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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Queen Victoria's Descendants. By Marlene A. Eilers (Falköping, 1997). ISBN 91-630-5964-9. 190 pp. Illustrated. Indexed. Hard cover. Price ca. \$40 plus postage and handling. Order from Rosvall Royal Books, Enäsen, Falekvarna, S-521 91 Falköping, Sweden.

This book, written in English, is the second edition of this marvelously complete genealogy of the descendants of Queen Victoria of England. This edition has been produced in cooperation with Ted Rosvall of Sweden, a well-known authority on royalty, who has previously produced *Bernadotteättlingar (Descendants of the Bernadotte Family)*. The volume is handsomely illustrated with black and white formal group photos as well as relaxed family photographs. It contains information on all the known descendants of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, a total of 816 individuals (the latest one born 14 June 1997), and it gives a fascinating picture of the ups and downs of the social classes. Here you will find the royal house of Sweden and dozens of German *von und zu*, but also just plain Herr Bauscher, Mr. Taylor and Miss Patterson of the U.S.

The main part of this volume is a narrative, with a section for each of the nine royal children, where you will find many glimpses—some rather amusing, others more tragic—into the personal lives of these individuals. The story of Prince Ludwig Rudolph of Hannover, who committed suicide after his wife died of a drug overdose, is but one example. All of these stories serve to illustrate the fact that the descendants of royalty are just like ordinary people, in most respects.

The last seventy pages contain genealogical tables, with dates and places for births, marriages, deaths and divorces. It must have been an enormous task to gather such information from all over the world. The names, and sometimes dates, for the parents of spouses are also mostly included, which makes this an even more admirable research effort.

Still, some important information on these individuals is lacking. Not one of them seems to do anything. Information on their formal education, degrees, diplomas or professions, which would have made the book even more interesting and useful, is not included. While you know something about the most well-known royalties, the large group of unknown individuals probably have to support themselves as day-care assistants, computer programmers, McDonalds' employees, or accountants. The book takes on a quality of unreality, when such information is not mentioned.

Elisabeth Thorsell, Järfälla, Sweden

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Synd och skam. Ogifta mödrar på svensk landsbygd 1680-1880 (Sin and shame. Unwed mothers in the Swedish countryside 1680-1880). By Marie Lindstedt Cronberg (Lund, 1997). ISBN 91-86470-06-X. 316 pp. Dissertation of the Historical Institution of Lund University, Sweden. Literature list. English summary.

In this doctoral thesis, written in Swedish, the author discusses the conditions experienced by unwed mothers in the Swedish countryside during the period 1680-1880, a time of change in both the legislation and the general views concerning this matter. She bases her theories on the legal documents, legislation, and court records for the legal district (*härad*) of Torna in the province of Skåne, but also compares the results of her studies in Torna with the results of other researchers from other areas of Sweden.

In conjunction with the discussion on unwed mothers, there is also a discussion on the legislation concerning adultery, which was most often the cause of illegitimate births. To have sex outside of marriage was considered a crime against both civil law and church law, and two unmarried partners that were discovered as having had this relationship were both fined.

In cases of simple adultery (*enkelt hor*), where one partner was married and the other unmarried, it was decided in the law of 1608 that both were under sentence of death. Fortunately, the death sentences had to be sent to a court of appeal for approval, and there they were regularly transformed into heavy fines. In 1653 the law was changed, and fines became the ordinary punishment for simple adultery. If you did not have the money, you might spend a few days on water

and bread at the local jail or your might “pay with your body.” For example, men were publicly whipped (*slita spö*) with thick, but flexible, birch rods, while women were whipped with softer, birch twigs bound together like the working end of a broom.

Double adultery (*dubbelt hor*), where both partners were married, was considered a very serious crime. It carried a death sentence, which was quite often carried out. Those sentenced to fines also had to come to church and publicly admit their sins and be given absolution by the parish priest. Such public shaming was seen as the cause of many murders of newborn infants, as mothers tried to prevent anyone from knowing that they had been pregnant. In 1741 it was changed to a private ceremony in the church sacristy. It was mandatory, up to 1855, to go through this ceremony, otherwise the woman was not admitted to Holy Communion. That was considered to be the worst punishment, because not being able to go to Communion was a black social mark.

Since the crime of sex outside marriage was not easily exposed, unless there was a baby involved, the authorities always tried to find out the name of the man involved in the case, as he, too, should receive his punishment. This is why the names of absent fathers can sometimes be found in the legal records. Sometimes the father was named by the woman; sometimes he was pointed out as a result of local rumors. Often, he denied his part in the affair and the case was then dismissed, only to be reopened at the next meeting, when witnesses were called. Their stories can be very detailed, sometimes even amazingly so. In one case, a witness had looked through a crack in the wall and seen a woman's legs in the air! If the man continued to deny his part, he could often be sentenced to clear himself by taking the oath on the Bible. Before doing that, he had to receive special education from the parish pastor on the dangers of perjury; but, if he did take the oath, he was free from this case.

Many women killed their infants, and they were sentenced to death and executed. This worried King Gustaf III, who had to sign all these death sentences. In 1778 he published a new law, the Infanticide Bill (*Barnamordsplakatet*), which enabled a woman to give birth without giving her name. Furthermore, nobody was allowed to ask for the name of the father. This probably worked best in the cities. In Stockholm, for instance, you can find hundreds of babies with both parents unknown. This presents a huge problem for genealogists!

Marie Lindstedt Cronberg also researched what effects this new law had in her rural area. She found that men had a good chance of escaping the consequences of their less serious relationships; that men more often denied that they were involved with any special women; and that men were much less likely to be sentenced to pay child support. She found that women, on the other hand, still had to take care of the babies and did not have much support from their surroundings.

This book is a must for anyone who wants to understand the problems of unwed mothers in 17th to 19th century Sweden, and the impact of legislation and social habits on their daily lives.

Elisabeth Thorsell, Järfälla, Sweden

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Index to the 1865 Minnesota State Census for Chisago County. Compiled by Jay W. Liedman (Roseville, MN, 1998). ISBN 0-915709-57-0. 64 pp. Paper. \$12.00 plus \$3.00 shipping (Minnesota residents must add sales tax). Order item M-291 from Park Genealogical Books, P.O. Box 130968, Roseville, MN 55113-0968.

This volume is a must for any historian or genealogist interested in that most Swedish of Minnesota counties—Chisago. During June and July of 1865, all inhabitants residing in the district “excepting Indians not entitled to vote” were enumerated (a total of 2,175 individuals). Touted by the publisher as a “new model for census indexes,” it consists of (1) an introduction that includes background information on the 1865 Census, caveats on the proper use of the index, and maps (pp. 1-12); (2) a comprehensive, every name index (arranged alphabetically) to the 1865 Census (pp. 13-28); and (3) full reproductions of the actual schedules, i.e., pages, of the 1865 Census (pp. 29-62).

Compiler Jay Liedman notes that the “period between federal censuses [1860 and 1870] was a time of considerable migration and social disruption.” In this regard, he mentions settlers in western and southern Minnesota moving east as a result of the Sioux uprising, soldiers returning from the Civil War, and early pioneers in eastern Minnesota moving west to Meeker and Kandiyohi counties. Given these circumstances, Liedman contends that “having the mid-decade census provides an opportunity

to more precisely track individuals and families that may have appeared on one of the decennial federal census[es] but could not be located on the other."

Liedman has included two features in this volume that enhance its usefulness to *SAG* readers. Since township names and boundaries have changed since 1865, he has included the following useful maps: (1) the political divisions (townships) of Chisago Co. in 1865; (2) the political divisions (townships) of Chisago Co. in 1996; (3) an 1865 landowner plat map of Township 34, Range 20 (Chisago Lake Township); and (4) an 1865 landowner plat map of Township 33, Range 20 (portions of Wyoming and Franconia townships).

The index also includes a number of footnotes that could prove extremely valuable to researchers working with Swedish immigrants in Chisago County. Consider the following six examples: 18. "A. P. Glader" was earlier known as Anders Peter Nilsson; 24. "Gustaf Hultquist" previously had been known as Gustaf Jonason or Gustaf Johnson; 43. "Sven Nelson" changed his name to Swen McLean in 1867 and again in 1869 to Swen N. Liedman; 48. "Andrew Porter" was earlier known as Anders Johansson or Anders Jaensson; 56. "Gustav Strand" was earlier known as Gustav Johannesson; and 63. "Charles Zackrison" appears to have also been known as Carl Johan Noyd. Unfortunately, since references for these footnotes are not given, the information they contain must be considered tentative, until corroborated by other sources.

Jay Liedman and his collaborators, Earl Leaf and Stina B. Green, are to be commended and congratulated for producing this well-designed and handy index.

James E. Erickson, Minneapolis, MN

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The Swedish Community of Brownville, Maine. Compiled by Carl Jacob Larson (Kettering, OH, 1997). Report-bound, 82 x 11; 96 + 39 pp. Illustrated. \$18.00. Order from Carl J. Larson, 248 Napoleon Drive, Kettering OH 45429.

The period of mass migration from Sweden has been referred to as "the swarming of the Swedes." Carl Jacob Larson's self-published book is a reminder that the late nineteenth-century swarming also included the scattering of the Swedes, leading to knots of Swedish settlement in small and rather out-of-the-way places like Brownville, Maine.

The little Swedish community at Brownville in the mid-state interior of Maine appears to be a labor-market offshoot of the better-known colony at New Sweden, Maine. In the nineteenth century Brownville was a slate quarrying center. The first Swede to settle in Brownville, Nils Fredin, was recruited in 1871 as a new arrival in New Sweden by a quarry owner who had gone there in search of laborers. Other Swedes followed over the next thirty years or so, working with the earlier Welsh immigrant quarrymen and farming on the side. Brownville/Brownville Junction also became a rail center, and some Swedes were then employed by the railroads.

Carl Jacob Larson provides "biographical sketches" of sixteen of these immigrant Swedes. Each sketch gives varying information about the individual's background in Sweden, his—and in one instance, her—emigration, and some details on the person's life in America. The sketches continue with similar information about descendants into the fourth and fifth generations, including life events as recent as 1996. As in most family histories, the completeness of the entries varies with the sources, and Mr. Larson has relied on a number of respondents.

Mr. Larson himself began compiling information about the Swedish families of Brownville while he was still in high school in the 1920s. The author states in correspondence that he was asked to write about the Brownville Swedes in order "to preserve a part of Brownville's history that would otherwise be lost." In recording this information, Mr. Larson serves both local history and the descendants of the sixteen Swedish immigrants. For the others of us interested in Swedish life in America, the book provides tantalizing clues about the Swedes in Brownville and their background in Sweden.

A clue of particular historical note is the appending of both a translation and a copy of the original handwritten protocol, in Swedish, of the founding on 20 July 1900 of the "Swedish Lutheran

Bethel Parish of Brownville, Maine." This may be the only record of the short-lived congregation, as neither the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center nor the Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America could provide further information about this parish founded by an Augustana Synod pastor from Portland, ME. The original document is kept at the Brownville Community Church (letter from Mr. Larson of April 20, 1998). Mr. Larson also includes a listing of Swedish natives buried in the Brownville Village Cemetery. Otherwise, there is little indication of the use of records or sources beyond the thanks expressed to twenty-six "descendants of the original Swedes who spent much time and effort to compile the vital data presented."

For the student of Swedish immigration and for those wishing to trace ancestry in Sweden, eleven of the sixteen principals of the biographical sketches are sufficiently well-identified by parish and/or village of origin that one should be able to find them in the Swedish parish records. Two have only "Sweden" as place of origin, and three are connected to Swedish placenames that I was not successful in verifying in the *KAK Bilatlas, Cradled in Sweden*, or Rosenberg's *Geografiskt-statistiskt handlexikon öfver Sverige*. The immigrants came mainly from northern Sweden. Nils Fredin and a brother, Olof Lundin, came from Borgsjö Parish, Västernorrland, in 1871 and 1873, respectively. Eight or nine later immigrants have their origins in the parish and/or district of Undersåker in Jämtland, and are bound by ties of kinship, marriage, or acquaintance in Sweden. Another pair of brothers came after the turn of the century from the village of Ärbyn, Råneå Parish in Norrbotten. Only two of the sixteen subjects did not come from northern Sweden. The brothers Jacob and Sven Larson came from Skåne. A village history notes the following regional difference: "The darkest Swedes, such as the Larsons, came from the southern part of Sweden. The blond Swedes, such as the Fredins, came from the middle of Sweden in the province of Jämtland" (William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville...and the Junction*, [Milo, ME, 1983], 21).

How much of the "Swedish community of Brownville, Maine" do these sixteen immigrants and their families represent? No doubt the context is apparent to Mr. Larson and to the residents of Brownville descended from these immigrants, but to the outsider it is not clear what the size of the Swedish community in Brownville was at any given time, nor what place the Swedes had as a nationality group in the community. Mr. Larson notes that the Bethel congregation was started with a membership of twenty-one adults and twenty-eight children. The local histories, of which Mr. Sawtell is the contemporary author, mention a few more names of Swedes, and they also provide insight into the economic importance of quarrying for Brownville, the shortage of workers for the quarries, and the significant role Swedes played in quarrying. *Sawtell's Slate, Rails and Men: The History of Brownville*, 3 vols., (Dover-Foxcroft, ME, n.d. [1994?-]) provides further context with a chapter on "The Coming of the Swedes."

Nineteenth-century Swedish immigrants didn't just settle in rural Illinois and Minnesota; and, in the East, all the Swedes didn't go to industrial Worcester and Jamestown. From Carl Jacob Larson's compilation of these sixteen family histories, we learn that even in Maine, where relatively few Swedes settled, New Sweden was not the only locus of Swedish settlement. Mr. Larson gives us clues and raises questions about a small part of Swedish labor migration to America. Why were the Swedes recruited for and attracted to slate-quarrying? Were there connections between the Swedes in Brownville and those in Monson, a nearby slate-quarrying center where Swedish churches were established? At least one contingent of Swedes at Monson also had their origins in Råneå Parish, Norrbotten.

The Swedish Community of Brownville, Maine is not a slick commercial product. It has been reproduced directly from the typewriter, and bears with it foibles that are almost charming in the era of word processing and laser printers—uneven type, uneven impressions, and sometimes the difficulty of making a clean correction. The typewritten text is only troublesome where weak impressions occasionally make the reproduced letters hard to read. Five photographs of Swedish immigrants are also included. The book is subject to the usual litany of recommendations for improvement to be recited in reviewing family history publications, including better documentation and a name index.

Ronald J. Johnson, Madison, WI