

Cataloguing a New World: Pehr Kalm in Canada

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Pehr Kalm was the first of Carl Linnaeus' disciples and became one of the best known of the young men whom the famous botanist sent out across the globe to describe and catalogue its flora, fauna, and human habitation. Kalm was born in 1716 to Catharina Ross and Gabriel Kalm, a Finnish clergyman who died before the birth of his child. The boy grew up with his mother in Österbotten (Ostrobothnia) and with the help from relatives managed to enter study at the Royal Academy of Åbo (Turku).

A promising young man, Kalm caught the attention of Baron Sten Bielke, who served as judge at the Åbo Court of Appeal and held an abiding interest in natural history. In 1739, Bielke joined Carl Linnaeus and four other scientists in founding the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and he introduced young Kalm to Uppsala University and Linnaeus in 1741. Kalm longed to travel, and his first trip went to Bohuslän in western Sweden. But Linnaeus had greater plans. He wished to send his student to the Cape of Good Hope, while Bielke suggested Iceland. In 1744, Bielke and Kalm visited St. Petersburg in Russia and were impressed with the abundance of Asian and Siberian plants they saw in the city's botanical garden. They conceived a plan to send Kalm on an expedition with the yearly Russian caravan through Siberia and Mongolia to China, but it turned out to be impossible to secure permission and the plans petered out. A disappointed Kalm had to wait another three years before he could embark on the trip of his life, to North America. In 1747, partly in order to secure funding for his travels, Kalm was appointed to the first chair in Economics ("oeconomie") at the Academy in Turku, and later that year Kalm left Sweden accompanied by his servant Lars Jungström, who was an accomplished gardener. They would re-

turn in 1751, loaded with seeds, potted plants, and collections of various rocks and other objects.

Kalm and Jungström arrived in Philadelphia harbour in September 1748. Kalm spent his first evening dining with Benjamin Franklin, to whom he carried a letter of recommendation. He devoted the following nine months to visiting Swedish settlements along the Delaware River, collecting, drawing, and describing its flora and fauna. In June 1749, he and Jungström began travelling towards Canada. It was there that Linnaeus and the financial backers in Sweden-Finland hoped that Kalm would be able to procure seeds from useful plants that could be readily adapted to the climate of Northern Europe. Kalm travelled up the Hudson River to Albany, crossed Lake Champlain, and trekked through forested land over to the St. Lawrence River Valley toward Montréal, Trois-Rivières and further on to Québec. The company reached as far northeast as Bay St. Paul before turning south again.

All along the way, Kalm noted everything that he saw in his journal: flowers, trees, rocks, animals, and people. Butternut or white walnut trees grew aplenty along the river, kingfishers streaked by, large and unfamiliar fishes "sauntered" in the water seemingly unafraid, bears existed in plenty but were less fierce than the ones in Finland; and when the company camped for the night, mosquitoes attacked them in force. Kalm's greatest curiosity concerned minerals, plants, and to some extent birds and animals. Sugar maples and rattlesnakes earned initiated comments. Some plants elicited descriptions because of their familiarity, such as when Kalm noted that the tiny flower *Linnaea* (*Linnaea borealis* L.), which was Linnaeus' favourite and had its name after him, grew in plenty in the forests or that "ordinary Swedish lingonberries" could be found as well. Sometimes