

Iroquois country despite hearing tales of cannibalism, in order to see what “no Swede had until then had the opportunity to view.” Awed beyond any previous event, Kalm attempted to describe the Falls exactly as he experienced them sitting no more than a fathom from where the mass of water roared down the chasm. In comparison, all other falls he had visited before in North America and Sweden “appeared like child’s play.” Kalm’s eyewitness account of the Niagara Falls, printed almost immediately by Benjamin Franklin, became the first account in English of this wonder of nature.

In 1750, before returning to Finland, Kalm married Anna Margareta Sjöman in Philadelphia. She was widowed after Johan Sandin, who had been sent out as pastor to the Swedish Gloria Dei congregation in Philadelphia. Together, she and Kalm had one son, Gabriel, who grew up to become a Major in the Nyland and Tavastehus Dragoon regiment in southern Finland.

Upon the couple’s return to Sweden, Linnaeus urgently wished to see his former student. “Take firebrands and throw after Prof. Kalm that he may come without delay to Uppsala,” he exclaimed in a letter to a friend in Stockholm, “since I long for him like a bride does for one o’clock at night.” Linnaeus and Kalm both had high hopes that the mulberry bush (*Morus rubra* L.) would lay the foundation for a successful silk industry in the Nordic North. Furthermore, they expected some species of trees to provide valuable timber and maize and Indian rice (*Zizania aquatica* L.) to make the many marshes in Finland and Sweden fecund. Medicinal herbs such as ginseng and lobelia were hoped to provide a cure for syphilis.

The trip to North America had been the experience of Kalm’s life. Despite his misgivings about the “wild” western and northern reaches of America, he longed to return. He and his wife applied for permission to emigrate, but Linnaeus averted it and instead secured for him a position

as vicar near Åbo, in addition to the professorship at the Royal Åbo Academy. At the vicarage, Kalm and his wife established a garden where they attempted to cultivate the seeds brought from America. The result was not quite what Kalm had intended. Seeds and plants died, and only a few – rather useless ones – thrived. Yet, their efforts have been deemed to have made an impact on Finnish and Swedish horticultural practices. Kalm also transferred technological knowledge from the New World. His first doctoral student defended a dissertation, largely based on Kalm’s material, on birch bark vessels in the hopes that it could be adapted to Finnish conditions and needs. He was highly appreciated as a teacher and directed during his time as professor of economy 146 dissertations. He encouraged his students to publish in Swedish, rather than Latin, and to concentrate on topics that could have a direct influence on economic practices, such as on the uses of raspberries or how to domesticate forest animals. Five of the dissertations related to Kalm’s discoveries in America. His tireless focus on observations of the natural world in order to elicit its uses for human economy broke new ground in the Swedish and Finnish academy, and he has

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been described as a pioneer in Finnish biology research. He left much of his American notes and materials to Linnaeus, who subsequent-

ly published on it in his *Species plantarum* and in scholarly dissertations at Uppsala University. Linnaeus mentioned that Kalm had determined the characteristics of three plant families and discovered numerous species new to science. In his honour, Linnaeus named the plant genus *Kalmia*, which refers to a group of about eight evergreen shrubs of the family *Ericaceae*.

Kalm is often described as a typical Linnaean utilitarian. He believed, he wrote, that “natural history alone, when it is not connected to its usefulness for human life, is only quarrel and not one bit better than a lot of metaphysical foolishness.” The main purpose of his trip to America