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Book Reviews

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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 SAG Editor,

A manual for Swedishness

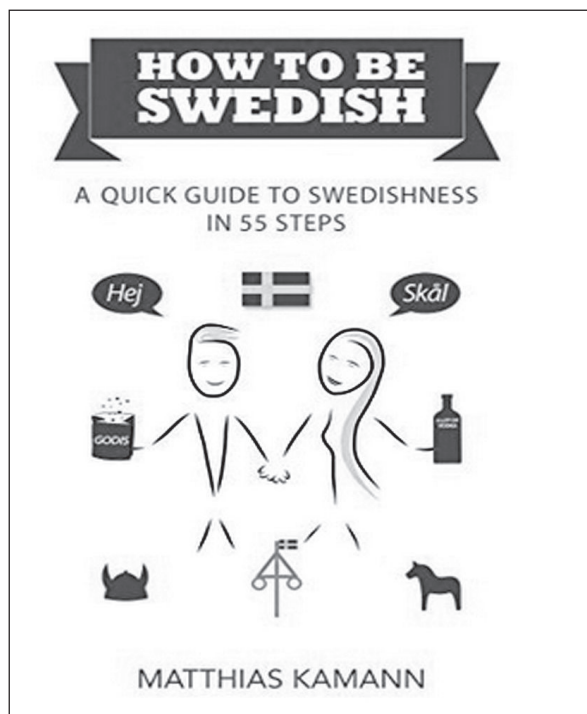
How to be Swedish: A Quick Guide to Swedishness - in 55 Steps. By Matthias Kamann. Published in 2017. ISBN 978 91 983799 0 7. At Amazon.com \$16.90.

Information from the Amazon website:

“For example, in this book you’ll learn how to: Interact with Swedes without embarrassing yourself. Celebrate Swedish traditions. Flirt like a Swede.

“Find out why: Swedes are obsessed with sunshine, nature, and a socializing activity called *fika*. Swedes don’t work in July. Swedes dance like little frogs around a pole that looks like a gigantic phallus. And there are many more steps on how to smoothly blend in among Swedes.

“Learn what Swedish people fear and desire. This Sweden guide will get you prepared for a *fantastisk* time in Sweden.



Textile pictures from the emigration days

Solveig Kristiansson's textilbilder från utvandringens tid, by Ulf Beijbom, photos by Sune Ekstrand. Published in 2018 by Emigrantinstitutets vänner. ISBN 978-91-977515-3-7. Hardcover, 140 pages. In Swedish!

This new book by Ulf Beijbom, former director of the Swedish Emigrant Institute in Växjö, Sweden, shows a number of the works in embroidery by artist Solveig Kristiansson, who is a great artist in this kind of textile work. She has, during her career



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Book Reviews

which started in the 1970s, produced a number of tapestries. Their motifs were often scenes from her early history, made with needle and thread.

This book covers her work from 1989 onwards, showing different moods and feelings. The photos are all in color, which SAG cannot show, and black and white does not do her work justice, but we will try.

Textile images from the time of emigration make a beautiful book. With needle and thread, Solveig Kristiansson has with warmth, compassion, humor, and very many stitches has created wonderfully vivid images of the hometown in

the compassion, humor, and infinitely many stitches, created wonderfully vivid images of the southern Småland forest areas. It is all about a time that is now gone but still preserved in memory. The images are complemented by Ulf Beijbom's both personal and factual texts where he, with his light pen gives a background both to time and to all persons who wove in the textile images. Solveig Kristiansson's images are largely about her own relatives and memories of childhood. It is easy to believe that, despite long working days, there was room for stories that got stuck with the young girl who seems to have had her ears wide open towards the adults' story-telling. If you judge by the pictures, there is a shimmer around childhood that is portrayed as idyllic as one would wish for all children. As in Astrid Lindgren's Bullerby, the children live in great freedom and great security. While the children playfully explore their world, the adventures

accumulate. Everything depicted in colorful embroidery, or *yarn paintings*, as Solveig Kristiansson prefers to call her pictures. It is about a time when most people lived close to farming and thus also close to the seasons. In the pictures, it is usually summer and besides the children's games one can follow the farm chores as well as the great celebrations of life such as baptism, wedding, and funerals.

There are also sad stories of father's dying and the rest of the family having to rely on the harsh parish welfare. Another story is about a mother, whose child died, and she comes home from the U.S. and wants to adopt a relative's child as there are so many, but is denied this.

And as this is Småland, there are also many other references to pictures and letters from all those who left the homeland for new and hopefully greener pastures.

Elisabeth Thorsell

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Book Reviews



A Swedish maid in Chicago.



Emil Bryggare plays the accordion for the Nygård family.

New and noteworthy (Short notes on interesting books and articles)

Family Tree Magazine (December 2018) has, as usual, a number of interesting articles. As Christmas was coming, there were ideas on how to share the family's special traditions with younger generations.

Of great interest is also the *2018 Best Websites for genealogy in the U.S. states* (75 of them). If you have a dentist in Iowa during the period of 1883-1967 don't miss the collection of photos of such students to be found on <www.iowaheritage.org>. If you have Scots among the ancestors, then you will find the article "Taking The High Road" useful, as it explains the Scottish system of records keeping. The *State Guides* in this issue covers Alabama and Oregon. Not many Swedes in Alabama (1900: 491), but many more in Oregon (in 1900: 4,690).

Many genealogists have the ultimate goal to produce one (or more) book about their ancestors, and in this issue there are several good hints on how to finally reach it. It is important to decide on what you want to accomplish, and not get sidetracked (even if you happen to find a great story that has nothing to do with the ongoing project).

In this issue there are also mentioned six different sources that can help in identifying the origins of immigrants. They are passports, county histories, state military records, alien enemy registrations, early alien registrations, and city marriage returns.



Hedemora in Dalarna ca 1670, from Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna, from a sketch by Erik Dahlberg.