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Book Reviews

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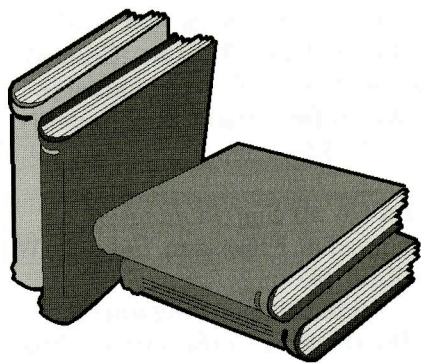
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Book Reviews

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 <j2vikings@att.net> or 2407 Hunsberger Drive, Limerick, PA 19468, so he knows what you are working on.

A Scandinavian Guide

Norden, A Guide to Scandinavian Genealogical Research in a Digital World, by Art Jura, Picton Press, Rockport, Maine, 2003, Soft Cover, 115 pp., 2003, \$14.95. More info from www.pictonpress.com

Countries sharing the common Scandinavian heritage, generally referred to as the Nordic countries, have all been the source of people migrating to the United States, Canada, and other lands in past centuries. These Nordic lands, referred to collectively by Art Jura as Norden, include not only Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, but also Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Åland, and the lands of the Sami. It is the purpose of the author of this book to highlight the similarities and to distinguish some of the differences in migration, people, and genealogical research between and among these various lands.

For example, some migrants from Sweden may be Finns. Sami migrants may be listed in records as from Norway, Sweden, Finland, or even Russia. Greenlandic migrants may be Danish or Inuit. For those seeking their roots in only one of these countries, this book may not be the best guide. But for those with a broader curiosity, or those who find an ancestor at some point in history who has been blended by Nordic migration or ethnic patterns, the book may be helpful. For this purpose, however, the book is broad but not

deep. For each chapter, the author, a Finnish-American, includes in the Bibliography a listing of references, both books and websites, for those wishing to obtain more information about a particular country.

After a brief summary of the history and culture of the Nordic people, Art Jura has assigned a chapter to each of the lands making up Norden, beginning with Sweden. The chapter on Sweden is the longest since Sweden is the largest country in population with the greatest number of emigrants. Also, much of the information common to most of the countries is covered in the chapter on Sweden, in order not to be repetitive in the other chapters. Each chapter contains the addresses of websites of special relevance to research in each of the countries, with additional websites listed at the end of the book. There is also at the end a Nordic word list. Commonly used words found in various records are listed in each of five languages and in English, to assist the researcher.

Current residents of Sweden or one of the other countries may already be quite familiar with most of the distinctions and nuances encountered in doing research and seeking roots in their own and other Nordic lands. To Scandinavian-Americans, Canadians, and others a few generations removed from the history and culture of their countries of origin, this book presents many useful insights into the variations in customs, record-keeping, ethnic minorities, and Internet sources among the lands making up Norden.

For those whose interest is primarily Swedish genealogy, this book is not a detailed "how-to" guide, such

as the incomparable *Cradled in Sweden*, by Carl-Erik Johansson. It is better viewed as an introduction to all the Nordic countries to serve as background for further research in one or more of the other lands, with many useful and interesting nuggets of information about each.

Dennis L. Johnson

A Swedish Life in America

Ingrid. My Swedish-American Life and Adventures, by Ingrid Bergström. Swedish-American Historical Society, 3225 W. Foster Ave, Box 48, Chicago, IL 60625, (2003). Info: <http://www.swedishamericanhist.org/booklist.html>

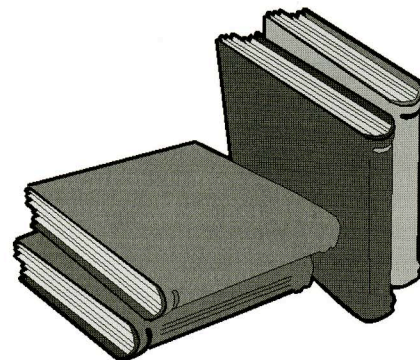
It was at one of my first SAG Workshops I heard the late Carl-Erik Johansson of Salt Lake City speak. What he said that afternoon continues to echo.

He responded to a question. Someone asked why the Swedes had immigrated to America. His reply was quick, strong, and with loud fervor. As he thrust one fist into the other hand's palm, he shouted, "They were hungry."

This was true of the vast majority of the Swedish immigrants in the 19th century. However this cannot be said for Ingrid, the immigrant of this book. And yet it can.

When Ingrid left Sweden in 1947, she and her husband, Gösta, were not hungry for food as were the early immigrants. Instead they had a

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hunger of another mode. They were hungry for opportunity, for success, for challenges.

Before they left Sweden they managed and owned a small cafe in Stockholm. With this they were successful, but they knew their opportunities were limited. The Sweden of the late 1940's did not afford the same upward mobility to unschooled individuals or members of the working class. Ingrid and Gösta had a hunger to try their wings and fly higher than Stockholm and Sweden's social system of 1947 permitted.

This is Ingrid's story. It is a folksy story of a very smart and gutsy and kind woman. It is told in Ingrid's own words. This is not an academic tome. Instead it is a very sincere account of how two people with wonderful attitudes, strong work ethic, and definite loyalty were successful as Swedish immigrants in the 20th century.

Like the Swedish immigrants of a century earlier, Ingrid and Gösta never lost their deep love of their native land, but they thrived with the opportunities of the new land. Like the Ingrids and Göstas of earlier periods, they put their shoulders to the wheel and forged persistently on. Just like our Swedish immigrant ancestors, Ingrid and Gösta made better lives for themselves. Some things remain the same.

Karna Olsson

Midwestern Swedes

Swedes in Moline, Illinois, 1847-2002, by Lilly Setterdahl, Universal Publishers/upublish.com, 2003, soft cover, 296 pp., \$29.95. Available at www.amazon.com

The author and her late husband, Lennart Setterdahl, came to the U.S.

from Sweden in 1959, settling in Cleveland, OH, until 1971, when they moved to the Moline, IL, area. Their hobby became a lifetime career, following their interest in the "great migration." Working together until Lennart's death in 1995 and then independently, Lilly and her husband have published 11 books on Swedes in the U.S. They also collected information on Swedish-American publications, conducted innumerable interviews, and have taken thousands of oral histories and photographs. Their work is now held in the archives of Augustana College, The Emigrant Institute in Växjö, the National Archives in Stockholm, and elsewhere.

As with most of Lilly Setterdahl's previous books, this volume focuses on a particular locality with a strong Swedish immigrant influence, and chronicles the history of the Swedes in that community. Previous subjects include Scandinavians in Alabama, in Rockford, IL, and two volumes on Swedes in Minnesota. *Swedes in Moline* is quite comprehensive, including not only many individual and family histories, but also a great deal of information on businesses in the community, local periodicals and newspapers, churches, Swedish organizations, and excerpts from letters and diaries of many immigrants.

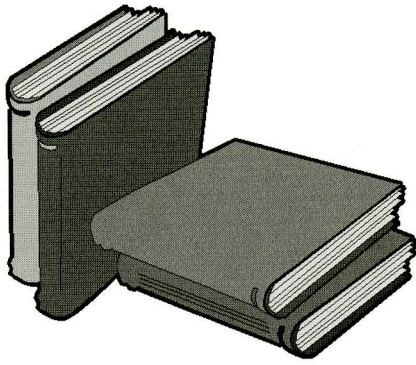
The history of Moline from the early settlement days of the 1850's through the Civil War period, the development of Moline as a center of industry, and the growth of the city through the First World War and the Great Depression is outlined in the introduction. How this history affected, and was influenced by, the Swedes is the focus of the sections on political and civic leaders and the growth of businesses in Moline. This city is the home of the John Deere and Company, Minneapolis-Moline, several furniture and cabinetmakers, and numerous small businesses. These companies became the basis

for employment of most of the Swedes who came to Moline in the 19th century and later. The section on Businesses lists in detail the variety of trades existing, from architects to wagonmakers, and their Swedish proprietors, founders, and workers.

Fascinating to read are the 18 pages of 'Documented Impressions', excerpts from letters and diaries of some fifteen Swedish immigrants who wrote down their thoughts to relatives in Sweden, or recorded them in their diaries, about their trip to America or their lives in Moline. Most are from the time period of the 1880's to 1940, and a few are about trips back to Sweden by these immigrants.

The entire latter half of the book contains over 120 brief histories of individual immigrants or families in Moline and vicinity. Most are accompanied by a photograph of the person or family and give their dates and places of birth in Sweden, their occupations, children, and dates of death. For most individuals, an oral history interview exists and is listed as being available either at the Vasa National Archives in Bishop Hill, IL, or at the Swedish Emigrant Institute in Växjö, Sweden.

Taken as a whole, this book provides a good general picture of the influence of the Swedish Immigration on one Midwestern community in the U.S., and the influence of that community on the Swedes who settled there, not only in their individual lives and livelihoods, but in how these Swedes brought their churches and created their social organizations to build a complete community for themselves and their descendants in Moline.



For the serious researcher who is seeking information on a particular business, family, or organization in Moline, this book will serve as a reference and guide leading to much additional material. The book gives many details, dates, street addresses and other information of value, and is well documented with indexes of all persons or contributors included. The Bibliography will lead to many additional sources, directories, microfilms, newspapers, and other materials.

Dennis L. Johnson

A European Guide

The Family Tree Guide Book to Europe, by Erin Nevius and others. Betterway Book, 278 pages, soft-cover, \$22.99. Available from www.amazon.com

It feels bad to start this review by saying "Don't buy this book!", but that is my true opinion. This book contains a number of articles on doing genealogical research in Europe, and have mostly been published in *Family Tree Magazine* in some earlier version. The articles have been updated and provided with tips for further reading and addresses to archives and other institutions, and web addresses too.

That is fine, but can you trust the information? Judging from the chapter on Scandinavia I am doubtful. This was written by David A. Fryxell, a man with a good Swedish name and with ancestors from Västergöt-

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land, which we discussed last year, when we happened to meet. So he has done some Swedish and Scandinavian research, but missed many important points.

The first thing that catches the eye is the strange map; in Sweden Lake Mälaren has become a bay in the Baltic, and there are no towns in southern Sweden. In Denmark there are only Copenhagen and Vejle, where are cities like Odense and Århus? And in Finland we miss Åbo (Turku).

But that is not so bad, compared to other things. If this book was to help budding Scandinavian genealogists, why start with the Vikings? And then spend pages on telling stories about the exploring spirit of the Norse peoples?

Then we come to the steps to follow to find the Scandinavian ancestors, where the author constantly mixes references to all four countries. It would have been much better to first discuss the Danish and Norwegian systems of record keeping, as they are based on their joint history, and then the Swedish and Finnish system, which is based on the Swedish Church Law of 1686 (as Finland then was part of Sweden). Anyway, he starts with the emigration records, and mentions web addresses for Denmark and Norway, but seems unaware of the CD *Emigranten* for Sweden. Then he discusses the name systems, and gets the patronymic names fairly right, but all other names are supposed to come from farm names or the military, which is not correct.

And now, the proper records, where I will only comment on the ones for Sweden (and Finland). The *husförhörslängder* are just mentioned, as where "you may also be able to learn more," when to me it is one of the most important records there is, the one where you get to follow a family and its members in detail from birth to death, in a way no other record allows you to. In this section many

dates are mentioned that are quite new to me, like that the government started to keep its own vital records in 1950, when I always thought that did not happen until 1991!

Next we come to "other records" and for Sweden the author mentions something called "census records," which I think must be the *mantalslängder*, and then he says they start in 1650, and I have always believed that they start around 1628. In a special chapter on these records he gives all kinds of examples of exemptions from being listed in them, and in total evidently thinks they are much more important than the clerical surveys, which is wrong. Mostly you only use these "censuses" for periods way back in time, before the church records starts or when those are missing for some reason. He also suggest that interested readers should get hold of a special book, in Swedish, which is quite difficult for Swedes to read, very academic prose.

The important legal records, court minutes and probates, are not mentioned except very superficially.

I will not quarrel with his book list, as one of my own books is listed, but find it noteworthy that he does not list *Swedish American Genealogist* nor the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, where he ought to have learnt a lot about Swedish genealogy. Instead he lists two Swedish language journals, both heavy reading for English language researchers: *Personhistorisk Tidskrift* and *Släkt och Hävd*. The list of addresses for the archives is outdated; for instance the author still places the records for Värmland in Göteborg, when they have been in Karlstad for about 10 years. Among web sites he mentions *Rötter*, but not its English language sibling *Swedish Roots*.

Anyone who is serious about Swedish research will learn much more and correctly by reading Carl-Erik Johansson's *Cradled in Sweden*.

Elisabeth Thorsell