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Book Reviews

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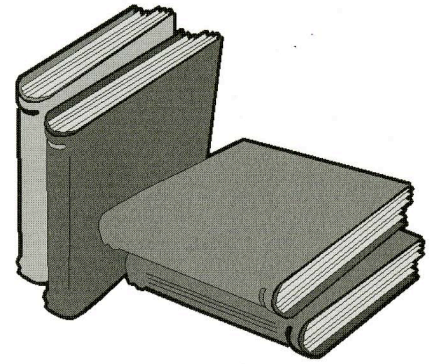
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Book Reviews



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.

Correction

Lilly Setterdahl's book about *Swedes in Moline* has a price tag of \$25.95.

What Is It to Be a Swede?

Swedishness Reconsidered, Three Centuries of Swedish-American Identities, Daniel Lindmark, Ed., Umeå, 1999, Tryckt av Livrena Grafiska AB, Kungälv, 1999. Soft Cover, 142 pages, in English.

This volume is a collection of research papers by five scholars at Umeå University in Sweden, edited by Daniel Lindmark, Associate Professor of History. Two of the five are doctoral Students, the other three, including Dr. Lindmark, are faculty members at the University in the Department of Historical Studies. Each paper addresses a particular aspect of Swedish migration to the U.S. or, in one paper, to Canada. As with most research papers, they are written in the academic style and are thoroughly documented with a detailed list of sources, intended more for the scholar than for light reading.

DANIEL LINDMARK: *Swedish Lutherans Encountering Religious Diversity in Colonial America: From Swedish mission studies to American religious history.*

This essay looks at patterns of church activity among descendants of New Sweden colonists in the 17th

and 18th centuries. How the religious needs of these colonial Swedes were met, interchurch cooperation with Anglican congregations, religious commitment measured by communion frequency, and confessional attitudes during this time period are all examined. Members of Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington, DE, and of the Wicaco congregation (Old Swedes) in Philadelphia are the principal subjects of the study.

ROGER KVIIST: *Religious Perfectionism, Early Swedish Immigrant Political Identification, and T. N. Hasselquist.*

Dr. Kvist has concentrated his study on the political/religious beliefs of early Swedish immigrants before and during our Civil War (ca. 1840-1870). His principal thesis is that Swedish Lutheran Pietism in these new citizens was strongly influenced both by their homeland beliefs, and by contact with Yankee Protestants. This, together with the strong influence of their religious leaders such as T. N. Hasselquist, caused the majority to give their allegiance to the Republican Party in the political realignment which was occurring during that period. While the earliest immigrants were inclined to the Democratic Party, their allegiance underwent a shift as a result of their Pietist perfectionist beliefs and the Republican Party's stand against slavery.

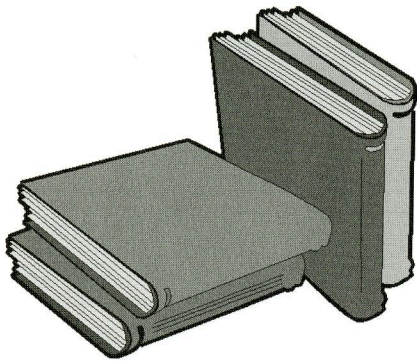
PER NORDAHL: *Lost and Found – a Place to Be: The organization of provincial societies in Chicago from the 1890's to 1933.*

Prof. Nordahl addresses the need

for immigrant Swedes in Chicago to maintain images of home and belonging by creating a large number of Swedish provincial societies during this time period. Almost every province from Blekinge to Värmland had its own club or social group, sometimes more than one. The author examines the origins, stated goals, growth, and decline of these clubs, and their role in linking members with the past and preparing them for their new lives in America. The paper identifies 24 of these clubs and includes group photographs of several. Nordahl examines the purposes of the provincial societies, concluding with: "The loss of their old place was resolved by the construction of a new one based on the collective memory of their past". *Reviewer's comment:* Few American cities had a large enough Swedish population to allow the proliferation of provincial clubs. Chicago was almost unique in that respect, with by far the greatest number of immigrant Swedes of any city during this period.

CARINA RÖNNQVIST: *Scattered Swedes and Single Settlers: On ethnic identity reflected in nationalistic sentiments, gender and class in 20th century Canada.*

In this paper, the author draws distinctions between the Swedish immigrant population in Canada, and those in the United States. The Canadian immigrants were predominantly men (about 70%) and most of them were single. The time period was a little later, about 1910 to 1920, and these immigrants came in a time of greater industrialization and more as individuals, not family



Book Reviews

groups or even whole neighborhoods as with the earlier immigrants to the U.S. They were more scattered and less likely to be found living among fellow Swedes. Ms. Rönnqvist examined three individual men by means of a number of their letters written home to Sweden over a period of years; men who settled in the Canadian prairie provinces about 1905–1910. She identifies the three as “The Adventurous Conservative, the Hot-tempered Socialist, and The Romantic Settler.” Through their letters she analyzes their attitudes about ethnicity and nationalism in Canada.

PER-OLOF GRÖNBERG, “*My Kind of Town?*” *Ethnicity and class as determining factors for return migration or permanent settlement among Swedish engineers in Chicago 1910-1930.*

In this study, the author looks at a population of young men trained at various technical schools in Sweden who migrated to Chicago in the first decades of the twentieth century. His method was to look at a population of 158 of 218 Swedish engineers who joined the Swedish Engineers’ Society of Chicago in 1910-1913. (The other 60 could not be tracked, and were deleted from the sample.) He found that of these 158, 65% settled in Chicago, 15% settled elsewhere in the U.S., 2% went to another country, and 18% returned to Sweden. The proportion returning to Sweden was only slightly greater than the general Swedish immigrant population, about 15%. He concludes that most of those who returned saw their time in the U.S. as enhancing their careers in Sweden

and/or they had stronger social and family ties to their country of origin. The case for ethnicity or class as determining factors in their return is not strongly made.

These five research papers offer glimpses into particular aspects of the Swedish migration to North America, which are of interest to those wishing a more complete understanding of these immigration patterns. In addition, to this reviewer, they also offer some insight into the attitudes of these contemporary Swedish scholars toward this migration and the people involved.

Dennis L. Johnson

Once Upon a Time in Mpls.

So Far Away in the World, Stories from the Swedish Twin Cities, Anne Gillespie Lewis, Nodin Press, Minneapolis, MN 2002, Soft Cover, 175 Pages, \$19.95

Anne Gillespie Lewis grew up in Minneapolis and, after working as a journalist and author, is now a freelance writer. She has a Swedish grandmother and, in addition to writing several books, writes a column for the American-Swedish Institute’s newsletter *Posten*. This book strikes very familiar chords with the reviewer, since I grew up in Minneapolis only ten years or so earlier than Ms. Lewis.

Using primarily personal interviews with the subjects or their descendants, Ms. Lewis writes about several dozen well-known people who lived in Minneapolis who were born in Sweden, or who are descended from these immigrants. Subjects include among the earliest settlers in Minnesota such as Bertha Brunius, who came to St. Anthony Falls (now within the city of Minnea-

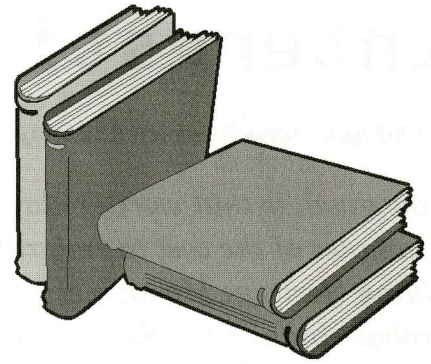
polis) in 1854. Others came later on, such as Inga Svensson who arrived in Minnesota about 1889 and spent much of her adult life as the beloved cook to the family of Governor Alexander Ramsey. The author also included several more recent immigrants who she describes as “world citizens,” couples who have alternated between living in Sweden and in Minneapolis.

A number of prominent citizens of Swedish ancestry are also profiled in this book, such as Axel Ohman, builder of many buildings including the landmark Foshay Tower. Axel came as a young lad from Leksand, Dalarna, in 1922. The well-known Youngdahl family, (Ljungdahl, in Sweden), whose ancestors came to the U.S. before 1892 and produced a governor of Minnesota (Luther), the pastor of the largest Lutheran Congregation in the U.S. (Reuben), an author, a congressman, an attorney, a college dean, and others of prominence among their children. (I was confirmed by Reuben Youngdahl in 1945 at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis.)

Gretchen Carlson (Miss America in 1989 and now a CBS News correspondent), former Governor of Minnesota Wendell Anderson, Axel Johnson, saloon keeper, Oscar Danielson, leader of the Oscar Danielson Orchestra, early Pastor Eric Norelius, and basketball star Don Carlson of the Minneapolis Lakers are more examples of the variety of people of Swedish descent Ms. Lewis writes about. Many more less well-known but interesting members of the Swedish American community are also included.

Worthy of mention are several uniquely Scandinavian institutions in the Twin Cities such as Ingebretsen’s on Lake Street, source of many Scandinavian foods and specialties, the American-Swedish Institute and it’s benefactor, Swan Turnblad from Småland, and others. Scat-

Book Reviews



tered among all the biographical sketches are a variety of recipes for Swedish cooking which were collected by Ms. Lewis in the course of all her interviews, and some from her Swedish grandmother. The two dozen recipes are indexed and classified in the back of the book for easy reference. Major annual Swedish-oriented festivals and events are also listed in the endnotes, together with a complete listing of all the persons mentioned in this volume. Sources of information are also thoroughly listed in the Bibliography.

These brief sketches of Swedish Americans of several generations in the Twin Cities provide the reader with a warm portrait of many facets of life for their subjects in the period between 1850 and the beginning of the 21st century. All those interested in the Swedish American experience in America, and particularly in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, will be enriched by these sketches and anecdotes.

Dennis L. Johnson

From the Pacific

Voices of Ballard, Immigrant Stories from the Vanishing Generation, Lynn Moen, Editor, Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA, 2001, Soft Cover, 294 Pages, \$15.95.

Ballard, Washington, was a mill town in Seattle, now a neighborhood of that city. The town was settled beginning in the 1880's as a working community for those employed in the sawmills, ship chandleries, machine shops, and fishing docks. Located just north of downtown Seattle and between Puget Sound and Lake Washington, Ballard has water on

three sides. The community was settled mostly by Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns, with a scattering of people from Iceland, Denmark, and a few other groups. Most of these people immigrated directly from their old country. For a few it was the final stop of several in the U.S. or Canada.

The voices of Ballard, referred to in the title, are short chronicles of nearly one hundred individuals and their families settling in Ballard, culled from over 120 interviews collected and deposited in the Nordic Heritage Museum, a center for Scandinavian culture in Ballard. The interviews have been transcribed and are in the Museum's archives for future researchers. An exhibition and two videos were also created along with this book, and are available for loan from the Museum for groups who wish to learn more about Ballard.

The editor, *Lynn Jolie Moen*, a lifelong resident of Ballard, has organized the collection of stories into three groups. These are: *Coming to Ballard*, *Living in Ballard*, and *Working in Ballard*. Each narrative is written in the first person, as told by the person interviewed. At least six of the subjects have died since being interviewed, and the editor stresses the importance of these kinds of histories to record the memories of the "Vanishing Generation" in Ballard. Photographs of the subject of the narrative are included wherever available. A complete index makes it easy to locate persons and places referred to in the book.

Each narrative represents a life created in Ballard by the new American, with his or her family. Working in the mills, as a commercial fisherman, a tailor, a baker, a restaurant owner, or another career, each person struggled to survive and make a living in their new land and raise their families to succeed. All the stories are upbeat and optimistic

despite hard times, wars, and recessions. The next generation largely attended college and often achieved prominent positions in the professions, teaching, politics, or other areas. The book provides many glimpses into family life and growing up in Ballard, including entertainment, ethnic societies, churches, schooling, and working.

These families tended to stay mainly with their own countrymen for churches and social groups, but mixed frequently and freely with others for their work and in their community. They got along pretty well with each other, but were conscious of the differences. One anecdote mentioned was the complaints of the Norwegian fishermen that the Swedes clogged the bay with their logging, so the Norwegians couldn't get their fishing boats in and out of the docks.

In addition to the value of this collection of stories to historians, this book provides a fascinating picture of one Scandinavian settlement in the U.S. which we can all compare with our own experiences and savor the differences with other locations, other decades of history, or other kinds of occupations. Those who would understand the full entirety of the immigrant experience will welcome this book into the menu, joining books about other Swedish communities such as Moline, IL, Minneapolis, MN, Chicago, IL, New Sweden, ME, and many others.

Dennis L. Johnson