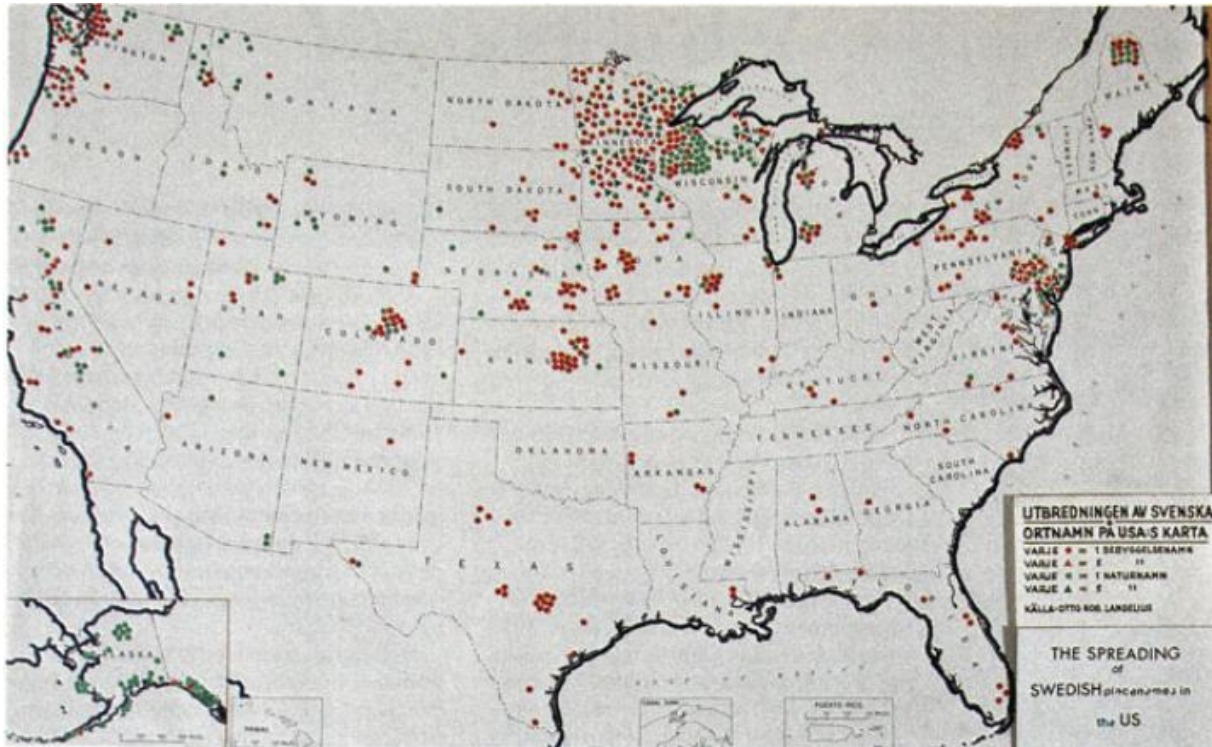


Swedish immigration to the USA



The spread of Swedish names of different places in the USA. Gives an illustration about their settlement – i.e. State of Minnesota.

Swedes emigrated to the United States for various reasons, including economic, social, and political factors. In the mid-19th century, Sweden was experiencing economic hardship, including crop failures, job scarcity, a farmland reform and poverty. Additionally, Sweden had a rigid social structure with limited opportunities for upward mobility, which made it difficult for some people to improve their economic situation.

The United States, on the other hand, was experiencing an economic boom and had a growing demand for labor in various industries, including agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. This created opportunities for immigrants to find work and improve their economic situation.

Another factor was political freedom. Sweden was a constitutional monarchy at the time, and while it was relatively stable and peaceful, some Swedes sought more political freedoms than what was available in their home country. The United States, as a democratic nation with a Bill of Rights and individual freedoms, offered an attractive alternative.

Religious and cultural differences also played a role. Some Swedes were attracted to the religious freedom and diversity in the United States, while others were drawn to the American way of life and culture.

Overall, Swedish emigration to the United States was motivated by a combination of economic, social, political, and cultural factors, with the hope of improving their lives and finding greater opportunities.

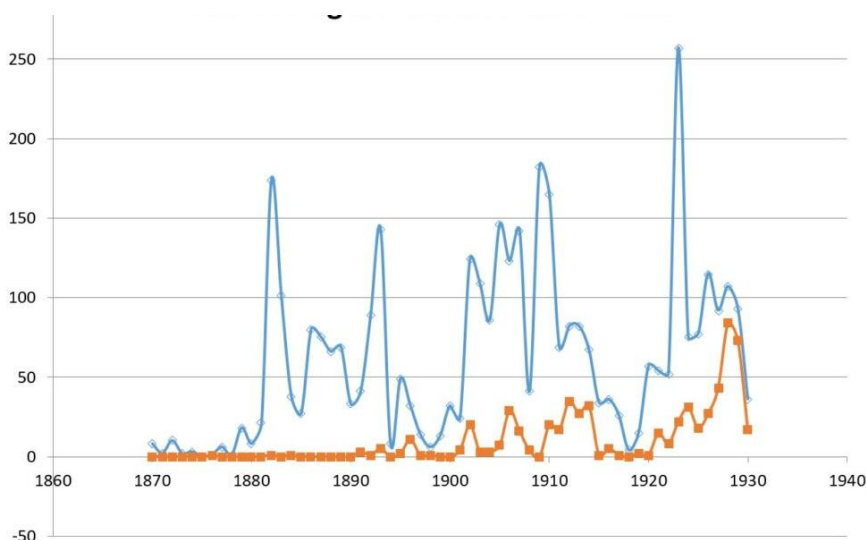
The primary reason for the mass emigration was economic opportunities, as Sweden was experiencing rapid population growth and limited agricultural land, while the United States had vast expanses of fertile land and as mentioned a booming economy.

The first wave of Swedish emigration started in the 1840s, mainly consisting of poor farmers and laborers who settled in the Midwest, particularly in the states of Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Many of these early immigrants were drawn to religious communities, such as the Bishop Hill settlement in Illinois, founded by a Swedish religious leader named Erik Jansson.

The second wave of Swedish emigration occurred after the American Civil War in the 1860s and 1870s, with an increasing number of Swedes leaving for America seeking economic opportunities. This wave of immigration also included many skilled workers, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, and tailors. It is estimated that approx. 120,000 people left Sweden 1868-1873. For three years, Sweden had suffered from stunted growth between 1866-1868.

The third and final wave of Swedish immigration occurred in the early 20th century, with many Swedes fleeing poverty and economic depression in their home country. Many of these immigrants settled in urban areas, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast, where they worked in manufacturing and other industries.

In total, an estimated 1.3 million Swedes emigrated to the United States between 1840 and 1920. The impact of Swedish immigrants on American society and culture has been significant, particularly in the Midwest, where many communities still celebrate their Swedish heritage with festivals and cultural events.



Number of Swedish immigrants to USA (blue) and Canada (brown).

Bishop Hill



Bishop Hill was the site of a utopian religious community founded in 1846 by Swedish pietist Eric Janson (1808-1850) and his followers. Many consider the Jansonist emigration as the beginning of Swedish America.

Bishop Hill is a historic settlement located in Henry County, Illinois, USA, that was founded in 1846 by a group of Swedish religious dissidents known as the Bishop Hill Colony. The group was led by Erik Jansson, who had broken away from the Lutheran Church of Sweden due to disagreements over religious doctrine and church practices.

Jansson and his followers settled in western Illinois, where they established a communal society based on their religious beliefs. They named their settlement Bishop Hill in honor of their leader, who was known as "the Bishop." The community grew rapidly, and at its peak, it had more than 1,000 residents.

The Bishop Hill Colony was known for its strict adherence to communal living, with members pooling their resources and sharing everything from food to clothing. The community was also known for its skilled craftspeople, who produced high-quality goods such as furniture, textiles, and tools.

The community's success was not without challenges, however. The harsh Illinois winters and difficult farming conditions made it difficult for the colony to sustain itself, and tensions between Jansson and other members of the community led to conflicts and ultimately to Jansson's assassination in 1850.

Despite these challenges, the Bishop Hill Colony survived for several decades, but it began to decline in the late 19th century as members left to pursue other opportunities. Today, the historic Bishop Hill

settlement is preserved as a state historic site, and visitors can tour the town's historic buildings and learn about its unique history and culture.

Swedes in Minnesota



The first house for a settler was often a shanty that later was replaced as the living conditions got better.

The first significant wave of Swedish immigrants to Minnesota came in the 1850s and 1860s, and many of them settled in rural areas where they established farms. The immigrants were drawn to Minnesota for a variety of reasons, including the availability of cheap land, the promise of jobs in the lumber and mining industries, and the opportunity to practice their religion and culture freely. The fertile soil, which was similar to the soil in Sweden, and the state's relatively mild climate (winter expected) was also of importance.

The first Swedish settlement in Minnesota was the New Sweden colony, established in 1851 in what the city of Scandia is now. The settlers, led by Gustaf Unonius, established a Lutheran church, a school, and a trading post, and began farming the land. The settlement eventually failed due to a lack of resources and internal disputes, but it paved the way for later Swedish settlements in Minnesota.

The Swedish immigrants faced many challenges in establishing themselves in Minnesota. The climate was harsh in the winter, and they had to adapt to a new way of life in a new country. They also had to learn new farming techniques and adjust to a different agricultural environment.

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, Swedish immigrants continued to arrive in Minnesota, settling in cities such as Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as in rural areas throughout the state. Many Swedish immigrants worked as farmers, laborers, and craftsmen, and they formed tight-knit communities centered around their churches, schools, and social clubs.

Upon arrival, many Swedish immigrants settled in rural areas and established small farming communities. They brought with them their farming skills and techniques, as well as their traditions and customs. The Swedish immigrants quickly adapted to the harsh conditions of the Minnesota prairie, and their hard work and perseverance helped to transform the landscape.

In addition to farming, many Swedish immigrants also found work in the lumber and mining industries, which were booming in Minnesota at the time. The immigrants worked long and difficult hours in the forests and mines, often facing dangerous conditions and poor pay. Despite these challenges, many Swedish immigrants were able to save enough money to purchase their own farms and homes, and to send their children to school.

The Swedish immigrants established communities in many parts of Minnesota, and they built churches, schools, and other institutions to support their way of life. They also maintained their cultural traditions and language, and many of their descendants still identify strongly with their Swedish heritage. Over time, the Swedish immigrants and their descendants became an integral part of Minnesota's social, cultural, and economic life. They contributed to the state's agriculture, industry, and culture, and their legacy is still felt in many parts of Minnesota today.

By the turn of the 20th century, Minnesota had become home to the largest population of Swedish immigrants in the United States. The Swedish immigrants had a significant impact on the state, contributing to its economy, culture, and politics. Swedish traditions, such as Midsummer celebrations and lutefisk dinners, remain a part of Minnesota's cultural heritage to this day.

Swedes in Chicago

By the early 20th century, there were over 100,000 Swedes in the city. They settled mainly on the north side of Chicago, in the neighborhoods of Andersonville, Uptown, and Ravenswood.

Living conditions for Swedish immigrants in Chicago varied depending on the time period and the individual's circumstances. In the early years, many Swedes lived in boarding houses and worked in the factories that sprang up around the city. They often shared small apartments or rooms with other immigrants, and conditions were cramped and overcrowded. The neighborhoods were also often plagued with poor sanitation, disease, and crime.

Over time, as Swedish immigrants became more established in the city, they were able to move into more spacious homes and apartments. They formed tight-knit communities and established their own churches, social clubs, and businesses. Many worked in the manufacturing industry, and others became shopkeepers, skilled tradespeople, or professionals.

In the early 20th century, many Swedish immigrants were involved in the labor movement and fought for better working conditions and wages. They also played a significant role in local politics, with several Swedish Americans serving as aldermen, state representatives, and even mayor of Chicago.

Overall, while the early years of Swedish immigration to Chicago were marked by difficult living and working conditions, Swedish Americans were able to establish themselves in the city and make significant contributions to its development and growth.

Travel cost of emigration



The cost for a family emigrating from Sweden to the USA in the 1890s varied depending on several factors such as the mode of transportation, the size of the family, and the destination in the United States.

Most Swedish emigrants traveled in steerage class, the cheapest option, which was characterized by crowded and uncomfortable conditions. A typical journey could last anywhere from two weeks to several months depending on the mode of transportation and the weather conditions.

The cost of passage in steerage class varied depending on the shipping company, the time of year, and the destination. On average, a single adult ticket could cost between 200 and 400 kronor, while a family of four could pay between 800 and 1,600 kronor. However, the cost could be much higher if the family chose to travel in second or first class.

In addition to the cost of passage, Swedish emigrants also had to pay for other expenses such as food and lodging while traveling to the port of departure, fees for passport and visa applications, and the cost of shipping their belongings to the United States. Overall, emigrating to the United States was a significant financial investment for Swedish families, and many had to sell their land, property, and belongings to afford the trip.

Claiming land



During the 1900s, the US government implemented a system of claiming land called the Homestead Act. The Homestead Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 and allowed settlers to claim up to 160 acres of public land in exchange for a small filing fee and a commitment to live on and improve the land for at least five years.

To claim land under the Homestead Act, a person had to be at least 21 years old, a head of household, or had served in the US armed forces for at least 14 days. They also had to be a US citizen or have filed a declaration of intention to become a citizen. After meeting these qualifications, the person could file an application with the local land office and, if approved, would receive a land patent from the government.

The Homestead Act was intended to encourage settlement of the western territories and was very popular among farmers, ranchers, and other settlers. However, the land that was available for claiming was often of poor quality and many settlers struggled to make a living on their homesteads. Additionally, the Homestead Act had negative consequences for Native American populations, as it led to the forced removal of many tribes from their ancestral lands.

To claim land under the Homestead Act, Swedish immigrants (like all other immigrants) would have had to meet the eligibility requirements, which included being at least 21 years old or the head of a household, a US citizen or intending to become one, and able to improve and cultivate the land for at least five years. Once they met these qualifications, they could file a claim with the local land office and receive a land patent if their claim was approved.

The Homestead Act was intended to encourage settlement of the western territories and was very popular among farmers, ranchers, and other settlers. However, the land that was available for claiming was often of poor quality and many settlers struggled to make a living on their homesteads. Many Swedish immigrants settled in the Midwest and West, where they established farming communities and contributed to the agricultural development of the region. They also established Swedish-language newspapers, churches, and cultural organizations to preserve their heritage in their new home.

Returning home to Sweden

The exact number of Swedish immigrants who returned home from the USA is difficult to determine as it is dependent on various factors such as time period, individual circumstances, and reasons for returning. However, it is estimated that between 20 and 30 percent of Swedish immigrants who came to the USA during the late 19th and early 20th centuries eventually returned home.

There were several reasons why Swedish immigrants chose to return to their homeland. Some immigrants experienced difficulty adjusting to life in America, while others were drawn back to Sweden by economic or family reasons. Additionally, the outbreak of World War I and subsequent economic downturns in the USA led many Swedish immigrants to return home.

It is worth noting that the trend of Swedish immigrants returning home began to decline after the 1920s, as the USA became a more established destination for immigrants and economic opportunities increased.

Occupation

During the early waves of Swedish immigration many Swedish immigrants worked in industrial jobs, particularly in the manufacturing and mining sectors. Swedish immigrants were often employed in factories producing textiles, furniture, machinery, and other goods, as well as in iron and copper mines in the Upper Midwest.

As Swedish immigrants became more established in the United States and began to move into urban areas, many became involved in skilled trades such as carpentry, masonry, and plumbing. Some Swedish immigrants also entered professions such as medicine, law, and engineering.

In addition to these occupations, many Swedish immigrants were involved in agriculture, particularly in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest regions of the United States. Swedish immigrants established farms and homesteads, and many became successful farmers and landowners.

Overall, while the most common occupation for Swedish immigrants varied depending on the time period and location, many were employed in industrial jobs, skilled trades, and agriculture. Swedish immigrants were known for their strong work ethic and determination, and many found success and prosperity in the United States through hard work and perseverance.

Criminality

Criminality among Swedish immigrants to the United States was generally low during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Swedish immigrants were known for their strong work ethic, religious faith, and commitment to family values, which helped to create stable and law-abiding communities in the United States. The vast majority of Swedish immigrants to the United States were law-abiding citizens who contributed positively to their communities and to the country as a whole.



The statue of Karl Oskar and Kristina in Karlshamn, Sweden is a tribute to the main characters in the Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg's four-part novel series "The Emigrants". The series, published between 1949 and 1959, tells the story of a group of Swedish peasants who emigrate to the United States in the mid-19th century, seeking a better life and escaping poverty and oppression in Sweden.

Karl Oskar and Kristina are the central characters of the novels, and their journey from Sweden to the United States is a recurring theme throughout the series. The statue, which was unveiled in 1965, depicts Karl Oskar and Kristina looking out over the sea towards the United States. He looks forward to a new life in USA and she looks back on their homeland. The statue was created by the Swedish sculptor Arvid Källström.

By Ingolf Berg, Lidingö

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