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Swedes in Canada: A Project to Research and Write a History of Swedes in Canada

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Two final comments—one a substantive criticism and the other merely a voiced frustration—need to be made. First, I was surprised to discover that the extra letters found in various Scandinavian alphabets (e.g., å, ä, ö, ø) do not appear in personal names and place names in this database. This omission—it is clearly not an oversight—is unacceptable and should be corrected in future versions.

Second, the Church readily admits that the VRI for Scandinavia is “a partial collection of the records available from the countries and time periods represented.” So, in spite of the 4.5 million vital records (and the estimated 10 million total names) included in the database, it will prove frustrating and/or totally inadequate for a significant number of potential users. To begin with, the four countries are unequally represented in the database. Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish records comprise 40%, 30%, 26% and 4%, respectively, of the total. Furthermore, the database is, for all intents and purposes, in its infancy. For example, Swedish researchers will quickly discover that only 13% of Swedish parishes are represented, that 4 of the 24 Swedish counties (Jämtland, Norrbotten, Västernorrland, and Östergötland) are not represented at all, and that 8 of the 20 Swedish counties included in the database are represented by 3 or fewer parishes.

In spite of the reservations noted above, this database is a significant first step in indexing vital records from Scandinavia. The VRI is a powerful albeit limited research tool that can be purchased at a bargain price. No Scandinavian genealogist should be without it.

James E. Erickson, Edina, Minnesota

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Swedes in Canada

A Project to Research and Write a History of Swedes in Canada

The Lakehead Social History Institute takes pleasure in announcing the Swedes in Canada Project, with the goal of producing a history of the Swedes in Canada, from the beginning of their immigration in the late nineteenth century through their experiences in Canada to the present day. The history of the Swedish experience in Canada has not been described at book length and the institute has undertaken to rectify this shortcoming.

The Lakehead Social History Institute, an organization of Lakehead University and community-based researchers in Thunder Bay, Ontario, includes among its members Elinor Berglund Barr, an historian of Swedish origin whose various publications include a bibliography of the Swedish experience in Canada

and *The Scandinavian Home Society 1923-1993: A Place to Meet, A Place to Eat*. This illustrated history of an important Thunder Bay institution required intensive research of the Swedish experience in Thunder Bay and equips Elinor well to expand her research across the country.

The first objective of the Institute, working in co-operation with the Reverend Donald Sjöberg of Winnipeg, a retired bishop of the Lutheran Church in western Canada, has been to raise the funds required to carry out the research program. Thanks especially to contributions by lodges of the Vasa Order of America in Manitoba and Alberta and by the Swedish Embassy, in addition to individual contributions, the Institute has already obtained almost half of the research budget of \$25,000.

As part of the fundraising effort, the Institute has established a program by which individuals can honor Swedish immigrants to Canada in the book. For each donation of one hundred dollars (\$100) the name of the immigrant, the date of immigration, the place in Sweden from which the immigrant came, and the place the immigrant settled in Canada, together with the name of the donor or a person being honored by the donation, will be published in the book.

Elinor Berglund Barr will be studying the experiences of Swedes in Canada from coast to coast as well as in Sweden and the United States. Dr. Ernie Epp, co-director of the Institute and a member of the history department at Lakehead University, will supervise her in this research and in the development of the history.

Elinor is interested in receiving printed family trees of Swedes who lived in Canada and also in their Canadian experiences as shown in family histories, documents, correspondence, memoirs, diaries, photos, newspaper clippings, and the like. Please send copies only (not originals) to her. They may be in either Swedish or English.

Important information for interested individuals:

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