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A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915. By Robert C. Ostergren. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. Illustrations, maps, graphs, charts, notes, bibliography, index. xv + 400 pp. \$45 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Robert Ostergren's *A Community Transplanted* is something of a smorgasbord, with a meaty main course. Ostergren has drawn concepts and methodology from various social science disciplines, which perhaps limits his readership. But the book does break new ground in the extent to which it measures, correlates, and evaluates a great number of socio-economic variables in the lives of hundreds of immigrants from a Swedish parish in the 1880s.

Having emphasized its social-scientific approach and its density of information, I should also mention that Ostergren begins his study with an imaginative, personal narrative reflecting the thoughts of a typical immigrant in old age as he looks back over his life in Sweden and America. Laced as it is with quantifiable facts, Ostergren's narrative still manages to remain rather readable. This work is an important one and I hope layreaders as well as academics will pay attention to it.

Ostergren reconstructs one of the trans-Atlantic chain migrations of the nineteenth century. He defines chain migration as a "process in which culturally homogeneous settlements formed through . . . the repeated movement over time of kin, neighbors, and friends between localities in Europe and the Upper Middle West (and often between settlements on successive midwestern frontiers)." As these communities corresponded with each other, they established "conduits for a prolonged series of back and forth impulses between places that both reflected and inspired change in each."

Ostergren studies the society, culture, and economy of Rättvik parish in the upper Dalarna province of Sweden and examines how and why nearly one thousand of these Swedes emigrated to the United States between 1864 and 1889. He then follows the careers of the five hundred

or so who congregated in two American counties: Isanti in Minnesota and Clay in Dakota Territory. He carries their story through the second generation, up to 1915, and then does the same with the folk back home in Rättvik. He shows how life changed in the post-settlement period, observing that the church remained a stronger cultural factor in Isanti than in Rättvik.

Besides challenging Turner's thesis of the frontier, this study also questions the adequacy of Oscar Handlin's portrait of peasants uprooted and forced into an entirely new way of life. Uprootedness may characterize the experience of European peasants in urban America, but in Ostergren's view it has little applicability to the rural immigrant, especially those involved in "chain migration."

The Swedes that Ostergren studies wished above all to re-establish in the New World a community much like the one they left behind. What worried the Rättvikians was not their existing status, but the trend they saw developing—in which the new generation would have a very difficult time maintaining the kind of life their elders enjoyed. These were land-owning folk, not landless *torpare*, but they realized that they had just about reached their maximum capacity for clearing new land and exploiting other local resources. Thus many of them elected to purchase cheap land in America and to replicate their Swedish social and religious values in the New World.

This replication, however, depended largely on family and kinship groups reinforcing each other. By 1890 the majority of emigrants from Rättvik were young, adventurous, unmarried males, and they felt no particular "pull" to rural Isanti, which by now had a well-established Swedish-oriented subculture. Urban and industrial influences affected both communities, but by 1915 Isanti's Swedes had retained their Old World traditions more effectively than had the Rättvikians themselves.

Ostergren's is part of a small but growing volume of literature one might label as "comparative immigration history," in which historians examine and compare both sending and

receiving communities. This is not an easy task, requiring as it does facility in a second language and the interdisciplinary skills of historian, geographer, and sociologist. Ostergren has displayed admirable versatility. In its many-faceted approach, this study may serve as a model for the analysis of other chain migrations to rural, and perhaps even urban, areas of the United States.

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