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Book Reviews

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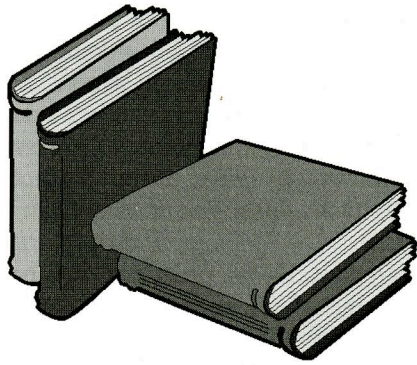
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Book Reviews

Here you will find information about interesting books on the immigration experience, genealogical manuals, books on Swedish customs, and much more. We welcome contacts with SAG readers, suggestions on books to review perhaps. If you want to review a book yourself, please contact the Book Review Editor, Dennis L. Johnson at <djohnson@2vikings.com> or 2407 Hunsberger Drive, Limerick, PA 19468, so he knows what you are working on.

On the Bus through the Night

Hounds of the Road: The History of the Greyhound Bus Company, by Carlton Jackson, Bowling Green University Press, Bowling Green, Ohio, 2nd Edition, 2001, 254 pages, softcover, available through Amazon.com, about \$12.00.

In the 1890's, the woods of northern Minnesota rang with the sound of lumberjacks and the crash of falling white pine trees through the long, cold winters. These virgin forests were the primary resource of a land of rocks and waters, mostly unsuitable for farming or homesteaders. To serve this busy logging industry and the many seasonal workers, small towns had sprouted from the woodlands, including the town nearest our summer home, Grand Rapids. This town was situated at the last major rapids on the upper Mississippi River, the point where river steamers could go no further upstream. Thirty miles to the east, the town of Hibbing emerged also to serve the logging industry.

Hibbing, 75 miles northwest of the port of Duluth on Lake Superior, had only 3,000 people in 1901, but it already had seventy saloons. It was incorporated as a village in 1893, and had wooden sidewalks to keep people out of the mud on the unpaved main street. About this time, iron ore was discovered under the city of Hibbing,

part of what was to become the Mesabi Iron Range, extending for some seventy miles between Grand Rapids and Ely. Iron mining rapidly became the major industry of this part of Minnesota, especially since by the first decade of the 20th century, the stands of white pine were nearly all gone. Logging moved to Canada and to the Pacific Northwest. For a short period, lumberjacks and miners shared the wooden sidewalks, drank in the saloons, and caroused on the streets of Hibbing. Soon the lumberjacks moved on.

Hibbing, however, quickly became a boomtown when iron was discovered under its streets, and the new Mahoning mine operation attracted many new people to Hibbing. Large numbers of new immigrants from many countries flocked to the area for jobs, including a number of Swedes and other Scandinavians. The valuable ore lay right under the village, sometimes as close as only four feet below the ground surface. To make way for open pit mining, the entire village was moved about two miles to the south, to an area originally named Alice, now South Hibbing. The iron ore was hauled by newly built railroads to the port of Duluth, then loaded on ore ships to be carried through the Great Lakes to great iron smelters in eastern cities in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Miners had to find their own places to live, mainly in Alice, and had to walk the two miles or more to and from the mine each day. There were a few horses and wagons around. The few cars in the area were far too expensive for miners to own or hire for transportation.

One of these new miners in Hibbing was a young Swede named *Carl Eric Wickman*. Carl was born in Mora, Dalarna, Sweden, August 7, 1887. He came to the U.S. in 1903, when he was only sixteen, at first to Arizona where he worked in a sawmill. He disliked the heat and dryness of Arizona, however. When he heard from fellow immigrants that the Minnesota climate was more like that in Sweden, he traveled north to Hibbing and went to work as a miner in the Mahoning mine. By 1913, he had saved \$3,000.00, a fairly large sum for the time. He decided to use his savings to buy a franchise in Hibbing to sell Goodyear tires and Hupmobile automobiles, an early make of car. He was apparently not a good salesman; no one would buy the single Hupmobile he had available to sell. He finally decided to buy it himself. To supplement his income from selling tires, he had the idea to use his seven passenger car to carry miners back and forth from their homes to the mine. On his first day he made \$2.25, which encouraged him to continue making trips.

Two other Swedish immigrants decided to buy into Carl Eric's new business, and bought his Hupmobile for \$1,200.00. They soon quarreled, however, and Carl Eric bought Oscar Wenberg's share back. This is the last we hear of Oscar Wenberg, but the other partner, Andy Anderson, continued with Carl Eric Wickman. Andy had immigrated on a cattle boat in 1900 and worked as a driller in the mine and a blacksmith's helper. Like Eric, he had dreams of a better life. Their transport business was popular, and they began regular

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hourly operations between Alice and the Hibbing mine. At first they charged \$1.50 for the trip, but as volume increased the fare was dropped to fifteen cents each way or twenty five cents for a round trip. The seven seat Hupmobile was loaded with up to eighteen passengers, some hanging on for dear life to the bumpers or running boards.

The Hupmobile was soon lengthened by blacksmith Andy Anderson to hold more passengers but was still insufficient to meet the demand for rides. They brought in another immigrant, Arvid Heed, who drove a Buick or a Packard. With two cars and three drivers, this new business became known as the Hibbing Transportation Company and ran around the clock. It was known locally as the "Snose Line." By 1915, the business bought two new buses made by the White Company in Cleveland. A route was extended to nearby Nashwauk, fifteen miles southwest of Hibbing. A year later, the route was extended to Grand Rapids.

The author then goes on to describe the hectic and rapid growth of the bus line founded by Carl Eric Wickman. Through price wars with competitors, then many mergers and acquisitions, the company later became known as the *Greyhound Bus Company* and grew to be the largest bus company in the U.S. Greyhound eventually served 60% of all intercity bus travel in this country and was to become a corporate conglomerate with many other divisions and activities. In 1946, after shepherding the company through the many trials of growth, a depression, and two world wars, Carl Eric turned over the reins of the company to Orville Caesar, a long time associate and manager. Wickman decided to return to his native Sweden on his retirement, his first visit since he left in 1903. On the *Gripsholm* in 1946, Wickman had a heart attack and was saved by a dramatic rescue with the help of the

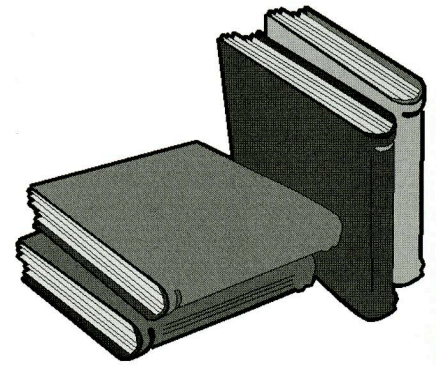
RAF and badly needed medicine. He recovered and was subsequently given an order by King Gustav V of Sweden for living up to the monarch's motto of "Service to the Unserved." Wickman died in 1954, at the age of sixty-seven.

Jackson's book, while providing much information about the company's founding by Carl Eric Wickman, is primarily a chronicle of his company which, in the latest edition, brings the Greyhound Company history up to the present day. The book is richly supplied with many photographs of early operations and buses operated by the company. Interludes of bus driver stories and humorous incidents collected by the author are included. A number of personal anecdotes and excerpts from Wickman's business correspondence serve to illustrate the humble character, thriftiness, and unique personality of this immigrant Swede. The book is well documented with sources for the information about Carl Eric and his company and a lengthy bibliography is available for further reading.

In the north end of Hibbing, near the site of the old mine, is a museum operated by local citizens which has exhibits and films to illustrate the life of Wickman and his company. Visitors can also walk through a garage housing about eight or nine of various restored Greyhound buses used by the company over the past eighty years.

The story of Carl Eric Wickman is an inspiring tale of another young Swedish immigrant who found opportunity in the United States. With great energy and ambition, he was working to build a great corporation from humble beginnings in a small Minnesota mining town. His is a story of hard work, savings, and personal honesty which eventually brought him to great success in business and to receive high honors in the country of his birth.

Dennis L. Johnson

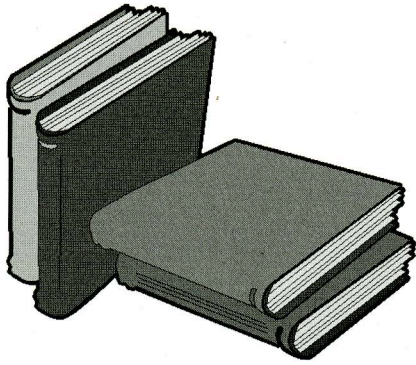


One Way to Feel Good

On My Swedish Island, Discovering the Secrets of Swedish Well-Being, by Julie Catterson Lindahl, Penguin Group USA, New York, 2005, 301 pages, hardcover, available at Amazon.com, \$16.07 plus shipping.

Our ancient ancestors sought survival, food, and procreation. In medieval times, our ancestors added salvation and a degree of civilization to this list. Our more recent immigrant ancestors sought a better life, religious freedom, and opportunity in a new land. My parents' generation expanded these needs to include a better life for their children, a more complete education, and a respectable occupation. And in my own case, I sought an advanced education and a chosen profession, the designing of buildings.

Many in the next generation, that of my children, seem to add as their primary goal the attainment of a "state of well-being." The author of this book seems to have found her state of well-being by living on a small Swedish island near Stockholm and adopting, with great enthusiasm, the Swedish life style. Unique among books about Sweden, this is about modern Sweden as seen through the eyes of an American who migrated to that nation a little less than ten years ago. Julie Catterson met and married a Swedish citizen, Claes Lindahl, in 1997 and in 1998 had twins, a boy and a girl. Initially,



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they lived in Stockholm and worked in a consulting business together.

Julie Catterson was born in the U.S. Her father was the eldest son of Scottish immigrant parents, who began his working career in a soda fountain and went on to build a successful career in international banking. Her mother was born in wartime Germany and immigrated with her parents in search of a better life in America. Julie lived in many countries on three continents while growing up, and moved frequently. She was educated at Wellesley College in the U.S. with a BA in English literature. She attended Oxford University for a master's of philosophy in International Relations, then was a Fulbright Scholar in international affairs at Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She entered a career in international consulting, working worldwide with several major consulting firms. She soon attained a prominent position as a management consultant, an apartment in London, and a fast-paced jet set lifestyle.

In the course of her travels, Julie met and fell in love with her future husband, Claes, and moved to live with him in a large house in Stockholm. For a few years, summer months were spent at a summer house on an island. This house had been inherited by her husband, and was without access by car. The island had only one other part-time resident.

Julie soon became enchanted by life on this island, and finally persuaded Claes to move to the summer house year-round. This decision resulted in the idea of this book, describing Julie's discovery of "the

secrets of Scandinavian well-being."

After an introduction, Julie Catterson Lindahl organizes her book into seven chapters, each describing a different aspect of what she sees as the elements of the Nordic life style. With sensitivity and detail, she describes the Nordic approach to the science of life, outdoor life and fitness, the green environment, relaxation, domestic design, diet and health, and the quest for meaning. The chapter on diet and food includes many recipes for traditional Swedish foods, plus many tips on nutrition. A final section lists many resources for contact or further study, organized by subject areas and whether U.S. resources or Scandinavian. The book is well-written and well-organized, with many insights and perspectives that will appeal to many readers.

Swedish-Americans will find this book adds a great deal to their perception in general of present-day Sweden and in particular to the lifestyle of many Swedes. It also conveys a sense of one modern, liberated and well-educated American woman's response to that lifestyle and the changes in her attitudes about the cultural differences which she encounters and describes.

Ms. Catterson lists a website on a page at the end about the author. In exploring this site, I find that she has started an organization titled Wellness of Scandinavia. She has apparently found that the well-being of the Swedish lifestyle needs a little fine tuning; the organization offers consulting in well-being, plans to arrange tours in Sweden of spas and other locations promoting her concepts, and plans to sell in the U.S. and elsewhere a line of body salves to enhance one's feeling of well-being. It is good to see that her ingrained American spirit of enterprise has not totally disappeared into the idyllic Swedish countryside.

Being an American and a generation older than the author, I am

limited in my capacity to evaluate whether the life style she describes is accurately portrayed, or whether it has brought most Swedes to the state of well-being that she seems to have found. I have only visited Sweden and have never lived there. I take the author at her word, however, and am sincerely glad for her that she has found the secret of well-being for herself. But living simply for much of the year in the beauty and solitude of a country home on a crystal clear lake in the north woods of Minnesota, I find many of the same satisfactions and rewards that Julie Catterson Lindahl describes in her book.

Dennis L. Johnson

Editor's note: The web site mentioned above is

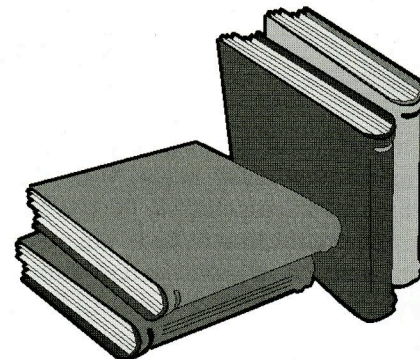
www.wellnessofscandinavia.com

Omaha Swedes 1889

The Swedes in Omaha and South Omaha - 1889, edited by Louise Bloom Baumann and others. End notes by Nils William Olsson, Ph.D., F.A.S.G. Published 2005 by the Swedish Cultural Committee, Inc., of Omaha. ISBN 0-9704655-1-3.

There are a few ethnic city directories in New England (Boston and Worcester) for the local Swedes, but that there was one also for the city of Omaha was a big surprise, especially as it was printed already in 1889. It was published by a man called Carl Bohmansson, born 17 May 1859 in Kristianstad, and was an apprentice bookkeeper before his emigration in 1880. Carl came to Omaha at the end of the 1880s, and became a partner in the publishing of *Omaha Svenska Tribun*, but after a few years left to start a temperance paper, *Aurora*, and later died in

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Minneapolis in 1901.

While still a youngster he published this city directory in 1889, and listed as many Swedes as he could find. Many advertisements helped to finance the publication, and are reproduced and translated in the reprint, which helps to capture the atmosphere of the 1880s.

The information for each person is surname, first name or initials, occupation and address. Given the many patronymics this makes it difficult to identify the John Erickson or Anna Johnson you are looking for. For other more specific surnames you will have a big help of this book.

A number of persons (174!) have been identified by Nils William Olsson, founder and editor emeritus of SAG, and published as endnotes. He has mainly been working with the records of Immanuel Lutheran Church and the First Covenant Church records and *The Swedish Element in Omaha*, by O.M. Nelson.

The result is good; many individuals have now their birth dates and home parishes in Sweden noted, which should make it possible to trace their lines in the old country.

However, now that we have the database *Emibas*, it is possible to

compare dates with the ones found there. It turns out that there are many differences. Sometimes the names differ, someone who was *Frans* in Sweden, was *Frank* in the U.S. On the other hand, a woman with full names and birth information, might prove to be impossible to find in the *Emibas*, as is the case of Elisa Maria Petterson (wife of #1), who is said to have been born in either Stockaryd or Hjälmteryd on 25 Dec. 1860. But a quick check in Hjälmteryd church records showed that the information might be correct, but that she was somehow missed during the excerpt work for emigrants. So even the best of databases are not infallible. Another interesting piece of information is that through comparing the information in *Swedes in Omaha* with *Emibas*, you might find out the name the immigrant used in Sweden. The wife of #94 Magnus August Larson was called Carolina Borup in Sweden, but is probably the same as Carolina Albertina Persdotter, born 23 Feb. 1849 in Nykil, immigrating in 1873 from Linköping.

John O. Nordvall (#118) was born 14 June 1842 in Norrby, Väst., and emigrated 1871, unmarried, from

the book he was married when he emigrated, and also had an academic career before emigration. A look into the Rogberga records shows only that he came from Norrby in 1870 and “ran away to America” in 1871. He seems to need more research!

Tuve Per Söderholm (#147) left Sweden as plain Tuve Persson, and his wife as Olivia Mathilda Johansdotter, born in Naglum, Vägö., but emigrating from Gärdhem, Vägö. It is not known when they changed to Söderholm, but the change itself is typical for the immigrants.

There are a number of nice illustrations, mainly buildings that were standing in 1889, and that probably made a big impression on the very rural Swedish immigrants.

This book is a good help to resolve some of the questions on what happened to the immigrants. We want more books of this type!

Elisabeth Thorsell

New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

Elizabeth Shown Mills, F.A.S.G., has recently published what is called a *QuickSheet*, which focuses on how to cite on-line sources, and it is consequently named *Citing Online Historical Sources*. This is a four-page laminated little publication that you can keep by your computer, so you get your citations correct. You can buy it from Genealogical Publishing Company at www.genealogical.com for just \$5.95 + postage.

The *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* prints in its April-July 2005 volume most of the papers that were presented at the “Jag lever och har hälsan,” Conference on letters and diaries of Swedish Immigrants, that was held in the fall of 2004 at the Swenson Center in Rock Island. The lecturers include *Eva St. Jean*, *Jennifer Eastman Atteberry*, *Britt Liljewall*, *Joy K. Lintelman*, *Maria Erling*, *Ulf Jonas Björk*, and *Solveig Zempel*, with an introduction by *Dag Blanck*. These papers are most interesting, and should be read by anyone interested in the immigrants.

On the lighter side we might mention the crime story “*Lineages and Lies. A Nick Herald Genealogical Mystery*,” by Jimmy Fox (2002), which is set in New Orleans, where dire happenings at a lineage society leads to murder. The author has also published “*Deadly Pedigree*” and, “*Jackpot Blood*,” all available at Amazon.