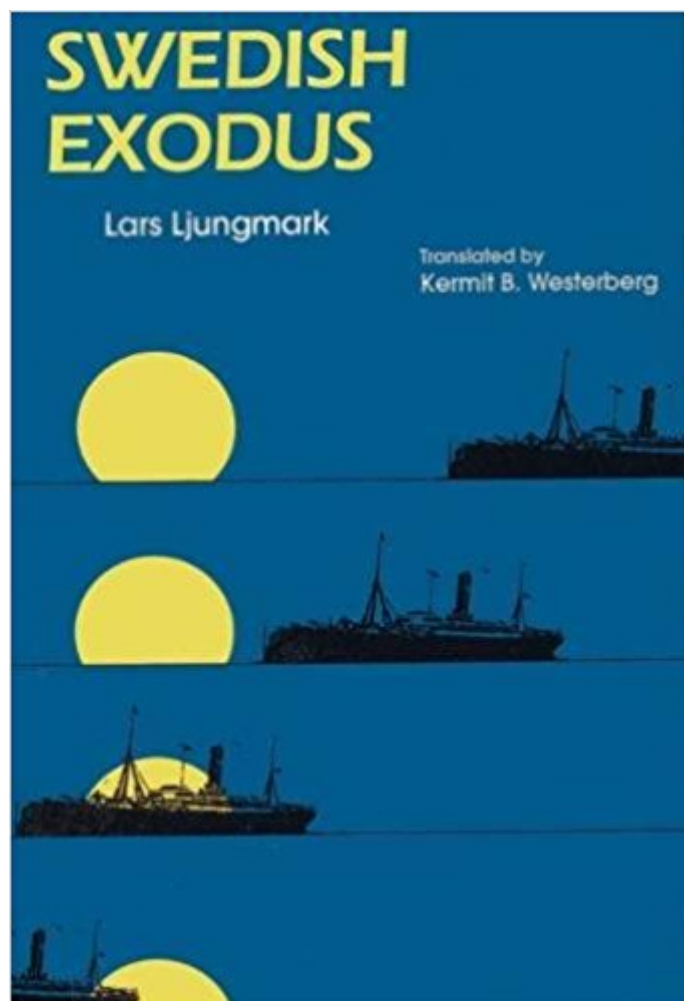


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Swedish Exodus



Synopsis

"America fever" gripped Sweden in the middle of the nineteenth century, seethed to a peak in 1910, when one-fifth of the world's Swedes lived in America, cooled during World War I, and chilled to dead ash with the advent of the Great Depression in 1930. *Swedish Exodus*, the first English translation and revision of Lars Ljungmark's *Den Stora Utvandringen*, recounts more than a century of Swedish emigration, concentrating on such questions as who came to America, how the character of the emigrants changed with each new wave of emigration, what these people did when they reached their adopted country, and how they gradually became Americanized. Ljungmark's essential challenge was to capture in a factual account the broad sweep of emigration history. But often he narrows his focus to look closely at those who took part in this mass migration. Through historical records and personal letters, Ljungmark brings many of these people back to life. One young woman, for example, loved her parents, but loved America more: "I never expect to speak to you in this life. . . . Your loving daughter unto death." Like most immigrants, she never expected to return. Another immigrant wrote back seeking a wife: "I wonder how you have it and if you are living. . . . Are you married or unmarried? If you are unmarried, you can have a good home with me." Ljungmark also focuses closely on some of the leaders: Peter Cassel, a liberal temperance supporter and free-church leader whose community in America prospered; Hans Mattson, a colonel in the Civil War and founder of a colony in Minnesota; Erik Jansson, a book burner, self-proclaimed messiah, and founder of the Bishop Hill Colony; Gustaf Unonius, a student idealist and founder of a Wisconsin colony that faltered. The story of Swedish immigrants in the United States is the story in miniature of the greatest mass migration in human history, that of thirty-five million Europeans who left their homes to come to America. It is a human story of interest not only to Swedes but to everyone.

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Customer Reviews

"Swedish Exodus is the translation (and excellently rendered it is) of Den Stora Utvandringen. Its ten chapters serve as an admirable introduction to the subject and they are supplemented by a good, if selective, bibliography. . . . "It is a tribute to this admirable survey that one is left at the end wishing for more personal details of the fascinating adventures of these pioneers."—Times Literary Supplement

Text: English, Swedish (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a descendant of Swedish immigrants, I decided to write my U.S. history term paper on their journey to the States using "Swedish Exodus" as my primary source. This book provides an abundance of interesting information. It covers everything from the push and pull factors that sparked the "exodus" to the extent of the influence of Swedish culture in America at the conclusion of the mass Swedish oversea migration. I highly recommend this book for anyone writing a paper on this topic or who is genuinely curious about this historical Scandinavian move.

This is a book written from a Swedish historical perspective. That alone makes it an interesting read. It touches on many key elements of questions that descendants of Swedish immigrants want to know about how, why and where their ancestors got to the United States.

The chapters of this book set out the points of major importance about Swedish emigration to America. This is good as a place to start reading about Scandinavian emigration studies and its solid selected bibliography is helpful for guidance to more academic works.

Although the first Swedes to come to America founded their own colony bordering what later became Philadelphia and stretched into New Jersey in 1638, it was not until over two hundred years later in the 1850's that Swedish immigration to America reached a substantial level. This books tells

the interesting story of how over a million Swedish immigrants, from 1851 to 1930, came to establish themselves in the United States. Included are accounts of a number of immigrant histories and how they came to settle in various parts of our country, usually in the Midwest. One learns that Sweden in those days was far from the progressive nation that we now know, but instead a heavily stratified society lacking in religious freedom outside of the state-sanctioned Lutheran church. Not only did many Swedes find the freedom and opportunity that they sought in America, their immigration had a lasting influence on Sweden itself as it moved towards becoming a more attractive country for its existing citizens--thereby dissuading them from voting with their feet and leaving the old country for America's beaconing shores.

This book, written by a Swedish professor at Goteborg University, is a comprehensive study of the mass emigration of Swedes to the United States. It looks at who emigrated, their reasons for emigrating, their experiences both en route and in the United States, where they settled, and their effect on the United States and Sweden (both by leaving and, in some cases, returning). Along the way, the author uses many words from the emigrants themselves, drawn from letters and diaries, allowing them to speak to us themselves. I can't say enough about this book. I enjoyed the book immensely, feeling as though it answered all of my questions. So, if you are interested in the Swedish immigrants to the United States, then you must read this book.

"Swedish Exodus" is an indispensable reference for Swedish researchers. In these pages one can find out why so many Swedes decided to come to America, how they managed it, where they emigrated to in America, how many came during each year of the mass migration, how many remigrated each year, how many came from each major Swedish district, and how they did in America. It even outlines the consequences of the emigration on Sweden. It is nicely indexed, contains a useful bibliography, and is illustrated with photos and drawings.

Being of Swedish descent I always wondered why my forebears came here. Now I know. Concise. Not wordy. Good for someone that wants a good simple explanation of the Swedish Exodus.

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