702, Penn’s surveyors mapped out a 500 acre parcel of unclaimed land on Ridley creek that Penn granted to a small Lenape band (Figure 1). The following year, Penn’s surveyors measured and drew a new map for Charles Whitaker that bounded three sides of the Okehocking plot and included most of the rivers and creeks, limiting Lenape access to these water courses where they might harvest fish for food (Figure 2). This bounding, in effect, erased the Lenapes’ usufruct rights as it restricted their traditional food-ways. Ten years later, two other Englishmen gained ownership of parcels that completely bounded the other sides of the Okehocking tract (Figure 3), then the local
English township built Delchester Road through the Lenape land.\textsuperscript{42} By 1730, records show other English had purchased the Okehocking land.\textsuperscript{43} When faced with losing their autonomy, these Lenape abandoned this land grant and retreated into the less inhabited areas of middle Pennsylvania to rejoin with other Indians to preserve their traditional ways of life. Significantly, the name “Okehocking” can be translated to mean “the place surrounded.”\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 64.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 46.
Figure 1: 1702 Okahooking or Okehocking land grant on Ridley Creek.
From: http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Land-Records-Indices.aspx

Figure 2: 1703 land grant to Charles Whitaker on Ridley Creek.
Note how land is still recorded as vacant near the Okehocking land.
From: http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Land-Records-Indices.aspx
Figure 3: 1713, Okehocking land grant is completely surrounded by European land purchasers. From: http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Land-Records-Indices.aspx
CHAPTER 5
SWEDES AS AGENTS OF EMPIRE

Transnational Swedes

Considering Swedish and Finnish ethnicity goes beyond investigating how these colonizers adapted to cultural conditions in New Sweden, to understanding why they submitted to cultural change that permitted them to accept, and adapt, and ultimately aid their Dutch then English rulers. In the early modern Atlantic world, switching loyalty was not problematic because “early Modern Europeans identified themselves primarily by their locality or region, not by their own nation.” Although seventeenth-century republics, kingdoms, and empires existed there were no clear nations, yet New Sweden colonizers occupied lands along the Delaware River as transnational people.

Here, ‘trans’ means “relational, made in the in-between … and ‘trans’ [means] change, as in the subject position -- formed and in play -- between nations and through crossing borders.” Swedish colonizers adapted to cultural change that arose from Atlantic World economic processes, beginning when they left Sweden as landless peasants seeking prosperity in New Sweden. Seventeenth-century Atlantic empires were on the rise, European nations were beginning to form, and royal houses and their administrators held power. Some empires that engaged in Atlantic world trade operated

45 Thompson, Contest, 11.

economically as early nations but were still ruled by queens and kings. Swedish colonizers did not migrate and accommodate change by moving from nation to nation in a contemporary ‘transnational’ sense, they instead stayed in place on their Delaware lands and adapted to new laws and cultures as national borders moved across them.

Swedish colonists farmed and came to own tracts of land near the Delaware River first as Swedes, then as Dutch, and finally as English and exhibited a level of indifference when swearing allegiance to conquering European powers. For example, within days of the 1655 Dutch conquest of New Sweden, many Swedes swore an oath of allegiance to New Netherlands, promising to be “loyal and faithful to the honorable High and Mighty Lords, the States-General of the United Netherlands,” and they became Dutch citizens.47 Nine years later, The Swedes and Finns immediately capitulated as the Duke of York seized the area, consolidated English control of the Atlantic coast and blocked Dutch traders from buying furs and tobacco from colonists in Maryland.48 Swedish colonists submitted to English law and became English subjects by swearing loyalty to the King Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York who assumed ownership of the area.

Swedes and Finns experienced their place along the Delaware through multiple nationalities and through multiple identities that included ethnicity (Swedish and Finnish), and occupations (officer, soldier, farmer, trader), among others. A transnational focus on New Sweden situates its colonizers within the continuum of more successful Dutch and English colonizing activities. Their easy political conversions reveal a salient


48 DeCunzo, 202.
quality of Swedish and Finnish colonizers: they were adaptable and open to cultural change, and not stubbornly clinging to isolationist tradition. New Sweden’s settler colonists are recast as agents acting, first for the Dutch, then later for the English, albeit in their own self-interest.

Swedish Agents of Empire

When English land sales began on the Delaware, William Penn’s first purchasers preferred to buy land in today’s Chester County as it had long since been cleared and transformed into recognizable European spaces of fields, marshes for grazing livestock, and usable buildings.49 Individual English colonizers were so eager to buy this property that some resorted to illegal survey tactics that included bribing surveyors to measure land favorably for a purchaser. Additionally, William Penn questioned the legality of old Swedish, Dutch, and English patents, and forced land owners to renew their patents according to his new land sale system. Penn used his land patent renewal process to reduce older European holdings to give new purchasers access to desirable, Swedish and Finnish land. Around 1700, Penn pressured Swedes and Finns to remove to a place named Amity, further up the Schuylkill River. Few moved, and the rest retained some of their older holdings on the Delaware and lower Schuylkill with the help of their newly appointed minister, Reverend Rudman, who negotiated a series of land agreements between his parishioners and William Penn.

The Swedes and Finns created a familiar European space from which more successful empires launched increasingly acquisitive and aggressive colonial ventures. A

closer look at this early Swedish then Dutch period reveals that changing usufruct treaty deeds into deeds of land ownership created a market in land. The combined Swedish creation of a European space and the Dutch creation of a market in land is the small but important clue that solves mystery about how the Lenape were pushed away from the Delaware, deeper into Penn’s Woods.
CONCLUSION

The Delaware River market in land encouraged increasing numbers of European colonizers to enter Lenapewhittuck and other Indian lands, to make their land based fortunes in North America. The Lenape Indians were not pushed off their land around the Delaware River by naïve land sales and disease or war, but by European settler colonists who flooded the area as they engaged in buying and selling their own colonial lands, and any Indian land they could purchase or possess. Removing the cover of Lenape and Swedish amity is the first step toward uncovering the development of a land market. Seeing Swedes and Finns in their role as settler colonizers exposes the beginning of the sad and messy history of how the Lenape were pushed off their Delaware River land by Europeans. By revealing the pernicious effect the Delaware River land market had upon Lenape removal, the moment is revealed when the Lenapes’ regional power and self-determination in Lenapewhittuck retreated from that became the beginning of European power in the region, albeit a power rooted in land-based prosperity.

Future study could pin down a precise timeline for the development of a market in land on the Delaware River by first cataloguing imperial maps, treaty deeds, land patents, and survey maps, then by creating a timeline to reveal the gradual changeover from the Indian landscape of shared usufruct rights into a European land market. Understanding this process will prove in undeniable detail how the market in Delaware land encouraged European settler colonizers, and not colonial soldiers used by European companies or governments, to do the dirty work of removing indigenes from their land.
Settler colonial intentionality around Delaware River land acquisition can be exposed by closely documenting the way small adaptations to local conditions increased over time in intent, scope, and result. Understanding the growth of this early land market can demonstrate how the English, especially William Penn’s Quakers, encouraged individual colonizers to remove the Lenape. The example of the Okehocking land grant pushes back the threshold for aggressive English land acquisition practices and indigene removal before the 1735 Walking Purchase of William Penn’s sons.

Future research could also look at change over time of the patron/client relationship between the Lenape and the Swedes. Current genealogical research is beginning to reveal familial connections between the Lenape and the Swedes that haunt primary sources. A more fulsome account of the relationship of these two early modern nations could replace cherished myths of Lenape and Swedish amity with clearer understandings indigenous and European colonial encounters.

A clearer understanding of Lenape and Swedish relations can uncover the ways the women of New Sweden related to the land market. Some Lenape sachems who controlled and sold land were matriarchs. All land patents were made to men with the exception of Armegott Printz, the daughter of New Sweden’s governor Johan Printz, whose land ownership was encouraged during the Dutch period, but came into question during the English period.
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Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


