

Germans' insistence that "we were here first" encouraged the writing of some of the first "multi-cultural" alternatives to a national history of Anglo-Saxon triumphs.

Equally popular—and mythic in their intentions—were numerous accounts documenting an immigrant group's service and sacrifices during the American Revolution and the Civil War. With far less evidence, some immigrants also argued that the origins of American democracy, or American culture's concern with liberty or representative government, could be traced to Old World origins, whether in medieval Scandinavia, ancient Greece or Italy, or in the forests of Germany. Overland calls this home-making genre the myth that "we were American to begin with." Along with tales of discoverers, founders, and soldiers, these histories provided evidence aimed to convince skeptical Anglo-Saxons that foreigners deserved inclusion in the nation.

Immigrant Minds, American Identities succeeds in offering a sympathetic portrait of both the origins and forms of immigrant home-making myths without ignoring their limitations. Overland rightly notes that alternatives to American ethnic identities always existed, notably in various expressions of working-class internationalism that dismissed national loyalties as irrelevant for mobile workers in an international economy. His book also offers a sensitive comparison of home-making myths among European immigrants and American minorities—indigenous peoples, Spanish-speakers in the Southwest, and the descendants of African slaves—who were excluded not only from the circle of national belonging but from citizenship and its rights. Finally, Overland rightly emphasizes how immigrants' claims that they were "Americans to begin with," were "here first," or "gave our blood" almost inevitably sought to position one group of foreigners above others and above the native minorities of the country. In competing for a home in America, ethnic American identities too often closed the door to persons unlike themselves.

Swedes in the Twin Cities: Immigrant Life and Minnesota's Urban Frontier, edited by Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001. x, 367 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Norma J. Hervey is professor of history at Luther College. Her research interests include ethnicity and immigration history.

This work of 24 essays by prominent scholars in the United States and Sweden testifies to the remarkable history of published monographs on immigration history in Minnesota. This is an important work that

challenges those of us in Iowa who focus on immigration and ethnic groups to write and publish the histories of the multiple immigrant groups who came to Iowa. The presence of such institutions as the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, and the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids offers opportunities to scholars and committed amateur historians. We need more texts to teach Iowa history, and immigrant history is a good place to begin. Cooperative efforts with scholars and organizations in the home countries of Iowa immigrants would enhance our state and regional history.

The book begins with a primary immigration question, "melting pot or mosaic?" (15-27). The topics covered by subsequent essays range from neighborhoods to prisoners, from the founding and work of various immigration societies to the fine arts. Each essay will appeal to readers with specific areas of interest. Most will enjoy reading the full work.

In the essay, "Why Minnesota, Why the Twin Cities?" H. Arnold Barton clearly demonstrates that Sweden and Minnesota do *not* have a common landscape or climate, one of the long-standing myths about why Swedes chose Minnesota. He explains the primary reason for their choice: "By now, most of the good land in Illinois and southeastern Iowa—where their earliest settlement lay—was already taken, so most of the new arrivals moved on to where land was available on terms they could manage" (32). "Timing, opportunity, transportation, and promotion" are motives that are common to immigrant groups from around the world. Of course, most were influenced by these factors after seeking communities that included relatives, friends, or, at least, a group from the home country.

Teutonic Minnesotans, cited in 1909 as superior citizens, were not always so well received. In 1901 a letter cited by Rudolph Vecoli suggested that Swedish lumberjacks, in comparison to Yankees, "come from generations of unwashed ancestors" (17). Joy Lintelman's research on down-and-out Swedes documents that women as well as men were usually incarcerated for drunkenness. There are rewarding essays on the various Swedish organizations and on the successes and failures of radical newspapers in the context of the nativism of the First World War. The success stories of libraries and newspapers provide interesting contrasts with the failure to develop a successful press in Chicago, a city with a much larger Swedish population. Music groups, theater presentations, and sports activities all present a vivid social history. Minneapolis also has an impressive history of teaching Scandinavian languages in the public schools.

The final section of the book focuses on religion and politics. The scope of Swedish-American religious choices and activities is surprising and encompasses most Protestant churches. The issue of teaching evolution has long been a topic of lively discussion and more. In that context, the life of Minnesota educator, philosopher, and politician David Swenson will interest—and perhaps inspire—scientists as well as political scientists. The elections represented include that of 1918, marked by the challenge of disloyalty, as well as the struggle between the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and the Republican Party in 1970.

My favorite work from the Minnesota Historical Society continues to be *They Chose Minnesota* (1981), a major reference work that includes all immigrant groups. However, *Swedes in the Twin Cities* offers a great deal more than the title suggests to those interested in the history of the Midwest or in immigrant history in general. The book may not serve as a text for courses other than those on Swedish-American immigrant history, but it will be interesting to any student or scholar of ethnic and immigrant history. Most of the essays are well written and quite readable. It has been simultaneously published in Sweden, another positive suggestion for historians who focus on other immigrant groups.

Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest, by Susan Sessions Rugh. *Midwestern History and Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001. xxi, 285 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

Reviewer David Blanke, assistant professor of history at Texas A & M University–Corpus Christi, studies rural history and popular culture. He is the author of *Sowing the American Dream: How Consumer Culture Took Root in the Rural Midwest* (2000) and *The 1910s* (2002).

Susan Sessions Rugh examines the evolution of family farming and the rural community in Hancock County, Illinois, from the first permanent Anglo settlements of the 1820s to the end of the nineteenth century. In eight carefully crafted and exceptionally well-written chapters, Rugh lays bare the tensions between the actions of these typical midwesterners and the social, economic, and political forces that flourished around them. Three broad concepts direct her analysis: the consequences of cultural conflict between settlers from differing regions, the significance of the expanding marketplace on this population, and the corresponding responses by farming families. Productive in various ways, the text is particularly successful in its treatment of gender, religion, and the regional ethnic conflicts that she contends “amalgam-

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