

PSA Honors Program

Emma Erickson

Swedish Immigration: Why They Came to Minnesota

History

05 May 2014

Swedish Immigration

Why They Came to Minnesota

Emma Erickson

5/5/2014

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Letters & Diaries.....	6
Economic Pull Factors & Railroad Propaganda	8
Land Company Propaganda	12
Shipping Company Propaganda	19
Influential People	21
Political Pull Factors	26
Ethnic Pull Factors	29
Conclusion	34
Bibliography.....	39
Primary Sources.....	39
Secondary Sources	40

Introduction

Emigration has been a characteristic of the Scandinavian countries for centuries. The Vikings raided and settled the British Isles, France, Russia, Iceland, and Greenland. These restless peoples of the far North found themselves in the armies of Norman crusaders and Constantinople. Throughout the centuries there were periods of emigration and periods that had almost none. This pattern continued when the first Swedish colony was placed on the banks of the Delaware River in North America in the year 1637. It continued once again during the 19th and early 20th centuries when about 1.4 million Swedes left the country (The Generations Network, Inc., 2009). That number represents about one-fifth of the average total population for that time period. Not all of these immigrants went to the United States, only the majority. The rest went to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Germany, England, Denmark, and Norway among other countries.

The first major wave of international immigration to the US came between the years 1847 and 1856 when around three million people arrived (Ljungmark, 1979). Most of these immigrants came from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany and mainly settled near the Mississippi Valley frontier. The second wave came between 1865 and 1873 and for the first time included large numbers of Scandinavians. The frontier extended to the Upper Mississippi Valley (Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota), and this region filled with Scandinavian settlements (Ljungmark, 1979).

The explanations of why 31 million Europeans chose to leave their country can be found on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. John Michael Quigley introduces the

concept of push and pull factors. The “push” was exerted by the sending country; in this case it's Sweden. The “pull” was exerted by the receiving country, which is the United States. These “push” and “pull” factors included economic conditions or economic opportunities (Quigley, 1972).

Religion also played a major role in the first wave of migration of Swedes. The government of Sweden was connected to the State Lutheran Church. People were persecuted if they practiced another religion, and other Swedes treated followers of other religions unfairly. This caused many Swedes to migrate between 1840 and 1860. Sweden also had a mandatory military service for men. Many of them left due to not wanting to serve.

One of the main push factors included the rapidly growing population of Sweden. Sweden's population increased due to a decline in the number of deaths and because of the high birth rate. In spite of the emigration, Sweden's population went from 2.3 million in 1800 to 5.5 million in 1910 (Ljungmark, For Sale-Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration, 1866 - 1873, 1979).

With the growing population came another push factor: no land available for the abundance of non-landowners in the rural areas. At the same time, the landowners' lots were reduced because of the splitting of the homesteads due to inheritance, sale, etc. (Ljungmark, 1971). For those people who didn't own any land or farmers with farms that didn't make a profit, the situation was much worse because of the low agricultural wages. The only solution for these people was to leave the rural area. They had two choices of where to go: try and find employment in the expanding industries in the city and urban areas or travel across the Atlantic to the virgin territories of America.

Between 1866 and 1869 a series of catastrophic famines were caused first by too much rain, then drought, and finally epidemics that led to crop failures. Some sixty thousand Swedes left the country during these three years of starvation (The Generations Network, Inc., 2009).

Pull factors are those positive aspects of a certain country that determine where people end up. One of the main factors to the United States was the availability of jobs. With the lack of land in Sweden, those who were farmers or farmhands were looking for agricultural jobs. The United States had lots of land to farm. Even urban industrial workers could find work in the newly industrialized country of the United States.

The next and probably most important of the pull factors was the availability of land in the United States. Due to the abundance of land the United States government enacted the Homestead Act of 1862. This act was designed to give away the public lands held by the government to private individuals. Those who had left Sweden because there was no land were drawn by the advertisements and letters sent home about those who had bought many acres of land for minimal amounts.

Letters sent home from family, friends and neighbors also were an important pull factor. Those who had left sent home news about availability of jobs and higher wages. Swedes who were still having a hard time in Sweden considered taking their advice and also immigrating to the United States.

Once these individuals decided to emigrate, how did they decide where? Did they know as soon as they boarded the ship in Sweden? Did they make the decision as they crossed the vast Atlantic Ocean? When looking at a country like the United States why did these immigrants choose Minnesota? About 9.9% of Minnesota's population

declares it has Swedish ancestry (Census Bureau, 2000). The Census figures from 1870 to 1900 also show the large numbers of Swedes coming to Minnesota. In 1870, Minnesota had a population of 439,706, and 56,927 Minnesotans were Swedish immigrants (University of Virginia, 2004). That was the largest number Swedish immigrants of any state in that year. Only two states were close with Illinois having 41,859 and Wisconsin having 42,845 Swedish immigrants. 1880 was similar with Minnesota having 101,697 Swedish immigrants, Illinois with 59,385 and Wisconsin with 57,487 (University of Virginia, 2004).

Approximately 1.3 million Swedes came to America. A large number of them settled in Minnesota, and I'm curious to know why. It couldn't have been an easy decision, and I think it is important for those who have Swedish ancestry to find out how they came to live where they do today. The purpose of my research was to discover the reasons why Swedish immigrants chose to move to Minnesota in such large numbers. In my studies, I assumed that the various pull factors were the greatest determinant of the Swedish immigrants' decision to move to this state. I further assumed that the different social, political, and economic pull factors had as great or greater influence on the Swedish immigrants' decisions to migrate as the influence of individual family members. I consequently analyzed the broad national and statewide socio-economic and political contexts, rather than focusing narrowly on family history.

My research partly focuses on the letters and diaries that were sent between Minnesota and Sweden. I will also be looking at the propaganda that was used in the United States and in Sweden to persuade emigrants to come to Minnesota. A few of the pull factors will be looked at more closely, including ethnic stereotypes and political

parties. The techniques used by organizations like railroads, land companies, shipping companies, federal authorities and others will also be an important resource to study. I would like to see how these organizations fit into the immigrants' decision of where to move.

Letters & Diaries

Swedes who arrived in the United States wrote letters and sent them back to their homeland for their family, friends, and neighbors to read. They spoke highly of America and its good features like religious and political freedom, high number of jobs, higher wages and many other attributes. Once the Homestead Act of 1862 was passed, the Swedes wrote back about the abundance of land and how a new immigrant could afford a place of their own in America. The following examples of letters and diaries lead to the conclusion that correspondence sent back and forth between Sweden and America influenced those who were still in Sweden to consider leaving.

Olaf Anderson kept a diary from the time he left his hometown in Sweden until he arrived in Red Wing, Minnesota. In his diary, Anderson recounted that he served in Swedish Parliament from 1850 to 1851. He disliked the aristocratic influence in the government, and he felt that the common people had no voice in the rule of their land. He was also concerned about his family's welfare. He came to the conclusion that his children might have a better future if he moved them to America. He came to Red Wing, MN alone in 1855. He liked the country and decided to return to Sweden and make plans to take his wife, five daughters and two sons (Anderson Diary).

The personal correspondence of Sven Johan Persson related how his family came to America. He wrote,

In 1913, my father went to America to find a place where one could be anything you wanted. In Sweden at this time you couldn't rise above your father. He wanted more for us. Specifically he wanted an education for his sons. In a letter he told of meeting someone on the ship who told him to go to Minnesota. He told him about the jobs in St. Paul (Persson Diary).

Persson's correspondence does not say whether the man his father met was another Swede or an employee of an organization whose job it was to recruit newly arrived Swedes.

Carl Fredrick stated that "he was lured to Minnesota by the reports of friends who had migrated there from Sweden"(Fredrick Diary). Many Swedes received tickets and money in addition to descriptions of the United States to encourage them to come. The relatives who sent these items did so with the understanding that their kin would repay those tickets with labor upon reaching their destination.

Economic Pull Factors & Railroad Propaganda

In addition to individual interactions, macroeconomic factors also played a role in Swedish migration. The Gilded Age was a period approximately spanning the last three decades of the 19th century. It was a time of unparalleled growth in technology (Flagler Museum, 2011). Big business entrepreneurs and bankers became wealthy beyond what most can imagine today. These “captains of industry” became household names: John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil, Andrew Carnegie of Carnegie Steel, and J. Pierpont Morgan. Their methods were not always fair, but there were few laws regulating business conduct at that time. The Gilded Age was an era of rapid economic growth, but there was also a lot of social conflict. American wages, especially for skilled workers, were much higher than in Europe. This attracted millions of immigrants. Rapid industrialization meant, despite the increasing labor force, real wages in the United States grew 60% from 1860 to 1890, and continued to rise thereafter (Flagler Museum, 2011). However, the Gilded Age was also an era of poverty as very poor European immigrants poured in. Railroads were the major industry, but the factory system, mining, and labor unions also increased in importance.

In the late 1800s, businesses operated largely without government regulation. This hands-off, laissez-faire, approach to economics contended that government should play a very limited role in business. Supporters of this strategy maintained that if government did not interfere, the strongest businesses would succeed and bring wealth to the nation as a whole (Pearson Education, Inc.).

Most Americans accepted laissez-faire economics in theory. In practice, however, many supported government involvement when it benefited them. For example, American businesses favored high tariffs on imported goods to encourage people to buy American goods. American businesses also accepted government land grants and subsidies. A subsidy is a payment made by the government to encourage the development of certain key industries, such as railroads.

To ensure government aid, business giants during the Gilded Age supported friendly politicians with gifts of money. Some of these contributions were legal and some were illegal. Between 1875 and 1885, the Central Pacific Railroad reportedly budgeted \$500,000 each year for bribes (Pearson Education, Inc.).

The cooperative relationship between railroads, federal government, and the state government resulted in their joint efforts to draw Swedish immigrants to the Minnesota prairies. At an early stage, the State of Minnesota was aware that the railroads would be important in attracting immigrants. Railroads were the key to the location of new Swedish settlements during the late 19th century. As the tracks pushed westward across the prairies, communities sprang up. In addition, to offering ease of access to the unsettled prairie, the railroads provided work for newly arrived immigrants. Many prospective settlers selected the site of their future homes while earning "seed capital" in the railroads' employ (Rice, 1981).

In 1866 the Northern Pacific Railroad Company informed Governor William R. Marshall that the company intended to create an immigration bureau "for the purpose of settlement of the land of the Company" (Ljungmark, *For Sale-Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration, 1866 - 1873*, 1979). In order to increase the

railroad's potential traffic, an energetic immigration propaganda for the railroad land was started in the early 1870's. Since the state land grant consisted mostly of forest, the propaganda was aimed particularly at the Scandinavians who were considered to be especially appropriate settlers in such areas.

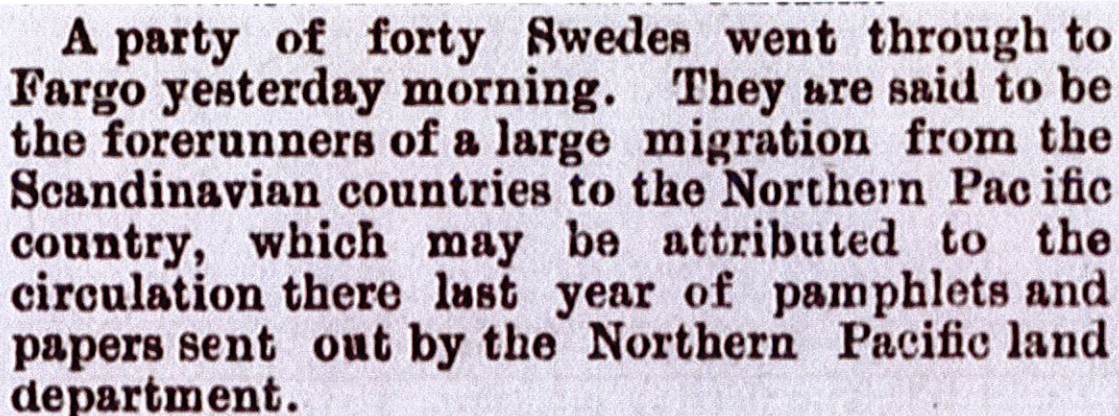
Both the state and the private sector were aware that it was in their common interest to promote immigration. The increased railroad construction in Minnesota starting in the late 1860's made more railroad land accessible and created a rising demand for immigrants as workers and land buyers. The Scandinavians were attractive to the railroads in both capacities. The three main land grant railroads were: The St. Paul & Pacific, The Lake Superior & Mississippi, and The Northern Pacific railroads (Ljungmark, For Sale-Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration, 1866 - 1873, 1979).

All three of these railroads had the same objective: to attract immigrants. They all had basically the same organization of their land and immigration departments, but they had to adapt their propaganda to their different premises. The St. Paul & Pacific sought to populate a region still partly on the frontier. Because the Northern Pacific had not yet begun to build in the early 1870's, it did not yet have lands to sell. The Lake Superior & Mississippi sought to attract immigrants to an area where many Swedes had already settled.

Land-grant railroads became the West's principal colonizers. The benefit of immigrants was two-fold: newcomers would both buy their land and create traffic previously lacking in barely settled regions. Soon every western railroad set up both a Land Department and a Bureau of Immigration. The Land Department both took care of

selling the sections granted by the government and priced the land - usually at \$2 to \$8 an acre (Van Ophem, 2012). It arranged credit terms needed by the immigrants and supervised numerous activities to attract prospects: reduced round-trip tickets for possible buyers, land-viewing expeditions where purchasers were luxuriously entertained, and elaborate "reception houses" along the way where buyers and land viewers were accommodated (Van Ophem, 2012). Land Departments worked long and hard to attract settlers.

Below is an example of the Land Departments' efforts to persuade Swedes to come to America.



A party of forty Swedes went through to Fargo yesterday morning. They are said to be the forerunners of a large migration from the Scandinavian countries to the Northern Pacific country, which may be attributed to the circulation there last year of pamphlets and papers sent out by the Northern Pacific land department.

Figure 1

(Daily Globe, 1880)

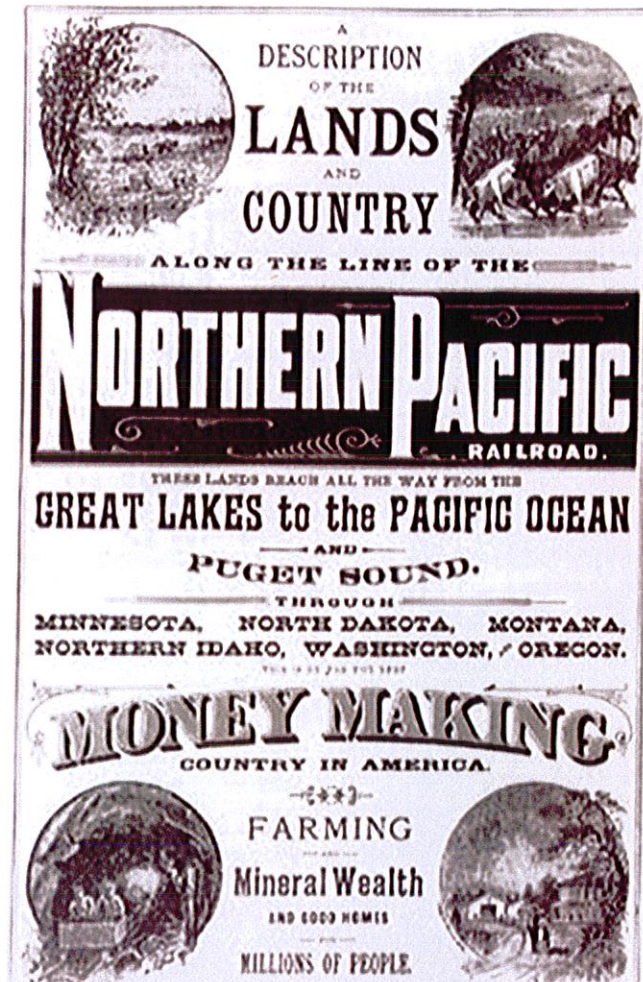


Figure 2

(MacIntosh & Wilma, 1999)

Land Company Propaganda

The railroads' bureaus of immigration were just as active as their land departments. The bureaus' task was to advertise the Great Plains region to get as many immigrants to populate the railroads' lands as possible. Even immigrants who did not settle on railroad land were welcome as producers of goods that the railroads could

carry. All railroads had agents in eastern port cities to greet immigrants. These agents also arranged their transportation west, and made sure that no rival company lured away these prospective settlers. Agencies were also set up in numerous cities in Europe. For example, the Northern Pacific Railroad had a central office in London with branches in Liverpool, Germany, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries (Van Ophem, 2012). This pattern was followed by most railroad lines. Agents were usually returned immigrants with excellent persuasive powers or the prominent figures in their communities. In Scandinavian countries, ministers were often employed to influence people to migrate. The agents' primary mission was to present the American West as a land of milk and honey. Their brochures, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and posters were glossy examples of exaggeration.

MINNESOTA!

CURE FOR THE PANIC

Emigrate to Minnesota!

Where no Banks exist ; a suspension is unknown.
Land and Water of best kind. No Ague and
Fever there. CLAIMS can be made by rich and
poor.

THE MAN OF SMALL MEANS

CAN SOON REACH COMPETENCY.

Climate dry and healthy. The rich respect and
assist the poor—all labor together. The finest
Lands are open to pre-emption.

Saint Paul is the great stopping place,
From there you can go to any point, as emigrant
settlers start daily to the various Land Offices and
Districts.

Figure 3

(American Memory, 2008)

WESTWARD HO!



THE GREAT LAND GRANT
OF
THE ST. PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS AND MANITOBA RAILWAY,
NOW INCORPORATED WITH
THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY LINE
NOW OPEN FOR SETTLEMENT.

1,500,000 ACRES
THE MOST PRODUCTIVE LAND IN THE WORLD IN THE PARK REGION OF

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA HAS NEVER HAD A CROP FAILURE!
HAS NEVER HAD ANY FROZEN GRAIN!!
HAS THE GREATEST YIELD PER ACRE!!!
HAS THE GREATEST AGGREGATE YIELD OF WHEAT!!!!

Figure 4

(American Memory, 2008)



EMIGRATION



UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

The attention of Emigrants and the Public generally is called to the new reports regarding

TERRITORY OF MINNESOTA,

Containing a population of 100,000 and possessing the Union as a State during the present year. According to an act of Congress passed last February, the State is constitutionally endowed with Lands for Public Schools and State Universities, also granting 100 per cent. on all sales of U. S. Lands for Internal Improvements. On the 31 March, 1857, grants of Land from Congress was made to the leading Towns & Railroads in Minnesota, so that in a short time the trip from New Orleans to any part of the State will be made in from two and a half to three days. The

CITY OF MINNAPOLIS,

Situated on the Mississippi River, 25 miles below St. Paul, is now a prominent point for a large Commercial Trade, being backed by an extensive Agricultural, Forestry and Farming Country; has fine streams in the interior, well adapted for Milling in all its branches, and Manufacturing **WATER POWER** to any extent.

Mr. JOHN SWENSON, is Gentleman of large means, ideas and liberality, speaking the various languages, is the principal Proprietor of Minnapolis. He laid it out on such principles as to encourage all **Mechanics, Merchants, or Professionals** of all kinds, on the same equality and footing; the consequence is, the place has gone ahead with such rapidity that it is now an established City, and well deservedly double its population for every year.

Persons arriving by Ship or otherwise, can be accommodated without expense in travelling, going to Saint Louis, or down of Course and make Railroad to Dubuque on the Mississippi. Steamboats leave Saint Louis and Dubuque daily for **MINNAPOLIS**, and make the trip from Dubuque in 26 to 40 hours.

NOTICES.

1. All Railroads and Steamboats, partly this and a complete plan, or protection, direction to Americans, **AID THE EMIGRANT**, and forward their own interests.

2. For authentic documents, reliable Statements, and all particulars, in regard to Occupations, Wages, Possessing Lands (or any) Stock and Cattle, Price of Lumber, Expenses, &c., apply to

THOMAS B. WINSTON, 21 Long Street, New Orleans
ROBERT CAMPBELL, St. Louis
JOSEPH B. FORBES, Dubuque

Figure 5

(American Memory, 2008)

AMONG THE WHEAT-FIELDS OF MINNESOTA. Minnesota is pre-eminently the wheat-growing State of the Union. Almost the youngest of the political sisterhood. With a settlement and town history of hardly more than a decade, she now boasts of a quarter of a million of inhabitants, and contributes largely to the wheat-markets of the East. Owing to the peculiarity of her climate and soil, she is the best adapted of any of the States to the raising of this staple. Wheat is in fact almost her exclusive object of production. None farm here except for this. Her dry, clear, and for the most part, cool atmosphere makes Minnesota the very paradise of wheat-growers. As one stands on the boundless rolling prairies of this country, and looks around him on every side, and sees the interminable reach of slightly undulating soil, clad with golden-rod, fire-weed and a vast variety of other flowering plants intermixed with prairie-grass, and notices the almost utter absence of forest, and catches the onward rush of the fresh, cool southern breeze that sweeps by with a voluminous force, he involuntarily thinks of the wide expanse of the ocean, and snuffs the wind as he would the sea-breeze itself.

Figure 6

(Harper's Magazine, January 1868)



Figure 7

(American Memory, 2008)

Usually the leaflets emphasized the profits waiting for settlers on the Great Plains and stories of personal success were often used to illustrate this point.

Shipping Company Propaganda

EMIGRATION
TO THE UNITED STATES & BRITISH PROVINCES OF N. AMERICA.

AMSTERDAM	1000	J. & W. Moore	NEW YORK	1000	J. & W. Moore
BOSTON	1000	G. & S. Bennett	PHILADELPHIA	1000	G. & S. Bennett
BREITENBURG	1000	F. Anthon	SPRINGFIELD	1000	J. & W. Moore
BRISTOL	1000	G. & S. Bennett	WASH. DC	1000	J. & W. Moore
BUFFALO	1000	J. & W. Moore	WILMINGTON	1000	J. & W. Moore
CHICAGO	1000	J. & W. Moore	WYOMING	1000	J. & W. Moore
CINCINNATI	1000	J. & W. Moore	YONKERS	1000	J. & W. Moore
CLEVELAND	1000	J. & W. Moore	NEW BRUNSWICK	1000	J. & W. Moore
DALLAS	1000	J. & W. Moore	NEW JERSEY	1000	J. & W. Moore
DENVER	1000	J. & W. Moore	NEW YORK	1000	J. & W. Moore
DETROIT	1000	J. & W. Moore	NEW YORK	1000	J. & W. Moore

THE BOSTON PACKETS,
 THE ONLY ESTABLISHED LINE OF PACKETS BETWEEN
LIVERPOOL & BOSTON,
 SAILING EVERY WEEK FROM LIVERPOOL.

The Boston Packets, whose reputation for punctuality, speed, and safety stands unrivaled, offer superior facilities to private Emigration. The cargo on the average is accomplished in a shorter time than by any other line of vessels sailing for North America, and Passengers for the Western States or Canada may still continue on reaching their destination at least a week earlier by this route than by way either of New York or Philadelphia.

While English-built Vessels offer superior accommodations for all classes of Passengers. They are constructed of the best materials, have been built expressly for the Passenger Trade, and fully equipped with the most improved provisions.

They are commanded by men of character, skill, and experience, who take every precaution calculated to promote the health and comfort of the Passengers. Provisions of the best quality, subject to the inspection and approval of the Government Emigration Officers, are supplied to Passengers according to Act of Parliament.

Each Vessel carries a duly qualified and experienced Surgeon, paid by the Owners. Every Emigrant is to receive of the Surgeon, free of charge, all the medical assistance he may be entitled to by law, or by contract.

HENRY B. HENDERSON, 17, Rowland Street, Liverpool. JOHN W. MOORE, 11, South Street, Liverpool. JAMES SMITH, 11, South Street, Liverpool. SAMUEL FRANKLIN, 1, Fenchurch Lane, London. GEORGE GRANT & CO., 20, Fleet Street, London.	ROBERT HENDERSON, 17, Rowland Street, Liverpool. W. & S. CURRIE, 11, South Street, Liverpool. CORNELIUS CALLETON, 11, South Street, Liverpool. JAMES KENT, 11, South Street, Liverpool. W. G. STEPHENS, 11, South Street, Liverpool.
--	--

TRAIN & CO.
 100, WATERLOO ROAD, LIVERPOOL.
 121, ST. PATRICK STREET, CORK.

All the Boston Packets are distinguished by a Red Flag, with a White Diamond in the center.

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY H. B. TRAIN & CO., LIVERPOOL.

Figure 8

(National Museum of American History)



Figure 9

(Aquitania, 2014)

The first emigrants travelled in the holds of sailing cargo ships. With the invention of steam, an efficient transatlantic passenger transport mechanism was established at the end of the 1860s. Tickets soon became much cheaper due to the speed and the

capacity of the large ships. The transport companies operated various routes from the various Swedish port towns of Stockholm and Gothenburg.

Something of a Reduction.
A. E. Johnson & Co., Northwestern agents of the Thingvalla line, have received a dispatch from Copenhagen informing them that a reduction of 30 per cent. had been made in prepaid storage rates to New York, to take effect immediately. This reduction will naturally cause an increased immigration from Sweden and Norway to the Northwest during the coming spring.

Figure 10

(St. Paul Daily Globe, January 1887)

Influential People

There were also many influential people who persuaded emigrants to leave Sweden and come to America. One of those people was Hans Mattson. Mattson was born on a small farm in Sweden in the year 1832. In 1851, he immigrated to the United States with a friend. He settled on a farm in a Swedish colony in Illinois in 1853 (Cartwright, 2013). He then returned to Sweden and brought his family back to join him, but Mattson did not find Illinois promising. He left in search of better land just a few months after settling there.

In August 1853, Mattson led a group of several hundred Swedish immigrants to Goodhue County, Minnesota. The settlement was soon called Vasa, and it became home to prominent Swedish Americans. Mattson left the colony in 1856 for Red Wing, Minnesota. New immigrants continued to arrive, sustaining Vasa's Swedish culture. He practiced law in Red Wing between 1857 and 1858. From 1858 to 1861 he was appointed to Justice of the Peace, then City Clerk, and finally County Auditor (Ljungmark, For Sale-Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration, 1866 - 1873, 1979). He also participated in the American Civil War with the Union Army. He entered the war as a captain in a company of Scandinavians whom he had recruited. In 1863, he became a colonel in the Third MN Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

After returning to Minnesota, Mattson began his work as an immigration booster. First, he worked for private railroad companies. He started with the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co, where he worked as a protection agent to greet Swedish and Norwegian arrivals in Chicago. Building on his experience in 1866, Mattson proposed the creation of a state Board of Immigration. The board was designed to recruit immigrants to homestead land in Minnesota. Until the 1880's, immigration to the U.S. was regulated by states rather than the federal government. In 1867, the board was established and Mattson was named as its first secretary. The state was especially interested in recruiting Scandinavian immigrants, who politicians considered to have good moral character (Cartwright, 2013).

Mattson soon returned to working as a private immigration booster. In the late 1860s and 1870s, he was an immigration agent for the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad Company and for the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. His work as a

private immigration booster sometimes overlapped with his service as a state official, but the state did not see it as a conflict.

As a booster, Mattson promoted Minnesota in Sweden and Norway, as well as among Scandinavian immigrant communities in the eastern United States. Mattson recruited immigrants to Minnesota by writing for Swedish American newspapers. He also encouraged immigrants to write letters to friends and family in Europe. Finally, he published pamphlets about the benefits of Minnesota. During his lifetime, Mattson founded several Swedish newspapers in Chicago and Minneapolis, including the *Minnesota Stats Tidning* (Cartwright, 2013).

In 1870, Mattson ran for Minnesota Secretary of State. Scandinavian influence in Minnesota was growing, and the Republican Party sought Swedish and Norwegian candidates for office. Mattson won and became the first Swede elected to office in Minnesota. Mattson left the position in 1872, but he was re-elected and served again from 1887 to 1891.

In between his stints as Secretary of State, Mattson lived outside the U.S. He took his family to Sweden in the spring of 1871. He remained in Sweden for five years as a booster. President James A. Garfield offered him a diplomatic post because Mattson had become one of the most prominent Swedish Americans in U.S. politics.

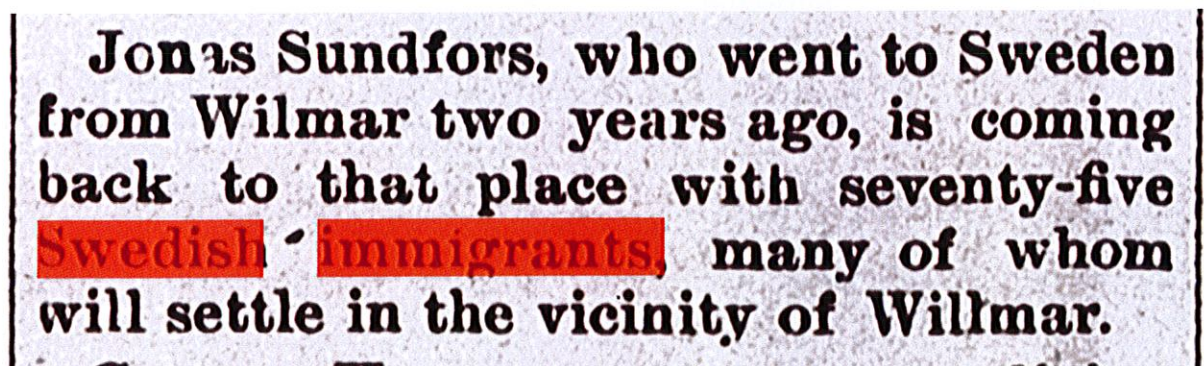
Swedes preferred to settle in areas that were similar to the Swedish countryside. Swedish author Fredrika Bremer gave substance to this belief in 1850, when she described Minnesota as "the New Scandinavia" (Howitt, 1853). Her works were read all over Europe, especially in her homeland of Sweden. The celebrated Swedish novelist was discerning enough to realize that the future North Star State was "just the country

for Northern emigrants," an observation that caused her to exclaim, "What a glorious new Scandinavia might not Minnesota become!" (Howitt, 1853).

She traveled the world extensively and in 1850 visited Minnesota. Her many remarks included:

This Minnesota is a glorious country, and just the country or Northern emigrants -- just the country for new Scandinavia ... Here would the Swede find again his clear, romantic lakes, the plains of Scania rich in corn, and the valleys of Norrland ... Scandinavians who are well off in the Old Country ought not to leave it. But such as are too much contracted at home and who desire to emigrate, should come to MN... just the country for new Scandinavia. It is 4 times as large as England; its soil is of the richest description, with extensive wooded tracts; great numbers of rivers and lakes abounding with fish and a healthy, invigorating climate (Howitt, 1853).

Various immigrants returned to Sweden again and again bringing more and more fellow immigrants with them.



Jonas Sundfors, who went to Sweden from Wilmar two years ago, is coming back to that place with seventy-five Swedish immigrants, many of whom will settle in the vicinity of Willmar.

Figure 11

(Warren Sheaf, June 1892)

Also many state and federal officials went to Sweden to persuade people to immigrate to Minnesota.



Figure 12

(The Minneapolis Journal, January 1901)

Political Pull Factors

Political pull factors also drew Swedish immigrants to Minnesota. Prior to immigrating, most Swedes, opposed slavery and believed in the potential for self-made men. These beliefs were very similar to the ideologies of the Republican Party. When the Minnesota Republican Party was formed during the spring and summer of 1855, its primary aim was opposition to the extension of slavery. Most of the native-born Americans who were moving into the territory were antislavery Northerners who also supported the Republican call for homestead (free land) legislation (Lass, 1998).

Central to the Republican Party was the ideology of free labor. This belief system was the result of the economically expanding, enterprising, and competitive society of the early nineteenth century (Etheart, 2014). The word "labor" had slowly begun to take on new meaning. Previously, it meant only those who were involved in the manufacture of goods. By the 1840s, Northerners defined "labor" as any wage earners or self-employed workers. It included those men who owned their own farms, worked their own soil, were educated, and most importantly, were economically independent. Northern society argued that it offered opportunities to all who sought them and enabled most to achieve independence and property. Northerners believed this economy would lead to a more equal distribution of wealth, rather than aid the development of an upper class (Etheart, 2014). They resented and were insensitive to the plight of the poor, because they believed this condition was due to a lack of efforts. The Swedish embraced the Republican ideals of self-sufficiency, hard work, and self-discipline. They desired the opportunity to become self-made yeoman farmers that the Republicans offered. Many had been tenant farmers in their homeland.

The ideal of free labor directly contradicted the South's slave society. The "free labor" concept emphasized an egalitarian vision of individual human potential, the idea that anyone could climb the ladder of success with hard work and dedication. The Republican Party melted the ideals of freedom, independence, and self-reliance into one another as the free labor creed. These beliefs superseded the Revolutionary ideals of the Founding Fathers and they were the true roots of anti-slavery sentiments.

From the 1840s onward, Scandinavian immigrants were well represented in the abolition movement, and they volunteered in great numbers to fight for the Union, with the onset of the Civil War. This is another area where Swedish immigrants sided with the Republican Party. Native-born Northerners united in their free labor, anti-slavery beliefs in the mid nineteenth century.

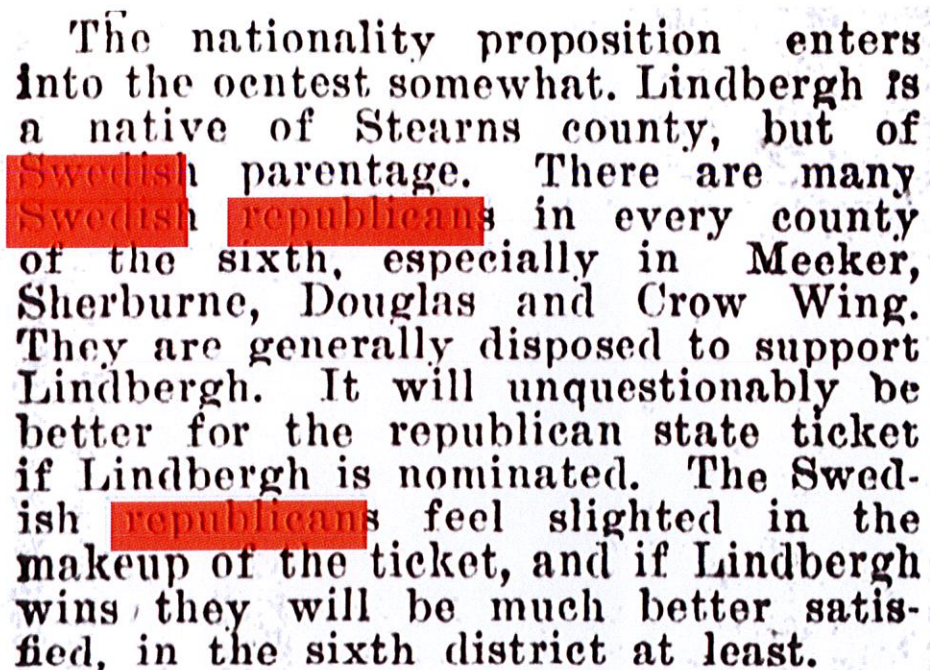
Republicans also believed in the self-made man ideology. A self-made man is one who comes from low origins and climbs the social ladder to create a new identity for himself. Key factors in this rise from rags to riches are hard work and a solid moral foundation. Education is also significant. The self-made man is one who has not inherited his social position by birth and achieves everything without outside assistance. The concept of the self-made man was deeply rooted in the national ethos of the 1800s. Americans argued that everyone should be able to acquire material success and upward social mobility regardless of the circumstances of birth. Therefore, equal opportunity should be provided for all to advance through economic competition in the capitalist marketplace.

The idea of the American Dream is rooted in the United States Declaration of Independence which proclaims that "all men are created equal", and endowed with the

rights to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". The Swedish immigrants came to the United States looking to live the American Dream.

Many Swedish immigrants voted Republican because they shared ideals with this party. These immigrants also ran for offices and won. Of the 24 governors since Knute Nelson (elected governor in 1893), all but 5 have been of Scandinavian extraction. Scandinavians have also been heavily represented in the state legislature and in Minnesota congressional membership (Lass, 1998).

The following newspaper article illustrates the relationship between people with Swedish affiliations and their political views.



The nationality proposition enters into the contest somewhat. Lindbergh is a native of Stearns county, but of Swedish parentage. There are many Swedish republicans in every county of the sixth, especially in Meeker, Sherburne, Douglas and Crow Wing. They are generally disposed to support Lindbergh. It will unquestionably be better for the republican state ticket if Lindbergh is nominated. The Swedish republicans feel slighted in the makeup of the ticket, and if Lindbergh wins they will be much better satisfied, in the sixth district at least.

Figure 13

(St. Paul Daily Globe, February 1896)

Ethnic Pull Factors

Ethnic stereotypes were another pull factor that brought Swedish immigrants to Minnesota. Native born Americans viewed certain ethnic groups in a positive light and others in a negative light. With the vast numbers of Germans and Irish coming to America, hostility towards them erupted. Part of the reason for the opposition was religious. Almost all of the Irish and many of the Germans were Roman Catholic. This influx of immigrants would eventually bring increased political and cultural power for the Roman Catholic Church. This led to a growing fear of Catholicism. As the 19th century wore on, antagonism diminished, Protestant Americans realized that Roman Catholics were not trying to seize control of the government. However, fears continued into the 20th century that there was too much "Catholic influence" on the government.

Part of the opposition was political. In the United States a person could vote once they were naturalized and were 21 years old. Most immigrants living in cities became Democrats because the party focused on the needs of commoners. Irish Catholic politicians were blamed for engaging in political corruption and violence. Nativists alleged that the Irish voters were controlled by local priests who were controlled by Rome (Billington, 1938).

Part of the opposition also occurred because Americans in low-paying jobs felt threatened by recent immigrants willing to work for almost nothing in order to survive. Signs that read "**NO IRISH NEED APPLY**" sprang up throughout the country (USHistory.org, 2014).

Decatur Review (Decatur, Illinois) May 25, 1871

GROCERY CART AND HARNESS FOR SALE
G—In good order, and one chestnut horse, 8 years old, an excellent saddle horse; can be ridden by a lady. Also, one young man wanted, from 16 to 18 years of age, able to write. **No Irish need apply.** CLUFF & TUNIS, No. 270 Washington-st., corner of Myrtle-av., Brooklyn.

New York Daily Times – Mar 25, 1854

WANTED—A GIRL OF NEAT AND INDUSTRIOUS
W habits and an amiable disposition to take the entire charge of two small children. **No Irish need apply.** Address, with real name and residence, H. M. D., Box No. 170 Times Office.

Figure 14

(Yester Year News, 1871)

Social Darwinists also castigated southern Europeans. Social Darwinism is the application of Charles Darwin's biological theory of evolution to sociology, and it contended that some races of people were superior to others. Social Darwinists believed Europeans were more intelligent than other races and had stronger senses of morality and duty (Van Ells). It was also argued that certain ethnicities had a stronger work ethic and were more driven to succeed. For example, the English, were ranked superior to Greeks and Italians. The peoples of southern and eastern Europe were viewed as less intelligent than northern Europeans. Social Darwinists also supposed they had a weaker sense of morality, and thus they were susceptible to lives of crime and corruption. The only proper role in society for Southern and Eastern European immigrants to America was to perform menial labor (Van Ells). Social Darwinists

assumed these peoples were not capable of political leadership. This assumption was founded on the observation that huge numbers of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were illiterate. However, their lack of literacy was due to deficient educations, rather than mental inferiority. Many immigrant groups we consider "white" today were thought of a century ago as inferior non-white peoples. For example, the Irish were sometimes called "white Negroes". Attitudes toward race and ethnicity would affect social policy and legislation, which it turn would sometimes lead to violence. Embracing the scientific racism of social Darwinism and the eugenics movement, nativist reformers argued that the real problem was hereditarily inferior southern and eastern Europeans arriving in record numbers from countries like Italy, Greece, Russia, Hungary and Poland (Van Ells).

Some ethnicities were viewed negatively before they even set foot on American soil. The following is a newspaper article about preventing immigration. The author is appealing to the Federal Government to prevent immigration from every European country due to infectious diseases and the threat of immigrants taking too many jobs. The author also specifies certain ethnicities as particularly undesirable.

While immigration from all European countries ought to be checked, at a time when more than 500,000 persons who had been employed steadily until a few weeks ago are out of work and many thousands more are working only half time, the prevention of immigration from Russia, Hungary, Austria, and Italy is greatly to be desired, because it would not only shut out the possible carriers of infection, but at the same time exclude immigrants of the least desirable and very worst class—immigrants whose habits are repulsive, whose ignorance is peculiarly dense, who are incapable of comprehending our system of government, and whose characteristics may be studied at the Anarchist meetings on the east side in this city.

Figure 15

(To Prevent Immigration, 1893)

In contrast, people from Scandinavia were viewed positively as seen in this newspaper article from 1905.

LAUDS SWEDISH-AMERICANS

Louis G. Northland Says **Swedish** Immigrants Are Among Best.

The December number of The World of Today contains an interesting article on "Swedish-Americans" by Louis G. Northland, who tells what has been achieved in a half century in a new land.

Over one million **Swedish** immigrants entered the United States between the early fifties and the latter part of the nineties, says the author, and they constitute today one of the most respected, intelligent and industrious and law-abiding elements of our cosmopolitan population. At a low estimate the property now invested in **Swedish** American churches and educational and social institutions is worth \$15,000,000.

As a race our Swedish-Americans have some characteristic faults, and many virtues. They are God-fearing, "the plain people," to use one of Lincoln's favorite expressions. The national **Swedish** characteristics are industry, frugality, truthfulness and honesty. With strong hands and clear heads, loyal in their sentiment toward their adopted country, they have planted schools, churches and hospitals on the hills and in the valleys. In the middle west, the southwest and on the

on the hills and in the valleys. In the middle west, the southwest and on the Pacific coast they were among the pioneers and today their flourishing settlements bear witness to the industry and thrift that made the **Swedish** immigrant welcome to our country.

"There is no foreign nationality in our country that so soon becomes American as the Swede. Children born of **Swedish** parents are to all practical purposes American in ideas and sentiment. The second generation knows little of the language of its ancestors and the third generation considers the foreign immigrant with much the same feeling as does the American of Dutch or Mayflower ancestry."

The article treats of the **Swedish** press and literature in America, the American union of **Swedish** singers, **Swedish** art and artists, Swedish-Americans in the professions and the Swedes as citizens.

Figure 16

(Chronicling America: Historic American Newspaper, 1905)

Conclusion

Push factors in Sweden and pull factors in the United States both encouraged thousands of Swedish immigrants to come to Minnesota. Swedish immigrants generally assimilated quickly to their new home. Although they melded into society, they also retained ethnic traditions and contributed to Minnesota's cultural diversity. Their influence was essential in forming today's Minnesota. Swedish immigrants arriving in America formed a minority culture group. Some quickly lost the cultural baggage they carried from the Old World, but most strove to retain a sense of Swedishness by establishing institutions that enabled them to do so. However, not all Swedish Americans retained their ethnicity and embraced the Swedish sub-culture.

Milton M. Gordon describes this process. First, the immigrant adopts the cultural trappings of the host society. This includes its language and values. The Swede begins to *look* like an American. Next, the immigrant integrates into the host society. Schools, work places, and community groups are the first step in integration. This process continues with inclusion in private clubs and social organizations. Lastly, intermarriage solidifies integration. This is when the Swede begins to *act* like an American. The assimilation process completes when the immigrant no longer thinks of himself as a hyphenated American and is consequently unwilling to support a special interest position that conflicts with the interests of the host society. The Swede begins to *think* like an American (Rice, 1981).

Swedish immigrants quickly looked like their American neighbors. Even their homes resembled other Minnesotans, except for a few precious items brought from Sweden. Swedish immigrants had even greater difficulty maintaining their drinking and

eating customs because America's agricultural system was different than their homelands'. Traditional dishes were quickly identified with major holidays. These holiday traditions have tenaciously persisted to the present.

Swedes in Minnesota also retained their language for quite some time, and it was considered one of the most important aspects of their culture (Rice, 1981). From the beginning, it was clear that if the Swedish language were to survive it must be complemented with English. Nowhere in Minnesota, or the rest of the United States, was there a Swedish settlement large enough to conduct all affairs of daily life in Swedish. Dealings with most state and local government officials had to be conducted in English. Swedish immigrants did not question the need to know English. Unlike German groups, Swedes made no attempt to create full-time Swedish schools (Rice, 1981).

The Swedish immigrants' desire to retain their natural language slowed down the process of assimilation. The vast majority of Swedish immigrants arrived in this country with little or no knowledge of English, and for them the language barrier spelled the difference between a rapid and torturously slow pace of assimilation (Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, 1979).

The church made the greatest effort to preserve Swedish as the spoken language of the home and local community. All of the principle religious bodies to which Swedish Americans belonged retained Swedish as their ecclesiastical language. The church was the most important community and social center to Swedes in Minnesota in the 19th century. By keeping the Swedish language alive, the church created an atmosphere in which Swedish was able to flourish. However, schooling posed a great

threat to the survival of the Swedish language in Minnesota. Children received their educations entirely in English. The effort to pass along the language fell to the Sunday schools.

The early maintenance of separate churches offers the best evidence of Swedish resistance to structural assimilation i.e. the dissolution of ethnic social organizations (Rice, 1981). One of the first acts Swedish settlers performed was build Lutheran churches in their communities. Lutheranism was the state church of Sweden, and most immigrants were therefore members in their homeland.

For Swedish immigrants in rural areas the tempo of assimilation was slow, due to the homogeneous character of the early settlements and their isolation from the outside world. Nevertheless, most Swedes did not feel a great need to maintain a distinct ethnic profile on more than a local basis, and few of their churches and fraternal orders, despite what was said above, developed significantly along regional or national lines.

By the end of World War II, Swedish Americans were well integrated into American society in terms of their religious life. However, many congregations still took pride in their Swedish roots. Recently, some churches have restored services that are conducted in Swedish on special days, such as Christmas. Other churches never gave these services up entirely.

Minnesotans' curiosity in their Swedish heritage has been reinforced by a growing interest in the great migration to America and particularly to Minnesota. The Emigrant Institute was founded in 1965 in the city of Växjö. In 1968 a celebration called Minnesota Day was held for the first time near the institute (Rice, 1981). It has been held annually ever since. In the late 20th century, many institutions dedicated to the

preservation were of Swedish culture also established in Minnesota: historical and fraternal societies, museums, and foundations.

Today, the great era of Scandinavian immigration is more than a century distant, but the cultural legacy of the Scandinavian immigrants is alive and well. Many of the great Scandinavian newspapers are still being published, and they have been joined by an increasing number of websites in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, and Icelandic (Library of Congress). Scandinavian-American social clubs, choirs, debating societies, and sports teams can still be found across the U.S., and every year tens of thousands of Americans gather at conventions and festivals to celebrate their Scandinavian-American heritage.

Along with the traditional holidays celebrated by Americans, many Swedish Americans celebrate two additional holidays. The summer solstice, or Midsummer's Day, is on June 21 (Granquist, 2014). This is a time for feasting and outdoor activities. In many areas of Swedish America, this day is celebrated as "Svenskarnas dag" (Swedes' Day), a special festival of Swedish American culture and solidarity, with picnics, parades, and ethnic activities. December 13 is Saint Lucia Day. Remembering an early Christian saint who brought light in the darkness of the world, a young woman is selected to be the "Lucia bride". Dressed in a white gown with a wreath of candles on her head, she leads a procession through town and serves special breads and sweet rolls. The Luciafest is an important holiday leading into the celebration of Christmas (Granquist, 2014).

The numerous pull factors that drew immigrants into Minnesota at the end of the Nineteenth Century helped to determine the Swedish settlers' legacy. For example, if

Swedish immigrants arrived due to the appeal of family members, friends and neighbors, then family and community remains important to their descendants today. If Republican politics drew immigrants' into Minnesota, then politicians of Swedish ancestry still play a disproportionate role in Minnesota politics. Minnesota is the one state in the Union where Swedes have commanded the center of attention. With two exceptions, all of the state's governors since 1905 have been Scandinavian born or of Scandinavian descent. No less than ten of the 26 American governors who have come from purely Swedish backgrounds have held office in Minnesota. Minnesota was profoundly impacted politically, socially, culturally, and economically by its Swedish forebears, as well as the politicians, industrialists, and propagandists who drew them here. The state was imbued with their values. While the racism embodied by the nativists still haunts the state's present, it has been conversely inspired by the ideals of hard work, community, self-discipline, and entrepreneurial initiative that made Minnesota the North Star State.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

1855, Olaf Anderson Diary, Wallenberg Library and Archive Collections, American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN. Hereafter cited as Anderson Diary.

Emigration. Broadside 1850. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Free Lands. Broadside 1890. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Westward Ho!. Broadside 1878. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Minnesota! Cure for the Panic. Broadside August 1857. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Daily globe. (St. Paul, Minn.), 18 April 1880. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

Harper's new monthly magazine. (New York City, New York.), January 1868. *Journals: Harper's New Monthly Magazine (1850 - 1899)*.

The Minneapolis journal. (Minneapolis, Minn.), 03 Dec. 1905. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

The Minneapolis journal. (Minneapolis, Minn.), 21 Jan. 1901. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

New York Times. (New York City, New York), To Prevent Immigration. (1893, August 25).

No Date. Sven Johan Persson Diary, Wallenberg Library and Archive Collections, American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN. Hereafter cited as Persson Diary.

No Date. Carl Fredrick Diary, Wallenberg Library and Archive Collections, American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN. Hereafter cited as Fredrick Diary.

St. Paul daily globe. (Saint Paul, Minn.), 20 Jan. 1887. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

St. Paul daily globe. (Saint Paul, Minn.), 14 Feb. 1896. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

Warren sheaf. (Warren, Marshall County, Minn.), 30 June 1892. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. *The Minneapolis journal*. (Minneapolis, Minn.), 21 Jan. 1901. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

Secondary Sources

- Aquitania*. (2014). Retrieved March 6, 2014, from Chris Cunard Page:
<http://chriscunard.com/aquitania.php>
- Billington, R. A. (1938). *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*. New York: Macmillan.
- Cartwright, R. (2013, December 23). *Mattson, Hans: (1832 - 1893)*. Retrieved January 12, 2014, from MNopedia: <http://www.mnopedia.org/person/mattson-hans-1832-1893>
- Etheart, A. (2014). *Journal Of History*. Retrieved March 5, 2014, from Binghamton University:
<http://www2.binghamton.edu/history/resources/journal-of-history/lincoln.html>
- Flagler Museum. (2011). *America's Gilded Age*. Retrieved 04 02, 2014, from Flagler Museum:
<http://www.flaglermuseum.us/history/gilded-age>
- Granquist, M. A. (2014). *Swedish Americans*. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from Every Culture:
<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Sr-Z/Swedish-Americans.html>
- Howitt, M. B. (1853). *Minnesota Historical Society Collections*. Retrieved December 10, 2013, from Minnesota Historical Society:
<http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/31/v31i03p148-157.pdf>
- Lass, W. E. (1998). *Minnesota: A History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Library of Congress. (n.d.). *Immigration*. Retrieved April 5, 2014, from Library of Congress:
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/alt/scandinavian.html>
- Ljungmark, L. (1979). *For Sale-Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration, 1866 - 1873*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ljungmark, L. (1979). *Swedish Exodus*. Swedish Pioneer Historical Society.
- MacIntosh, H. M., & Wilma, D. (1999, February 22). *Northern Pacific Railroad announces Tacoma terminus on July 14, 1873*. Retrieved April 10, 2014, from History Link:
http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=922
- National Museum of American History*. (n.d.). Retrieved 12 2014, March, from Enterprise on the Water:
http://amhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/2_3.html
- Pearson Education, Inc. (n.d.). *Politics in the Gilded Age*. Retrieved April 6, 2014, from Pearson Access:
<https://perspective.pearsonaccess.com/content/resources/learningresources/ss/pdf/SS0019.pdf>

Quigley, J. M. (1972). An Economic Model of Swedish Emigration. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 111-126.

Rice, J. G. (1981). Chapter 12: The Swedes. In J. D. Holmquist, *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of The State's Ethnic Groups* (pp. 248 - 276). St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

The Generations Network, Inc. (2009). *Reasons for Emigration*. Retrieved 12 10, 2013, from European Emigration: The Historical Records: <http://www.european-emigration.com/se/reasons.html>

The Industrial Revolution in America. (2013, 08 28). Retrieved 03 12, 2014, from Sage American History: http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/gildedage/topics/railroads_industry.html

University of Virginia. (2004). *Historical Census Browser*. Retrieved October 25, 2013, from University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/>

USHistory.org. (2014). *Irish and German Immigration*. Retrieved April 1, 2014, from U.S. History: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/25f.asp>

Van Ells, M. D. (n.d.). *Gilded Age Nativism*. Retrieved April 6, 2014, from Nashua Schools US History: [http://schools.nashua.edu/myclass/coreyc/ushistory/Documents/Gilded%20Age%20\(Nativism\).pdf](http://schools.nashua.edu/myclass/coreyc/ushistory/Documents/Gilded%20Age%20(Nativism).pdf)

Van Ophem, M. (2012). *Land Departments and Bureaus of Immigration*. Retrieved December 13, 2013, from American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and beyond: <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/essays/1801-1900/the-iron-horse/land-departments-and-bureaus-of-immigration.php>

Yester Year News. (1871, May 25). *Where No Irish Need Apply*. Retrieved March 14, 2014, from Yester Year News: <http://yesteryearnews.wordpress.com/2011/03/17/where-no-irish-need-apply/>