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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

The Swedish Experience in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography by Elinor Berglund Barr. Proceedings from the The Swedish Emigrant Institute, 4. Published by The Swedish Emigrant Institute, Växjö, Sweden 1991. ISSN 0283-4465; ISBN 0-9691717-3-0. 79 pp., 8.25 x 11.5 in. Softcover. North American Distributor: Singing Shield Productions, 104 Ray Boulevard, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada P7B 4C4. Price: Canada \$CAD 12.50 plus postage and handling \$2.00; U.S. \$US 11.50 plus postage and handling \$3.00.

In the world of sports, we are not surprised when the accomplishments of average athletes are dominated by those of superstars. Similarly, in the ivory towers of academia, the contributions of most scholars seem insignificant by comparison with those of Nobel Laureates. And in the North American geopolitical arena, events occurring within Canada (whether they be political, cultural or otherwise) tend to be overshadowed by similar events taking place within its larger neighbor to the south - the United States.

Writing in the preface to **The Swedish Experience in Canada**, Ulf Beijbom argues that this overshadowing phenomenon also applies to Canadian migration history, especially as it pertains to Swedes. He notes that "the Swedish immigrant experience in Canada is a subject which has been largely neglected by migration researchers" and further states that "the trend to emigrate to the United States...has completely overshadowed the Canadian scene." If this is true, then Barr's assertion that "Canadian scholarship stands in a disadvantaged position" seems to be a fair and accurate description of the context out of which this book emerges.

The book itself consists of 79 pages whose overall appearance is reminiscent of a typewritten manuscript. The pages are bound in a soft cover, and it is worth noting that the binding on my copy broke after very limited use. **The Swedish Experience in Canada** is organized into major sections. The first section is a well written and very readable 19 page essay that describes the current state of Canadian scholarship vis-a-vis the Swedish experience in Canada. This is followed by 55 pages containing annotated bibliographies on 162 "works" ranging in format from books to journal articles and in content from scholarly to folksy. The book concludes with two alphabetical lists, one with the 29 periodicals and the other with the 89 books included in the annotated bibliography.

Although I concur with Beijbom's assessment that this annotated bibliography "reflects the Swedish presence in most avenues of human life in Canada," I would be remiss if I did not stress both the paucity and the unevenness of the Canadian source material included by the author. Yet this very fact, more than anything else, tends

to corroborate Barr's contention that there is a pressing need for Canadian scholarship relative to the Swedish experience. To that end, the author suggests that her "annotated bibliography offers both a reference point for assessing the current state of Swedish studies in Canada and an incentive to redress the situation." In fact, Barr justifies the book's "broad sampling of publications, authors and genres...interspersed among scholarly works" on the grounds that she intended **The Swedish Experience in Canada** to be a "seminal source" for anyone interested in things both Swedish and Canadian. For those of you with such interests, this book is a must.

James E. Erickson, Edina, MN.

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Norwegian Local History: A Bibliography of Material in the Collections of the Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison by Dennis Auburn Hill. Published by McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina, 1989. xiii + 125 pp. Name Index. Cloth. Out of print.

The University of Wisconsin Memorial Library has long been recognized as having attained the largest collection of Norwegian local history in North America. This collection of over 2,000 volumes includes the popular *bygdebøker* - genealogical farm histories from individual communities. In addition to the *bygdebøker* are also found city directories, general community histories as well as local historical society publications.

In 1989 Dennis Auburn Hill, a Fulbright scholar, published through McFarland & Company a comprehensive bibliography of this unique collection. This bibliography is arranged by place name with some cross references. The individual entries include title, author, sponsoring organization, place of publication, date, number of pages or volumes, illustrations, series title and uniquely, the Memorial Library's call number. This work also includes a list of selected reference works and an index to authors, editors and illustrators.

Now that this guide has been available to historians and genealogists for nearly three years, we are able to report on both the strengths and weaknesses. A knowledge of Norwegian geography is especially important in using this reference. Although the bibliography is arranged by place name, rarely is the Norwegian county name included, except in instances where a name is found spelled the same in two or more communities and books are available from both places. Many communities with a local history in this collection also have a common name with other communities in Norway. In these instances it is impossible to readily determine which community the reference applies to.

As in any bibliography, we immediately recognize the books that for one reason or another were inadvertently missing from the publication. These primarily included older volumes in Memorial Library's cutter classification as well as volumes added in the late 1980s.

Some references list only one or two volumes in the set, when actually more volumes can be found on the shelves. Books that have been removed from the general collection, microfilmed and then discarded are still included, using the general library call number rather than the new microfiche call number.

Sadly, this bibliography is already out of print, but may be found in many reference collections. The Vesterheim Genealogical Center, 425 West Main Street, Madison, WI 53703 had the foresight to purchase several copies of this bibliography. These remaining copies may still be purchased from Vesterheim Genealogical Center for \$25.00 plus shipping costs.

Blaine Hedberg, Vesterheim Genealogical Center
Madison, WI.

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Rolf H. Erickson 1940-1992

This journal and its staff announce with deep regret the death of Rolf H. Erickson 18 Nov. 1992. Mr. Erickson was an early subscriber of *SAG*, contributed to it on many occasions and served as an articulate adviser, constructive critic and on many occasions as the well-spring of inspiration when the Editor sought him out for a solution of some knotty problem.

Rolf Erickson was a consummate historian, avid genealogist and a true Scandinavianist in the old 19th Century connotation of that term. Though born of Norwegian-American parents, he was equally at home with Americans of Danish, Finnish, Icelandic and Swedish extraction. For him there existed no borders between the Scandinavians, illustrated for instance by the fact that he served on the Board of Directors of the Swedish-American Historical Society of Chicago and was one of its most aggressive members, always looking for ways and means to expand the horizons of the society. His deep knowledge of the Scandinavian-American community in Chicago is evidenced by his two-part portrayal, "The Chicago Exhibition of Scandinavian-American Artists in 1929" in *SAG*, March, 1989, pp. 60-77 and June, pp. 129-148. His legendary knowledge of the Scandinavians in Chicago was also of inestimable value when he and the Editor published a directory of "Scandinavian-American Physicians in Chicago 1887-1912" published in *SAG*, March, 1986, pp. 1-12.

Rolf was the genial chief of the Circulation Department of Northwestern University Library in Evanston, IL, where he served with distinction for more than 22 years. In this position he came in contact with thousands of students as well as faculty members, who will always remember his gracious smile, his rollicking laughter and his energy which knew no bounds when it came to ferreting out hard-to-locate materials. *Ave atque vale.*