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**ACCULTURATION AMONG SWEDISH IMMIGRANTS
IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA, 1870-1900**

by

Terrence Jon Lindell

A DISSERTATION

**Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Major: History

Under the Supervision of Professor Frederick C. Luebke

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1987

TITLE

Acculturation Among Swedish Immigrants

In Kansas and Nebraska, 1870-1900

BY

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ACCULTURATION AMONG SWEDISH IMMIGRANTS

IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA, 1870-1900

Terrence Jon Lindell, Ph.D

University of Nebraska, 1987

Adviser: Frederick C. Luebke

Contemporary observers and many historians have maintained that Swedish immigrants rapidly assimilated into American society. This dissertation examines this conclusion by focusing on rural Swedish settlements in the Great Plains--the Lindsborg community in McPherson and Saline counties in Kansas and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders counties in Nebraska.

These immigrant communities, all founded in the two decades following the Civil War, typically were established by Swedes who had spent some time in states east of the Great Plains and had thus already begun to assimilate. All of the settlements developed congregations of various denominations--either through religious schism or immigration by different groups--representing the religious diversity of Swedes in America.

Swedes willingly adopted some American practices and institutions. Seeking economic success, they quickly discarded Swedish customs that were less useful than American patterns. Swedish immigrants generally acquired citizenship, involved themselves in the public life of their communities, and participated in politics. They supported the public school system rather than establishing full-time parochial schools. Swedes socialized with Americans in various public settings.

There were, however, limits to the degree of assimilation Swedish immigrants were willing to accept. Their churches, although these institutions had adapted to the American environment in some respects, preserved Swedish as the medium of worship through the use of summer parochial schools that gave religious and language instruction. The immigrant churches also provided social activities that kept youth within the congregation. Nor were rural Swedish immigrants prone to admit Americans into their families; the group exhibited high rates of

endogamy.

Swedish immigrants lived in two worlds. In their public world they sought assimilation into and acceptance by American society. But they also had a private world, bounded by church and family, where the Swedish language and heritage prevailed. Americans, looking at the public life of Swedish-Americans, saw people who readily accommodated themselves to America, but failed to perceive the extent to which Swedes preserved their ethnic identity.

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Special thanks are due my wife, Lois A. McElroy Lindell, who has had to share our entire married life with my doctoral program. This dissertation would not have been possible without her assistance and support, and I promise to give her as much aid as I can as she finishes her dissertation. Moreover, I promise never to put her through a dissertation in history again.

T.J.L.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
1	The Question of Assimilation	1
2	The Swedes Settle the Plains	29
3	The Religious Diversity of Swedish America	65
4	The Impact of Religious Diversity in Kansas and Nebraska	93
5	The Role of the Congregation	127
6	To Train Up a Child: The Role of Education	148
7	Swedes in the Marketplace	171
8	The Swedes in Public Life	203
9	The Swedes and Interaction with Other Groups	230
10	The Progress of Assimilation	254
	Bibliography	268

LIST OF TABLES

6.1	Mean School Attendance by Months for Individuals Aged 6- 18 in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.	151
7.1	1880 Occupational Structure, Lindsborg, Kansas, by Ethnic Stock.	188
7.2	1900 Occupational Structure, Lindsborg, Kansas, by Ethnic Stock.	189
7.3	Occupational Index for Lindsborg, Kansas, 1880 and 1900.	191
7.4	1800 Occupational Structure, Wahoo, Nebraska, by Ethnic Stock.	192
7.5	1900 Occupational Structure, Wahoo, Nebraska, by Ethnic Stock.	194
7.6	Occupational Index for Wahoo, Nebraska, 1800 and 1900.	195
8.1	Rates of Citizenship Among Immigrant Groups , in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1870.	206
8.2	Citizenship of Swedes by Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1870.	208
8.3	Citizenship by Years in U.S. for Swedes, in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.	210
8.4	Citizenship by Years in U.S. for Non-Swedish Immigrants in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.	211
9.1	Endogamous Marriages among Ethnic Groups in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1880.	244
9.2	Endogamous Marriages among Swedes in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1880.	245
9.3	Endogamous Marriages among Ethnic Groups in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.	246

LIST OF MAPS

1.1	Kansas Counties Under Study	15
1.2	Nebraska Counties Under Study	16
2.1	McPherson County, Kansas	39
2.2	Saline County, Kansas	40
2.3	Saunders County, Nebraska	45
2.4	Burt County, Nebraska	48
2.5	Polk County, Nebraska	52
2.6	Phelps County, Nebraska	56

CHAPTER 1

The QUESTION OF ASSIMILATION

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries vast numbers of European immigrants arrived on American shores. The people who made up this great migration-- numbering over thirty million by some estimates--were only part of a much larger movement in Europe set in motion by changing conditions on both sides of the Atlantic. As the burgeoning populations of small European nations strained the resources to feed them, as agricultural changes threw peasants off land their families had tilled for generations, as the development of industry undermined village craftsmen whose ancestors had practiced their trade for centuries, and as national states made demands which their citizens found unacceptable, a new Volkwanderung began. Part of this migration was the short trek from agricultural districts to nearby cities where industrial jobs might be available. Some of it was to neighboring European nations. Some fifty-five million left Europe altogether. Approximately sixty percent of these looked across the Atlantic to a new land that seemed to offer golden opportunities-- the United States.¹

For many, the United States held out possibilities unavailable in their homelands. Those who had the resources and inclination to enter agriculture found both vast tracts of fertile land awaiting the plow and liberal land policies on the part of the national government. Immigrants with other goals found a range of jobs in older American cities on the East Coast and in newer cities developing across the continent. American industry, entering a period of explosive growth in the decades after the Civil War, offered employment for the newcomers.

The tens of millions of men and women who comprised this immigration added immeasurably to the American nation they joined. They found a nation in which the once-rich ethnic base established during the colonial era had been eroded by a half century during which there had been little immigration. This new migration insured that cultural diversity would be

an American hallmark as the immigrants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought to build ethnic cultures and preserve traits carried from their homelands. American cities, partly due to the weight of huge numbers of foreign-born inhabitants, were forced to change in size and structure. American entrepreneurs found in the immigrants much of the cheap labor force to further the industrialization of the nation. Immigrants with pick and shovel helped build the vast infrastructure required of a modern economy. Settlers from Europe contributed their share to the transformation of the great reaches of the American interior from wilderness to bountiful farmland.

One of the central problems facing these immigrants was retention of their native culture. Generally they came knowing that they would have to make some adjustments in the new land, but precisely how much of the old would have to be shed and how much of the new would have to be adopted was a question that could only be answered in America. This was a highly complex issue, for the preservation of culture depended upon both the psychology of the individual immigrant and the circumstances in which he found himself. The immigrant needed to possess both the desire to retain his ethnic identity and a range of contacts with fellow countrymen which could shield him from corrosive contact with American society. Inevitably, however, some such contact had to take place, and the history of every immigrant group in America reflects the efforts of at least part of the group to maintain their cultural identity in a new social environment.

Sweden lost a substantial number of its citizens to the United States through emigration. From the middle of the nineteenth through the third decade of the twentieth century, about a million and a quarter Swedes left their native land for new homes in America. Although the number of Swedes emigrating to the U. S. fell short of the numerical contributions of some more heavily populated nations, few European nations gave so heavily--in terms of percentage of population migrating--as did Sweden. Only famine-ravaged Ireland and the other Scandinavian countries of Norway and Iceland exceeded the rate of loss experienced by Sweden.²

Once in America, these Swedish immigrants faced the same questions concerning

assimilation into American society with which other nationalities were confronted. The Swedes and the other Scandinavian immigrants developed a widespread reputation for rapid acquisition of American characteristics--a reputation not shared by most other immigrant groups. A brief review of opinion--scholarly and otherwise--on this facet of the Swedish and larger Scandinavian experience in America will demonstrate how pervasive the reputation has been, at least until recent times.

This image was already apparent in popular literature appearing in some of the nation's major periodicals in the late nineteenth century. In an article for the North American Review, H. H. Boyesen, himself a Scandinavian, called attention in 1892 to the consensus among students of immigration "that the Scandinavians adapt themselves with great ease to American institutions. There is no other class of immigrants which is so readily assimilated, and assumes so naturally American customs and modes of thought." Although Boyesen noted that Scandinavians maintained their ethnic institutions like other groups, he contended that the Americanization process went on inexorably.³ It might be natural for Boyesen to defend his own ethnic group, but his arguments were also used by Americans of native stock in his day. Albert Shaw, who as a magazine editor in the 1890s railed against immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, saw the Scandinavians as "the most rapidly Americanized" and a desirable group "to freshen and re-inforce the American stock."⁴

In the 1880s the sources of American immigration began to shift from northern and western to southern and eastern Europe. This so-called "new" immigration brought people with customs and characteristics much different from the immigrants of the previous decades. So different were these newer peoples that they seemed threatening to many Americans of the day, who worried that these groups could not be assimilated into American society. In the face of mounting numbers of migrants from new sources, the older immigrant groups found a better reception among American thinkers. As Barbara Miller Solomon has pointed out, the stereotypes--often unfavorable--which New Englanders had developed of earlier immigrants

were subtly transformed to emphasize their good characteristics, their contributions to American life, and the closeness of their fit to the American racial stock.⁵

Moreover, the society into which these new groups were migrating was reconsidering its own attitudes about immigration in general. As John Higham contends, Americans of the mid-nineteenth century had little doubt that assimilation would eventually overtake most of the cultural minorities in the nation. The decentralized nature of American society masked the fact that assimilation was not proceeding apace, however. By late in the century changes in the American economy and society--particularly industrialization and professionalism--called forth a new synthesis in which unassimilated groups were viewed as dangerous impurities that should be eliminated.⁶

This new concern generated considerable writing on the role and place of various immigrant groups in American society. Again, the Swedes--and Scandinavians in general--were praised for their willingness to adopt American customs and to merge with the host society. Such was the judgment of Prescott F. Hall and Edward A. Ross, both members of the Immigration Restriction League who wrote books on the subject of immigrants in the U.S. Hall, in a work permeated with the notion that the old immigration was superior to the new, pointed out that the Scandinavians "assimilate readily, take part in politics, usually on the side of good government; and they are in every way a desirable addition to the country." Ross agreed, arguing that "no immigrants of foreign speech assimilate so quickly as the Scandinavians" and praising them for not having "braced themselves against assimilation as have the Germans, with their Deutschtum."⁷ M. W. Montgomery, a Congregationalist minister who had toured Scandinavia and had worked with immigrants in Minnesota, argued fervently that the Scandinavians were "among the best foreigners who come to American shores" and "are more nearly like Americans than are any other foreign peoples." He went on to note that the Scandinavians did not, like some other groups, bring alien and undesirable qualities to the U.S. and did not threaten basic American institutions.⁸

Sometimes this praise of the Scandinavian shaded into an attitude of Nordic racial superiority and an emphasis on how Scandinavians added to the American character. Hence Henry Goddard Leach, president of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, asserted, "Unlike some immigrant peoples, the Scandinavian accentuates rather than dilutes the pristine Yankee-Puritan virtues." In the same vein, Samuel P. Orth termed the Scandinavians "the most useful of the recent great additions to the American race."⁹ Kendrick C. Babcock, in a work intended as "a sympathetic study of the Scandinavian element in American life," found it worthy to note that some of the desirable characteristics of the Scandinavians "distinguish them strikingly from the South European."¹⁰

Some of the most ardent supporters of the Swedish reputation for rapid assimilation were those writers who sought to illuminate that immigrant group's contributions to American society. Generally coming from within the ethnic group, these authors filiopletistically extoll the glories and qualities of the Swedes and the Scandinavians as a whole. An early example of works of this genre is O. N. Nelson's History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States. Even while admitting that Scandinavians settled in clusters, were occasionally criticized for "clannishness," and could conceivably remain in the U.S. for decades without learning English, Nelson maintained that Scandinavians "become quickly Americanized."¹¹ Amandus Johnson credited the Swede's "ready accommodation" and "inborn loyalty to his immediate surroundings" for his rapid assimilation and stated with conviction, "There are no more patriotic and loyal citizens within the confines of the forty-eight States than the citizens of Swedish descent."¹² A volume edited by Adolph B. Benson and Naboth HedIn to commemorate the tricentennial of Swedes in America is a virtual monument to the Swedish contributions to America and the image of Swedes as rapid assimilators.¹³ The most recent major addition to the filiopletistic strain, Allan Kastrup's The Swedish Heritage in America, proudly notes many authors have observed that "the Swedish immigrants adjusted themselves on the whole with relative ease to their adopted country and became in a remarkably short time Americanized." The writer seems to have no trouble going

on to explain that recent research of the retention of ethnic identities in America calls to question this earlier belief of rapid assimilation. Indeed, as Robert Salisbury notes, one of the curiosities of the filiopietistic school of Swedish immigration is the trumpeting of rapid assimilation while describing the heroic efforts to build ethnic institutions and elaborating on the contributions the Swedish people made to America.¹⁴

The image of the Scandinavian immigrant as a rapid assimilator persisted in the works of historians of American immigration in general, in popular writers on the subject, and in the pages of publications devoted to preserving the history of Swedes in America. Carl Wittke, for example, contended that "The Swedes have been perhaps more quickly Americanized than any other immigrant group," a sentiment similar to that expressed by Louis Adamic in his A Nation of Nations.¹⁵ Some later historians also have continued the image. Victor Greene, in a study of ethnic leadership in Chicago, termed the experience of Swedes in America "more obviously and basically assimilative" than other groups he considered. James Stuart Olson, surveying The Ethnic Dimension in American History, saw the Swedes and Danes as relatively receptive to Americanization.¹⁶

A number of scholars, frequently writing for publications connected with Swedish America, have attempted to explain why Swedes seem to have submerged their ethnic identities into an American nationality so quickly. Adolph Benson placed great weight on qualities inherent in the Swedish character for speed in assimilation. The Swede's tolerance of other cultures, appreciation of things foreign, value for education, love of liberty, practicality, intention of establishing a permanent home, and recognition that assimilation was necessary were all vital in the adoption of a new nationality.¹⁷ Albert F. Schersten argued that trends within Swedish society of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in conjunction with traditional Swedish characteristics, promoted rapid assimilation. He saw in industrialization, urbanization, and various political and social reform movements a set of forces which, when added to Protestantism and cosmopolitanism, prepared Swedish immigrants for ready adaptation to the society they

encountered in America. Others have tended to side with Schersten and give emphasis to developments within Swedish or American society rather than innate character traits. C. Emanuel Carlson credited the growing interest in public schools and discontent with the state church in Sweden. Fritiof Ander emphasized the importance of the Swedish church and press in America for encouraging assimilation, at least until the mass emigration of the 1880s brought large numbers of Swedes to this nation and forced a reorientation.¹⁸

Although the dominant trend has been toward viewing the Swedes as rapid Americanizers, there has frequently been an undercurrent among writers that recognizes a search for identity within the Swedish-American community and actions and institutions intended to preserve a sense of Swedishness. Hence a number of authors remark on a certain "clannishness" among Swedish and other Scandinavian immigrants and one historian points out that the Swedes, despite their support for public schools, mobilized against legislation such as the Bennett Law in Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century.¹⁹ One of the essays in Benson and Hedin's 1938 collection on Swedes in America even takes a relatively objective view of cultural maintenance and sees "a goodly number of sections of the United States where the Swedish population has been, and still is, numerous enough, concentrated enough, united and homogeneous enough in interest and activity, to maintain a distinct Swedish culture."²⁰ A sociological study of the intermarriage rates among various groups in a Minnesota county in 1930 found Swedes much more likely to accept marital partners from within their ethnic group than outside it.²¹ Helge Nelson, a Swedish geographer who contributed a classic account of Swedish settlement patterns in the U.S., found in the development of homogeneous communities, continuous immigration, and ethnic institutions of the Swedes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries strong weapons against the lengthy list of forces for assimilation he enumerated.²²

In the last twenty years, the history of immigration and immigrant groups has received substantial attention among academics. One of the forces initiating this has been the growing recognition of cultural pluralism in American life following the civil rights revolution and the

Black Power movement of the 1960s, although pluralists have by no means been united in their conclusions about the nature and utility of ethnic identities.²³ Contributing also has been the development within the historical profession of quantitative methods and widespread interest in the so-called "new social history." These developments have added significantly to our understanding of Swedish immigrants and the question of assimilation.

Much of this new research has challenged the image of Swedes as rapid assimilators. The most important work questioning the ready assimilation of Swedish immigrants in the United States has been Sture Lindmark's Swedish America, 1914-1932 which looks at Swedes in the heartland of Swedish settlements, Illinois and Minnesota. Examining critical issues for "Americanization" (as he chooses to term the process of assimilation), Lindmark discerned low rates of exogamy, rates of naturalization more consistent with lengthy residence in the nation than cultural characteristics, strenuous efforts to keep alive sacred and secular organizations, and the mobilization of the ethnic community in the face of crisis. Lindmark's findings did not "support the idea that the Swedish Americans were more prone to assimilate or became assimilated more easily than other nationalities."²⁴

Among the most productive scholars working in the field of Swedish settlement in America have been the historical geographers, who have made studies of Swedes in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Kansas. Their findings, based on quantitative techniques applied to small geographic units in America--and sometimes in Sweden--show some of the vast complexity of the issue of assimilation.

Assimilation--although it was a process which all groups faced to some degree--did not spread evenly through the life of an immigrant group. Some aspects of life were prone to Americanization while others could be and were sheltered in some circumstances. Substantial evidence indicates that Swedish farmers quickly adopted the dominant patterns of agriculture in the regions they settled. This was particularly true for those producing the major cash crops. When it came to minor crops intended for home consumption rather than sale, there was greater

diversity among immigrant groups.²⁵

Although economic assimilation appears to have occurred without resistance in rural areas, immigrants were unwilling to shed other cultural forms. Microstudies of Swedish communities show that Swedes frequently clustered in an attempt to preserve a sense of community. Moreover, this clustering was not simply based on a common nationality. Many Swedes were able to establish compact communities based on religious preference or provincial--sometimes even parish--origin in the old country. Through group migration or individual migration directed by America letters, kinship ties, and economic aid, some Swedes were able to create homogeneous communities which reflected ties that had bridged the Atlantic.²⁶

This transplantation and preservation of parish and provincial identities presents serious challenges for historians. The European peasants who settled in America by and large did not bring with them fully formed national identities. Rather, their primary level of association was with the local and regional areas from which they had come. Thus the Swedish settlers who created the Cambridge Lutheran Church in Isanti County, Minnesota, organized themselves into parish subdivisions which largely reflected the different administrative units in which they had lived in Sweden. It was in America that the disparate Swedish groups eventually formed a real sense of "Swedishness." This process--while ultimately successful--took time, as indicated by the findings of some scholars who have focused their attention on small community studies where it was possible to trace individuals.²⁷ Historians must be conscious of this sense of identity and need to examine how and why national attachments gradually replaced provincial ones. The record of Swedes' assimilation appears to be not merely one of Americanization, but may have included the creation of a national Swedish identity as well.²⁸

The cultural geographers have concerned themselves primarily with rural settlements. For Swedes in an urban setting, the best work available is Ulf Beijbom's Swedes in Chicago, which reveals the formation of ethnic neighborhoods, an extensive array of ethnic institutions

designed to serve the Swedish community, little intermarriage with other groups, and a low rate of naturalization.²⁹ Paul Spengler's work on the major cultural groups in Jamestown, New York, shows, among other things, that the Swedes were consciously trying to preserve an ethnic identity while striving for economic success in an American city. Byron Nordstrom has indicated the potential for further study in Minneapolis, where a Swedish neighborhood possessed the range of ethnic institutions necessary to cater to the needs of the area's inhabitants.³⁰

A number of recent contributions to our knowledge of Scandinavians in America have focused on their political activity. Early interpretations of Swedish involvement in politics often pointed to the group's loyalty to the Republican party as evidence of assimilation. Later scholars of the subject have pointed out that Swedish Republicans sometimes worked for their own ends in politics and frequently mobilized the ethnic group in support of Scandinavian candidates. In particular, the work of Sten Carlsson and Bruce Larson has shown a degree of ethnic unity in public affairs that belies full assimilation.³¹

Recognizing this trend away from viewing the Swedes and other Scandinavians as rapid assimilators, the authors of recent general studies on the subject have by and large dropped the image from their works. In some cases, all mention of the earlier stereotype is simply omitted. In others, specific evidence is indicated to demonstrate the retention of an ethnic identity among group members despite the forces for assimilation.³²

A review of the historiography of the question of assimilation among Swedish immigrants leaves some important questions. Obviously, large numbers of writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the Swedes as a group which readily and rapidly adopted American ways; some even believed this happened too quickly. Equally obviously, more recent scholars have found good reason to doubt this stereotype, particularly with the application of quantitative methods to the inquiry. The question arises--why did Swedes gain their reputation for rapid assimilation when there is strong evidence to the contrary? Salisbury has suggested that the recent shift in emphasis from assimilation to preservation is tied to trends within ethnic history

at large. During the 1960s, as Americans became more aware of cultural diversity, historians of ethnicity-- including those interested in the Swedes-- began to examine maintenance phenomena rather than evidence of acculturation and assimilation. This new focus, methodological developments in the discipline of history, and the entry into the field of Swedish-American history of Swedish scholars such as Sture Lindmark, Ulf Beijbom, and Sten Carlsson-- individuals who like the filiofetists would be more likely to emphasize the preservation of Swedish culture because of their own backgrounds-- seem to explain the changing conclusions on the question of assimilation.³³ There is some truth to Salisbury's conclusions. His arguments are not entirely satisfactory, however, because he does not explain why so many saw Swedes and their fellow Scandinavians as rapid Americanizers in the first place. The evidence suggests that it was a widely held opinion in America-- among Scandinavians and non-Scandinavians-- that the Swedes quickly adjusted to conditions in America and shed their native customs easily. Even the ethnic institutions erected by the group often served to ameliorate the difficulty of Americanization than to prevent it. Salisbury's arguments do not address the question of why this image developed in the first place.

Thomas Archdeacon suggests that the answer may lie in the Scandinavians' relationships with American society. As he points out, "If the assimilation of a minority is taken to mean the absence of social pathology and of conflict with the majority, then the British and the Scandinavians quickly achieved this state. If, however, positive evidence of the loss of a separate identity is required, different conclusions are in order."³⁴ Numerous observers have commented that the Scandinavians, with their strongly pietistic Protestantism, acceptance of public education, high rate of agricultural settlement, and strong attachment to the Republican party, fit well into the American society which they joined.³⁵ There were relatively few issues upon which the Scandinavians notably differed from their American neighbors. If one looks at those questions, the Scandinavians appear to have assimilated well. If, however, one examines the struggle to keep alive ethnic institutions, the strength of ethnic churches, efforts to preserve

the native tongue in sacred life, the strong inclination to marry within the group, and periodic political mobilization on behalf of issues and candidates of interest to the group, the image of rapid assimilation becomes clouded.

This dissertation is a study of the process and progress of assimilation among selected rural areas inhabited by Swedish immigrants in the central Great Plains states of Kansas and Nebraska during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The study examines the immigrants' efforts to preserve characteristics of their Swedish culture--or cultures, delineate those areas where immigrants were willing to adopt American traits, and evaluate the success at cultural maintenance. One of the results of the study will be a clearer understanding of why Swedes were seen as rapid assimilators despite the apparent efforts to prevent some forms of assimilation.

Important questions might be answered from such a study. How far had Americanization progressed by 1900 among Swedish settlers in the Great Plains? Did Swedes indeed assimilate at a faster rate than other groups? If not, how can we account for their reputation as rapid Americanizers? What factors encouraged rapid assimilation and what factors inhibited it? How did the institutions of the Swedish communities function in the process of assimilation? Were these institutions a useful intermediary stage on the way to assimilation or were they barriers to it?

Kansas and Nebraska provide a useful site for studying the process of assimilation among Swedish immigrants. In addition, with the exception of work done on the Lindsborg region in Kansas, relatively little study has been given to Swedish settlers in the two states.³⁶ The two states lie outside the center of Swedish settlement in the United States, which is located in Illinois and Minnesota. None of the pre-eminent Swedish-American institutions--churches, societies, newspapers, and the like--had their headquarters in the central Plains. The region thus offers the opportunity to examine whether or not an immigrant group could maintain its cultural integrity while separated from its major centers in America. Rural districts such as those in

Kansas and Nebraska not only offer units small enough for detailed analysis, but also are representative of the dominant Swedish-American experience on the Great Plains. Finally, these states make possible a comparison of the two. Swedes in Kansas, particularly those in the Lindsborg area, managed to establish an ethnic identity that has lasted well into the twentieth century. Institutions established by the group in Kansas have also endured. Swedes in Nebraska, though numerous, have been less successful in keeping their presence visible. One is tempted to conclude that Nebraska Swedes Americanized quickly while those in Kansas were more successful in maintaining their culture. One of the goals of the study is to test the validity of this impression.

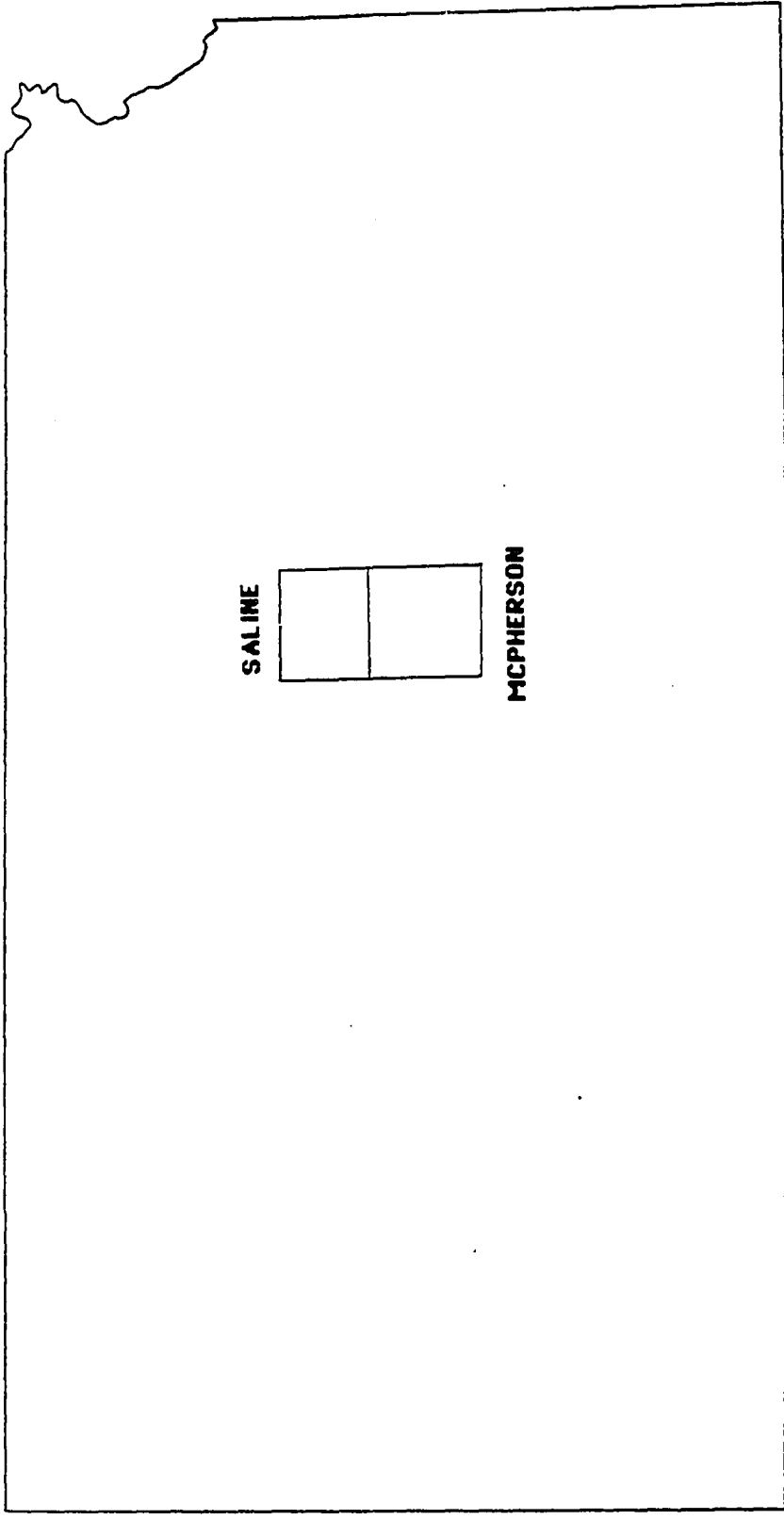
The Plains states do present one characteristic that may complicate any systematic attempt at analyzing the impact of assimilation. Large numbers of their Swedish settlers came via one of the eastern states, particularly Illinois, rather than migrating directly from Sweden. Those immigrants who spent months or years among their countrymen and native Americans in settlements further to the east doubtless acquired some exposure to a Swedish-American culture already under formation and the process of assimilation. For example, a Swede who passed through Henry County, Illinois, on his way west would likely have become acquainted with one or more of the religious groups operating in the Swedish communities, read one or more of the major Swedish-American newspapers, acquired a smattering of English, and perhaps learned about prevailing agricultural practices by hiring out as a farm laborer to an American-born farmer. This individual's experiences in Kansas or Nebraska may have differed from those of someone who settled in the Great Plains without an intermediate stay elsewhere in the United States.

The area for this proposed study consists certain counties in Kansas and Nebraska selected for their population of Swedish immigrants in 1890 and their rural nature. The counties were identified through the use of Helge Nelson's study of the geographical distribution of the Swedes in America and published volumes of U. S. census data. Nelson's work gives the Swedish-born

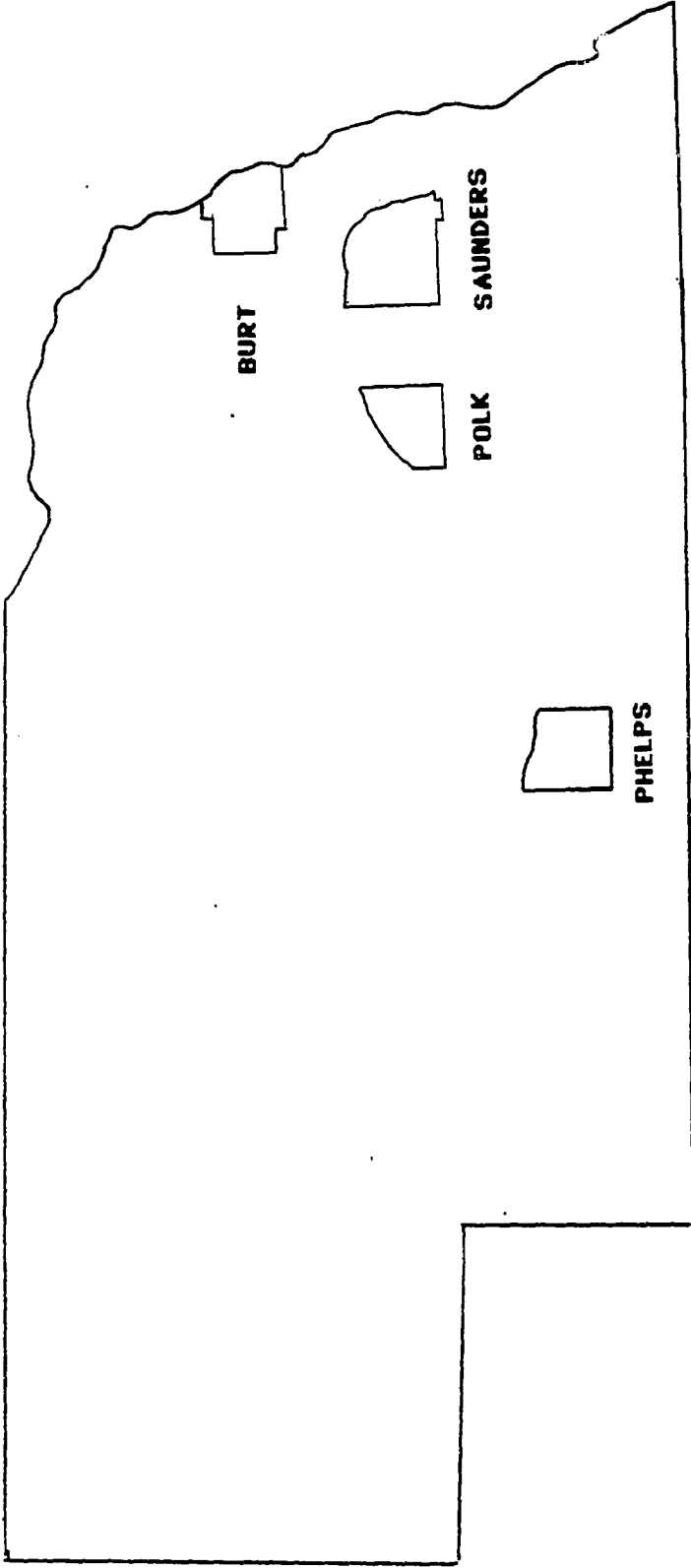
population for each county in certain census years. The census of 1890 was selected because, for all practical purposes, Swedish immigration to the central Great Plains had ended by that time. Virtually all important areas of rural Swedish settlement in the two states recorded fewer Swedish-born in 1900 than in 1890. In order to insure that the counties sampled had a sufficient number of Swedes to give the "critical mass" necessary to allow cultural maintenance, counties with more than 1,000 persons born in Sweden were selected.³⁷

The initial selection process yielded only three counties--Burt, Saunders, and Polk in Nebraska--because all counties with an urban center (classified by the U.S. Census as 2,500 people or more) were omitted. It was decided this sample was too small, so three additional counties with populations of Swedish-born of over 1,000 were added--Phelps in Nebraska and McPherson and Saline in Kansas. Each of these counties had "cities" by 1890, but none of them had large urban settings. Moreover, adding these counties allowed the inclusion of the heavily Swedish settlements of Holdrege, Nebraska, and Lindsborg, Kansas. The Lindsborg region, stretching from the middle of McPherson County north to the middle of Saline County, was particularly desirable because it was the most Swedish rural area of the Great Plains in the late nineteenth century. Because the intent is to focus on the Swedish experience in agricultural and small town settings, census samples were drawn from selected townships within these counties.

In the chapters that follow, this study examines certain aspects of the lives of the Swedish settlers in the selected counties. Within these various facets of life, an attempt is made to determine whether or not assimilation occurred and its progress between 1870 and 1900. Five different aspects have been chosen in which to measure assimilation--economic patterns, religious life, educational activities, social life, and public affairs. In some, a degree of assimilation took place willingly and without rancor simply by weight of circumstance. Indeed, in some instances, immigrants eagerly sought an accommodation to American practices. In others, immigrants strenuously worked to preserve Swedish culture, defining some aspects of their heritage as too precious to lose without a struggle.



KANSAS COUNTIES UNDER STUDY



NEBRASKA COUNTIES UNDER STUDY

MAP 1.2

heritage as too precious to lose without a struggle.

In economic affairs, past research has shown that the Swedes were willing to adopt the major agricultural patterns of their native-born neighbors. There seems to be little purpose in pursuing that aspect of economic assimilation. However, there are other areas within this broad topic that have been neglected. If the occupations of Swedish settlers mirrored those of other groups, the Swedes were assimilated economically. If those patterns differed significantly, assimilation had not yet occurred. Were Swedish settlers integrated into the economy of the region or did they create an economy separate from their neighbors? Did Swedish workers have the option to work within the ethnic group or were they forced to go outside it? Did Swedish farmers have to rely on outsiders for credit and marketing mechanisms? Did Swedish consumers have the option of patronizing their countrymen or were they dependent on other groups for goods? Did native-born merchants make concessions to Swedish customers by hiring clerks who could converse with them in their native tongue and by stocking goods peculiar to the ethnic group? Did non-Swedes patronize Swedish-owned businesses? All of these factors might be used to gauge the degree of assimilation taking place.³⁸

In rural Swedish-American communities of the nineteenth century, the church was the focal point, as the work of cultural geographers has shown repeatedly.³⁹ Religion had been a major consideration in emigration for some, and groups sometimes came to America with the specific purpose of organizing a religious community in a new land. A large part of a neighborhood's activities revolved around its religious life. For many, it was one of the cornerstones of personal identity. In this sphere, one might expect to find a substantial degree of resistance to change and a high rate of cultural maintenance. The growth and vitality of churches, continued use of the Swedish language, and the numbers of second generation Swedish-Americans remaining within their forefathers' faith might be means to measure this. On the other hand, if large numbers of Swedes deserted those faiths associated with the group for membership in other church bodies, there is strong evidence of assimilation. If Swedish congregations began to adopt

American practices in their religious life, it may be a sign of institutional adaptation to new circumstances.

The Swedes were deeply divided in their religious affiliations. The pietism that swept Sweden prior to and during the era of emigration manifested itself in America in the splintering of the Swedes' religious unity. Although the Lutherans remained the largest denomination in Swedish America, they faced serious challenges from the Baptist and Mission Covenant groups--and a lesser one from the Methodists--in the competition for members. This division fragmented the homogeneity that many Swedish settlements might otherwise have attained. Such religious unrest may have influenced the pace of assimilation.

Education can be a two-edged sword. It can serve as the primary way by which a group preserves its culture in the next generation or it can be the major method by which the children of immigrants assimilate American ways. Any immigrant group completely dedicated to the maintenance of its ethnic identity would shield its children from the public school, use the public school for its own ends, or devise some strategy with which to counteract the school's influence. Moreover, an ethnic group intent on remaining independent of American society must also create institutions to train a new generation of leaders to carry on the struggle. Education is one of the primary battlegrounds in the effort for cultural preservation. It then becomes important to know how Swedish immigrants viewed the school. If they erected an array of parochial schools that kept their children from the public schools, it would indicate a determination to maintain Swedish culture. If they wholeheartedly embraced the public school, it would signify a willingness to assimilate in at least some areas of life. It also becomes important to examine the Swedes' efforts at creating academies and colleges that educated youths for leadership and service. The goals and success of these institutions can reveal the extent and effectiveness of cultural maintenance.

A group's social life presents a variety of possibilities for testing assimilation. Ethnic groups committed to preserving their identity will erect a variety of organizations within which

members can interact and obtain necessary services. If the Swedish communities under study created wide ranges of ethnic institutions capable of meeting all their needs, assimilation would be slowed, especially if those institutions saw in cultural maintenance the only hope for survival. If, on the other hand, Swedes habitually went outside the group to satisfy social needs, assimilation was underway. The extent of exogamous marriage as evidenced by the decennial federal census is a strong indicator of the extent of disintegration of a group's cohesiveness. Individuals who marry outside the group inevitably compromise their culture and seldom can pass it along intact to their children.

Assimilation can be tested in public affairs in several ways. Certainly the choice to apply for American citizenship and the effort to become naturalized indicate some desire to take part in American life and to transfer one's loyalties to the new nation. Although it is not the intention of this study to examine precinct level voting patterns in a quantitative fashion, political orientation might reveal substantial differences from or agreement with the host society on important public issues, serving as a gauge of Americanization. Voting for a politician with a Swedish name simply because of the ethnic tie may be evidence that the group is willing to participate in the structure of American politics but insists on retaining its own identity. The ease or difficulty with which a politician of Swedish heritage is accepted by political parties and voters may reveal how well assimilated the Swedes had become. Even participation in national holidays like the Fourth of July shows some degree of assimilation.

One aspect of the ethnic identity crucial to assimilation is language. A group maintaining its language as the primary method of communication can resist the pressures of assimilation far better than a group losing its native language. Linguistic preservation or assimilation is not been one of the five areas targeted for study. This is not because it is of little importance. To the contrary, the language question runs through all the areas chosen. Any substantial and significant assimilation must be accompanied by some degree of adoption of the host society's native tongue. Linguistic assimilation is so pervasive that it cannot be treated separately and the question of

language retention will be dealt with in several of the following chapters.

Many Americans once looked upon assimilation as a relatively simple process. Immigrants should conform to the Anglo-American culture which had been established on this continent. Later writers developed more sophisticated models to explain the relationship immigrant groups ought to bear to the rest of American society. Some called for a melting pot in which a new cultural identity for all would form. Others called for toleration--even approval--for all cultures in a pluralistic nation. Along the way, historians and social scientists began to recognize how enormously complex the process of assimilation actually is.

In 1964 Milton Gordon published his now-classic work Assimilation in American Life. In it he identified seven assimilation "subprocesses or variables." The first of these subprocesses is cultural assimilation, also known as acculturation, in which the minority group adopts the behaviors of the host society. The second, structural assimilation, is achieved when members of the minority are widely admitted to the social groups of the larger society. The third, marital assimilation, occurs when large numbers of the minority intermarry with members of the host society. The fourth, identificational assimilation, results when the minority group develops "a sense of peoplehood" derived from the experiences of the host society rather than its own. The fifth, attitude receptional assimilation, comes when the minority experiences no prejudice from the native society. The sixth, behavior receptional assimilation, takes place when the minority faces no discrimination from the host society. The seventh subprocess, civic assimilation, results when there is no "value and power conflict" between the minority group and the host society.⁴⁰

Gordon's work was important in breaking down the process of assimilation into a variety of categories. Assimilation was not something which spread evenly through an immigrant's life. It was welcomed--even eagerly sought--in some aspects of life, but met with fierce resistance in others. Gordon's model, although it has its flaws, will have some application in the chapters that follow.⁴¹

Historians cannot, however, view the history of ethnic groups in America merely as the gradual loss of an ethnic identity. First of all, that ethnic identity itself was not fully formed. Swedes first settling in the United States often thought of themselves as Värmländers or Blekingers rather than Swedes. It was in America that a real sense of a Swedish national identity began to form. Moreover, as the mass emigration from Sweden came in the 1880s, Swedes in the United States began to move toward forming a Swedish-American culture that many expected to last for generations. The Swede's history is not just the erosion of an ethnic identity; it is also the creation of one in a new land.⁴²

A second point that must be considered is that the Swedish immigrants' identity was itself a complex matrix of elements. Immigrants brought with them a wide array of memories, experiences, skills, and artifacts from the old country. They also brought values, expectations, and goals. A Swedish peasant did not depart the land of his parents with the intention of becoming a Swedish peasant on the plains of Kansas or Nebraska. He came with the intention of securing his future and that of his children, of becoming the independent landowner of a far larger tract than he could ever hope for in Sweden. In the interaction between these elements and the American setting, immigrants worked out strategies to help them achieve their own ends. Jon Gjerde's work on Norwegian communities in the upper Midwest indicates that immigrants' efforts to improve their status was rooted in aspirations developed in their homeland but realizable only in America.⁴³

Finally, one must remember that immigrant communities were not undifferentiated masses in which all members shared the same goals. Harold J. Abramson recently sketched out four different individual adaptations to assimilation. One type, the traditionalist, will try to maintain his ethnicity in some form, even though he might have to make some compromises. A second, the convert, would embrace a new culture with zeal, going to great lengths to prove his new affiliation. A third, the exile, would never adjust the loss of a previous culture. In the literature of immigration, the character of Beret Holm in Rørvaag's Giants in the Earth comes to

mind as a representative of the exile. The final type is the ethnic isolate, who never acquired an ethnic identity as a child and can never fit into any culture. This last type is rare, but all of the others would have been found in any immigrant community of the nineteenth century. Such a community's history of assimilation would be the record of the complex interaction of the goals and fortunes of the various groups which inhabited it.

CHAPTER 1

NOTES

1. For a good overview of the conditions in Europe and America during the period of mass migration, see Philip Taylor, The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the U.S.A. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971). Frank Thistlethwaite, "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," XIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques Rapports. 5: Historie Contemporaine; rpt. in New Perspectives on the American Past, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley N. Katz and Stanley I. Kutler (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), 2:45-70, is indispensable for an understanding of the topic.
2. Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, trans. Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 10; John G. Rice, "The Swedes," in They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups, ed. June Drenning Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), p. 248; Ulf Beijbom, "Swedes," in Harvard Guide to American Ethnic Groups, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1980), p. 972.
3. H. H. Boyesen, "The Scandinavian In the United States," North American Review 155 (November, 1892): 527, 529-31, 533.
4. Albert Shaw, "The Scandinavians in the United States," The Chautauquan 8 (December, 1887): 171-172. On Shaw's attitudes toward other groups, see Barbara Miller Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 110.
5. Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants, p. 152-153.
6. John Higham, "Integrating America: The Problem of Assimilation in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of American Ethnic History 1 (Fall, 1981): 7-25
7. Prescott F. Hall, Immigration and its Effects upon the United States, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913), p. 62; Edward Alworth Ross, The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People (New York: Century Co., 1914), pp. 75-76. For more on Hall and Ross, see Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants, *passim*. For similar sentiments see Julian Ralph, "Our Swedish Fellow-Citizens," Harper's Weekly 40 (April 25, 1896): 422.
8. M. W. Montgomery, "A Wind from the Holy Spirit" in Sweden and Norway (New York: American Home Missionary Society Bible House, 1885), pp. 6-7. The same passage can be found in M. W. Montgomery, "An American Evaluation of the Scandinavians Here in 1884," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 7 (October, 1956): 144-147. The italics of the original--embodying all of the phrases cited--have been dropped. Frederick Hale, "Nordic Immigration: The New Puritans?" Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 28 (January, 1977): 27-44, argues persuasively that the threat of new immigrant groups encouraged American church leaders to overemphasize the similarity of Scandinavians to American culture and to ignore important differences.

differences.

9. Henry Goddard Leach, "The Scandinavians," in Immigrant Backgrounds, ed. Henry Pratt Fairchild (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1927), p. 231; Samuel P. Orth, Our Foreigners: A Chronicle of Americans in the Making (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), p. 157.

10. Kendrick Charles Babcock, The Scandinavian Element in the United States. University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. 111, No. 3 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1914), pp. 9-10, 17. See also Robert S. Salisbury, "Swedish-American Historiography and the Question of Assimilation," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 21 (April, 1978): 117-118.

11. O. N. Nelson, "History of the Scandinavian Immigration," in History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States, ed. O. N. Nelson (Minneapolis: O. N. Nelson, 1893), 1:49-50, 72-74.

12. Amandus Johnson, Swedish Contributions to American National Life, 1638-1921 (New York: Committee of the Swedish Section of America's Making, Inc., 1921), p. 14. For similar sentiments see Lars P. Nelson, What Has Sweden Done for the United States?, 2nd ed. (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1917), pp. 26-29; Alfred O. Fonkalsrud, The Scandinavian-American (Minneapolis: K. C. Holter Publishing Co., 1915; rpt., San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1971), p. 59; and Abram C. F. Ottey, The Swedish Race in America (Philadelphia: Olney Printing Co., 1940), pp. 34-36. Ottey's work follows Johnson's quite closely.

13. Adolph B. Benson and Naboth Hedin, eds., Swedes in America, 1638-1938 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938). See especially the article by Eric Englund, "Farmers," pp. 75-91 and the one by Oliver A. Linder, "Newspapers," pp. 181-190. See also Adolph B. Benson and Naboth Hedin, Americans from Sweden (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1950), p. 426.

14. Allan Kastrup, The Swedish Heritage in America: The Swedish Element in America and American-Swedish Relations in their Historical Perspective (Minneapolis: Swedish Council of America, 1975), pp. 639-641; Salisbury, "Swedish-American Historiography," pp. 118-120.

15. Carl Wittke, We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant, rev. ed. (Cleveland: The Press of the Case Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 273; Louis Adamic, A Nation of Nations (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), pp. 131, 134-135.

16. Victor Greene, "'Becoming American': The Role of Ethnic Leaders--Swedes, Poles, Italians, and Jews," in The Ethnic Frontier: Essays in the History of Group Survival in Chicago and the Midwest, ed. Melvin G. Holli and Peter d'A. Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 148; James Stuart Olson, The Ethnic Dimension in American History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 119-120. See also Frederick Hale, The Swedes in Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1983), p. 26; Emily Greene Ruffner, "The Swedish Settlement at New Upsala: The Search for Opportunity in America." (D.A. Diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 1979), pp. 140, 146; Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," Western Historical Quarterly 8 (October, 1977): 426-427; and Joseph S. Roucek, "Swedish Americans," in One America: The History, Contributions, and Present Problems of our Racial and National Minorities, ed. by Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), p. 70.

17. Adolph B. Benson, "The Assimilation of Swedes in America," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 7 (October, 1956): 136-144.
18. See for example Albert F. Schersten, "The Historical and Cultural Background of Swedish Immigrants of Importance to their Assimilation in America," Augustana Historical Society Publications 2(1932): 47-63; C. Emanuel Carlson, "The Best Americanizers," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, ed. J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelie (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), pp. 31-50; and Fritiof Ander, "Some Factors in the Americanization of the Swedish Immigrant, 1850-1890," Illinois State Historical Journal 26 (April-July, 1933): 136-150.
19. Nelson, "History of the Scandinavian Immigration," p. 72; Kendric C. Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," The Forum 14 (September, 1892): 109; Edward A. Steiner, On the Trail of the Immigrant (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906), p. 118; Ralph, "Our Swedish Fellow-Citizens," p. 422; and Wittke, We Who Built America, p. 273.
20. W. Elmer Ekblaw, "Geographical Distribution," in Swedes in America, p. 110.
21. Lowry Nelson, "Intermarriage among Nationality Groups in a Rural Area of Minnesota," American Journal of Sociology 48 (March, 1943): 585-592.
22. Helge Nelson, The Swedes and the Swedish Settlements in North America (Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1943), pp. 373-375.
23. John Higham, "Current Trends in the Study of Ethnicity in the United States," Journal of American Ethnic History 2 (Fall, 1982): 5-15.
24. Sture Lindmark, Swedish America, 1914-1932: Studies in Ethnicity with Emphasis on Illinois and Minnesota (Stockholm: Läromedelsförlagen, 1973), p. 329 and *passim*.
25. On agricultural practices, see Robert C. Ostergren, "A Community Transplanted: The Formative Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Community in the Upper Middle West," Journal of Historical Geography 5 (April, 1979): 189-212; Bradley H. Baltensperger, "Agricultural Change among Nebraska Immigrants, 1880-1900," in Ethnicity on the Great Plains, pp. 170-189; and David Aidan McQuillan, "Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups to Farming in Central Kansas, 1875-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975). For a Norwegian example, see Jon Gjerde, From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 168-201. For Germans consult Terry G. Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966).
26. John G. Rice, Patterns of Ethnicity in a Minnesota County, 1880-1905, Geographical Reports, No. 4 (Umeå, Sweden: University of Umeå, 1973); Rice, "The Role of Culture and Community in Frontier Prairie Farming," Journal of Historical Geography 3 (1977): 155-175; Rice, "Marriage Behavior and the Persistence of Swedish Communities in Rural Minnesota," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Swedish Heritage in the Upper Midwest, April 1-3, 1976, University of Minnesota, Duluth, edited by Nils Hasselmo (Chicago: Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1978), pp. 136-150; Robert C. Ostergren, "Cultural Homogeneity and Population Stability Among Swedish Immigrants in Chisago County," Minnesota History 43 (Fall, 1973): 255-269;

and Ostergren, "Prairie Bound: Migration Patterns to a Swedish Settlement on the Dakota Frontier," in Ethnicity on the Great Plains, ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 73-91. For an historian's findings in two Wisconsin communities, see Hans Norman, "Swedish Communities in Wisconsin," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration, pp. 121-135. On Norwegians, see Gjerde, From Peasants to Farmers, pp. 137-167.

27. Ostergren, "A Community Transplanted"; Ostergren, "Cultural Homogeneity and Population Stability"; and Rice, "The Role of Culture and Community." Higham, "The Problem of Assimilation," p. 9, notes that these provincial identities were eventually replaced by national identities that still remain.

28. See Dino Cinel, From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), for an excellent example involving Italians.

29. Ulf Beijbom, Swedes in Chicago: A Demographic and Social Study of the 1846-1880 Immigration (Stockholm: Läromedelsförlagen, 1971). Beijbom's findings on naturalization must be taken with care, however. His data come only from the 1870 census, which recorded only those individuals who had actually received citizenship, not those who had taken out their first papers.

30. Paul A. Spengler, Yankee, Swedish and Italian Acculturation and Economic Mobility in Jamestown, New York, from 1860 to 1920 (New York: Arno Press, 1980); Byron J. Nordstrom, "The Sixth Ward: A Minneapolis Swede Town in 1905," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration, pp. 151-165. For an example of a city where Scandinavians failed to form vital ethnic institutions for some time after settlement, see Matti Kaups, "Swedish Immigrants in Duluth, 1856-1870," in *ibid.*, pp. 166-198.

31. Sten Carlsson, "Scandinavian Politicians in Minnesota Around the Turn of the Century: A Study of the Role of the Ethnic Factor in an Immigrant State," Americana Norvegica 3 (1971): 237-271; Carlsson, "Scandinavian Politicians in the United States," in Scando-Americana Papers on Scandinavian Emigration to the United States, ed. Ingrid Semmingsen and Per Seyersted (Oslo: American Institute, University of Oslo, 1980), pp. 153-166; Bruce Larson, "Swedes in Minnesota Politics," in The Swedes in Minnesota, ed. Byron Nordstrom (Minneapolis: T. S. Denton & Co., 1976), pp. 86-105; Bernard Eisenberg, "The Scandinavians," in America's Ethnic Politics, ed. Joseph S. Roucek and Bernard Eisenberg (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 323-343. Older accounts that recognized this tendency in politics include Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," pp. 106-107; and Steiner, On the Trail of the Immigrant, p. 118.

32. See, for examples, Taylor, The Distant Magnet; Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration and Assimilation (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975); Maxine Seller, To Seek America: A History of Ethnic Life in the United States (Englewood, NJ: Jerome S. Ozer, 1977); and Thomas J. Archdeacon, Becoming American: An Ethnic History (New York: The Free Press, 1983), especially pp. 110-111, 175. See also Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, pp. 126-131.

33. Salisbury, "Swedish-American Historiography," pp. 124-134. Salisbury uses as evidence of the shift from assimilation to preservation two articles written by Conrad Bergendoff. The first, "Augustana--A People in Transition," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, ed. J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelie

(Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), pp. 197-208, was a discussion of the transition from a Swedish Lutheran synod to a new trans-national one in the 1960s. The second, "The Role of Augustana in the Transplanting of a Culture Across the Atlantic," in The Immigration of Ideas: Studies in the North Atlantic Community: Essays Present to O. Frittof Ander, ed. J. Iverne Dowie and J. Thomas Tredway (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1968), pp. 67-83, dealt with the role Augustana played in the preservation of Swedish culture in America. The comparison between the two might not be relevant because Bergendoff was dealing with two entirely different time periods in the articles.

34. Archdeacon, Becoming American, p. 110. See also Charles H. Anderson, White Protestant Americans: From National Origins to Religious Group Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 43, 55-56.

35. See Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," 106-109; Shaw, "The Scandinavians in the United States," p. 171; Hall, Immigration and Its Effects Upon the United States, p. 62; Orth, Our Foreigners, pp. 156-157; Englund, "Farmers," 86-88; and Adamic, A Nation of Nations, pp. 134-135.

36. Harald Runblom and Lars-Göran Tedebrand, "Future Research in Swedish-American History: Some Perspectives," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 30 (April, 1979): 132.

37. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, pp. 266-281, 286-292; U. S. Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, taken in the Year 1900, Vol. 1, Population: Part I (Washington: U. S. Census Office, 1901), pp. 161-175, 251-261; Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Historical Approaches to the Study of Rural Ethnic Communities," in Ethnicity on the Great Plains, p. 5.

38. Oliver Zunz has suggested the possibility of a "dual opportunity structure" which afforded immigrants avenues of success either inside or outside the ethnic group. See his "American History and the Changing Meaning of Assimilation," Journal of American Ethnic History 4 (Spring, 1985): 64; and The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 38-39.

39. Ostergren, "Cultural Homogeneity," p. 260; Ostergren, "A Community Transplanted," p. 202; Ostergren, Prairie Bound, p. 76; and Rice, Patterns of Ethnicity.

40. Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 60-83, especially p. 71.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 70. Gordon's model includes adoption of the host society's religion as a measure of cultural assimilation. Given the strong emphasis that many Swedish immigrants placed on religion, joining an American congregation would be more akin to structural assimilation.

42. See Kathleen Neils Conzen, "German-Americans and the Invention of Ethnicity," in America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History, ed. by Frank Frommiller and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 1: 131-147; Andrew P. Yox, "Bonds of Community: Buffalo's German Element, 1853-1871," New York History 66 (April, 1985): 141-163; and Cinel, From Italy to San Francisco, pp. 228-255.

43. Ojerde, From Peasants to Farmers, p. 236; Zunz, "American History and the Changing Meaning of Assimilation," p. 66.

44. Harold J. Abramson, "Assimilation and Pluralism," in Harvard Guide to American Ethnic Groups (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1980), pp.155-160.

CHAPTER 2

THE SWEDES SETTLE THE PLAINS

Before the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 the area that would become the states of Kansas and Nebraska had little attraction for people. Its white population consisted largely of soldiers in remote military posts, transients bound for more attractive places further to the west, and scattered merchants supplying wayfarers. Stephen Douglas's bill to organize the territory for the purpose of building a trans-continental railroad opened the region to settlement and fueled the flames of sectional discord as both Northerners and Southerners sought to extend their own views on slavery into the virgin land.

Population growth for the territories of Kansas and Nebraska was slow for the first decade. Much open land still remained in the tier of states immediately to the east. Accounts of the riches in the far west continued to lure settlers past the plains of the new territories. First poor economic conditions and then the Civil War stifled the development of the region. Not until the close of the war and the resumption of immigration would Kansas and Nebraska, both states before the end of the 1860s, see extensive settlement, with Kansas generally in the lead. Economic depression and crop failure intervened in the 1870s, but high rainfall, a great surge in immigration, considerable migration from the eastern states, and extending transportation systems brought a rush of settlement in the states during the 1880s.

Among the thousands of people who sought new homes on the prairies of Kansas and Nebraska in the decades after the Civil War were large numbers of European immigrants, drawn there primarily by the opportunity to own land. Among these were significant numbers of Swedes, a nationality that established important rural communities in both states.

The Swedish settlements of Kansas and Nebraska have much in common. The first Swedish

settlers trickled into the respective states in the 1850s, although in numbers too small to create ethnic communities. In each state, the first rural settlements that could be considered truly Swedish formed in the late 1860s. Both states had concentrations of Swedes in urban centers along the eastern border, but the dominant Swedish experience was rural. Although individuals of Swedish birth could be found in virtually every county in Kansas and Nebraska, there were substantial concentrations of the group in certain rural areas. By the late 1880s, the older Swedish communities were contributing migrants to new settlements in the western areas of these states.

The settlements in the two states also have significant differences. In Kansas, one of the early settlements emerged as the dominant Swedish cluster in the state. The Lindsborg community, covering the southern portion of Saline County and the northern portion of McPherson County, far surpassed--both in numbers of settlers and in importance--others. Not even the state's urban centers of Kansas City and Topeka had as many Swedes as did Lindsborg and the surrounding area. One of Lindsborg's leaders, speaking with only slight exaggeration, boasted that his town was "the social and religious center of the Swedes in the entire Southwest."¹ In Nebraska, by contrast, no single rural center held the pre-eminent position that Lindsborg did during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Douglas County, including the urban center of Omaha, had more Swedish immigrants than any other county during the period. The rural settlements in Saunders and Burt Counties began in the late 1860s and remained important, but Polk County superseded Burt as the rural county with the second highest number of Swedes in the 1870s and Phelps took the top position when it was settled during the late 1870s and into the 1880s.

In Kansas, a surprising number of settlements were founded by colonies of like-minded immigrants intending to establish homogeneous communities. The Lindsborg area owes its size and ethnic background to the actions of colonization companies that purchased nearly thirty thousand acres of railroad land. These companies attracted settlers who not only wanted the

security of Swedish neighbors, but also desired neighbors of the same faith who would cooperate in creating a close Christian community. Lindsborg and its hinterland proved to be a powerful magnet for later Swedish immigrants seeking the same qualities. Nebraska lacked such ambitious colonization schemes. While group migration was common in Nebraska, it did not approach the scale nor carry the zeal that existed to the south.

Nor did Nebraska Swedes have leaders comparable to those present in Kansas. Two Swedish clergymen from Lindsborg gained national reputations for their activities during the late nineteenth century. Both of them actively promoted various causes benefiting their community and fellow countrymen. Both encouraged other Swedes to migrate to Lindsborg. Both sought ties with American culture and politics as means of advancing their own ends. The first, Olof Olsson, was in part responsible for the success of one of the early colonization companies. When in the mid-1870s he left for duties at Augustana College and Seminary in Rock Island--an institution he would eventually preside over--he helped pick his successor. That man, Carl A. Swensson, dominated the Lindsborg scene from 1879 until his death in 1904. Nebraska Swedes, while they developed some capable leaders, lacked men of the stature of Olsson and Swensson.

The first Swedes to settle in Kansas had come as early as 1848, involved in the Santa Fe Trail trade. In 1855, hearing reports of good land in Kansas Territory, a Swede from Galesburg, Illinois, journeyed to the Blue River valley in northeastern Kansas. Finding conditions to his liking, he returned to the area the following year with his family and brother. Thus began the Mariadah! settlement in Pottawatomie County. Other Swedish settlers followed, having heard of Mariadah! by word of mouth and through reports in Hemlandet, the major Swedish-language newspaper of the time.²

In 1857, Dr. C. H. Gran of Andover, Illinois, announced plans to lead a colony of Swedes to Kansas the following year. T. N. Hasselquist, a leading Swedish-American clergyman and editor of Hemlandet, gave the enterprise favorable reviews. According to the original scheme, Gran and other interested parties were to meet and proceed to Kansas as a group. When Gran arrived at the

predetermined rendezvous he was disappointed to find only a few people waiting for him. Some prospective settlers had become impatient and had already departed for Kansas. The opportunity to create a substantial Swedish colony in Kansas before the Civil War failed, partly because of poor organization and partly due to unfavorable reports about conditions in the territory. Although Gran and a handful of others did try to settle in Kansas, their numbers were too small to be successful.³

Following the war, eight Swedish immigrants left Junction City, Kansas, in search of good homestead land further west. In the Smoky Hill River valley south of Salina, they encountered Anders Bengtson Carlgren, who had claimed land in the area in early 1864. Finding the land suitable, the Swedes encouraged others to join them on the frontier and in May, 1866, seventeen Swedes filed homestead claims in what would become the Lindsborg settlement. Other Swedes followed.⁴

This small cluster of Swedes in the Smoky Hill River valley might have remained an insignificant settlement had it not been for decisions made by countrymen in Illinois. S. A. Lindell, a Swede who had immigrated to Chicago in 1866, had suggested to friends that the Swedes form a colonization company to purchase land in the West. Acting on this idea on April 17, 1868, they formed the First Swedish Agricultural Company of Chicago. Its original goal was to settle each of one hundred colonists on a quarter section of land on the frontier. Circumstances led the company to consider Kansas. The settlers already in the Smoky Hill area were at the time trying to persuade others to take land in the area through accounts in the Swedish-American press. A Lutheran minister then serving as the Kansas Adjutant-General arranged special railroad passes for representatives of the company to tour Union Pacific lands in the region and special rates for settlers purchasing land in the area. When reports of the region proved favorable the company bought lands totaling 13,168 acres in McPherson and Saline Counties. This organization eventually was incorporated by the state of Kansas as the First Swedish Agricultural Company of McPherson County.⁵

That this colonization venture had a special sense of identity and purpose--and that these were tied to faith as well as to ethnicity-- was evident from the start. The first meeting opened with a reading from Scripture and prayer and the participants disbanded with prayer. The second article of the constitution, following only the one naming the company, decreed, "Everyone received as a member of this corporation shall be a believing Christian, adhere to the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, be industrious and thrifty, and exert himself for the upbuilding and development of the company." In a subsequent article, members were reminded that they were "duty bound to work for the maintenance and success of the corporation" and that he who failed at this would have to "be satisfied with such decision concerning himself as a majority of the members pass." Ill or incapacitated members were to "be treated in as lenient a manner as the condition of the corporation will allow." The instructions to officers continued this tone; the president was to "be a firm character" who was to "sincerely quench all disorder and insubordination, but with kindness and love treat want and virtue."⁶ The first structure on the company's land was the bolagshuset--the company house--which served as initial housing for members relocating to Kansas. The property of the company was held communally at first, most of it being sold to members in a closed auction in February, 1871.⁷

The First Swedish Agricultural Company was more than just a commercial enterprise. It was an organization of individuals united not simply by the desire to acquire land in Kansas, but also by the goal of creating a homogeneous religious community. To achieve this the members were willing to pool their material resources, to hazard their health on the frontier, to bind themselves to a community of fellow believers, and to accept the discipline that community meted out. In the exclusive and religious nature of this organization lies an important facet of Lindsborg's history.

This initial religious impulse received a crucial reinforcement in June, 1869, when the Rev. Olof Olsson, a young Lutheran minister, brought a group of immigrants from Sweden to the Smoky Hill River region. A pious youth, Olsson had prepared for the ministry in Sweden.

According to secondary accounts, following his ordination he became frustrated at the indifference he found both in his parishioners and in the hierarchy of the state church. In this frustration he became even more enthusiastic and supportive of the lösare cause (so named because of the use of lay readers--lösare-- as preachers) a pietistic reform movement in his homeland. If large numbers of his parishioners turned a deaf ear to his admonitions to lead a godly life and if his superiors proved unresponsive to his complaints of lax discipline, emigrating with those who shared a kindred spirit seemed to be the answer. Correspondence between Olsson and the head of the Augustana Synod, the Swedish Lutheran body in America, indicates that the discontented minister was considering the possibility of starting over in America as early as 1867.⁸

In the summer of 1868, C. R. Carlson, a schoolmaster and lösare leader who was one of Olsson's close friends, joined the First Swedish Agricultural Company and departed for America. Carlson's brother-in-law, Magnus Carlson, had been one of the founders of the company and had encouraged his relative to build a new life in Kansas free from the formalism of the Swedish church. Once in Lindsborg, C. R. Carlson convinced the pioneers there that Olsson would be the best choice for a minister. A call--informal because no congregation had yet been created in the company's settlement--soon followed. Olsson was also encouraged to come to America by another friend, the Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, who was then pastor of a Swedish Lutheran church in Galesburg, Illinois. Dahlsten had written Olsson about church conditions in America, telling him that he would find a church in which a hierarchy did not stifle evangelism, where pietism was encouraged, and where pastors could exercise the discipline necessary to keep their congregations pure. As Emory Lindquist, the biographer of Olsson and chief historian on Lindsborg's development, explains, "The decision of Olsson to go to Kansas was clear. The missionary impulse, the quest for religious freedom, the adventure of building a religious community of a distinctive character, the urging of Christian friends combined with economic and social factors to fashion the background for the decision."⁹

This decision was not made alone. Some two hundred other Swedes from the area in the

province of Värmland where Olsson had been preaching elected to accompany the pastor to Kansas. In May, 1869, Olsson led this large emigrant party on the first leg of the journey. Unfortunately, the group was divided in Glasgow, Scotland, where it was to board a steamer to cross the Atlantic. Since Olsson's group was too large to fit the available berths of one vessel, the Swedes split into two groups, Olsson leading one of them. The second group, reaching Chicago ahead of their fellow Värmlanders, was contacted by a Swede recruiting railroad laborers for work in Missouri. Instead of proceeding to Kansas, they chose to go on to Missouri in hopes of earning money. Eventually this group purchased land in Linn County, Missouri, rather than joining the Lindsborg community. Olsson's charges reached their original destination without further mishap in June.¹⁰

The one hundred or so Swedes who joined Olsson on the Kansas prairies were an important addition to the colonists of the agricultural company. Some appear to have joined the ranks of the company's members; others relied on homesteading land still unclaimed in the alternate sections of public property remaining within the railroad tract purchased by the Chicago Swedes. Not only were the Värmlanders numerically important, but they also buttressed the religious tone of the original colonists. They, like Olsson, brought with them a religious zeal which had been frowned upon in Sweden but which found companionship in Kansas.

One of Olsson's central purposes in emigrating from Sweden was met with the organization of the Bethany Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Lindsborg in August, 1869. That it was to be a congregation free of the lackadaisical spirit common in the Church of Sweden is evidenced by the first constitution. Communion was denied to any person who had not been "carefully examined by the pastor and the deacons concerning the genuineness of his conversion." Anyone seeking membership had to apply to a deacon but the prospective member could not "be admitted before the pastor and the deacons have thoroughly discussed his application." Each of the deacons was to examine potential candidates "by personal conversation" and discuss the matter with the church council before membership could be approved. By some reports, Pastor Olsson's

own wife underwent the same examination. Even members' children who had received religious instruction from the pastor had to go through the same process to be admitted to communion.¹¹

In many respects, the experience of the early Swedes in Lindsborg parallels the Puritan experience in colonial New England. In A New England Town, Kenneth Lockridge describes what he calls a "Christian Utopian Closed Corporate Community." The early settlers of Dedham, Massachusetts, were individuals sharing a faith and seeking to create a utopia in the wilderness. Membership in the community was restricted to believers and only those surviving a rigorous examination were admitted. Even the children of full members had to undergo the review of church leaders. While the community reinforced church discipline over wayward members, it also offered benefits to those who joined.¹²

Like the Puritans in Dedham, the Lindsborg settlers--especially those who chose to join the Bethany congregation--formed a closed Christian community. The First Swedish Agricultural Company originally planned to establish one hundred settlers--all of them Lutherans--in its colony. Membership in the Company was closed in August, 1869, when the number of members neared one hundred. The membership of Bethany was even more restrictive, the church council admitting only those whom it was convinced were sincere Christians. The members of both the company and the church placed themselves under the community's discipline. Each in its own way--as had the Puritans two centuries earlier--attempted to establish a pure community.¹³

Foreshadowing later religious divisions, only twelve individuals became charter members of the Bethany congregation, although many settlers had attended the organizational meeting. Some objected that the constitution departed too much from the model recommended by the Augustana Synod. Others, no doubt remembering the state church of Sweden, believed that the new church did not distance itself sufficiently from the Lutheran body and protested when the congregation sought admission to the Synod in 1870. The religious unity of the Lindsborg settlement, strained by such issues, eventually shattered over doctrinal controversies in the 1870s.¹⁴

The First Swedish Agricultural Company, which came to be known as the Chicago company, was not alone in its efforts to found Swedish settlements in the Smoky Hill River valley. A few months after the Chicago company was formed another colonization company began at Galesburg, Illinois, out of meetings headed by Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, the same man who had encouraged Olsson to come to America. Dahlsten himself had suffered some disappointment in Galesburg because his congregation had divided over doctrinal disputes. Many of the Swedes in the Galesburg area were recent immigrants unable to afford land in Illinois. Learning of opportunities to purchase large tracts of railroad land in Kansas, interested individuals gathered in the fall of 1868 to create the Galesburg Colonization Company. A committee en route to inspect railroad lands in the counties of Saline and McPherson happened upon a similar group of Swedes from Berlin (later Swedona), Illinois. The two committees joined forces, found the area suitable, and contracted to purchase twenty-two sections totaling over 14,000 acres to the north and west of the Chicago company's holdings.¹⁵

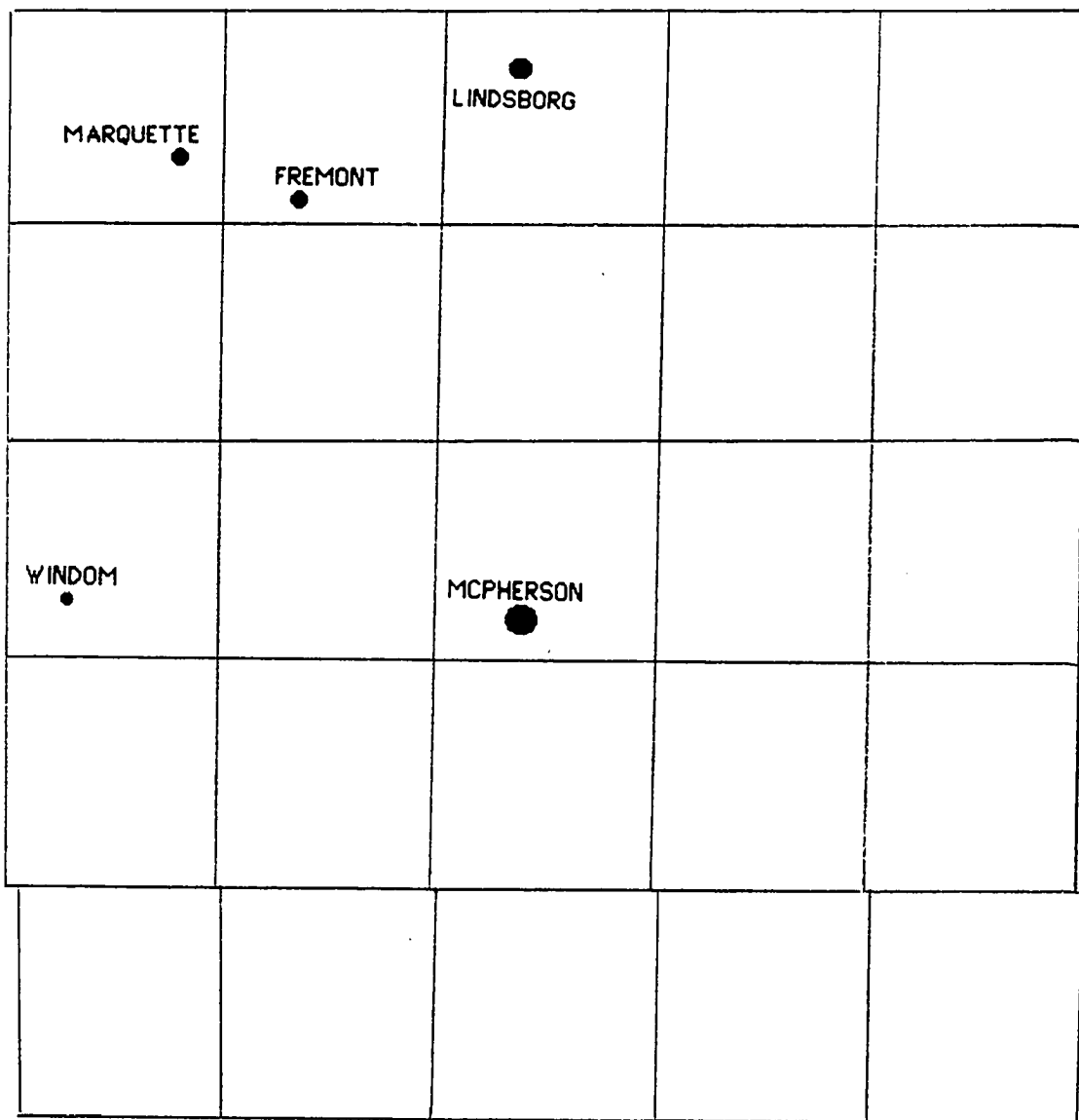
The Galesburg company conducted its affairs differently from did the Chicago company. Although the members were Lutherans who sought to establish Lutheran communities in Kansas, they did not bring quite the same sense of zeal that the Chicago company and Olsson's Värmländers had brought with them. Nor was the company's property held in common. The Galesburgers arranged for the Kansas Pacific to make contracts with the individual members of the company. As soon as the land was thus claimed, the Galesburg company itself dissolved, although the new landowners often traveled in large groups to their new homes. The Galesburg Colonization Company, although it contributed substantially to the Lindsborg region by making possible a dense settlement of Swedish Lutherans, lacked some of the discipline and exclusivity of the First Swedish Agricultural Company.¹⁶

The Galesburg company was not the only group choosing to locate near the Lindsborg Swedes. In late 1869, Major Erick Forsse, who had served the Union in the Civil War, led a party of about forty from the Bishop Hill area of Illinois to a site northwest of Lindsborg to create

the settlement of Falun (Maps 2.1 and 2.2). A second party joined them in early 1870. To the north and east of Lindsborg, a colony of immigrants from the province of Blekinge founded the town of Assaria. The first settlers in this area had heard of the Chicago company and decided to settle in the same region even though they were not affiliated with the colony. North of Lindsborg a small group known as the Little Chicago Company or Colseth Company created a small settlement that rejected Lutheranism.¹⁷

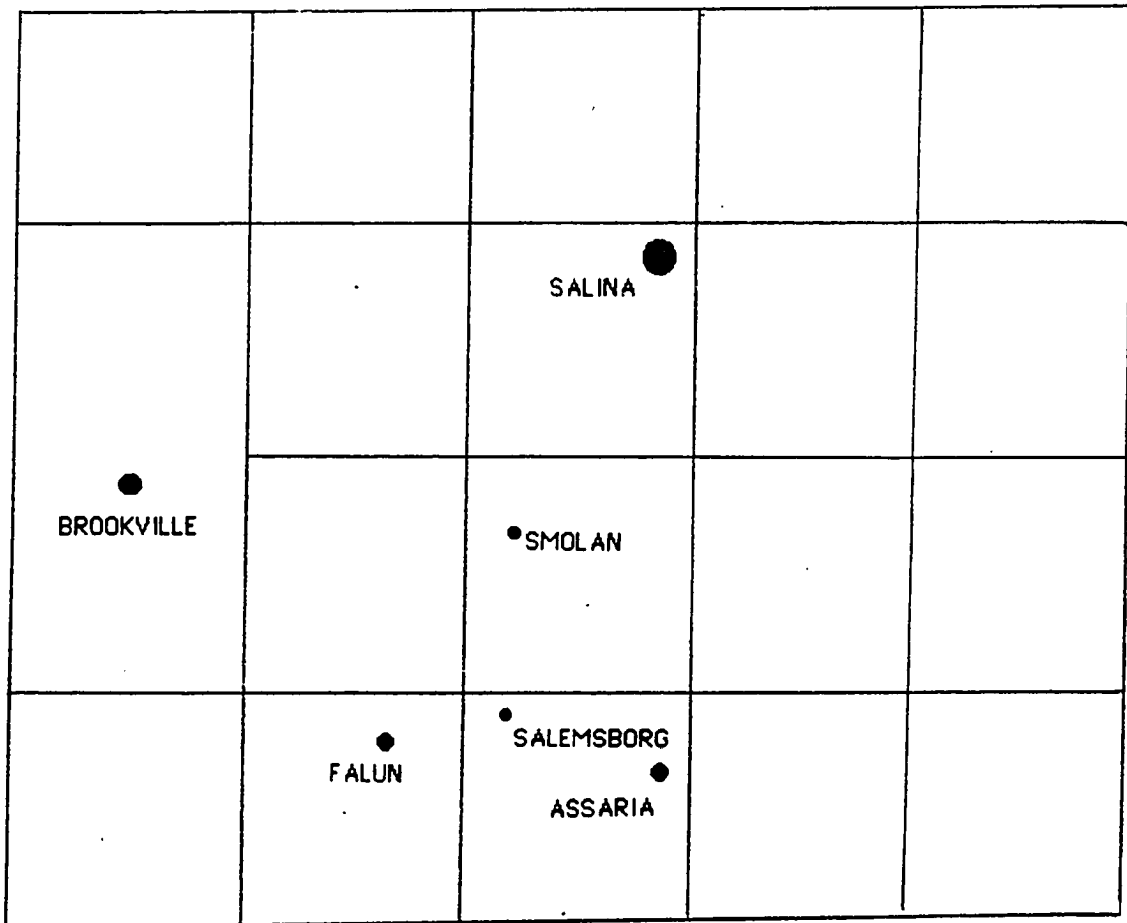
Such groups and individual immigrants did not need to purchase large tracts of land as had the two major companies. The original railroad grants had included only every other section, the balance being reserved as public domain and available through the federal government's land laws, although a person could homestead no more than eighty acres within the area of a railroad land grant. Thus a landseeker could claim some of the substantial public land in the area or purchase individually from the railroad or earlier settlers. Even though settlers of any nationality could choose from the remaining land, the Swedes managed to create tracts that were almost entirely Swedish by encouraging their countrymen to take unclaimed sections near other Swedes. In at least one of the Swedish communities in McPherson County, non-Swedes considering taking up residence in the vicinity were encouraged to look elsewhere.¹⁸

Although Saline and McPherson counties had large populations of Swedes, one must not assume that there were no differences among this nationality. The Swedes, like other immigrant groups of the nineteenth century, showed a distinct proclivity to cluster by provincial origin as well as by ethnicity. This tendency is evident in some of the settlements in the Lindsborg area. Natives of Värmland, a province on Sweden's western border, were to be found among the early members of the Chicago company, comprised all of the group that Olsson brought to the area, and continued to follow their landsmen to the central Kansas settlements. So many Värmlanders settled in Lindsborg that one geographer of Swedish America termed it the "Värmland of Kansas." Many of them came from a relatively small area of the province. This provincial group also played an important role in Lindsborg's religious history; ten of the twelve charter members of



MCPHERSON COUNTY, KANSAS

MAP 2.1



SALINE COUNTY, KANSAS

MAP 2.2

the Bethany hailed from Värmland.¹⁹

Värmlanders were not the only Swedes in the Smoky Hill River valley who had a discernible pattern. Many of the Galesburg company's settlers also congregated with Swedes from the same province. Salemsborg, founded north of Lindsborg by members of the second company, was comprised primarily of people from the district of Kalmar in the province of Småland. Smolan, still farther to the north, speaks of the Smålander origin of its first inhabitants in its very name. Assaria, a little to the east of Salemsborg, was established by immigrants from the district of Jämshög in western Blekinge. Northwest of Lindsborg lies Falun, named after a city in the Swedish province of Dalcarlia. Marquette and Fremont, to the west of Lindsborg, were peopled mostly by Smålanders, but New Gottland to the south attracted Västergötlanders from the area of Skaraborg. The earlier an immigrant came, the more likely he was to find available land neighboring others from his home parish or province. As the pioneer period passed land became relatively scarce, and this opportunity declined.²⁰

This provincial diversity sometimes provided grounds for dispute in the Lindsborg settlement. C. Terence Pihlblad suggests that the Värmlanders "carried their religious strife and dissension and deep pietism with them into their settlements" and that this accounts for some of the bitter doctrinal struggles of the 1870s. There may be some truth to this, for the neighboring settlements--with few immigrants from Värmland--did not engage in fierce verbal battles that characterized Lindsborg in the decade after its founding. J. P. Stromquist, one of the Fremont pioneers, recalled "a clear dissimilarity in characteristics and disposition" between the residents of his community and those of Lindsborg. The latter "were religious, lively, emotional, and talkative. It seemed to us they discussed religious topics at both proper and improper times." His own neighbors, by contrast, "were less loquacious and did not discuss religious topics as easily as the people of Lindsborg."²¹ Emory Lindquist offers additional reasons for the differences between the Freemount congregation and Lindsborg. The Freemount church leaders, having lived in Galesburg before coming to Kansas, had already experienced the division of a

congregation. Those most inclined toward extreme piety and separatism had already left Dahlsten's Galesburg church by the time the colonization company was sending settlers to Kansas. The people remaining, while devout, were not tied to the läsare movement in Sweden and were content to remain within the Lutheran fold.²²

Evidence hints that provincial origin could play a role in religious division. The Blekingers of Assaria were originally part of the Lutheran congregation of Salemsborg, but in 1875, pleading the distance to services, they insisted on forming their own church. They prevailed and built their own house of worship only four miles away from the Salemsborg church. One person familiar with the settlement argues that the real division was along provincial and cultural lines carried from Sweden, not geographical lines in Kansas.²³ When religious fragmentation led to the formation of the Rose Hill Mission Covenant church a short distance northeast of Lindsborg, the core of the new congregation was a small group of Östergötlanders living as neighbors.²⁴

This latter movement marked the end of an era in Lindsborg's early history. In the 1870s a doctrinal dispute originating in Sweden produced deep divisions within Swedish-American Lutheranism. The Lindsborg community fell victim to this controversy. Some of Olsson's parishioners, unable to convince their pastor that Lutheranism erred on certain critical points, left the congregation. The Bethany Lutheran church council excommunicated two others who refused to renounce what it viewed as heresy. The bitter feelings over this issue hurt Olsson deeply. In 1876, Olsson requested leave to teach at Augustana in Rock Island, his decision certainly influenced by the affair.²⁵

Olsson's influence over Lindsborg and Bethany did not end with his leave and later resignation, however. He continued to visit his first home in America and to work on its behalf. He helped Bethany choose his successor, Carl A. Swensson. A theological student at Augustana Seminary when Olsson first met him, Swensson arrived as the congregation's fulltime minister in 1879 and continued as its leader until his untimely death in 1904.²⁶

Swensson was an American by birth, the son of a Swedish immigrant clergyman who was a future president of the Augustana Synod. Much of his youth was spent in Andover, Illinois, where his father served as spiritual leader for a large settlement of Swedes. At sixteen he entered Augustana College. While on a band tour to Lindsborg in 1877, the young Swensson so impressed the Bethany congregation that they inquired of Olsson about him. Receiving Olsson's blessing, the Lindsborg Lutherans decided to issue a call, even though Swensson was still two years from ordination.²⁷

Swensson took charge of Bethany Lutheran shortly after his ordination in 1879. His congregation soon found it had selected a pastor with boundless energy, a leader who was a builder and booster as well as a pastor. Just two years after arriving in Lindsborg he founded Bethany College and served as its president and chief spokesman until his death. He traveled widely, preaching, lecturing, soliciting funds, and promoting his college, his congregation, his community, and various personal business enterprises. Eloquent in both Swedish and English, he provided an important link between the Swedes in the Smoky Hill valley and the larger American society. An ardent Republican, he rallied his countrymen to the cause of the Grand Old Party, particularly as agrarian protesters challenged it in the late nineteenth century. In return, he expected the party's favor for himself and for fellow Swedes. When Swensson died unexpectedly while on a tour in California in 1904, his death shocked the community. Although others would fill his positions, none would bring quite the stature, energy, and boundless enthusiasm that Swensson had.²⁸

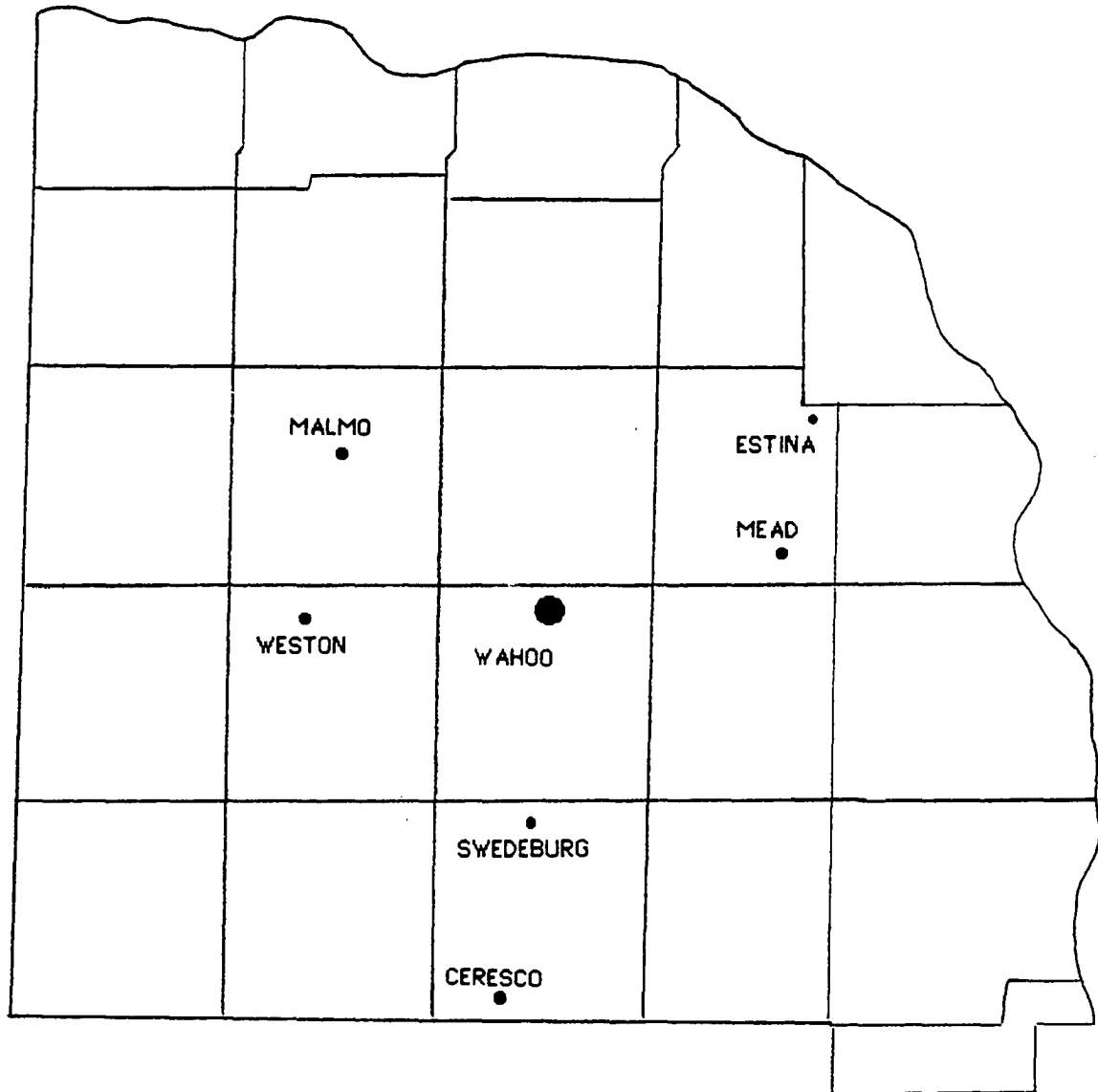
Swensson's death brought to a close an era in Lindsborg's history. Since its founding in the 1860s, it had known the leadership of two central figures. Olof Olsson, the pietistic young preacher from Värmland, had brought a substantial group of fellow believers to central Kansas in 1869. He organized the first congregation there, led it into the Augustana Synod, and nurtured its growth even during periods of schism. When religious controversy made enemies of old allies, Olsson withdrew from active leadership in the community, but still continued his influence from

afar. His successor provided a quarter century of direction to the Kansas Swedes. He worked tirelessly to improve his parish, to unite and enlarge his community, to build up his school, and to enhance the power and prestige of his fellow Swedes. This leadership helps explain the size and strength of the Swedish settlements in Saline and McPherson counties.

Few Swedes found their way to Nebraska before the Civil War. Only seventy Swedish-born persons were found by census takers in that territory in 1860. By the late 1860s, as was the case in Kansas, Swedish settlements were beginning to form, although less dramatically than in the state to the south. The 1870 census records nearly 5,000 immigrants born in Sweden and Norway then living in Kansas while Nebraska had less than half that number. By 1880 the Nebraska Swedes had closed the gap, numbering only a thousand fewer than the 11,000 in Kansas. The next decade was one of substantial growth for Nebraska. The state had more unsettled land with which to attract settlers than did Kansas, and Omaha was developing as a major urban center in the Midwest. By 1900 Nebraska had far outstripped Kansas in the size of the Swedish-born population, with nearly 25,000 Swedes to Kansas's 15,000. About twenty percent of Nebraskans of Swedish birth resided in Omaha.²⁹

The earliest Swedes in Nebraska appear to have traveled west as far as Omaha with Mormons in the 1850s but declined to continue on to Utah. Many Swedes arriving in the mid-1860s were attracted not to the land but to employment opportunities in Omaha. The Union Pacific in particular provided jobs for young Swedes either on construction gangs or in its Omaha shops. So many Swedes sought homes in one Omaha neighborhood that the locale came to be called Stockholm.³⁰ Other Swedes, intent on establishing farms, had moved into the counties north and west of Omaha. Two of these counties, Burt and Saunders, would become major areas of Swedish settlement in Nebraska.

The first permanent Swedish settlers in Saunders County arrived in 1867 when Swedes from Illinois and Minnesota took land to the north of the site of Mead (Map 2.3). Additional Swedes came directly from Kristianstads län in Skåne to the same area the following year. Still



SAUNDERS COUNTY, NEBRASKA

MAP 2.3

more arrived from the same district in Sweden in 1869, this time settling near Swedeburg.³¹ With small increments of this nature, Saunders might have developed a moderately sized Swedish population in time. A Lutheran minister in Omaha, working with the goal of congregating his countrymen into rural parishes, had a decisive influence on the future of the county.

In the spring of 1868, Pastor S. G. Larson, who had immigrated ten years earlier and had received his theological training in America, took leave from his Knoxville, Illinois, congregation to make a missionary tour through western Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. While in Nebraska he held the first Swedish religious services in the state, no other clergyman having settled in the state yet. In Kansas, he served on the First Swedish Agricultural Company's committee to choose land for the colonization venture before returning to Knoxville. Larson reported his findings to Swedish Americans through the pages of Hemlandet, no doubt stimulating interest in migration to the areas he had visited. Larson himself elected to relocate in Omaha the following winter, from which he encouraged others of his nationality to follow.³²

Over the winter of 1868-1869, with many of the Swedes in Omaha unemployed, some began to consider seeking land. Larson urged them to work as a group rather than as individuals so that they might create Swedish communities rather than becoming lost among other nationalities. The pastor consented to serve on the committee appointed to find a suitable location. Looking first in Lancaster County, the group found its way barred by streams. Moving north to Saunders County, the committee examined possible sites and returned to Omaha. As a result of Larson's direction, between two and three hundred Swedes chose to purchase or claim land in Saunders, many of them in the Mead area. Larson was among those who homesteaded in the region.³³

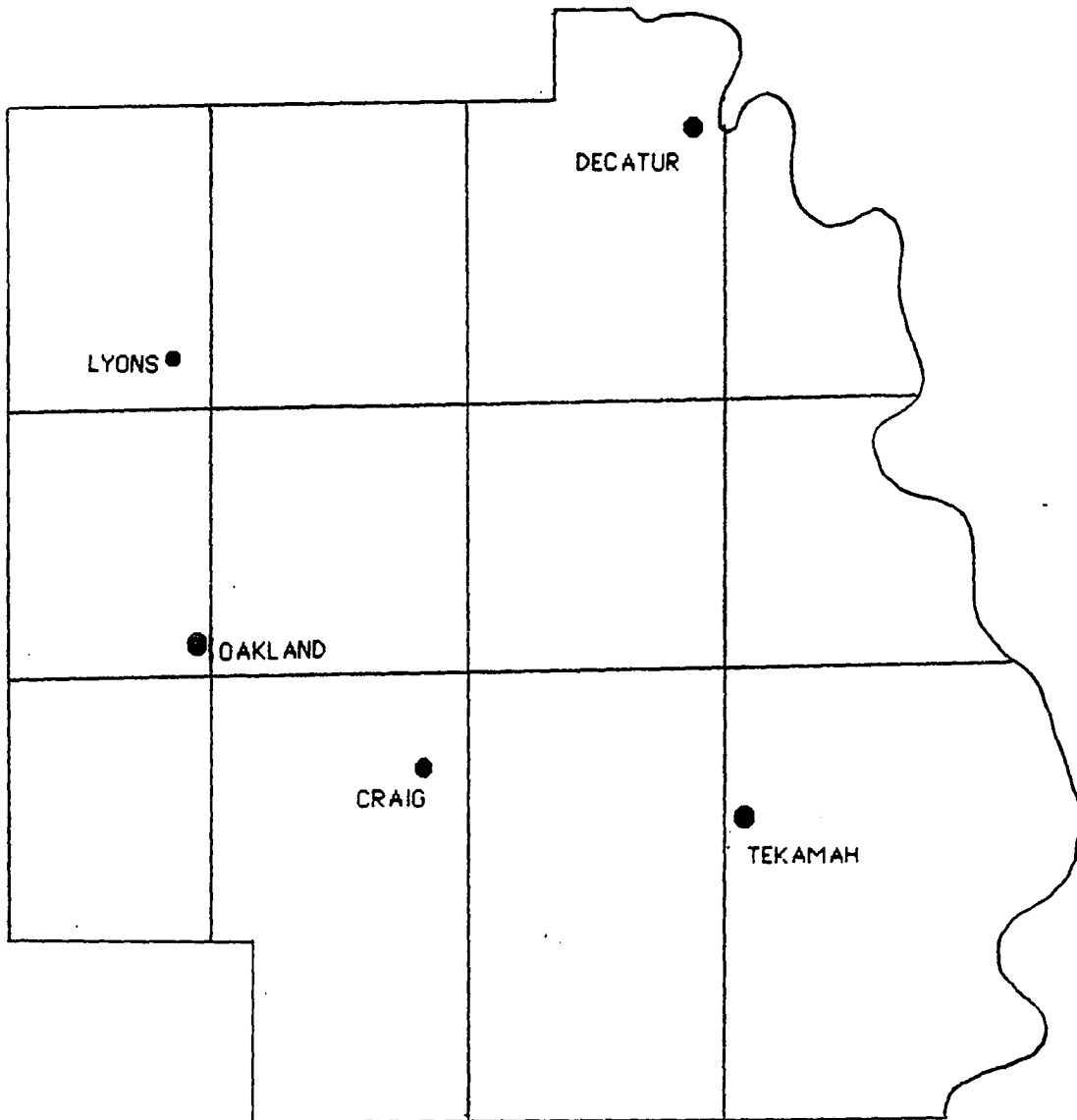
Larson continued to promote the Saunders County settlements, assisting countrymen hoping to settle in the area, leading parties of Illinois Swedes to Nebraska, spreading news of his community in the Swedish-American press, and organizing congregations for his Lutheran charges. The county continued to draw Swedes both from settlements farther to the east and

directly from Sweden. Settlers from Skåne took up residence in the vicinity of Malmö; Dalecarlians settled the regions to the west and north of Wahoo; and in the Mead area Swedes from Småland, Östergötland, and Västergötland acquired land.³⁴

In some respects the experiences of Olof Olsson and S. G. Larson were similar. Each played a central role in the religious and physical development of a major Swedish settlement in his respective state. By encouraging residential clustering and leading parties of landseekers, Larson helped Saunders County achieve sufficient numbers of Swedes to support ethnic institutions and maintain a distinct culture. He, like Olsson, was responsible for founding and serving several Lutheran congregations. Also like Olsson, the sectarian strife that disrupted Swedish Lutheranism in the 1870 split his congregations and convinced him to leave the area.

Important differences existed as well. Larson did not bring to Saunders County a large group of followers who had been caught up by his message in Sweden. The homeseekers who followed him were a diverse group, some of whom had already been drawn to a city on the American frontier and others whom he recruited in Illinois. Their aim was land and security, not a utopia on the prairie. If these people purchased railroad land rather than filing a claim for the public domain, they did so as individuals, not as a colony. When Larson retired from the scene, he did not go to a major ethnic institution and a position of leadership from which he could continue to bolster the fortunes of his Nebraska friends. He went on to another congregation in a more settled state. Indeed, Larson remained a parish pastor at various locations for the remainder of his career, and he eventually retired to his homestead near the Alma Lutheran Church which he had left over two decades earlier.³⁵

The first Swedish settlers in Burt County preceded the pioneers of Saunders County, first arriving in the Logan Creek area near Oakland in the mid-1860s (Map 2.4). Burt did not maintain this early lead, however. S. G. Larson's work to concentrate his countrymen in Saunders soon gave that county the largest rural settlements of Swedes in the eastern portion of the state. By 1870 Saunders had nearly twice as many residents born in Sweden than did Burt



BURT COUNTY, NEBRASKA
MAP 2.4

County³⁶

Joseph Alexis, an early authority on Swedes in Nebraska, suggests that the earliest Swedes in Burt County were natives of Dalsland who homesteaded in Nebraska in 1864. Local histories of the area have no mention of this small group. The first Swedes whose presence is clear came in 1866, when several Swedes travelled from Moline, Illinois, to Monona County, Iowa, then crossed the Missouri to take claims in Burt County. These were joined in 1867 by a party headed by Andrew Beckman, a native of Småland who had immigrated to Andover, Illinois, three years earlier. Beckman was pleased with the land he found and returned to the Swedish communities east of the Mississippi River to encourage others to build new homes in Nebraska.³⁷

Non-Lutheran groups played a much more prominent role in Burt County's development than was typical in Kansas and Nebraska. The Oakland community was one of the most diverse Nebraska Swedish settlements in its religious affiliations. The 1866 party included at least some Swedish Baptists and a congregation of that denomination was organized in 1869, a year after the first Baptist services were held in the area. Of its sixteen charter members, eight transferred their membership from an American Baptist congregation in Omaha, six from a Swedish Baptist church in Rock Island, and two directly from the Swedish province of Östergötland. Swedish Methodists from Iowa crossed the Missouri to take land in what was known as the West Side community, near Oakland, beginning in 1869. More of this faith joined the pioneers in subsequent years and the Methodists started a congregation in 1877. Many of the early Swedish Lutherans came to the area from Illinois with or at the urging of Andrew Beckman. S. G. Larson visited the settlement occasionally and served as the first pastor of the Lutheran congregation begun in 1869. This early disunity was further complicated by religious controversy in the mid-1870s, when a faction split from the Lutherans to found a Mission Covenant congregation. Still another Swedish denomination entered the picture when an Evangelical Free Church began in 1895.³⁸

A significant factor in the pattern of settlement among pioneers in Nebraska, including

Swedes, was the role railroads played. In order to encourage construction into lightly settled regions, the national government gave substantial tracts of land to railroad companies. The state sometimes added to the extensive acreage so distributed. In Nebraska, over sixteen percent of the total land area of the state went as land grants to railroads. These corporations in turn created land departments that promoted sale to individuals and companies. In Nebraska, two great railway corporations received the bulk of the land grants. The Union Pacific alone acquired nearly five million acres in Nebraska. The Burlington and Missouri River received close to two and a half million acres.³⁹

Of the four counties in Nebraska under study, only Burt County lay outside the major area of railroad lands. In the others, the Union Pacific and the Burlington sold land to Swedes and thereby helped encourage creation of enduring ethnic enclaves. In Saunders County the first waves of Swedish settlers were already taking land before either company began to advertise its property specifically to Scandinavians. While both railroads could claim a hand in aiding the Swedish settlements there, neither could claim their origin. Larson led Swedes into Saunders County in early 1869. It was not until October of that year that the Burlington hired a Scandinavian to reach potential settlers from the Scandinavian countries. Although the Union Pacific organized its land department on September, 1868, it was a year and a half before it aimed its appeals at a specifically Swedish audience in the United States by advertising in the pages of foreign language newspapers.⁴⁰

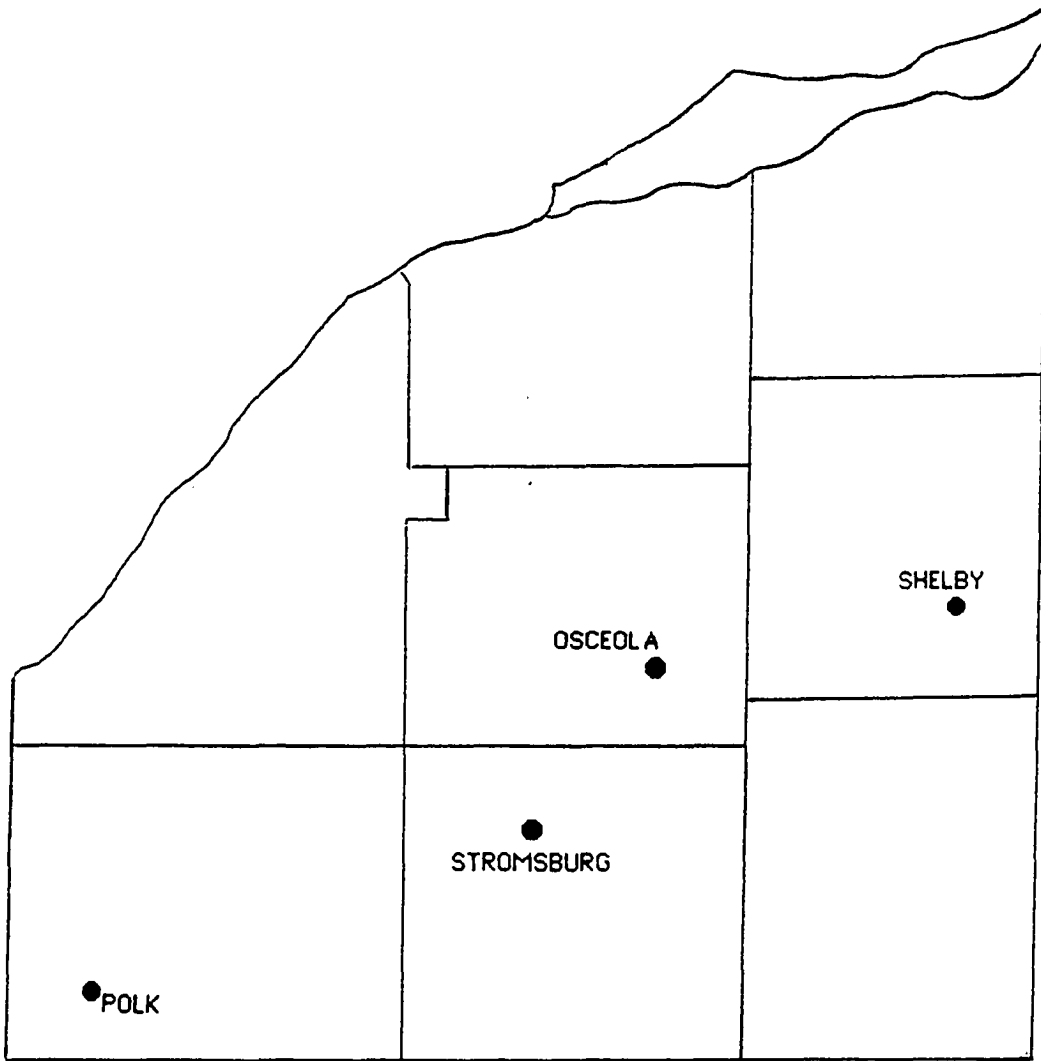
The railroads chose a variety of marketing strategies. Booster literature originally written for English-speaking readers was translated into the major languages of northern and western Europe, including Swedish. Maps of the land grant region were distributed. Foreign language newspapers here and abroad carried glowing accounts of the lands for sale and of the conditions newcomers would face. The Union Pacific hired booth space at expositions in the east. The companies sent land agents to the agricultural districts of states further east, particularly Iowa and Illinois, to encourage people to relocate in the West. Prospective buyers often received

free passes to look over the lands available and actual purchasers sometimes received special freight rates to move their belongings. At times the railroads hired immigrants who had been in America for some years to return to their homelands to promote interest in emigration.⁴¹

Nebraska's state government also had an interest in attracting migrants. Its own agents spoke on the advantages of the region and distributed literature to potential settlers. A Board of Immigration operated in the decade after the Civil War before being terminated in the 1870s.⁴²

By the time Swedish immigrants were considering the possibility of settling as far west as Polk County, the railroads were more ready to take an active role in recruiting them as prospective settlers. In the early 1870s several groups of Swedes in Illinois and Iowa chose to move into Polk and the adjoining counties. In 1870, a group of Swedes in Galva, Illinois, decided to move westward in concert. They chose Lewis Headstrom as a representative to explore sites in Nebraska for a new home. When Headstrom located suitable property in Polk County, the Galva Swedes formed a townsite company to establish a new community, Stromsburg, founded in June, 1872 (Map 2.5). At about the same time, Swedish Lutherans in Varna, Illinois, casting about for new lands, sent four men to Nebraska to investigate the potential. They, too, chose a site in Polk County. In March, 1872, twenty-eight people took homestead claims or bought from the railroad in what became known as the Swede Home area northwest of Stromsburg. Other Swedes came from Altona, Illinois. Still others came directly from Sweden.⁴³

Morris Spencer notes that a party of 103 families from the LaSalle region in Illinois took land in 1871 under the direction of a Union Pacific land agent named Hans Hansen, who was responsible for recruiting in the area between Davenport and Chicago. In 1873 twenty-six Swedish families from Glendale and Munterville, Iowa, took railroad land south of Stromsburg, the government land in the area already having been claimed. In his summary of immigrant groups taking land in the Union Pacific grant, Spencer lists groups totaling 206 families from Illinois and 54 from Iowa, all taking land in the Stromsburg and Osceola areas of Polk County between 1870 and 1873.⁴⁴



POLK COUNTY, NEBRASKA

MAP 2.5

As had been the case in Burt County, the settlements in Polk contained a range of religious groups, some of which reflected the diversity of Swedes who moved there. The settlers at Swede Home were Lutherans, having belonged to the same congregation in Varna, Illinois. Around Stromsburg, Baptists were more numerous and that denomination was the first in the settlement to organize a congregation, Baptists from Illinois and Iowa providing the nucleus. Indeed, the Lutheran church there was not established until 1888, and then in part only because some Lutherans had recently moved there. As was typical in most Swedish settlements on the Great Plains in the 1870s and 1880s, a Mission Covenant congregation also developed. Less common, two Swedish Methodist congregations also formed in the county.⁴⁵

Farther to the west, extensive Swedish settlement in the counties south of the Platte River began in the mid-1870s and continued into the 1880s. Several factors worked to delay development of that region. Swedes wanting to locate in Nebraska could still find land among their countrymen available in settlements further to the east. The town of Kearney served as the railhead for cattle drives in the region until 1873, which discouraged agricultural settlement for a time. Also important in slowing the movement of people into the region was the U.P.'s decision to delay opening its property for sale. Not until 1870 did the Union Pacific open the area just to the east of Phelps County for purchase. Once these hindrances were set aside, Kearney and Phelps counties emerged as the next major goal for Swedes planning to establish new farms in Nebraska.⁴⁶

The Union Pacific and Burlington roads land sales were central to the creating of large Swedish-dominated tracts in Kearney and Phelps counties. Both corporations had considerable land to dispose of and both had agents working among the Swedes in older Swedish communities and abroad. Of the two, the Union Pacific seems to have been more successful. Between 1874 and 1877, for example, that company placed 348 Swedish families from northeastern Illinois on its lands in Kearney and Phelps counties.⁴⁷

The story of the Union Pacific's work in Phelps County is dominated by Victor Rylander

and Leander Hallgren. In early 1876, Rylander and Hallgren were in Knox County, Illinois, to spread the word of railroad land available in the South Platte area. Among the people they talked to after church services one Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson and their son Rolf. Rolf kept a diary and its pages reveal something of how a colony of Swedes from an Illinois town made the transition to a frontier community. On January 22, Rolf recorded that Rylander and Hallgren were "U.P.R.R. land agents, who are organizing a colony for the settlement of Phelps County, Nebraska. Among the colonists are many of our friends and I think we will go too." Three days later, Rolf's parents made the decision to leave for Nebraska in the spring.⁴⁸ Despite the efforts of Rolf's aunt and uncle to dissuade them by describing the hardships of pioneer life, grasshoppers, and Indians, the Johnsons sold their farm and cattle and transported their household goods to Galesburg for shipment. On March 6, the young diarist's twentieth birthday, the small colony left Illinois. In the party were six families, three additional married couples without children, and five single men. Most came from Henderson Grove in Knox County, the Johnson's home.⁴⁹

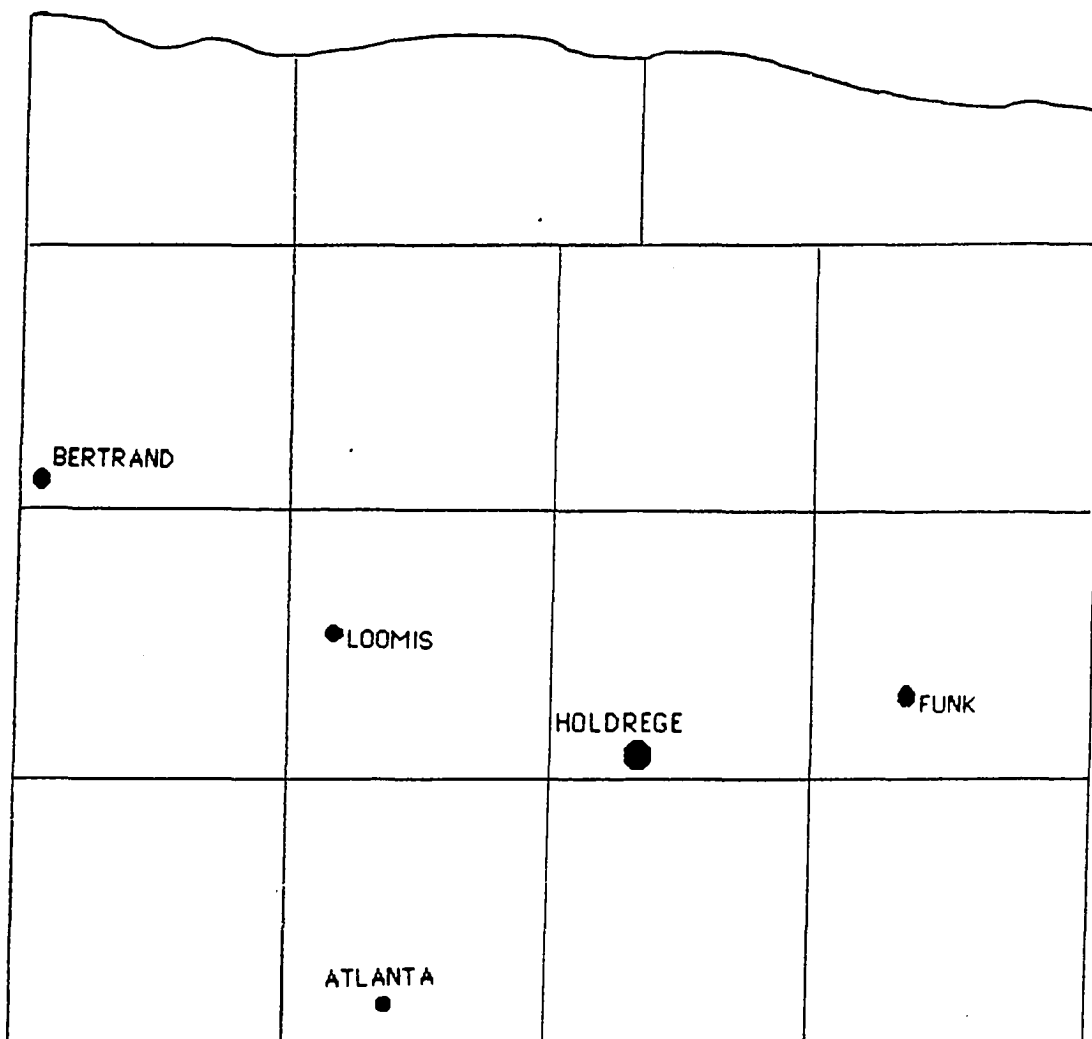
Late the following day, the party reached Kearney, where they were greeted and housed by one of John Johnson's old friends. Several days later Rolf departed for Phelps Center in Phelps County driving a team carrying a load of lumber to be used by Rylander and Hallgren to construct an emigrant house at which newcomers could find shelter until they found their land and made provisions for a home.⁵⁰ In late June the Johnson's, now in their new sod house, hosted a landseeker from Oneida, Illinois. Rolf reported the progress of the community: "New settlers are coming out every week and our settlement has more than doubled since last spring." A little over a year later Rolf mentioned another group from Illinois, including some old acquaintances, looking over the land available. His final entry on the development of his township commented on his father's assessor books. By March, 1879, Center township had nearly 300 residents, compared with 200 the previous year when the township had been larger.⁵¹

Hallgren and Rylander were not the only railroad agents laboring among the Swedes in

states further east. F. A. Beiyon representing the Burlington railroad was particularly active among the Swedes in eastern Iowa and in Illinois. Like his U.P. competitors, Beiyon had a building in which he could entertain prospective buyers while they considered his land. He had a five-room frame house on property he owned in western Kearney County. On at least one occasion, the Burlington agent plied a group of landseekers with whiskey. That day's transactions were reportedly profitable.⁵²

Illinois and Iowa were the principal providers of Swedish settlers in Phelps County, although some came directly from Sweden and others had settled previously in communities in eastern Nebraska (Map 2.6). Many of the members of the Moses Hill Mission Covenant church, for example, had come at the urging of Rylander and Hallgren and included Rolf Johnson. When Rev. C. H. Södergren took over the Fridhem Lutheran congregation in 1884, he found five families that had been part of his previous charge at Geneva, Illinois. Most of the Westlanda Lutheran congregation at Bertrand in western Phelps came between 1879 and 1884 from Varna and Altona--the same Illinois communities that contributed settlers to Polk County.⁵³

The same religious denominations that could be found in other Swedish communities were present in Phelps as well. The Lutherans were quite strong, with a church at Funk in the eastern portion of the county, another in Holdrege, and two more in or near Bertrand in the western end of the county. In addition, another at Axtell in Kearney County served some Phelps residents. The Mission Covenant church at Loomis was the only one of that affiliation in the county and, unlike the experience in counties settled earlier when doctrinal controversy divided many Lutherans, seems to have been established with little discord. Swedish Baptists had a small congregation in Holdrege and Swedish Methodists had two congregations in the county and a third in eastern Kearney. This latter congregation was established by Lutherans who found their desire to start a new congregation in their own area frustrated by neighboring Lutheran churches that feared losing members. A group that was unusually active and successful in Phelps County was the Free Church denomination. Frederick Franson, one of the denominations leading evangelists, organized



PHELPS COUNTY, NEBRASKA

MAP 2.6

the first free church in the county in 1860 and periodically returned to conduct revivals. Even the Mission Covenant people, who often split Lutheran congregations in the mid-1870s, found Franson's work troublesome. Two other such congregations formed in the county before the end of the century.⁵⁶

By the mid-1880s, the outlines of the major Swedish settlements in Kansas and Nebraska were clear. The Swedish-born population of the counties involved would continue to grow for a few years as other Swedes would find their way to these rural communities, and individuals of minority ethnic groups might sell out to the dominant Swedish group now and then, but the geographical size of the settlements was limited by the presence of other groups that had already formed stable communities in the vicinity. By the late 1880s the established population centers were sending out their own colonies to lands farther west, although the drought of the 1890s often tarnished the bright dreams of these new pioneers.

The beginning of the Lindsborg settlement in Kansas differed in significant ways from the origins of the Nebraska Swedish settlements in Saunders, Burt, Polk, and Phelps counties. Only among the settlers of the Smoky Hill valley--particularly among the members of the First Swedish Agricultural Company and Olof Olsson's Immigrants from Värmland-- did one find a sense of mission about the migration to the new land. Only there does one find conscious effort --even before land was purchased--to erect a homogeneous community of believers sharing the same religious enthusiasm. While the economic motive of owning farms was present in Kansas, it co-existed with a religious drive that must be recognized. The good fortune of having other colonies--at least one of them of substantial size--that in some way shared in this vision gave Lindsborg the Swedish hinterland it needed. Shepherding the Lindsborg Swedes were two prominent clergymen, one who presided over the early religious life of the Lindsborg settlement and another who helped guide the community into the twentieth century.

In Nebraska, where far more Swedes eventually settled, but where no single community dominated the state as Lindsborg did in Kansas, colonization was not marked by the same sense of

purpose. Some Swedes did arrived there in groups that had been formed elsewhere, but these did not have the specific goal of establishing pure communities. Illinois congregations such as the one in Varna contributed many small parties of homeseekers that traveled in the company of neighbors to new lands awaiting them. Once on the frontier, the pioneers created churches as one of their first institutions, but the purpose of the migration itself was the acquisition of land. Sometimes the earliest settlers lacked any strong sense of unity other than their ethnicity. Many of the Swedes in Saunders County took land there because of poor economic opportunities in Omaha, not because they had set out in concert from an earlier home with intentions of preserving old ties. Not infrequently, groups of different faiths took land in the same vicinity, as happened in Burt and Polk, making homogeneity impossible from the start. Nor did any of the Nebraska settlements develop the same caliber of leadership that could be found in the central Kansas settlement from the earliest days.

CHAPTER 2

NOTES

1. Carl A. Swensson, "The Swedes in Kansas," Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society 4 (1886-1888): 287.
2. Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), p. 2; Helge Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements in North America (Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1943), 1: 266-268; Alice C. Johnson, "The First Swedes in Kansas," in Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas, trans. Ruth Billdt (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 11. The latter book is a translated edition of Alfred Bergin's Lindsborg. Bidrag till Svenskarnas och den Lutherska Kyrkans Historia i Smoky Hill River Dalen (Lindsborg: Bethany Lutheran Church, 1909). Bergin was Bethany Lutheran's pastor at the time. Billdt is Bergin's daughter.
For a detailed treatment of the early Swedish settlers, see A. Schön, "De förste svenskarne i Kansas: Ett blad ur svensk-amerikanernas historia," Prärieblomman 12 (1912): 165-199.
3. Emory Lindquist, "A Proposed Scandinavian Colony in Kansas Prior to the Civil War," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 9 (April, 1958): 48-50, 57-58.
4. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 3-4; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 13-16.
5. Emory Lindquist, "A Land Company and a Community: The Background Factors in the Founding of Lindsborg, Kansas," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 9 (October, 1958): 111-113; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 33, 37; Alfred Bergin, "The Swedish Settlements in Central Kansas," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society 11 (1909-1910): 22-23. See Johan Augustin Pihl, God's People in a New Land, trans. and ed. Vernon C. F. Holm (Lindsborg, Smoky Valley Historical Publications, 1984), pp. 38-40, 43, for an account by one of the people joining the company.
6. Bergin, "Swedish Settlements," pp. 24-26, reprints the minutes of the first meeting, the constitution, and the instructions to officers.
7. Lindquist, "A Land Company and a Community," pp. 115-118.
8. Emory Lindquist, Vision for a Valley: Olof Olsson and the Early History of Lindsborg (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1970), pp. 2-16. Olsson's correspondence with T. N. Hasselquist, head of the Augustana Synod, is reprinted in Gunnar Westin, ed., Emigranterna och kyrkan: brev från och till svenskar i Amerika, 1849-1892 (Stockholm: Svenska Krykans Diakonistryelses Bokförlag, 1932), pp. 163-164, 211-212, 215-217.
9. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 17-20; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 10.
10. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 23-26. For the story of the Swedes that chose Missouri over Kansas, see Emory Lindquist, "The Swedes of Linn County, Missouri," Missouri Historical Review 45 (January, 1951): 138-149.
For general treatments of the settlement in the Lindsborg area, see Emory K. Lindquist, "The Scandinavian Element in Kansas," in Kansas, the First Century, ed. by John D. Bright (New

York: Lewis, 1956; Emory K. Lindquist, "McPherson County: The Early Years," in Northern McPherson County Centennial Observance, ed. by Marie E. Malm (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, [1970]), pp. 23-28; Kenneth S. Davis, Kansas: A Bicentennial History (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), pp. 113-114; Nell Blythe Waldron, "Colonization in Kansas from 1861-1890" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University), pp. 24-35; and Emory Giannangelo, "The Migration of the Swedes to Lindsborg, Kansas" (M.A. Thesis, University of Wichita, 1947).

11. The constitution of Bethany Lutheran has been reprinted in translated form in several places. See Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 29-30; Bergin, "Swedish Settlements in Central Kansas," pp. 29-30; and Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 72. On Olsson's wife, see Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, p. 31.

12. Kenneth Lockridge, A New England Town: The First Hundred Years expanded ed. (New York: Norton, 1985), p. 16.

13. Lindquist, "A Land Company and a Community," p. 113.

14. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 31-32, 35; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 73; E. P. Olson, "Church-Mindedness with the Kansas Conference," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, trans. and ed. Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Jaderborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), p. 125; Francis Johnson, "Memories from the Olsson Period," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, p. 21. The first half of Billdt and Jaderborg's book is a translation of Alfred Bergin's Lindsborg efter femtio år (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1919). The second half of the book is primarily a collection of reprinted newspaper articles.

15. Bergin, "Swedish Settlements in Central Kansas," p. 30; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 170-172; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 35-36.

16. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 170-171.

17. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 36-37; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 176-177; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:277.

18. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 178; New Gottland Evangelical Lutheran Church, McPherson, Kansas, Blessings Through the Century, 1872-1972 (n.p., n.d.), p. 11.

19. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:277; C. Terence Pihlblad, "The Kansas Swedes," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 13 (June, 1932): 35; Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 30-31.

20. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:277-278; C. Terence Pihlblad, "Kansas Swedes," pp. 35-36; C. Terence Pihlblad, "A Swedish Community in Kansas," American Swedish Historical Museum Yearbook (1945): 32-33; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 178-179. The Lutheran congregation in Fremont, a community named after John C. Fremont, designated their church the Freemount congregation so as not to use a secular name.

21. C. Terence Pihlblad, "The Kansas Swedes," p. 36; J. P. Stromquist, cited in "The Pioneer Period in Salemsborg and Freemount," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, p. 27.

22. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 57-58.

23. Ernest F. Pihlblad, "The Swedish People of Kansas and Adjoining States," in The Swedish Element in America, ed. Erik G. Westman and E. Gustav Johnson (Chicago: Swedish-American Biographical Society, 1930), 1:214.
24. Nils Heiner, "Församlingshistorik: Lindsborg, Kansas," in Stridda drag ur Missionsvännernas Verksamhet i Kansas och Missouri, ed. Kansas Svenska Evangeliska Missionkonferens (Topeka: Linderholm Bros., 1917), p. 28; Pihl, God's People, p. 7.
25. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 42-52; Lindquist, Smoky Valley People; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 74-76, 83. The dispute--over P. W. Waldenström's doctrine of the atonement--and its consequences for Swedish Lutheranism are dealt with at length in the next chapter.
26. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 84, 92.
27. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 127-128.
28. For material on Swensson, see Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 126-146; and Daniel M. Pearson, The Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1977).
29. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:285, 2:56; U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, A Compendium of the Ninth Census (June 1, 1870) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), pp. 392-93; U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880), Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883, pp. 492-495; U. S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Part 1 (Washington: U.S. Census Office, 1901), pp. cixxiv, 877. Norway was under Swedish control for much of the nineteenth century and the U.S. Census Office sometimes grouped the two nationalities together in the decennial census.
30. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:287; Joseph Alexis, "Swedes in Nebraska," Publications of the Nebraska State Historical Society 19 (1919): 80.
31. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:287; Svenska Evangeliska-Lutherska Swedeborg-forsamlingen, Swedeburg, Nebraska, Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Swedeburg-forsamlingen in ord och bild. Swedeburg, Nebraska, 1870-1910 ([Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1910]), p. 3
32. Albert P. Strom, ed., Swedish Pioneers in Saunders County, Nebraska: A Collection of Family Histories of Early Settlers in Nebraska (Pittsburgh: n.p., 1972), pp. 1-4; James Iverne Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1959), pp. 31-35; Bergin, "Swedish Settlements in Central Kansas," pp. 22-23.
33. Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 35-36; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:287-288; Strom, Swedish Pioneers, pp. 1-4; Alma Lutheran Church, Mead, Nebraska, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, Alma Lutheran Church, Mead, Nebraska, 1870-1945 (n.p., n.d.), pp. [3-4]. Mary Ann Jakl, "The Immigration and Population of Nebraska to 1870" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1936), pp. 123-124, incorrectly identifies Larson as Lars Larson.

34. Carl Albert Olson, Daybook, 1:99-100, Carl Albert Olson Records, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska [hereafter NSHS], records that Larson assisted Olson's father settle in the area; Gwen Rice and Robert [sic] M. Howard, "Peter Gibson: Adventurer, Blacksmith, and Prosperous Farmer," Swedish Pioneer Historical Society 27 (January, 1976): 50-51; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:287; Charles Frederick Sandahl, The Nebraska Conference of the Augustana Synod: Survey of its Work with Sketches of its Congregations, Institutions, Organizations, and Pioneers (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), pp. 210, 216, 222. Larson presided over the creation of the first three Swedish Lutheran churches in Saunders County: Alma at Mead, Edensberg at Malmo, and Swedeburg.

35. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, p. 26.

36. U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, The Statistics of the Population of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 363.

37. Alexis, "Swedes in Nebraska," p. 83. Eleanor Trott, Svenska Nebraska (York, NE: Gillen, Inc., 1967), p. 30, follows Alexis closely, as does Jakl, "Immigration and Population," p. 124. For the 1866 and 1867 groups, see A. Theodore Sohlberg, "Reminiscences of Early Nebraska Days and Typical Pioneers," in The Swedish Element in America, 1: 179, 181-183; Oakland Independent, Oakland, Nebr. Past and Present. Being a Review from its Pioneer Days, and Present State of Development (Oakland: Oakland Independent, 1907), pp. 8, 13, 18-19; Mrs. Bill Johnson, ed. and comp. Oakland Centennial: A Century to be Proud of a Future Unlimited (Oakland: n.p., 1963), p. 5; [C. G. Carlton, ed.], After Fifty Years, 1869-1919: Historical Sketch of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Oakland Congregation, Oakland, Nebraska (Oakland: n.p., 1919), p. 5; First Lutheran Church, Oakland, Nebraska, The Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the First Lutheran Church, May 9, 1944 (n.p., n.d.), p. 7.

38. First Baptist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, Historical Sketch of the First Baptist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, 1869-1919 (Oakland: The Church, 1919), pp. 11, 16, 50; West Side Methodist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, West Side Methodist Church Diamond Jubilee, 1877-1952 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 6-7; Oscar William Strombom, comp. and ed., "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska." Typescript, 1944. A microfilmed version of this work is in the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. [Carlton, ed.], After Fifty Years, pp. 5, 8; First Lutheran Church, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, pp. 7-8; Salem Covenant Church, Oakland, Nebraska, The Diamond Jubilee of the Salem Covenant Church, September 26-30, 1951 (n.p., n.d.), p. 3; Johnson, Oakland Centennial, pp. 52-58.

39. James C. Olson, History of Nebraska, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 163-164.

40. Richard C. Overton, Burlington West: A Colonization History of the Burlington Railroad (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), pp. 288, 368, 388; Morris Nelson Spencer, "The Union Pacific's Utilization of Its Land Grant with Emphasis on its Colonization Program" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Nebraska, 1950), pp. 84, 91. Spencer, p. 260, claims a group of 500 Swedish families bought U.P. land in Saunders in 1869 and 1870, but this must be seen as the actions of several different groups.

41. Overton, Burlington West, p. 298; Spencer, "Union Pacific's Utilization of Its Land Grant," pp. 76-77, 91-120, 155-186; Verne S. Sweedlun, "A History of the Evolution of Agriculture in Nebraska, 1850-1930" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Nebraska, 1940), pp.

28-30; Olson, History of Nebraska, p. 164.

42. Olson, History of Nebraska, p. 165; Sweedlun, "Evolution of Agriculture," p. 30; Kieve Stubenhaus, "Origins and Growth of the Nebraska Population, 1870-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1930), p. 6. On early Nebraska efforts to attract immigrants, see Edwin Frederick Wach, "Nebraska Agriculture and the State, 1870-1890" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1968), pp. 14-15.

43. Women's Civic Improvement Club, Stromsburg, 1872-1972 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 4, 61-62, 79; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:288; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, p. 304; Alexis, "Swedes in Nebraska," p. 81; James I. Dowie, "Unge Men, Ga Westerhut," Nebraska History 54 (Spring, 1973): 51-53.

44. Spencer, "Union Pacific Utilization of Its Land Grant," pp. 159, 255, 260.

45. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 305, 327; Women's Civic Improvement Club, Stromsburg, pp. 223-234, 238.

46. Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:289; Leslie E. Decker, Railroads, Lands, and Politics: The Taxation of the Railroad Land Grants, 1864-1897 (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1964), pp. 214-215; Olson, History of Nebraska, p. 187.

47. Spencer, "Union Pacific's Utilization of Its Land Grant," pp. 262, 270; Olson, History of Nebraska, p. 172

48. Rolf Johnson, Diary, January 22, 25, 1876. Rolf Johnson Papers. This collection, located in the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois [hereafter SSIRC], is not the manuscript diary. The diary was published in serial form in the Holdrege Progress and this collection is the undated newspaper clippings.

Spencer, in his useful work on the distribution of the U.P. land grant, does not mention Hallgren and reports that in 1879 Rylander joined the railroad's land department agents working the fertile ground of Illinois and Indiana before being dispatched to Sweden to work on potential emigrants. Here Spencer is in error, for the two men were certainly at work in Illinois at an earlier date. See Spencer, "Union Pacific's Utilization of Its Land Grant," pp. 181, 215-217; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:289.

49. Johnson, Diary, February 7, 29, March 4, 6, 1876.

50. Ibid., March 7, 11, 1876; Nelson, The Swedes and Swedish Settlements, 1:290.

51. Johnson, Diary, June 21, 1876; August 11, 1877; March 29, 1879. Johnson Papers, SSIRC.

52. B. E. Bengtson, Pen Pictures of Pioneers (Holdrege: Progress Printing Co., 1926-1931), 1:4, 33, 2: 7-9; [Elmer J. Lindholm, ed.] Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Commemorating Seventy-five Years of Gospel Preaching, 1879-1954 [Fridhem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Funk, Nebraska] (Funk, Nebraska: n.p., 1954), p. 6; Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 72-73.

53. Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Church of Moses Hill, Phelps County, Nebraska, Semi-Centennial, 1877-1927 (n.p., 1927), p. 12; [Lindholm, ed.], Diamond

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CHAPTER 3

THE RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY OF SWEDISH AMERICA

Among the rural Swedish settlements of the Great Plains, the single most important group institution was the church. Sometimes it was the force that led a colony of immigrants to a particular place; more often it was the first organization created by the fledgling communities on the prairies. A church building frequently took precedence over quarters more comfortable than a sodhouse or dugout among the first settlers. The spires of town and country churches became early focal points on the landscape.

These churches were more than physical artifacts. The congregations they housed became the center of religious and social life for large numbers of the Swedish immigrants. There people gathered to worship, to add new members to the congregation, to celebrate marriages and anniversaries, to honor their dead. There they discussed and debated both sacred and secular issues, socialized, found marriage partners, combined their talents in mission efforts, and passed on to new generations that which they valued of their culture. In a very real sense, these churches symbolized a vital core of Swedish immigrant identity on the Great Plains.

Few European nationalities found as many ways to express their religious loyalties as did the Swedes. Congregations representing the Lutheran Augustana Synod, the Mission Covenant, the Swedish Evangelical Free Church, the Swedish conferences of both the Baptists and the Methodists, as well as a few scattered congregations which apparently accepted no affiliation, can be found in the Kansas and Nebraska counties under study. Elsewhere may be found Swedish congregations in the Congregational and Episcopalian denominations as well as large numbers of Swedish Mormons. This division among the Swedes who came to America has had an important impact on how well the church served as a vehicle for cultural maintenance. To understand this great diversity, one must examine the religious milieu from which the immigrants came.

The Church of Sweden in the early nineteenth century was firmly committed to the

Lutheranism it had adopted during the Reformation. As a state church, it occupied a central place in every community in the land, serving not only the religious needs of the people, but also representing the government and its wishes. The pastor was an employee of the state who conducted divine services, kept vital statistics, reported on the affairs of his jurisdiction, and announced government decisions from his pulpit. The clergy were an educated elite who merited special status within the community. Church buildings were the property of the state and were maintained by taxes, which also paid the minister's salary. Services in the church were formal, placing great emphasis on liturgy and theology.¹

In the 1830s, however, Rev. George Scott, a Methodist preacher from Britain, began evangelistic work in Sweden. He found receptive audiences among those who believed the cold formalism of the state church could not meet their spiritual needs. Building on the remnants of an earlier pietism, Scott helped ignite a new pietistic movement in Sweden before opposition from the state church forced him out of the country.²

This new force was known as the läsare (readers) movement, so called because its members gathered in homes to read the Bible. The läsare called for a return to the Bible and a rejection or modification of the heavy ceremonialism of the state church. They condemned the worldliness of the clergy and demanded that church members live their faith, not simply profess it. Temperance was of major interest to them. Some insisted that only those who could show evidence of conversion be admitted to churches. This movement attracted numerous laymen and some ordained ministers.

One of the chief läsare leaders was Carl Olof Rosenius, termed by one scholar of Swedish religious movements "the greatest religious force in nineteenth century Sweden." Attracted to the cause by George Scott, Rosenius became the chief Swedish spokesman for the new pietism. He served in his homeland as a missionary for an American evangelical group rather than seek ordination with the State Church, although he never broke with the Lutheran faith. His chief contributions were serving as editor of Pietisten (The Pietist), the primary periodical of the

new movement, and adapting many American methods of revivalism to the Swedish scene.³

Church authorities looked askance at these developments and sometimes prosecuted pietists who violated laws governing religious behavior. Such enforcement, viewed as persecution by the läsare, only increased dissatisfaction with the state church. Indeed, some of the earliest group migration from Sweden was motivated by such discontent. Although the regulations against unsanctioned religious gatherings were relaxed in the 1850s and a number of non-Lutheran denominations appeared, many pietists looked abroad for religious freedom.⁴

The revivalism spawned by the läsare affected the regions of Sweden differently. Some areas were deeply influenced by the religious awakening, others only moderately. In Småland, a province in western Sweden, fervor was strong and those who became intensely evangelistic were said to have the Småland "predikosjukan" ("the preaching sickness"). When economic conditions also produced discontent in the 1840s and later, some of the regions most touched by both the pietistic movement and economic unrest were those in the forefront of contributing emigrants to America. Economic dissatisfaction piled atop religious dissatisfaction. Those most likely to choose new lives in America were also those most likely to seek a new or changed church.⁵

In mid-nineteenth century Sweden, Lutheranism held a virtual monopoly, buttressed by law and tradition. In America, this was not the case. While many Swedish immigrants chose to remain Lutheran, the church they created on this side of the Atlantic differed substantially from the one they had left behind. Other immigrants--recalling their unhappy experiences with the Lutheran state church--joined American churches, formed Swedish congregations associated with American groups, or created new denominations. Still others rejected all religious ties. The history of Swedish immigrants in Kansas and Nebraska--and their success at creating institutions that could help maintain a Swedish culture--is tied to this religious disunity. It is necessary then to examine the development of the major denominations among the Swedes in America.

In 1849, Lars Paul Esbjörn, an ordained minister of the Swedish church, migrated to

America to work among the Swedes here. He came as an individual rather than as the representative of the established church, although he was granted a leave of absence from his duties in Sweden. He received modest support from Swedish Missionary Society for travel expenses, but once in the United States he had to find other means of assistance. In his homeland he had been associated with the läsare movement, which helped prepare him for the circumstances he found in America.

Settling in Andover, Illinois, Esbjörn began work among the Swedes in that area and soon experienced the problems of working in the American environment. A Swede converted to Methodism had already split the community. Another Swede under Episcopalian auspices was trying to convince the immigrants to enter that denomination and still another represented Baptist interests. The settlers--many of whom were pietists--were suspicious of any representative of the Church of Sweden, so much so that Esbjörn did not enter their names in the official register he had brought with him. He also discarded his clerical robes. Moreover, with no steady support from Sweden, he was forced to seek aid from the American Home Missionary Society. This body, Calvinist in background, required that Esbjörn admit to church membership and communion only those who could prove they had experienced a conversion. Those who had been faithful members of the Lutheran church in Sweden, baptized into congregations and brought into full fellowship through confirmation, were to be excluded unless they could convince the minister of their spiritual awakening.⁶

In 1851, Esbjörn led his Swedish congregations into the Synod of Northern Illinois, an organization of Lutheran churches in the region. This synod, composed of Scandinavian, German and American congregations, was created in the upper Mississippi Valley in recognition of the westward spread of Lutheranism and the desirability of having some overarching organization that could support auxiliary institutions. Affiliated with the General Synod, an organization of Lutheran bodies which had long been in America, the Synod of Northern Illinois endorsed the Augsburg Confession as "mainly correct." On this point, Esbjörn and his associates disagreed

with the dominant elements of the new synod. They held the Augsburg Confession to be an accurate summary of biblical truths and were able to have that reservation acknowledged in the minutes of the synod's organizational meeting.⁷

This doctrinal difference pointed to a basic division within Lutheranism in America. Many of the Lutheran churches that traced their origin to colonial days had over time modified their theological base. They had accepted some elements of the Reformed tradition and were willing to compromise on the traditional confessional basis of Lutheranism. More recent Lutheran immigrants brought their historical commitment to the Augsburg Confession to America and were not agreeable to compromise on that point even though they wished to leave behind some of the offensive elements of the state church.

Many conservative immigrants also objected to an emphasis on tactics. Called the "New Measures," these referred to various revival techniques that became popular during the Great Awakenings among the Reformed churches and which were advocated by Americanized Lutherans. These methods included such things as camp meetings led by evangelists, anxious benches on which the potential convert would sit while being surrounded by people praying for him or her, testimony, and revival hymns. The goal of the "New Measures" was to bring the sinner through the emotional conversion experience that qualified him or her for admission to membership. These measures, however, implied that the traditional Lutheran practice of church membership through an educational program culminating in confirmation was insufficient.⁸

The conservatives showed growing strength in the 1850s. Esbjörn and his colleagues were able to sway the organization toward the conservative position on a number of measures, although not without engendering resistance from liberal elements. By the middle of the decade, the Swedes were able to achieve the adoption of a statement endorsing the Augsburg Confession as an accurate summary of the Synod's doctrinal base. However, the Scandinavian congregations did not remain in the Synod of Northern Illinois for long.

The issue which finally prompted the Swedish and Norwegian congregations to leave the

synod to form their own was Esbjörn's resignation from the faculty of the synod's seminary, an institution named the Illinois State University. Esbjörn abruptly left the school, where he served as the Scandinavian professor, over a variety of issues. Some of these dealt with personal conflicts he had with the administration of the school and some derived from theological differences and the treatment of Scandinavian students. His departure encouraged the Scandinavians in the synod to withdraw and create the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod in 1860.⁹

By this time, Swedish Lutheranism in the Midwest had existed just over a decade, much of that spent in cooperation with American groups or with Lutherans of other nationalities. That sojourn had at times been troublesome, but was to leave a lasting impact. The theological disputes with the older Lutheran bodies helped cement Augustana's attachment to the Augsburg Confession; indeed, the name Augustana is Latin for Augsburg. Much of the basic structure of the new synod owed its origins to American models observed through work in the Synod of Northern Illinois. The pattern for congregational constitutions came from those of American churches and the constitution for the Augustana Synod resembled that of the synod the Scandinavians had left.¹⁰

Despite the commitment to traditional Lutheran doctrine, these early Swedish churches were forced to make significant changes merely to survive in America. The support and control from the government was gone; congregations had to fend for themselves in areas that had not concerned them before. In Sweden the church was tax-supported; here parishioners--many of them struggling to make a living--had to devise a new way of effectively supporting church work. In their homeland the faithful found centuries-old church buildings; in America they had to erect their own churches and meeting halls or rent space from others. Ministers were few and the state no longer bore the cost of training them. When the Church of Sweden decided in 1856 that it would send no more clergy to minister to the Swedes in America, the immigrants had to develop and finance their own seminary. The Swedish settlers had to work out new systems of congregational control--particularly the division of power between the clergy and the laymen.

They had to write constitutions and by-laws and incorporate their congregations under state law. They needed to decide what would be the qualifications for church membership and what discipline might be exercised against wayward members. These pioneers had to determine what their relations would be with other denominations, whether or not to allow clergy from other groups to speak in Lutheran pulpits, and how to deal with the proselytizing activities of others. The early Swedish Lutherans had to create educational systems that would pass on to their sons and daughters what was dear of their faith and culture. They needed to develop church materials that were suitable for services in the new land. In all of these decisions, immigrants had to decide what to borrow from the American environment and what to save from their Swedish experience.¹¹

In many respects, the Swedish Lutheran congregations in America had traveled part way down the road to Americanization by the time the Augustana Synod was founded. The bishop had been eliminated and congregations had substantial power in a synodical structure. The pastor was an influential figure, but the church council and the congregation as a whole held significant control in their own right. A system of financing--often dues from communicants, supplemented by free will offerings--gave congregations some means of support, although financial difficulties were common. Women's organizations, generally sewing societies, developed to raise funds for mission projects and to contribute to the congregational treasury. Deacons and trustees filled the same roles as their American counterparts. Even the American Sunday school came into vogue, although the purpose was to begin Lutheran education prior to confirmation as a way of counteracting the lure of other denominations.¹²

This process of Americanization was aided by the attitude of early Swedish Lutheran leaders in America, for they recognized the necessity, even inevitability of Americanization. Their goal in creating a Swedish church was not so much to perpetuate Swedish as it was to gather Swedes into the Lutheran fold. Moreover, they had come into contact with the läsare movement in Sweden, were sympathetic to its cause, and thus more suited for working among pietistic

immigrants in a free church setting than their high-church brethren would have been. Esbjörn's early Sunday schools included English instruction and he sometimes preached in English to encourage his parishioners to learn the language. As he explained in a report to the American Home Missionary Society, he hoped thereby to reach Americans and "to make my countrymen more acquainted with the English language."¹³ T. N. Hasselquist, arriving in America in 1852 and destined to become the Augustana Synod's president and leader of its seminary, was even more committed to the cause of Americanization. As editor of Hemlandet, a major Swedish newspaper founded in 1855, he advocated the use of English and he recommended that his countrymen read American Lutheran church papers. He published a catechism which contained both Swedish and English. When he created a Sunday school for his congregation in Galesburg, Illinois, two of the five classes were in English.¹⁴ Erland Carlsson, who came in 1853 to take over congregations in Chicago, offered confirmation in English, often served as an intermediary for Swedes trying to deal with Americans, and taught English in his free time.¹⁵

These men all began their labors in America early in the history of Swedish immigration. When the numbers of Swedes were few, Americanization seemed imminent. The quarter century following the Civil War, however, was marked by an upsurge in Swedish emigration that brought hundreds of thousands of Swedes to the U.S. and made possible extensive settlements among that nationality. These large numbers not only made efforts at preserving the Swedish language and customs more possible; the continuous arrival of new immigrants made necessary church work in the language of their homeland.¹⁶

Lutheranism was not the only alternative for Swedish immigrants in the 1840s and after. Among the denominations later represented by the early Swedish settlers in Kansas and Nebraska were Baptists and Methodists. In both of these groups, Swedes cooperated with larger American bodies, just as did Swedish Lutherans in the Synod of Northern Illinois. Moreover, they received important material assistance in fielding missionaries, establishing congregations, and maintaining seminaries. Unlike the Lutherans, however, the Swedish Methodists and Baptists

long remained as conferences within the American denominations rather than seek independent status.

Swedish Methodism in America owes its origins to the efforts of British and American Methodists and Sweden and the activities of pioneer Swedish Methodist ministers in the United States. Methodist work in Sweden began with George Scott in the 1830s and 1840s. Although his purpose was to awaken the spiritual life of Swedish Lutherans rather than to win converts, Scott often had both effects. American Methodists aided their denomination's cause in Sweden with personnel and financial support. By 1876, following a relaxation of the restrictions against formal organizations among dissenters, there were enough Swedish Methodist congregations to establish an annual conference there.¹⁷

Some of these Swedish Methodists chose to emigrate to America and consequently formed one of the elements in the Swedish Methodist churches in this country. The other element was Swedish immigrants who were converted to the faith on this side of the Atlantic. The primary figure in this work was Olof Hedström. Hedström was a sailor who had been stranded in America in the 1820s. He married an American woman and was converted to Methodism. He was ordained a minister in that denomination and, after a number of years in mission work in the United States, he was assigned to a floating mission station in New York harbor. From this vessel--popularly known as the Bethel ship--Hedström served as the Methodist missionary to Scandinavian immigrants arriving in that port.

Greeting Scandinavians as their ships made port, Hedström inquired of their needs, distributed Methodist literature printed in English and Swedish, and tried to assist in the initial transition to America. Among the receptive, he sought converts. For example, when Esbjörn immigrated in 1849, Hedström had long discussions with him, hoping to convince the Lutheran minister to follow his lesser leanings into a new church. For those immigrants who were unsure of their destination, he gave advice to seek land in northern Illinois. Hedström had the cooperation in this effort of his brother Jonas, who had settled in Illinois in 1837. This link was

significant in creating extensive Swedish tracts in the area by Swedes of all denominations. The Hedströms influenced the Eric Janssonists' choice of Henry County, Illinois, for their Bishop Hill colony. The location of the Janssonists there in turn induced other Swedish immigrants to the region. For example, Lars Esbjörn chose Andover, Illinois, for his mission work among the Swedes both because of the numbers of Lutherans in the area and the proximity of the Janssonists, whom he hoped to win back to Lutheranism.¹⁸

At first, the early Swedish Methodist congregations became part of the English-speaking conferences within their region. Not until 1877 were the Swedes sufficiently strong to create their own conference, the Northwestern Swedish Methodist Conference. In 1870 the Swedes began their own seminary, but the institution led a peripatetic and financially troubled existence until it found a home on the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, in 1881.¹⁹

Swedish Baptists in both Sweden and the United States also owe a substantial debt to Americans. Many of the early Swedish Baptists had come into contact with the Methodist George Scott in Sweden, but instead of taking the path to Methodism they found one that led them into the Baptist faith. The three major figures of the denomination's founding years in America--Fredrik O. Nilsson, Gustaf Palmquist, and Anders Wiberg--were recognized leaders in both Sweden and America. Nilsson and Palmquist were both converted in America; only Nilsson decided to remain here permanently. Baptist mission organizations, particularly the American Baptist Publication Society and the American Baptist Home Mission Society, provided financial aid and missionaries to work among Swedes in Sweden and America. Baptists in Sweden made substantial use of the Sunday school, the model for which came from America, in their church work.²⁰

The Swedish Baptist congregations in America were members of the American Baptist conference in which they were located. Beginning in 1879, however, they were also members of the Scandinavian Baptist General Conference, a body which included Swedes, Danes, and

Norwegians. In 1882 the latter two groups withdrew to create their own conference and the parent organization became the Swedish Baptist General Conference. In the mid-1940s, the General Conference eliminated the term Swedish from its name and presented itself as a conservative alternative to other Baptist bodies. This made possible mission efforts among non-Swedes and the subsequent growth of the conference.²¹

Paralleling the decisions of the Lutherans and Methodists, the Baptists recognized the necessity of a seminary if they were to staff their churches with Swedish-speaking pastors. They established a Scandinavian department at the Baptist Union Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1871. The department's professor, John Alexander Edgren, was dissatisfied with the doctrinal laxity of some of his colleagues and resigned in 1884. The Swedes created an independent seminary that spent one year in St. Paul, Minnesota, before locating briefly in Stromsburg, Nebraska. By 1888, this experiment had failed and the Swedes returned to a Swedish department of the American seminary. This arrangement continued when the seminary became part of the University of Chicago and lasted until 1914 when that institution cut funds for the department.²²

By the time Swedish Methodists and Baptists were settling Kansas and Nebraska, a significant degree of Americanization had taken place. Indeed, they had encountered many of the problems of operating as free churches while in Sweden and had looked to American examples for solutions. In the United States there were close ties between the Swedes of those denominations and their American co-religionists. The immigrants depended heavily on the Americans for financial assistance and maintained conferences within larger American bodies. In this respect, the Swedish Baptist and Methodist denominations--because they were so closely linked to American bodies through origin and institutional ties--were more assimilated than was the Augustana Synod.

Two other religious groups that developed among the Swedes, the Evangelical Mission Covenant and the Evangelical Free Church, had their roots in Lutheranism. The Augustana Synod combined both elements of a state church and a revivalistic church. Trying to reach all Swedish

immigrants in America, the synod's congregations accepted all those who pledged faithfulness to their confirmation vows. This inevitably meant that the Augustana congregations were composed of both those who saw themselves as the elect and those whom the first group judged as the unsaved. Church discipline, which was used more extensively in America than in Sweden, was the means by which wayward members could be corrected or excluded from the congregation.²³

Other signs also pointed to Augustana's path between the formalism of the state church and the informalism of low-church tradition. Early pastors often modified their clerical garb and the liturgy in favor of less formal forms than those used in Sweden. Local congregations were allowed to choose their own preference in such matters. The first compilations of hymns published by the Swedes in America drew heavily on the revival songs of the läsare in Sweden. Hasselquist's collection of Femtio andliga sånger (Fifty Spiritual Songs), used many of the works of the Swedish evangelist, Oscar Ahnfelt. The preferred hymnal of the Synod was the 1849 Psalmbok by J. H. Thomander and P. Wieselgren, a revision of the 1819 hymnal that was intended to eliminate the influences of rationalism found in the earlier work but that was never accepted by the Church of Sweden.²⁴

This middle road was a natural choice for the early Swedish Lutheran leaders. They had imbibed of the läsare spirit in Sweden and sought to create a pietistic tone among their fellows here. Yet they were not willing to abandon either the forms of the church they had been raised in or the mission of bringing other Swedish immigrants into the Lutheran fold. The compromise between the state church model with its universal membership and a free church which admitted only the elect was not acceptable to all, however.

The discontented--sometimes known as the hyper-evangelicals--often had been deeply affected by Carl Rosenius's revivalism in Sweden before migrating. They had several complaints about Swedish Lutheranism in America. Pietists who believed that the church on earth was composed only of true believers objected to the inclusiveness of the Augustana Synod. The presence at the communion rail of persons whom they considered unredeemed was intolerable.

Moreover, although these people subscribed to the tenets of Lutheranism, they were often uncomfortable with the institutional character of the Synod, viewing it as a relic of the state church which wasted resources building a hierarchy when it should have been carrying out the evangelical mission of the church. Believing that religion was a matter of the heart rather than of the head, they often distrusted well-educated clergy who delivered finely crafted sermons about theology instead of simple biblical maxims.²⁵

By the late 1860s these hyper-evangelicals were beginning to organize that were called mission societies--circles of the pious within Lutheran congregations. These societies did not intend to separate from Lutheranism and generally did not intend to form a new congregation. Their early meetings included singing and lay preaching; sometimes collections were taken to support colporteurs in mission work. A mission society in Chicago created its own chapel apart from its congregation's church building without any intention of surrendering membership in the original church. In doing this, they were patterning their society after the Jönköping Mission Society in Sweden and they sought the constitution of the Swedish group as a model for their own.²⁶

These mission societies soon passed beyond congregational boundaries. In some cases, this was the logical step in separating themselves from the unconverted. In others, the inflexible attitude of an Augustana pastor drove them out. In still others, failure to win some point on congregational policy or practice prompted their secession. Even in this initial stage of removal they considered themselves Lutherans although they sometimes sought affiliation with bodies other than the Augustana Synod.

The case of the Galesburg Lutheran Church can serve as a useful example. Not all members agreed with the decision to leave the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1860, preferring the style of American Lutheranism. This was not, however, sufficient cause for a division. Later in the decade, a number of recent immigrants influenced by Rosenius joined this dissatisfied element. By 1868, they were strong enough to present resolutions to the synodical meeting

condemning all clerical garb and demanding that the congregation's lay delegates be admitted to the sessions of the synod's ministerium. Hasselquist, as the synod's president, and two other pastors visited the congregation in an attempt to quell these signs of unrest, but failed to stop the movement. The next step toward separation came over the issue of allowing a Swedish colporteur of the Rosentian camp preach to the congregation. The pastor, Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, at first refused, grudgingly granted use of a classroom rather than the pulpit, and then used the forum himself to deliver a warning on the evils of heresy. The colporteur had to arrange an outdoors meeting to speak. Shortly thereafter, the discontented faction created a mission society. Within weeks, they called a pastor; within months they sought membership in the Synod of Northern Illinois as the Second Lutheran Church of Galesburg.²⁷

The Galesburg split not only shows how differences could lead to mission societies and divisions within congregations, it also sheds light on the settlement of Kansas in 1868 and 1869. Dahlsten's congregation provided many members of the Galesburg Colonization Company. He headed the gatherings that created the company and he joined the migration to central Kansas. His unhappiness over the disagreement within his parish may well have had some influence on the decision to leave one of the oldest Swedish Lutheran congregations in America and settle on the frontier.

The scattered Mission Friends--as the members of these mission societies often called themselves--soon began to see the need for a union of their newly-founded congregations. Remaining in the Augustana Synod was clearly unacceptable, but some form of association of like-minded believers could meet pressing needs such as ordaining ministers. The very diversity of the Mission Friends, however, made such union difficult. By the mid-1870s three such organizations had been formed.

The first of these was the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Mission, created in May, 1872. The driving force behind its organization was Rev. Charles Anderson, the Danish-born minister of Second Lutheran in Galesburg. His goal was to affiliate the body with the Synod of

Northern Illinois and the General Synod. The body's membership requirements were no more stringent than the Augustana Synod's. Anderson's association was unacceptable to large numbers of the Mission Friends, and a year later Mission Friends established the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Synod. It was more narrowly based, intended only for Swedish congregations rather than for all the Scandinavian nationalities. It saw itself as firmly Lutheran, subscribing to the Augsburg Confession and the major creeds, but had no intention of uniting with other Lutheran bodies. Unlike the Lutheran Mission, the Mission Synod admitted to its congregations only those demonstrating a saving grace. It was suspicious of institutions and opposed the theological training expected of Augustana pastors. In May, 1874, Anderson organized still another association, the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ansgarius Synod. The Ansgar Synod, as it is generally known, superseded the Lutheran Mission and was designed to provide an umbrella organization for the Swedish congregations which did not leave the Synod of Northern Illinois to associate with the Mission Synod. Its doctrinal base and membership requirements were the same as the Mission Synod, but it was more open to associating with American Lutherans. It was also less wary of institutions, and took over the Lutheran Mission's school and renamed it Ansgar College. Some Mission Friend congregations rejected membership in any of these groups, preferring an independent status to the yoke that any form of union might impose. Even among the congregations that did join one of these synods, there were members who inclined toward a church free of any organization higher than the congregation itself.²⁸

All these groups included the term "Lutheran" in their names, although they abhorred the Augustana Synod. Individual congregations formed within these synods often used both "Mission" and "Lutheran," and sometimes "Free," in their titles. In the 1870s, however, a theological dispute that originated in Sweden swept through the Swedish Lutheran churches in America. When the furor abated, the Mission Friends had distanced themselves from Lutheranism-- although not abandoning it entirely--and many Augustana congregations were rent in half by a doctrinal crisis which today seems unimportant.

Paul Peter Waldenström, a bright young minister in Sweden in the early 1860s was at the heart of the controversy. As one of the state church clergy who adopted evangelical methods, he came to the attention of the Augustana Synod, which extended him a call to join the faculty of Augustana College. Waldenström declined, preferring to remain in Sweden. In 1868 he succeeded Rosenius as the editor of Pietisten, the läsare journal read widely by Swedes on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1872 he published a sermon on the doctrine of the atonement that shattered the peace of many a Lutheran congregation in Swedish America.²⁹

Waldenström argued that God's nature was unchanging and that man's fall into sin had not altered God's loving attitude toward man. Rather, the relationship between man and his Creator had been obstructed by changes in man due to the fall. Christ's purpose was to reconcile man to God and restore a relationship leading to salvation. This turned conventional belief on its head, for Lutherans maintained that the fall had occasioned an anger in God that was propitiated by Christ's sacrifice. The controversy that this challenge generated led Waldenström to review the confessional basis of Lutheranism. After two years of study, he concluded that much of traditional belief should be rejected. In its place he advocated a literal interpretation of the Bible.³⁰

In Sweden, Waldenström became closely associated with the Mission Friends and their societies. In 1876 he was disciplined by the state church for administering communion outside of a church to a gathering not sanctioned by religious authorities. He eventually resigned his office--but did not abandon the Lutheran church--and became a leader in the Mission Covenant in Sweden, an association of mission societies.³¹

In America, Waldenström's interpretation of the atonement was adopted by virtually all of the Mission Friends and, as one historian of the Mission Covenant notes, "the rupture with the Augustana Synod became irremediable."³² To complicate matters, the doctrine infiltrated many Augustana congregations, often causing a division between those who remained faithful to Lutheranism and those who adopted the new idea. The latter almost invariably seceded to form a new congregation among the Mission Friends. In a few instances, a Lutheran pastor who had

accepted Waldenströmian beliefs tried to lead his entire flock into the new fold.

In 1885, after years of bickering and internecine struggles, the two synods of Mission Friends finally came to a union. In the early 1880s the Ansgar Synod was badly divided over the issue of denominationalism. A radical free church element contended that all denominations were evil and true Christians ought not affiliate with such bodies; independent congregations, perhaps meeting annually as a group to discuss common problems, were the ideal. In addition, the synod was interested in changing its constitution to modify its confessional stance, but found it could not without losing its college, which was, in any case, in serious financial straits. Rather than trying to remedy what seemed an impossible situation, the Ansgar Synod in 1884 voted to disband within a year. Radical leaders, rejecting the institutional leanings of the Ansgar Synod and the conservatism of the Mission Synod, called for a new and loose association of congregations. Mission Friend leaders of both synods who valued an institutional structure called for a new organization that could transcend the old synods. The eventual result was two new church bodies among the Mission Friends.

The Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America, created in Chicago in 1885, drew together those Mission Friends who wanted a structured national body. As such, it attracted people with a wide variety of attitudes toward important issues. While nearly all of its members subscribed to Waldenström's atonement doctrine, few accepted all of his beliefs. Lutheranism remained strong, particularly in the fields of baptism, confirmation, and communion. In liturgical preference, the Mission Covenant included congregations which approached the state church in formalism and others which followed less rigid models. American Congregationalists, who believed the Mission Covenant might be brought into their fold, offered to establish a Swedish department at the Chicago Theological Seminary to train Covenant ministers. The new body accepted this assistance, but theological disputes led to the creation of the Covenant's own seminary within a decade.³³

The union of the Ansgar and Mission Synods failed to attract some Mission Friend

congregations. Some of these eventually affiliated with the Congregationalists, although these often entered the Mission Covenant later. Others followed the free church call of John G. Princell, a defrocked Augustana pastor who had joined the Ansgar Synod but later rejected even its denominationalism. As that synod collapsed, partly due to factionalism generated by Princell, he called for a gathering of those interested in some association of independent churches to meet in Boone, Iowa, in late 1884. The organization that resulted evolved into the Swedish Evangelical Free Church. This body was congregational in polity. The power of ordination lay with the individual congregation rather than with any supervisory body. At annual meetings, any church member--not just delegates from congregations--could vote. Although the Free Church cooperated with the Mission Covenant on a number of points--the two organizations supported some of the same home missions and used the same hymnal--efforts at uniting the bodies failed.³⁴

As the Swedes moved onto the central Great Plains, all of these denominations (using the term in its loosest sense for the Evangelical Free Church) created regional bodies to unite the scattered congregations of their faith. In 1868 the Augustana Synod divided its Mississippi Conference into east and west portions, the western one encompassing Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. In 1870 this was further divided into the Iowa and Kansas conferences, the latter containing Kansas, Nebraska, and a portion of Missouri. Colorado and Texas were later added to this territory.³⁵

Nebraska remained in the Kansas Conference until 1886, although Nebraska churchmen began agitating for their own conference in 1882. With the long distances and poor transportation links within the conference, especially when meetings were held in rural parishes, Nebraskans found it difficult to attend the semi-annual gatherings. There were also complaints that the Kansans monopolized the offices in the conference and that too little attention was paid to pressing mission needs in the Nebraska field. The conference meeting in October, 1882, tabled a petition for a separate conference, as did one the following spring. By this time

the question of separation held greater consequences. In 1881, Carl Swensson established Bethany Academy in Lindsay. In 1883, the Nebraska Swedes created Luther Academy in Wahoo. The Nebraskans calculated that a conference dominated by Kansas, headed by Rev. J. Seleen, a Kansas pastor who was also a director for Bethany Academy, would not be willing to assist their school. This was particularly true after the conference assumed control of Bethany in 1884. Seeking a solution to the impasse over independence, the following year Nebraska pastors proposed attaching Nebraska to the Iowa Conference. This suggestion was referred to the synodical meeting, where it was tabled. In August, 1885, members of the Nebraska districts of the Kansas Conference met at Swede Home in Polk County. C. F. Sandahl, then a teenager in the church where the meeting occurred, later recalled that the chief topic was Luther Academy, which was in financial trouble, and how to insure its support. The meeting concluded that independence from Kansas was the only solution. At the regular conference meeting in September, the Kansas delegates agreed that a separation was necessary, the synod concurred, and the Nebraska Conference was created in 1886.³⁶

None of the other denominations had the divisive problem of competing schools and how to support them. Consequently, the creation of new regional associations in Kansas and Nebraska was less of a problem. Among the Swedish Baptists, the Western Iowa and Nebraska Conference emerged from the Illinois-Iowa Conference in 1872 as a recognition of congregations forming in Nebraska. In June, 1883, separate conferences were created for Iowa and Nebraska. In addition to this membership in a Swedish organization, the congregations in Nebraska formed a Swedish Conference in the Nebraska Baptist State Convention in 1874. The Kansas Conference began in September, 1879, as the Scandinavian Missionary Society. In 1881 this was changed to the Scandinavian Baptist Conference of Kansas and the body associated with the Kansas State Baptist Convention. In 1891, following the withdraw of some Danish members, the body came to be known as the Swedish Baptist Conference of Kansas.³⁷

Swedish Methodists were organized into a single conference, the Northwest Swedish

Conference, in 1879. This body divided into three separate conferences in 1893, the Western Swedish Conference including all the congregations in Kansas and Nebraska, as well as those in Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota, Colorado, and Wyoming. Like the Baptists, the Swedish Methodist congregations also maintained an association with the American bodies within their state.³⁸

Most of the Mission Friend congregations established in Kansas and Nebraska before 1885 joined the Mission Synod. A few scattered ones belonged to the Ansgar Synod and a handful rejected affiliation with either. Not all of these congregations opted to enter the new Mission Covenant immediately after its creation. Following the organization of the Mission Covenant in 1885 Mission leaders in each state pressed for some form of state association. In Kansas the first such gathering--comprising only half of the mission congregations in the state--met in Lindsborg in December, 1885. A similar association began in Nebraska in 1886, was nearly disrupted in 1888 because some rejected any constitution, and was reorganized in 1889.³⁹ In both states there was a radical free church element that forced the groups to proceed cautiously. That faction almost destroyed the organization in Nebraska over the question of the constitution, and some congregations there stayed independent for years until their suspicions of the Covenant abated. The Kansas association did not adopt a constitution at first and its ministerial association did not keep minutes for more than a decade "due to the fear of order as a threat to Christian liberty."⁴⁰

Those Mission Friend congregations that remained independent of the Covenant did not create a regional association until 1896, when they formed the Association of Ministers, Elders, and Evangelists of the Free Churches in Nebraska and South Dakota. A year later the name was changed to the Scandinavian Free Mission Society in Nebraska and South Dakota, and eventually to the Scandinavian Free Mission Church of Nebraska. Although there were a few congregations in Kansas affiliated with the Free Church, the group was never strong in the state and they were eventually taken on as a mission field by the Nebraska association.⁴¹

This religious diversity among Swedes in America had significant consequences. It was

inevitable, for no single denomination could have satisfied the range of religious tastes among immigrants from Sweden. The Lutheran church--the church of their homeland and ancestors--attracted many, yet alienated others because of the nature of the state church in Sweden. Had there been no Swedish-speaking alternative to the Augustana Synod, many Swedes--placing faith above ethnicity--would have gone into American congregations. In this sense, diversity kept more immigrants within the religious institutions of Swedish America. In another sense, however, the diversity weakened those very institutions by fragmenting the resources which could be used to support them. Each denomination was forced to create some form of administration at the national level, establish religious newspapers, and found schools for the training of clergy. Much of this was duplication of effort made necessary by diversity, resulting in smaller and weaker institutions.

Seminaries provide a useful example. Each of the Swedish denominations that created institutions to train clergy relied to one degree or another on American assistance, especially in their early years. The larger the Swedish denomination, the more likely it was to achieve independent status for its seminary. The Augustana Synod's was Augustana Seminary, begun in 1860 after the abortive cooperation with the Synod of Northern Illinois. The Mission Covenant, second largest of the Swedish bodies, utilized a Swedish department at the Chicago Theological Seminary for its first years before establishing its own seminary in the 1890s. Swedish Baptists, comprising the third largest religious group in Swedish America, accepted a Scandinavian department in an American seminary at first, experimented unsuccessfully with a separate school in the mid-1880s, and returned to cooperation with Americans until 1914. The Swedish Methodist seminary attempted an independent existence, but eventually accepted facilities and aid from an American Methodist institution, a relationship which continued well into the twentieth century.

While the variety of Swedish-American church life divided the resources needed to sustain ethnic religious institutions, the nature of religion in America required significant adjustment

from the patterns familiar in Sweden, particularly for Lutherans. In Sweden, Lutherans attended churches that had existed for generations, supported by their taxes, staffed by state-trained clergy, and underpinned by the laws of the nation. In the United States, Swedish Lutheran immigrants had to establish their own congregations, forge a denominational structure, build their own churches, train their own pastors, find new means of finance, establish a new balance of power between clerical and lay leadership, and develop a church life that would appeal to their countrymen in a competitive environment. In meeting these challenges, Swedish Lutherans--some of whom later moved into the bodies created by the Mission Friend movement--drew heavily from the American examples they saw around them. For those groups that were dissenters in Sweden--particularly the Baptists and Methodists, who had ties to Britain and the United States--the adoption of American church methods frequently began in Sweden.

By the time Swedes began to establish significant numbers of congregations in Kansas and Nebraska, the major religious denominations among them had--after twenty years experience in the United States--already adjusted to American religious patterns. The various Mission Friend groups that came into existence after the Civil War and coalesced into the Mission Covenant and Evangelical Free Church followed the same lines. Moreover, the religious divisions among Swedes in America stretched thin the resources available to maintain ethnic institutions associated with churches and sometimes forced reliance on American denominations.

CHAPTER 3

NOTES

1. George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 1-6.
 2. Ibid., pp. 12-16; Karl A. Olsson, By One Spirit (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1962), pp. 42-46.
 3. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, p. 38; Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 47-50. For an overview of Rosenius's life and work, see G. Everett Arden, Four Northern Lights: Men Who Shaped Scandinavian Churches (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), pp. 115-150. For an overview of dissenters in Sweden, see Florence Edith Janson, The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931; rpt. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1970), pp. 167-221.
 4. The most famous group to leave Sweden under these circumstances was the Eric Janssonists who founded the utopian community of Bishop Hill, Illinois, in the 1840s. For their story see Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, trans. by Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), pp. 18-21; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 49-73; and Paul Elmen, Wheat Flour Messiah: Eric Jansson of Bishop Hill (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976).
 5. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 28-29, 103.
 6. George M. Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850-1860 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1927), pp. 7-12; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 148-158; G. Everett Arden, Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1963), pp. 27-35; Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, 1846-1860 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), pp. 112-120, 123-128.
 7. Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, pp. 242-245; Stephenson, Founding of the Augustana Synod, pp. 17-18.
 8. Arden, Augustana Heritage, pp. 45-47.
 9. Ibid., pp. 68-84; Stephenson, Founding of the Augustana Synod, pp. 105-129.
 10. Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, p. 260; Stephenson, Founding of the Augustana Synod, pp. 135-136; Karl E. Mattson, "The Theology of the Augustana Lutheran Church," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1960, ed. by Emmer Engberg et al. (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), p. 41; Conrad Bergendoff, "The Sources of the Original Constitution of the Augustana Synod, 1860," Augustana Historical Society Publications 5 (1935): 85-106.
- 1-1. Evald B. Lawson, "The Ministry," in Centennial Essays, pp. 152-154; Emmet E.

Eklund, "Faith and Education," in Centennial Essays, p. 78; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 179-180. For an excellent description of how a Norwegian congregation in Wisconsin dealt with this shift, see J. C. K. Preus, "From Norwegian State Church to American Free Church," Norwegian-American Studies 25 (1972): 186-224.

12. Gunner Westin, "Emigration and Scandinavian Church Life," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 8 (April, 1957): 38-39; Burnice Fjellman, "Women in the Church," in Centennial Essays, p. 203; Oscar Fritiof Ander, T. N. Hesselquist: The Career and Influence of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist and Educator (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1931; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1979), pp. 38-39, 227-228; Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, pp. 333-336; Oscar N. Olson, ed., A Century of Life and Growth (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1948), pp. 97-99; Conrad Peterson, "The Beginning of Swedish-American Education [Prior to 1860]," Swedish Historical Society of America Yearbook 8 (1922-1923): 47-48; Eklund, "Faith and Education," pp. 76-78.

13. Esbjörn to the American Home Missionary Society, June 3, 1852, in Selected Documents dealing with the Organization of the First Conferences of the Augustana Synod and their Growth until 1860, ed. by I. O. Nothstein (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1944), 1: 18; Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, p. 128; Stephenson, Founding of the Augustana Synod, pp. 137-138; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 158, 226; Westin, "Emigration and Scandinavian Church Life," p. 38.

14. Ander, T. N. Hesselquist, pp. 38-39, 41, 229; Fritiof Ander, "Some Factors in the Americanization of the Swedish Immigrant, 1850-1890," Illinois State Historical Society Journal 26 (April-July, 1933): 138-141; Victor Greene, "'Becoming American': The Role of Ethnic Leaders--Swedes, Poles, Italians, and Jews," in The Ethnic Frontier: Essays in the History of Group Survival in Chicago and the Midwest, ed. by Melvin G. Holli and Peter d'A. Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 147-152.

15. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 172-173; Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1860-1910: The Formative Period (Davenport, IA: Executive Council of the Augustana Lutheran Church, 1956), p. 42. Eric Norelius, the pioneer Swedish Lutheran minister in Minnesota, also taught English, both in Chicago and in Minnesota. See Eric Norelius, Early Life of Eric Norelius (1833-1862): A Journal of a Swedish Immigrant in the Middle West, translated by Emeroy Johnson (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1934), p. 222; and E. W. Olson, ed., "Early Letters to Erland Carlsson from a File for the Years 1853 to 1857," Augustana Historical Society Publications 5 (1935): 120.

16. Ander, "Some Factors in the Americanization of the Swedish Immigrant," pp. 141-143; Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, p. 118.

17. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 116-123; Allan Kastrup, The Swedish Heritage in America: The Swedish Element in America and American-Swedish Relations in their Historical Perspective (St. Paul: Swedish Council of America, 1975), pp. 146-151.

18. Kastrup, Swedish Heritage, pp. 180-183; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 152-156, 258. Johan Augustin Pihl, a läsare who settled in McPherson County, Kansas, and joined a Mission Friends congregation, describes such proselytizing by both Methodists and Baptists in his God's People in a New Land, trans. by Vernon C. F. Holm: Lindsborg: Smoky Valley Historical Publications, 1984), p. 36.

For other immigrant accounts of Hedström's work in New York, see H. Arnold Barton, ed., Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840-1914 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), pp. 84, 124; Ewald Benjamin Lawson, ed. Two Primary Sources for a Study of the Life of Jonas Swensson (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1957), p. 30; and Norelius, Early Life, pp. 105-106.

Both Swensson and Norelius later complained of how other Swedish denominations, particularly the Methodists, sought to lure Swedes away from the Lutheran fold. See Lawson, Two Primary Sources, pp. 32, 34, 37-38; and Norelius, Early Life, pp. 47, 50, 110-111, 120, 224.

19. Wesley M. Westerberg, "Ethnicity and the Free Churches," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 24 (October, 1973): 231-232; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 259-262.

20. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 74-87; Kastrup, Swedish Heritage, pp. 239-241; J. O. Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America: A History (Chicago: Conference Press, 1933), p. 78. Kastrup errs in crediting Nilsson with founding the first Baptist congregation in Sweden. See Stephenson, Religious Aspects, p. 77.

21. Backlund, Swedish Baptists, pp. 129-132; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, p. 254; Westin, "Ethnicity and the Free Churches," p. 233.

22. Backlund, Swedish Baptists, pp. 102-116; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 249-251.

23. Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 181-182; Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, p. 176. For a discussion of discipline and moral offenses, see Emmer E. Engberg, "Augustana and Code Morality," in Centennial Essays, pp. 122-149, especially pp. 123-133.

24. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 158, 169; Ander, I. N. Hasselquist, pp. 25, 227; Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 195-196; Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, pp. 363-365, 369-370.

25. Arden, Augustana Heritage, pp. 160-162.

26. Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 197-200.

27. The best discussion of the Galesburg trouble is found in Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 228-232. See also Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 268-270; and C. V. Bowman, The Mission Covenant of America (N.p., 1925), pp. 57-61.

28. Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 237-246, 253-254; Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 271-274.

29. Karl A. Olsson, "Paul Peter Waldenström and Augustana," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, ed. by J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelle (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), pp. 108-109, 112.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

32. Olsson, *By One Spirit*, p. 257.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 267-293, 313-321, 324-325, 336-337.

34. On the Swedish churches in Congregationalism, see Olsson, *By One Spirit*, pp. 335, 340-341. Most of these were in the East, although two existed in Nebraska--one in Lincoln and one in Weverly. See Motier A. Bullock, *Congregational Nebraska* (Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Co., 1905), pp. 311, 321. Both later entered the Mission Covenant. On the Free Church, see Olsson, *By One Spirit*, pp. 279-283, 458-463; Stephenson, *Religious Aspects*, pp. 275-276, 282-284, 287-288; Swedish Evangelical Free Church of the U.S.A., *Golden Jubilee: Reminiscences of One Work Under God, Swedish Evangelical Free Church of the U.S.A., 1884-1934* (Minneapolis: n.p., 1934), pp. 15, 17, 27.

35. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, p. 101; Olson, *Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1860-1910*, p. 20. Olson gives the date for the division of the Mississippi Conference as 1866, but Arden and others agree on 1868.

36. The separation of the Nebraska Conference is best told by James Iverne Dowle, *Prairie Grass Dividing* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1959), pp. 76-77, 85-86, 112-119. See also Charles Frederick Sandahl, *The Nebraska Conference of the Augustana Synod: Survey of Its Work* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), pp. 60-69; Albert W. Lindquist, "A Brief History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Kansas Conference of Augustana Synod," in *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Kansas (General Synod)* ed. by H. A. Ott (Topeka: F. M. Steves & Sons, 1907), pp. 260-262; J. Eder Larson, *70th Anniversary of the Nebraska Conference, 1886-1956: 50th Anniversary, Women's Missionary Society, 1906-1956* (n.p. n.d.), pp. 63-64; Alfred Bergin, "Kansas Conference History," in *The Smoky Valley in the After Years*, ed. by Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Jaderborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), pp. 102-103. The first half of Billdt and Jaderborg's book is a translation of Bergin's *Lindsborg efter femtio år* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1919). The second half of the book is primarily a collection of reprinted newspaper articles.

37. Backlund, *Swedish Baptists*, p. 136; Nebraska Baptist State Convention, *Minutes of the Twenty-seventh Anniversary of the Nebraska Baptist State Convention . . . and Minutes of Associations* (Blair: Nebraska: Pilot Steam Printing House, 1894), p. 48; P. Lovene, *History of the Swedish Baptist Churches of Kansas and Missouri, 1869-1927* (Chicago: n.p., 1928), pp. 72-74.

38. Stephenson, *Religious Aspects*, p. 262; Oscar William Strombom, comp. and ed., "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska," typescript, 1944, p. [7]. A microfilmed copy of this work is found in the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

39. Olsson, *By One Spirit*, pp. 254-255, 331; A. H. Jacobson, "Kansaskonferensens verksamhet," in *Strödda drag ur Missionsvännernas verksamhet i Kansas och Missouri* (Topeka: Linderholm Bros., 1917), pp. 264-266; Alfred J. Johnson, "Kansas Conference," in *Covenant Memories: Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant, 1885-1935* (Chicago: Covenant Book Concern, n.d.), p. 375; J. O. Lonquist, "Nebraska Conference," in *ibid.*, pp. 431-433; Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of Nebraska, *Fifty Years: The Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, 1886-1936* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 15-20.

40. Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, pp. 18-20, 44, 49; Olsson, By One Spirit, p. 330; Johnson, "Kansas Conference," p. 382.

41. Swedish Evangelical Free Church, Golden Jubilee, p. 209; Kansas svenska evangeliska Missions-konferens, Strödda drag, p. 310, lists only three Swedish free churches in all of Kansas in 1916. By contrast, there were 79 Augustana Synod, 26 Mission Covenant, 13 Swedish Baptists, and 7 Swedish Methodist congregations in the state at the time.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA

The division of religious Swedes into five major groups in Kansas and Nebraska-- Lutherans, Mission Covenanters, Free Church people, Baptists, and Methodists--carried a cost. At the national level religious diversity among Swedes fragmented resources, resulting in smaller and weaker institutions. The effect was similar at the local level. In county after county Lutheran congregations were challenged by and often split because of the Mission Friend movement. Differing opinions on the usefulness of a denominational structure sometimes prompted schisms among Mission Friends. Baptists and Methodists provided alternatives--sometimes actively proselytizing alternatives--to the Lutheranism of the Augustana Synod and Mission Friends. This competition resulted in a multiplicity of small congregations, duplication of effort, bitter resentment at the encroachments of other denominations, and ill-will that created enduring divisions within the Swedish communities on the Great Plains.

In the Lindsborg region of Kansas, the largest of the settlements under study, all of these religious groups formed congregations. The dominant group was Lutheran, as one might expect from the circumstances of settlement, with a dozen different local congregations scattered among the various Swedish communities in Saline and McPherson counties. Representing the schisms between the Augustana Synod and the Mission Friends of the 1870s and 1880s, the Mission Covenant was next in strength with six churches by 1900. The Swedish Methodists and Baptists each had a single congregation in the area, although the Methodists also had a mission place. Three or four weak free churches filled out the religious character of the Lindsborg region.¹

The large colonization efforts of the late 1860s insured that the Lutherans would be a powerful body in central Kansas. The constitution of the First Swedish Agricultural Company specified that members of that enterprise had to be Lutherans. Olof Olsson's group of

Värmlanders augmented the Lutheran strength in the Smoky Valley. The Galesburg Company was formed under the direction of Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, whose congregation in Illinois had been torn apart by one of the early outbreaks of the mission societies. There are no known rosters of that company's members, but inasmuch as the meetings that created the company took place in the Galesburg church after the dissenters left, one may assume that those content with the Augustana Synod comprised the bulk of the Galesburg group. Many settlers had no formal links with any of these companies but chose Lindsborg because they wanted a community with a Lutheran church. Such was the case of Swan Burk, a Västergötlander who read about the Swedish colonies in central Kansas in the pages of Hemlandet and moved there from Iowa.²

Small Lutheran churches soon began to dot the Kansas plains. In 1869 congregations were organized at Fremont and Salemsborg among members of the Galesburg company and Bethany at Lindsborg began among the Chicago company and Olsson's group. In 1870, a fourth was organized at Salina, the railhead for Swedes moving into the region. In 1871, Swedes in New Gottland township started their own congregation. These original churches became mother congregations for newer bodies that split off as outlying members pressed for churches closer to their homes. Thus, the Lutheran churches at Assaria (1875), Falun (1887), and Smolan (1893) originated from portions of the Salemsborg church. The congregations at Marquette and Windom once belonged to the Free Mount church before seeking independence in 1878 and 1879 respectively. The founders of the McPherson (1881) and Kristvalla (1887) congregations had once been tied to the New Gottland church.³

The Lutheran pioneers, however, carried with them the seeds of division. Most had had some contact with the läsare movement and some had associated with mission societies in Sweden or America. They considered themselves Lutherans, but held diverging opinions about what that meant and what their ties to the Augustana Synod should be.

Olof Olsson, for example, had been involved with the pietists in Sweden. Among his purposes in coming to America were to escape the restraints of the state church and to seek

fellowship in a congregation of believers. Before emigrating, he queried A. W. Dahlsten, whom he had known in Sweden, about the Augustana Synod because he was uncertain of the character of that body. When the Bethany congregation was formed, it did not immediately join the synod and its first constitution required a rigorous examination by the pastor and deacons for admission to membership. This attitude concerned Augustana leaders, who feared admitting a congregation which had strayed from traditional Lutheran tenets. Hasselquist, as president of the synod, enjoined Dahlsten to read Bethany's constitution after the congregation requested admission and report any irregularities.⁴

Olsson's attitude toward the Augustana Synod troubled two elements of Lindsborg Swedes. Some had belonged to Augustana congregations in states to the east and wanted to remain in the denomination. Francis Johnson, present at Bethany's organizational meeting, later explained that many people "did not like the new constitution so did not join the congregation before 1872, after the constitution of the synod was accepted." Others disagreed with steps toward such association and complained when Olsson convinced the congregation that membership was desirable. As J. A. Pihl, a member of the Chicago company, later wrote of the plan to join the Augustana Synod, "There were some members who were not content with this and a little dissatisfaction began to creep into the congregation."⁵

Pihl had participated in mission societies in Sweden prior to his 1868 arrival in America. In Chicago he had contact with Swedish Baptists and Methodists, and, although he maintained ties with the Lutheran church, he joined the Chicago mission society. He migrated to the Lindsborg area in the fall of 1869 and homesteaded in the Rose Hill area a few miles northeast of Lindsborg. There he renewed ties with Mission Friends, some of whom he had known in Illinois and some of whom had come from Östergötland. Perhaps as early as 1871 and certainly by late 1872, they were holding mission meetings in homes and were receiving monthly visits by Hans Blom, a Mission Friend colporteur who had taken up residence in Salina. Nor were these the only Mission Friends in the area; Pihl found a number of Smålanders around Salemsborg who had

brought their religious zeal from Sweden and with whom the Rose Hill group considered building a church.⁶

Olsson was ambivalent about such events. He was uneasy about itinerant preachers like Blom in his community, for such had caused rifts in other Lutheran congregations. On the other hand, Olsson himself had engaged in similar work in Sweden. In addition, members of his church maintained an open mind on the subject. Bethany's congregation voted in late 1872 to allow other denominations to utilize the church building when it was not in use and to grant the church council power to invite visiting preachers to speak.⁷

Waldenström's sermon on the atonement, published in the September, 1872 issue of Pietisten and soon read by Swedes in Lindsborg, helped solidify the religious factions in the Kansas settlement. When Olsson found that C. R. Carlson, an old friend from Sweden who had been responsible for attracting the pastor to Lindsborg, had been reading the sermon, he called a special meeting to condemn the doctrine. The issue would not die, however. Olsson and Carlson spent some months studying and debating the subject without resolution, others took sides, and the community was torn over the issue. Bethany's earliest historian, Alfred Bergin, wrote of the period, "Bibles were carried to work, they were placed on desks in business houses, and discussions were held day and night."⁸

Nor were these always calm conversations. Olsson's daughter Anna, about seven when the debate began to affect her home, later wrote a delightful memoir in the idiom of the child she had been when she experienced these events: "The men get so angry when they talk about The Teaching [as she termed the atonement doctrine]. They pound their fists on the table so hard that I get so scared of them. And they holler so loud when they talk." For Olsson the controversy was made worse by the fact that some of his opponents were among his closest friends from Sweden. The minister's health declined during the affair; some feared he would die and there are reports that others prayed he would.⁹

Feelings ran so deep that a division of the congregation was inevitable. In 1873 the Rose

Hill Mission Friends organized their own Sunday school. In early 1874, J. A. Pihl had his newborn son baptized by C. P. Mellgren, a Mission Friend colporteur, rather than by one of the Lutheran ministers in the area. In March of that year, Carlson asked for dismissal from the Bethany church, citing attacks against both his beliefs and his practice of inviting itinerant preachers to his home. Carlson and fifteen other communicants left the congregation within three weeks. A year later, two more members were excommunicated for their continued defense of the Waldenströmian doctrine. Most of these dissenters eventually joined the Rose Hill group, which organized a congregation in 1874.¹⁰

In late 1875, C. J. Nyvall, an old comrade from Värmland, visited Olsson in Lindsborg. Nyvall was touring America on behalf of a Swedish mission society and took the opportunity to observe conditions in Kansas. He was disappointed that Olsson would not allow him to preach at Bethany because he accepted Waldenström's ideas. Perhaps reflecting a continuing uncertainty about the choice between Lutheran orthodoxy and the Mission Friends, a number of Bethany's members hosted or attended the evening prayer meetings the visitor held. The church council permitted him to speak at a church conference held there and Olsson approved of the sermon. When Nyvall returned to Lindsborg near the end of his tour, however, he found a colder reception.¹¹

Most of the other early Lutheran congregations in the Lindsborg region suffered a similar fate in the nineteenth century. The Mission Friends at Salemsborg made their dissatisfaction known with the creation of a separate congregation in 1873, a year before the formal split at Lindsborg. Salina's mission congregation formed in 1878. In McPherson, the Mission Friends organized in 1880, a year before an Augustana congregation came on the scene. In Marquette, a Mission Covenant congregation came to fruition in 1889, five years after the Mission preacher in Lindsborg began work there. In New Gottland, a congregation formed in 1893, after twenty-two years of periodic visits by Mission Friend ministers. In Assaria, the Mission Friends were never strong enough to organize a congregation, although they gathered to hear visiting ministers

occasionally.¹²

Some Lutheran congregations escaped such losses. Free Mount Lutheran Church, created in 1869 by members of the Galesburg Company, struggled with the Waldenströmian doctrine for a time, but retained its unity. Its pastor at the time, John Seleen, left a record of the dispute in his memoirs. In 1877, the congregation was making the difficult decision of where to locate a new church building. People living to the west of Fremont, especially those near Marquette, wanted the church closer to them, but the majority of the congregation voted for rebuilding on the old site. While the congregation was split over this issue, two Mission Friends from Lindsborg began work among the Free Mount Lutherans. After services one Sunday, one of the Mission people stood up and announced an afternoon meeting at the Marquette schoolhouse. To counter this threat, Seleen arranged a similar meeting in a private home. The congregation remained faithful to the pastor and attended his gathering. When the Mission Friends found no one to listen to them, they tried unsuccessfully to disrupt Seleen's service. Seleen boasted of the result, "We were from that day free of these intruders. They said afterwards that the people in Marquette and Fremont were too ungodly." Two Baptists also tried to work among the Lutherans in the community, but with the same effect.¹³

There are several possible reasons for Seleen's success at putting out these theological brush fires. Certainly his quick action in scheduling a competing meeting deserves some credit, but other factors must also be considered. Fremont was settled by members of the Galesburg Company, an organization created after Mission Friends withdrew from the Galesburg church. The founders of the Free Mount church, having already gone through a selection process, may have been more predisposed toward Lutheranism. The Mission Friends in this case were outsiders, rather than members of the congregation. J. P. Stromquist, one of the pioneers in the Fremont area, credited the provincial origin of the settlers and the quality of the lay leadership for the indifference to the Mission call:

There was a clear dissimilarity in characteristics and disposition between people of Lindsborg and Free Mount. The majority of the people of Lindsborg had come from Värmland. They were religious, lively, emotional, and talkative. It seemed to us they discussed religious topics at both proper and improper times. . . . The Free Mount people were mostly from Småland, some from Dalarna, some from Östergötland, some from Skåne. They were less loquacious and did not discuss religious topics as easily as the people of Lindsborg. Maybe they were less religious. . . . The Lindsborg congregation had many good voices and facile tongues. They could hold forth with long and thundering speeches, many of them excellent. We did not have anyone like that in Free Mount.

The absence of emotional fervor, the stolid orthodoxy of lay leaders, and the work of Lutheran clergy in the area--for Seleen's colleagues came to his assistance--helped prevent a division in the congregation.¹⁴ It is also likely that the creation of the Marquette Lutheran Church in 1878 helped ameliorate discontent over Free Mount's location and forestalled any successful Mission congregation in that area for another decade.¹⁵

The year in which a Lutheran congregation was organized was also a significant factor in whether or not Mission Friends were successful in organizing a viable congregation in the same community. Those Lutheran congregations that began early typically suffered a schism; those that were organized late, particularly after 1875, seldom did. Of the six Lutheran churches divided by a Mission Friend movement that eventually became an organized Mission Covenant congregation--Lindsborg, Selemsborg, Salina, New Gottland, Assaria and Marquette--the earliest date of organization was 1869 and the latest 1878. The median date of organization for this group is 1870.5, the mean 1872. Of the five Lutheran churches that were not split--Free Mount, New Andover at Windom, Falun, Kristvalia at Galva, and Smolan--only one started before 1870 and three began after 1880. The median date of organization for this group is 1887; the mean is 1883.¹⁶

Patterns within these groups also support the significance of the organizational date. In the first group, those churches organized later had weaker Mission competition. In Assaria, where Lutherans organized in 1875, a Mission group was organized, but did not survive. The

1917 history of Mission Covenant work in Kansas reported that there was no longer a congregation in the community but that "an old report" noted the existence of "en vänkrets"--a circle of friends--with twenty-eight members and twenty-five children in Sunday school there. A 1900 article on Assaria's facilities reported that the Mission Covenant congregation had a building in the town, but--unlike the reports for the Lutheran and American Methodist congregations--listed no pastor.¹⁷ In New Gottland and Marquette--the other late congregations of the group experiencing a split--formal organization of a competing congregation came quite late, in 1893 and 1889 respectively. Moreover, at Marquette, the Covenant group was small and shared its meetings with an equally tiny free church group. Neither group could agree on basic doctrine and by 1900 both regular meetings and Sunday school had ceased. In what is one of the most unusual incidents in church formation in Kansas and Nebraska, the leaders of the two factions drew lots to decide whether they would continue as a free church or associate with the Mission Covenant. The latter won.¹⁸ Among the Lutheran congregations that did not experience a division, the earliest--Free Mount--staved off attempts that failed to produce a formal Mission Covenant congregation.

The primary reason for this differentiation is that the Waldenströmian controversy--the key event in separating Lutherans into those who adhered to orthodoxy and those who preferred new means and distrusted the Augustana Synod--was past when most of the congregations of the second group were formed. Most of these later congregations were organized by outlying members of an older congregation which had been split. The founding members of these newer organizations had already taken a stand on the atonement controversy and had stayed in the Augustana camp. By the same token, those likely to be attracted by a Mission Friend congregation had already been given the opportunity to cross over denominational lines.

There were other religious factions to consider among the Swedes in McPherson and Saline counties. In addition to the free church group at Marquette, there were free church organizations at Falun, Smolan, and Lindsborg. Falun was settled by a colony from Bishop Hill, the Janssonist

community in Illinois that had rejected Lutheranism in Sweden. This group created the Falun Christian Association Church, open to ministers of all denominations, but by 1887 this congregation had disbanded. At Smoian, a free church began about 1890, but joined the Salemsborg Mission Covenant congregation in 1912. In Lindsborg, a free church was organized in the mid-1890s, but was never very successful. The weekly church directory of the local newspaper carried no mention of it in the 1890s and it had no building of its own until 1905. In 1909, it had only thirty adult members and soon merged with the Mission Covenant church.¹⁹

Neither the Methodists nor the Baptists had any significant strength in the Lindsborg area. A Swedish Methodist minister moved from Chicago to Saline in 1871, began preaching in Falun, and organized a congregation with nine charter members there in 1871 or 1872. The group moved its worship services to Lindsborg shortly thereafter and by 1877, when it built a church, the congregation had forty adults with full membership. The Swedish Methodists experienced little growth in Lindsborg; in the 1890s, the number of adult members still hovered in the mid-forties. The men filling the Lindsborg pastorate occasionally preached to outlying groups, conducting, for example, services at Marquette in 1884 and initiating meetings in 1898 at Kentuck Creek east of Lindsborg. Neither of these efforts became significant.²⁰ The first Swedish Baptists in Lindsborg arrived in 1870 but did not organize a congregation until 1880 and nearly disbanded in 1886. No resident pastor served the congregation until 1887; the first church was not built until 1892. In 1897, in an effort to expand the circle of Baptist work in the area, the pastor began services and a Sunday school northwest of Lindsborg. This effort apparently led to the foundation of a Baptist church at Falun in 1910, an event which drew away many members from the Lindsborg congregation.²¹

Although religion is central to the history of the Swedish settlements in Saline and McPherson counties, it is an error to assume that all Swedes belonged to a church and that all church-goers belonged to a Swedish denomination. When Alfred Bergin collected short biographies of the early settlers in his 1909 history of Bethany and Lindsborg, he made

occasional references that a person was "not a member of any church" or had withdrawn from Bethany Lutheran and not associated with another denomination. More common was the observation that a person did not join Bethany until years--sometimes decades--after arriving in Lindsborg. An 1893 subscription biography encompassing central Kansas lists thirty-two Swedes in McPherson and Saline counties; any mention of religion is conspicuously absent in five of the biographies and one remarks that the subject had recently left the Lutheran church. The Lindsborg press occasionally printed obituaries like that for John Nelson, an employee of a McPherson business, whose funeral services were "under the auspices of the I.O.U.F. [sic] and the A.O.U.W."--fraternal lodges--rather than any denomination.²²

Ernst Skarstedt, one of the foremost Swedish-American journalists, spent thirteen months in the Lindsborg area in 1879 and 1880. At the time, he was a young immigrant, a former university student seeking his livelihood in America. He found that farm labor was unrewarding, for it did not pay enough to purchase his own land. His employer, a member of Bethany Lutheran, suggested he apply to teach Bethany's parochial school, a position that paid \$400 per year. The salary interested him, but when he learned he would have to join the congregation, which meant an examination of his religious beliefs by the deacons, he declined. Skarstedt explained to his employer that he would never allow himself "to be examined by persons whom I definitely knew to be beneath me in intelligence and education."²³

Skarstedt's account also indicates that others in the community did not subscribe to the pietistic standards set by local religious leaders. No saloons were permitted in Lindsborg and "some of the city's wise fathers" periodically checked local drugstores to see if anyone had purchased patent medicines containing alcohol. If bottles were missing from the shelves, the druggist was queried about the identity of the buyer. This rarely happened because the businessman simply restocked the shelves from a hidden supply. Drug stores also provided alcohol as a medicine for ailing livestock. As Skarstedt quipped, "It is remarkable that there were so many sick creatures at the time in the homes of the God-fearing people in Lindsborg."

And one of the immigrant's acquaintances, Dr. J. B. Curtis, a physician and druggist, boasted of making \$152 by selling ten-cent drinks from the back of his store during a July 4 celebration.²⁴

Skarstedt observed two factions in Lindsborg--the older Swedish element which was thoroughly religious and controlled the community and a less powerful group of younger Swedes and Americans who were less motivated by religion and sought more control of the town. There were occasional incidents which pointed to some tension in the community. Not everyone accorded religious leaders the respect they expected. One of Skarstedt's associates once left his work and dashed outside to call the passing Swedish Methodist minister an "impudent liar." When the Swedish Methodist church burned down under mysterious circumstances in December, 1879, suspicions fell on Dr. Curtis because of threats he had made. His trial, however, ended in acquittal. Nor were the Lutherans immune. In the summer of 1887 there was vandalism at Bethany's church, and at the 1889 annual meeting the congregation requested police protection to insure the tranquility of Sunday evening services. In 1892, "some unknown party threw a piece of a stone jar through one of the dining room windows at Rev. Swensson's home" as Sunday services were being dismissed. Several years later, a dozen young men disrupted a wedding dinner at which Swensson was present; one of them, who rode his horse into the tent where the meal was being served, "heaped some abuse on Dr. Swensson." In 1900 a local editor called for a curfew after a group of boys disturbed evening services at one of the local churches "by climbing up and looking thru [sic] windows."²⁵ The latter act might be written off as the playful prank of mischievous children, but the other incidents reflect more serious conflict and rebellion.

Even the Swedes who sought religious ties did not always find them in a Swedish congregation. Lindsborg had an English-speaking Methodist church, organized in 1880, as well as a Swedish one. At least some of the Swedes in the town preferred membership in it rather than in the immigrant church. For example, Jonas Wikstrom, born in Bishop Hill to Janssonist parents, chose the American congregation. Accounts of children's programs in the American

church reveal a sprinkling of Swedish names like Swanson, Monson, and Wetterstrom.²⁶

The religious diversity of the Swedes in McPherson and Saline counties was not unique. The same denominations can be found in the four Nebraska counties in the study. There are, however, important differences in the absolute and relative strengths of the various bodies. Although Lutherans typically founded the largest congregations, other groups sometimes had more churches. Nor was the Mission Covenant always the second largest group to the Augustana Synod.

Swedish Lutherans from Illinois began to settle in Burt County, Nebraska, by 1868. In November of that year, Rev. S. G. Larson of Omaha began preaching there monthly, and the following May approximately twenty people established a Lutheran church. In 1873, J. S. Benzon, who had succeeded Larson at Omaha, began visiting the congregation. The congregation grew rapidly, with Benzon alternating between services in Oakland and the Salem community six miles to the west, as many of the Swedes lived in the rural districts. By 1874, the congregation had 164 members, 80 of them communicants.²⁷

The same divisiveness that disrupted Lutheran congregations in Kansas soon struck in Oakland. In May, 1874, eighteen members of the congregation withdrew--the first of many such withdrawals--and began meetings under the direction of a lay preacher who had homesteaded in Cuming County to the west. In 1875, a Mission Friend pastor from Iowa began visits which culminated in the organization of a Mission Synod congregation the next year. The group built its first church in the Salem area in 1878. This rural location did not satisfy Mission Friends in Oakland, who began to hold their own meetings in rented quarters in Oakland. By 1885, this group was strong enough to organize a second Mission Covenant congregation. In 1895, following a revival conducted by John G. Princell, an Evangelical Free Church congregation was formed in Oakland.²⁸

In an effort to stem the losses caused by the Mission Friends, Benzon left his Omaha pastorate and accepted a call from Oakland. The attempt was futile and, disheartened by the loss of

two-thirds of his congregation, Benzon resigned after only seven months. His successor was J. P. Aurelius, a divinity student at Augustana Seminary, who agreed to serve Oakland and neighboring congregations for six months. His time there--from March to September, 1877--was a difficult one. The Mission Friends were highly critical and the Lutheran congregation had to address the troublesome question of where to locate their church building. This issue was finally settled in favor of Oakland, in hopes that a railroad would soon make it a boom town, rather than a rural site which would have been more convenient for many of the parishioners. Aurelius materially assisted the Lutheran congregation after he returned to his studies, soliciting funds for the struggling group and convincing a number of Swedes from Rock Island and Moline, Illinois, to move to Oakland. Following Aurelius's ordination in 1879, the Oakland Lutherans issued a call for him to become their pastor, which, given the troubles he had experienced there, he declined. J. Torell, who accepted the call, did so against the advice of many of his colleagues, who feared the congregation--then numbering only thirty communicants-- could not be saved. Torell acted quickly to shore up the weakened congregation. In his first year, 1879, he organized two sewing societies to involve the church women in mission work, a Sunday school, and a parochial school--institutions which typically are formed in the early years of a congregation's existence. At the end of his seven years at Oakland, the congregation numbered nearly 180 communicants and 320 baptized members.²⁹

Swedish Baptists were among the earliest settlers of that nationality in Burt County, the first ones coming from Moline, Illinois, and homesteading in the fall of 1866. These pioneers were followed by other Swedish Baptists from Moline, where they had belonged to the Swedish Baptist church in Rock Island, and from Omaha, where they had been members of an American Baptist congregation. The American influence was strong among the early Swedish Baptists in and around Oakland. The first church services for that group were conducted in English by Rev. Isaac C. Jones, an American preacher in the area. When a congregation was created in June, 1869, half of the sixteen charter members came from First Baptist in Omaha, an American

congregation. Six of the others came from Rock Island and only two directly from Sweden. Jones continued to serve the congregation periodically for another two years. Only the arrival of Baptists directly from Sweden--people who did not understand English--made this arrangement unsatisfactory and the first Swedish minister began his tenure there in September, 1871. Moreover, the Swedes operated a Sunday school in conjunction with American Baptists in the area in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The union Sunday school was organized in 1878, building on earlier work. This effort failed and the project was reorganized in 1882 with an American as superintendent and a Swede as assistant superintendent.³⁰

Swedish Methodists also colonized the Oakland area, the first coming from Burlington, Iowa, in 1869. A series of such immigrants, all from the Swedish Methodist church in that Iowa community, arrived over the next several years. Other Swedes from Illinois, New Jersey, and elsewhere in Iowa formed the core of the congregation created in July, 1877, after five years of visits by itinerant Swedish ministers. Whereas the Swedish Baptists erected a church in Oakland where there were American Baptists nearby, the Swedish Methodists built their edifice six miles northwest of the town. There was thus less cooperation with American Methodists than the Baptists experienced with their American brethren, although the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension gave \$250 toward the costs of the church construction. The American Methodist church in Oakland, organized in 1885, attracted some of the Swedish Methodists in the area.³¹

In Saunders County, the colonizing efforts of Rev. S. G. Larson, Nebraska's pioneer Swedish Lutheran minister, produced large Swedish settlements. Given Larson's importance in the early history of Saunders, it is not surprising that Lutheran churches were among the first Swedish churches in the county. Substantial numbers of Swedish Lutherans took land there in 1869 and early the next year formed three congregations under Larson's direction. Alma Lutheran at Mead was formally organized January 5, 1870, with seventeen charter members. In April, Swedes began congregations at Swedeburg and Malmo. In 1871, Larson moved from his

Omaha pastorate to a homestead near Mead to serve these rural churches.

In August, 1870, the Lutherans at Mead decided on a location for their first church building and began construction the following spring. Grasshoppers and hail devastated crops in the area so badly the next few years that the congregation could not afford to complete the project until 1874.³² Shortly after this, the first signs of trouble appeared at Alma Lutheran. At the annual meeting in May, 1875, L. P. Larson asked to be relieved of his duties on the church council "because he was tired of the discord which was prevalent at the church council's meetings." A discussion pointed to one of the other deacons as the chief reason for discord. Larson withdrew his request after the congregation took steps to end the conflict, the precise nature of which was never recorded. At the same meeting, in an action which may or not be related to Larson's request, another deacon was relieved of his office for failing to fulfill his duties.³³

At a special congregational meeting on January 27, 1876, a parishioner charged S. G. Larson with financial improprieties concerning money for travel expenses. In what is surely one of the most unusual meetings in a nineteenth century Lutheran church, witnesses for both sides presented testimony under oath before a justice of the peace. The congregation found Larson innocent of wrongdoing in the matter. Four months later, a group of Mission Friends seceded from the congregation and formed their own organization. Two of the twenty charter members of this new church had testified against Larson and another was a witness's spouse.³⁴

Carl A. Olson, a young Swedish immigrant in the Mead community, kept a daybook through this period. His record offers a rare look at the events surrounding a Mission Friend split in a Lutheran church. He and his parents arrived in Omaha in May, 1869, coming directly from Sweden in a company of twenty-one immigrants. Larson helped the family homestead in Saunders County and the Olsons attended Alma Lutheran. There, shortly after his sixteenth birthday, Olson was confirmed on May 24, 1874, following five months of confirmation instruction under Pastor Larson.³⁵

Nothing in Olson's account clearly presages the events of January 27. In December,

1872, he noted that his father attended a "protest möte"--a protest meeting--at S. G. Larson's, but neither the daybook nor the church minutes reveal the object of the protest. For the next three years, Olson recorded nothing exceptional about the community's religious life, although he did write that "Sab-n"--presumably John Sabelman, a neighbor who was elected one of the church deacons in 1875--preached several times, probably in Larson's absence. On May 30, 1875, a person named Nyman--perhaps Olof M. Nyman, a Mission Friend minister who lived west of Oakland--preached in the area.³⁶

Olson's treatment of the charges against Larson, while brief, placed great importance on the meeting. The entry for January 27 comments simply that there was a parish meeting to deal with the "klagen mot S. G. Larson" ("the complaint against S. G. Larson"). In his monthly summary, however, Olson spoke of "den stora andliga brytningna i Kyrkan"--"the great spiritual breaks in the church." A few days later his father went with two other men to complain to the pastor.³⁷

In the ensuing months Olson frequently recorded Mission Friend activity. On February 29, the Swedish Mission Friend leader C. J. Nyvall, continuing his tour American tour from Lindsborg, preached in the area. In late March, there was a meeting at F. Sabelman's about a congregational constitution. In early April, Olson noted that John Sabelman received a copy of Zions Banner, a major Mission Friend newspaper. A month later, the Saron Evangelical Lutheran Mission Association was established. Olson, his parents, and six people named Sabelman were among the twenty charter members.³⁸

In the spring and summer of 1876, all three of Larson's congregations in Saunders County produced Mission Friend organizations. The split at Alma came first, with the Saron association being founded on May 3. Five days later, the Bethesda Lutheran Mission Association was created at Malmo. At the end of August, the Lutheran church at Swedeburg suffered the same division. In each case the Lutheran congregation lost an important part of its strength as members crossed over into the new bodies. At Swedeburg, forty-three of eighty-nine members left when the

majority refused to open the church's pulpit to Mission Friend preachers. In 1877, Alma Lutheran recorded only ninety-four communicants, down more than fifty from three years earlier. Discouraged by the losses, Larson moved to Illinois in 1878. The Olsons purchased an organ at their former pastor's auction.³⁹

These new organizations were accompanied by substantial religious fervor in the area. Carl Olson's daybook became a catalog of religious meetings. On July 6, 1876, he and a friend went to a mission meeting at Bethesda in Malmo where Mission Synod ministers were speaking. He took in a similar gathering at John Sabelman's six days later, and on July 14 he underwent a conversion experience. As Olson extolled, "J[ag] fann frid me[d] Gud"--"I found peace with God." Thereafter, he recorded regular attendance at mission meetings and song meetings for more than a year.⁴⁰

Two other Augustana congregations were established in Saunders County before the turn of the century. Most of the Swedes who settled in the county intended to farm and acquired land in the rural districts. By 1880, however, there were enough Swedish Lutherans in Wahoo to hold divine services periodically. In 1883, before a formal Lutheran congregation existed there, Mission Friends created their own organization, although it disbanded some years later. Finally, in December, 1883, after the founding of Luther Academy brought more of their denomination to the community, Lutherans organized Bethlehem Lutheran Church. At least some of the early members still had Mission Friend leanings; the first resident pastor had to use the evangelical Hemlandsånger rather than the traditional Psalmboken, and efforts to use the standard Augustana service prompted several families to leave the congregation. At Valparaiso in the southwest corner of the county, Lutherans organized a congregation in 1895. The membership was never large and it was always served by pastors of neighboring churches.⁴¹

While there were no Swedish Methodist or Evangelical Free Church congregations in Saunders County, four Swedish Baptist congregations developed there. The first was at Estina, five miles northeast of Mead, where a number of Swedish Baptists from Illinois and Minnesota

began to settle in 1867. In September, 1870, they created the Estina congregation with seventeen charter members. In July, 1874, Baptists around Weston, many of them from the province of Gottland, organized the second congregation and in 1882 built a church several miles northwest of the community. The third developed at Wahoo in 1883. The final Swedish Baptist church to organize in the county was at Mead in 1889; many of the charter members had belonged to the Estina church but objected to the long drive to services there.⁴²

Although four such congregations is an unusually large number in a single county, none of these organizations was strong. Because the Swedish Baptists were so scattered, they were less successful than others at establishing permanent bodies. In 1889, the first year that reports are available for all four, the largest was at Wahoo with forty-two adult members. By 1895 all but Wahoo experienced significant growth, but the largest--then Weston--had only 73 adult members, nine of whom were not residents, and 30 students in Sunday school. In comparison, the Baptist church at Oakland had 130 adult members and 235 Sunday school pupils in 1895. Only two of the Swedish Baptist congregations were sufficiently established to weather the transition to English in the twentieth century. Estina disbanded in 1917 as the number of members declined. Wahoo merged into the American Baptist congregation in that city in the 1920s. Mead survived the language shift, but the construction of a World War Two ordnance plant disrupted the community and the church passed out of existence in 1947. Weston also endured the change from Swedish to English. Indeed, it was still one of the seven Swedish Baptist churches--and the only one from Saunders County--in a separate conference of the Nebraska Baptist State Convention in the late 1930s, even though the congregation made the switch to English in the 1920s.⁴³

Two Mission Friend leaders of national stature--Andrew Hallner and Fredrik Franson--had ties to Saunders County. Both came to the area as young men and while in Saunders crossed denominational boundaries. Hallner migrated to America with his parents in 1863. He homesteaded in Saunders County in 1869 and assisted S. G. Larson as a lay preacher. He was a charter member of Alma Lutheran and served as secretary when Larson organized the

congregation at Swedeburg. Hallner was of the Mission Friend camp, however, and was a leader in the separatist movement in all three Lutheran churches in 1876. Following the organization of the Mission Synod congregation at Swedeburg, he accepted a call as its first pastor. In 1878 he moved to Chicago, became secretary for the Mission Synod, and edited its newspaper. When the Mission Covenant was created in 1885, Hallner served as vice secretary. During the 1880s, he was back at Swedeburg for five years, but he eventually moved to California and established several Mission Covenant churches in that state.⁴⁴

Franson emigrated to Kansas with his parents in 1869, but moved to the Estina community shortly thereafter. In 1872 he underwent an intense religious experience, joined the Baptist church there for a time, and decided to enter the ministry. He studied for a time with the evangelist Dwight Moody and devoted his life to missionary work in the United States and abroad. In Nebraska, he was particularly important for his efforts among Mission Friends in Phelps County. He belonged to the radical free church wing of the Mission Friends, refused to join the Mission Covenant, and became associated with the Evangelical Free Church. A eulogist, with little exaggeration, termed Franson "the missionary's missionary" after he died in 1909.⁴⁵ Although these men had significant roles in the Mission Friend movement, neither served their Nebraska brethren in the same sense that Olsson and Swensson served Kansas Lutherans. Both helped create a number of Nebraska congregations, but they did not play a significant role in building other institutions in the state. Much of Hallner's time was absorbed by his national duties for the Mission Synod and Mission Covenant. Franson--even had he remained in Nebraska--was a millenarian who believed the end of the world was nearly at hand and saw little need for elaborate institutions. Moreover, because Franson favored the Free Church over the Mission Covenant, much of his work divided Nebraska Mission Friends rather than uniting them.

Swedes first showed interest in Polk County in 1870. Sizable Swedish settlements began to take shape there in 1871, with most of the pioneers coming from established communities in Illinois and Iowa. These early landseekers brought with them their religious preferences and

congregations representing a variety of faiths soon developed. Baptists and Methodists concentrated around Swedeburg, while Lutherans established a large rural church in the Swede Home area to the northwest.

The Swede Home Lutheran congregation underwent many of the same troubles other churches of that denomination experienced in the 1870s. The first settlers in the area came from Varna, Illinois, where they had belonged to the Lutheran church. Following their arrival in early 1872, a lay preacher with Baptist leanings began work among them, but they preferred to create a Lutheran organization. In the spring of 1873, Rev. A. N. Sweders, an Augustana Synod clergyman, homesteaded in the community. This boded ill for the Lutherans, for Sweders held Mission Friend views and accepted Waldenström's interpretation of the atonement. He insisted that membership in a new congregation be open only to those who could prove they were true Christians, and only four people met his standards at first. By July, three more had been admitted to membership and the laymen, ignoring Sweders's protests, adopted the Augustana Synod constitution. Sweders continued his obstructionism by refusing to accept members on letter of transfer and retreated only when forced to do so by visiting Augustana pastors who came at a layman's request. At the next annual meeting the congregation relieved its troublesome minister of his position. Sweders's efforts among Mission Friends in the county did have some return, however. A Mission congregation was organized in Stromsburg in 1874.⁴⁶

The Swede Home church produced several other Lutheran congregations in the area. In 1880 members living to the west created a new church in Hamilton County. In 1888, Swede Home's minister organized Salem Lutheran in Stromsburg to meet the needs of unaffiliated Lutherans there and to satisfy Swede Home members from the area who complained of the distance to church. In 1903, Lutherans in Osceola, many of them retired farmers who had formerly lived near Swede Home but who had moved to town, organized a congregation close to their homes.⁴⁷

The Baptists around Stromsburg, many of them coming from Illinois and Iowa, began their first congregation in 1873, a few weeks before the Lutherans at Swede Home formally adopted the

Augustana constitution. The Baptists predominated in Stromsburg and the church there became one of the largest Swedish Baptist organizations in the state. Ironically, its success as a Baptist community led to discord within that denomination.

In 1884 the Swedish-American Bible Seminary began in St. Paul as an alternative to a cooperative enterprise at the Baptist Union Theological Seminary. In 1885, Stromsburg offered forty acres of land and \$10,000 if the school would relocate to the Nebraska community. To an institution that was then holding classes in borrowed facilities, the offer was too good to resist. In January, 1886, classes began at the Central Baptist Seminary, as the school was then known. Theological differences soon tarnished what appeared to be a bright future. When the pastor of the local Baptist congregation, Rev. A. P. Ekman, introduced the Waldenströmian interpretation of the atonement in one of his sermons, the seminary's president, J. A. Edgren, rose to contradict him. This clash led to the secession of more than fifty members who sided with Edgren and who organized a competing congregation, the Regular Swedish Baptist Church, in March, 1887. In 1888 the Swedish seminary closed its Stromsburg doors and resumed its relationship with American Baptists, a move made both because of the unpleasant situation in Stromsburg and the remoteness of its location. In 1890, more than two years after both Ekman and Edgren had moved, the two Baptist churches were reunited.⁴⁸

The Swedish Methodists first began services in the Swede Plain area eight miles west of Stromsburg in 1875, but the immigrants lacked a regular pastor until 1877. By the early 1880s there were enough Swedish Methodists in Stromsburg to organize a second congregation there. These bodies were small, totalling just over one hundred adult members in 1894, and shared a single pastor for much of their history.⁴⁹

American Methodists and Baptists both had congregations in Stromsburg before the turn of the century. At least some of the Swedes of those denominations found membership in an English-speaking congregation preferable to membership in an immigrant church. There were no Swedes among the charter members of the Methodist Episcopal church, an American

organization, when it was founded about 1872, but by the mid-1880s a Swede had become one of the trustees. When an English-speaking Baptist congregation began in 1895, seven of the nine original members had Scandinavian names and one of those had led the effort to attract the Swedish seminary to Stromsburg.⁵⁰

Two congregations developed among the Mission Friends in Polk County by 1900. The first was the Mission church which formed in 1874 in the wake of Swedes's ouster from Swede Home Lutheran. This church remained independent of the Mission Covenant and the Free Church for some years before joining the Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, a body of Mission Covenant congregations. The other was a Free Church congregation which came into being west of Stromsburg and eventually moved into Polk, a small community in Pleasant Home township. This group first held services in 1889, but did not establish a congregation until 1900, and then with only nine adult members⁵¹

In Phelps County, the last of the Nebraska counties under study, Lutherans from states to the east provided an early core of settlers, but the most striking feature of the religious landscape is the presence of four congregations of the Evangelical Free Church. Here even the Mission Covenant complained of the radical Mission Friends who led Covenant congregations astray. Indeed, the Covenant managed to establish only one lasting church of its denomination in the county. Of the other religious groups, the Baptists had one and the Methodists had two congregations in the county. In addition, a Methodist congregation in western Kearney County is rooted in problems between Lutheran congregations in Phelps.

Large numbers of Swedes from Illinois, attracted to the area by Union Pacific land agents, took land in the county in the early and mid-1870s. In November, 1877, seeking a house of worship closer than Bethany Lutheran Church in western Kearney County, Lutherans in Phelps and Harlan counties created Bethel Lutheran. For a year and a half, the congregation, having no regular house of worship, met in members' homes. These services were typically held in the central and southern portions of the county, and Lutherans in the eastern tier of townships found

the arrangement unsatisfactory because of the distance to church. In January, 1879, these people organized Fridhem Lutheran.

The new congregation alarmed leaders in both Bethany and Bethel, who feared the upstart would weaken their churches by drawing away members. This opposition prevented the new organization from admission to the Augustana Synod and the Nebraska Conference until 1883. The delay so disgusted some members of Fridhem that they abandoned Lutheranism altogether and withdrew to organize a Methodist church in western Kearney County. Those who left included some of the congregation's prominent leaders, among them the man in whose home Fridhem had been organized. Several of Bethany's members also withdrew to join the Methodists.⁵²

Two other Lutheran organizations were established in Phelps County, both at the western border. Swedes from Varna and Altona, Illinois, settled that area in the late 1870s and early 1880s. In 1883 they created Westlands Lutheran north of Bertrand. For several years Olof Hedlund, a lay preacher from Holdrege, conducted services there. In 1887, when the congregation voted to build a new church in Bertrand, a group of farmers north of town objected. The two groups parted amicably, with the rural element purchasing the old church, moving it to a more convenient location, and organizing the Adullam Lutheran Church.⁵³

Among the Mission Friends in Phelps County, the dominant element tended toward the Free Church faction. Indeed, only one lasting Mission Covenant congregation was established in the county--the Moses Hill church founded near Loomis. In June, 1877, Moses Hill's first pastor--Rev. Jacob Danielson--and Andrew Hallner conducted revival meetings in the area. Another Mission Friend congregation--known first as the Church of God and later as the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church--existed in Loomis and shared a pastor with Moses Hill, but later chose to affiliate with the Evangelical Free Church.⁵⁴

At least some of the responsibility for the Free Church strength in the Swedish settlements in this region south of the Platte River lay with Frederik Franson. Early in the 1880s, he spent time in the area as a missionary with substantial results. In the fall of 1880 he

organized free churches at Westmark and Phelps Center in Phelps County and at Keene in Kearney County. In addition to the Church of God at Loomis, organized in 1883, other free churches were created at Holdrege in 1889 and Holcomb in 1899.⁵⁵

This large contingent of free congregations--together with two Methodist and one Baptist churches--posed problems for both the Lutherans and the Mission Covenanters. Despite the heavy Swedish settlement in the region, only four Lutheran congregations succeeded--Fridhem near the eastern border of the county, Bethel in the Holdrege area, and Westlanda and Adullam at the western border. Of these, Adullam was a small rural daughter congregation of Westlanda. In the central ranges of the county, only Bethel represented the Lutherans, but there were at least five congregations that eventually joined the Free Church. These and churches of other denominations worked among the Lutherans in search of converts. The late 1880s and the 1890s were years of fierce competition for members as revivals swept through the county. The Nebraska Conference historian writes of the period, "A spiritual prairie fire, started and kept up by proselyters, swept over Holdrege, with the particular object of devastating the Lutheran church." While the opinion that Lutherans were the primary goal of this work is perhaps exaggerated, all of the other Swedish religious groups were more comfortable with proselytizing than were the Lutherans. Certainly leaders of Bethel Lutheran were disquieted by activities such as the seven weeks of revivals the new Swedish Methodist congregation in Holdrege sponsored in the winter of 1896. Even the Mission Covenant, although the Moses Hill congregation benefited from a revival in 1889, blamed Franson for the loss of the Mission Friends at Phelps Center to the Free Church.⁵⁶

Such competition among the various religious bodies was inevitable because the participants judged the stakes--the souls of the misled and unregenerate and the survival of their own congregations--so high. In the nineteenth century, many church leaders and laymen believed their faith held a monopoly on religious truth and that other denominations were in error. Members of other churches were thus fair game for conversion efforts. Moreover, on the

frontier among new congregations struggling to build a church or hire a minister, the addition of even a few families might mean the difference between survival and failure.

There were two situations when strife could be especially serious. The first occurred when new congregations which were attractive to Swedish immigrants were in the process of formation and the religious balance in an area might be unstable. Several events could cause this situation. A new group moving into an area might establish its own house of worship and thereby provide an alternative--sometimes an actively proselyting alternative--to existing congregations. Established settlers in an area, but with religious allegiances to a denomination not found there, might decide it was time to organize their own congregation, perhaps encouraged by the recent settlement of co-religionists, a period of prosperity, promises of outside assistance, or strong lay leadership. An evangelist like Franson might work among the residents of an area--regardless of whether or not they belonged to other congregations--hoping to generate interest in a new organization. A difference of opinion--theological or otherwise--might lead to the division of an existing congregation and attempts to divide others.

The second situation which brought a substantial risk of competition involved revivals. Some religions stressed a conversion experience for membership and congregations relied on periodic revivals to transmit the religious enthusiasm of the founders to the next generation. If these efforts at religious awakening were aimed at the youth of a congregation, led by the local pastor, and short-lived, other groups had little to fear. This fulfilled the same function as confirmation in the Augustana Synod. On the other hand, when these affairs were lengthy, intended not only for young people and the unchurched but also for wavering members of other congregations, and perhaps conducted by a noted evangelist, established churches--particularly groups such as the Lutherans which placed less stress on revivals--felt threatened.

This religious competition caused bitter feelings in all of the counties under study. The division between the Lutherans and the Mission Friends dominated the scene in McPherson and Saline counties and was particularly distressing to the parties involved because they had once

considered each other Christian brothers. Olof Olsson, as the target of much invective over the Waldenström controversy, eventually reconciled with some of his old friends who had gone into the Mission Covenant. Not everyone was so generous. Anton Peterson, born into a Lutheran family near Lindsborg in 1884, remembered his minister calling the Mission Covenant church "the Church of the Pharisees" and that Lutheran children frequently referred to the Mission Friends as "malasse vänner"--"molasses friends."⁵⁷

Although the tension between the Lutherans and the Mission Covenanters was the strongest one in the Kansas counties, other sources of strain existed. John Seleen was troubled by Baptist efforts to win over members of the Free Mount congregation. The Swedish Methodists also tried to enlarge their territory around Lindsborg. Correspondents of Carl A. Swensson, the young seminary student Olof Olsson picked to be his successor at Bethany Lutheran, kept him appraised of events in the community while he finished his schooling. In 1878, one informant wrote Swensson that the Methodists were trying to take over the Sunday school at Dry Creek and that one of the residents there was determined not to have an Augustana pastor in the area. The following year, C. J. E. Haterius, serving as minister at Bethany until Swensson arrived, reported that "Engström [the pastor of the Methodist church] is trying with all his might to push himself in at Dry Creek."⁵⁸

Similar events occurred in Nebraska. In Burt County, Nebraska, the work of the Mission Friends almost destroyed the Lutheran congregation. J. P. Aurelius, the seminary student who served the Lutherans there during much of the critical period, declined to return as their pastor because of the abuse he had encountered from his opponents. In Saunders County, S. G. Larson, who had so much to do with the Swedish settlements in the county, was embittered by the charges against him and the fragmentation caused by the Mission Friends. He chose to leave, even though he had established a farm in the county. In Wahoo in the 1880s, the Lutherans and Mission Friends, both lacking their own building, worked out agreements to use the Congregationalist church on alternate Sunday afternoons. The cooperation ended when the Mission Friends

scheduled a meeting on the Lutherans' day.⁵⁹ In Polk County, the Lutherans at the Swede Home church had more problems with the Baptists than with other groups. In 1886, faculty and students from the Baptist seminary began revival meetings in schoolhouses and homes. C. F. Sandahl, then a teenager in the Lutheran body, later wrote that the Baptists "unblushingly declared that the Swede Home congregation was their God-given field for proselytism" but failed because their vituperative attacks on the Lutheran minister alienated members of the congregation rather than winning them over.⁶⁰ Indeed, the division among Baptists over the Waldenström controversy led to competition within that denomination. In Phelps County, as noted above, the Lutherans believed themselves besieged in the late 1880s and through the 1890s--a period when two Methodist and two Free Church congregations were created in the Holdrege area.

In time the enmity and contention turned to tolerance and cooperation. In 1897, for example, Rev. D. Brunström, who had attended Bethany College in Lindsborg, became the new pastor at the Mission Covenant church there. The same year the Lutheran, Mission Covenant, and American Methodists ministers participated in a joint temperance meeting in Bethany Lutheran Church. Congregational histories of churches split by the Mission Friend movement could charitably grant--thirty or forty years after the initial break--that the Covenant people had become good neighbors.⁶¹

This strife--understandable due to the diversity of theological beliefs--partitioned the Swedes' religious resources and affected their ability to maintain ethnic institutions associated with their religion. A single denomination would have needed fewer congregations in any given area than did two or more competing groups--with a consequent savings in church construction, ministerial salary, educational efforts to keep youth within the faith, and energy to resist proselytizing from other bodies. Larger congregations would have been more financially secure and better able to support local, regional, and national institutions of their denomination. Small congregations often met in rented or borrowed facilities for years before they could afford to build their own churches, frequently relied on non-resident ministers to conduct services, and

declined when only a few families moved or changed their religious affiliation. Historians and sociologists sometimes speak of a "critical mass" of settlers necessary to perpetuate an ethnic identity. The religious diversity among the Swedes in America made that mass more difficult to achieve and sustain by creating divisions within ethnic communities.

CHAPTER 4

NOTES

1. There were at least two other Lutheran organizations in the area, but neither lasted long. There was a congregation known as Elmsborg in the Mount Hope area about six miles southeast of Lindsborg. Founded sometime in the early 1880s--differing accounts report 1880, 1881, and 1882--the congregation had over fifty communicants and over one hundred members in 1883, but disbanded when the parsonage burned down. It had passed out of existence by 1892 because a brief history of the Kansas Conference which appeared that year does not mention it. See A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883; rpt., Atchison, KS: Atchison County Historical Society, 1976), 1: 817; Alfred Bergin, The Story of Lindsborg (Lindsborg: Bethany Printing Co., [1929]), pp. [18-19]; Smoky Valley News, November 23, 1881; and C. A. Swensson and L. G. Abrahamson, Jubel-Album (Chicago: National Publishing Co., 1892). There was something known as the Johnstown church, located at a small community about five and a half miles south of Lindsborg. Established in the 1890s, this apparently never developed into a separate organization. Alfred Bergin, the early historian of Lindsborg and Bethany Lutheran Church, noted that one of that church's early members was "very active in the building of the church in Johnstown, and was for a while in charge of the work there." See Ruth Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 58. This is a translation of Bergin's Lindsborg. Bidrag till Svenskarnas och den Lutherska kyrkans historia i Smoky Hill River Dalen (Lindsborg: Bethany Lutheran Church, 1909). Billdt is Bergin's daughter.

2. The First Swedish Agricultural Company's by-laws are printed in Billdt, Pioneer Swedish American Culture, pp. 24-27. For the chronology of the Galesburg Company, see Olsson, By One Spirit (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1962), pp. 229-230, and Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), pp. 170-171. On Burk, see Swan Burk, "Autobiography," (typescript, n.d.), Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas.

3. Albert W. Lindquist, "A Brief History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Kansas Conference of Augustana Synod," in A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Kansas, ed. by H. A. Ott (Topeka: F. M. Steves & Sons, 1907), pp. 262-272, provides a brief summary of these developments. The congregation at Fremont is called the Free Mount or Freemount church. The community was named for John C. Fremont, the explorer and politician. Church authorities, not wishing to give a secular name to a congregation, called it Freemount. See Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 173-174.

4. Emory Lindquist, Vision for a Valley: Olof Olsson and the Early History of Lindsborg (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1970), pp. 4-11, 16-18, 33-34. Bethany's first constitution is reprinted in Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 72. Hasselquist's letter to Dahlsten is reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 73, and in Ernst William Olson, Olof Olsson: The Man, His Work, and His Thought (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1941), pp. 70-71.

5. Francis Johnson, "Memories from the Olsson Period," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, ed. by Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Joderborg (Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), p. 21; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 73; Johan Augustin Pihl, God's People in a New Land, ed. and trans. by Vernon C. F. Holm (Lindsborg: Smoky Valley Historical Publications, 1984), p. 5.

6. Pihl, God's People in a New Land, pp. 28-30, 34, 38-40, 42-43, 46-48; H. Blom, "En kort historik öfver Kansas sv. ev. missionskonferens' verksamhet," in Strödda drag ur Missionsvännernas verksamhet i Kansas och Missouri (Topeka: Linderholm Bros., 1917), pp. 258-259. For biographical data on Blom, see Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 170-171, 778.
7. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, p. 42.
8. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 74. The best secondary account of this controversy is found in Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 42-51.
9. Anna Olsson, "A Child of the Prairie," trans. by Martha Winblad, ed. by Elizabeth Jaderborg (Lindsborg: n.p., 1978), p. 81; Nils Heiner, "Lindsborg, Kansas," in Strödda drag, p. 30; Anna Berg, "Dr. Olof Olsson as a Person and Pastor," in Billdt and Jaderborg, The Smoky Valley in the After Years, p. 19; Johnson, "Memories from the Olsson Period," p. 22; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 74.
10. Pihl, God's People in a New Land, pp. 44-47; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 76. Billdt lists the communicants who left at the same time as Carlson. Among them is J. A. Phil. Carlson was one of the trustees of the Mission Covenant when it was created in 1885. See Olsson, By One Spirit, p. 320.
11. Carl Johan Nyvall, Travel Memories from America, trans. by E. Gustav Johnson (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1959), pp. 53-56, 90.
12. See Ruby Phillips Bramwell, City on the Move: The Story of Salina (Salina: Survey Press, 1969), p. 127; and Strödda drag, passim, for the dates of these churches.
13. John Seleen, This Valley of Tears: The Memoirs of J. Seleen in Kansas and Sweden, trans. by Ruth Billdt, ed. by Elizabeth Jaderborg (n.p., 1971), pp. 33-34.
14. J. P. Stromquist, "J. P. Stromquist's Story," in Billdt and Jaderborg, Smoky Valley in the After Years, pp. 28-29.
15. Seleen, This Valley of Tears, pp. 35-36.
16. For dates of organization, see Lindquist, "Brief History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Kansas Conference," passim.
17. Strödda drag, p. 249; Lindsborg News, October 12, 1900.
18. A. H. Jacobsen, "Marquette, Kansas," in Strödda drag, pp. 202-204.
19. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 37, 145; Historical Atlas of Saline County, Kansas (McPherson, Kansas: American Atlas Co., 1972), p. 36; August Peterson, "Salemsborg, Kansas," in Strödda drag, p. 153; Evangelical Covenant Church, Lindsborg, Kansas, Centennial Book, 1874-1974 (n.p., n.d.), p. 19. For a sample church directory, see Lindsborg News, July 2, 1897.
20. Anna M. Carlson, History of Methodism in Lindsborg, 1871-1954: Diamond Jubilee: Trinity Methodist Church, 1879-1954 (Lindsborg: n.p., 1954), pp. 1-2; N. M. Liljegren, N. O. Westergren, and C. G. Wallenius, Svenska Methodism i Amerika (Chicago: Svenska M. E.

Bokhandels-Föreningens Förlag, 1895), p. 460; Victor Witting, Minnen från mitt lif som Slöman, Immigrant och Predikant, samt en historisk afhandling af Methodisms Uppkomst= Utveckling=Utbredning bland Svenskarne i Amerika och i Sverige, 2nd ed. (Worcester, Mass.: Burbank & Co:s Tryckeri, 1904), pp. 463-464; United Methodist Church, "Minister and Church Lists," Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; Smoky Valley News, January 4, 1884; Lindsborg News, August 26, 1898. Carlson placed the date of organization in November, 1871; Witting gives it as the summer of 1872.

21. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 145; Anna M. Carlson, "History of First Baptist Church [Lindsborg]," typescript, n.d., Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, pp. 1-2; First Baptist Church, Lindsborg, Kansas, A History: First Baptist Church Sixty Year Anniversary, Lindsborg, Kansas, 1880-1940 (Lindsborg: Bethany Printing Co., n.d.), 3-6, 13; P. Lovene, History of the Swedish Baptist Churches of Kansas and Nebraska, 1869-1927 (Chicago: n.p., 1928), pp. 45-47, 51; Lindsborg News, October 14, November 11, 1892; April 20, May 7, 28, 1897.

22. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 71; Portrait and Biographical Record of Dickinson, Saline, McPherson and Marion Counties, Kansas (Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1893), p. 574 and passim; Lindsborg News, January 3, 1890.

23. Ernst Skarstedt, Vagabond och redaktör: Iefnedsöden och tidsbilder (Seattle: Washington Printing Co., 1914), p. 32. For a secondary account of Skarstedt's stay in McPherson County, see Emory Lindquist, An Immigrant's American Odyssey: A Biography of Ernst Skarstedt (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1974), pp. 44-57.

24. Skarstedt, Vagabond och redaktör, pp. 49-50.

25. Ibid., pp. 73, 53; Lindsborg Localist, January 8, 1880; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 97-98; Lindsborg News, May 20, 1892; September 20, 1895; January 26, 1900.

26. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 68; Lindsborg News, June 7, 1889; June 24, 1899.

27. [C. G. Carlton, ed.], After Fifty Years, 1869-1919: Historical Sketch of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Oakland Congregation, Oakland, Nebraska (Oakland, NE: n.p., 1919), pp. 5-7; Charles Frederick Sandahl, The Nebraska Conference of the Augustana Synod: Survey of Its Work (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), pp. 200-201.

28. [Carlton], After Fifty Years, p. 8; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, p. 201; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years: The Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, 1886-1936 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 76-77, 80; Swedish Evangelical Free Church of the U.S.A., Golden Jubilee: Reminiscences of One Work Under God, Swedish Evangelical Free Church of the U.S.A. (Minneapolis: n.p., 1934), p. 168.

29. [Carlton], After Fifty Years, pp. 8-21; First Lutheran Church, Oakland, Nebraska, The Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the First Lutheran Church, May 9, 1944 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 8-13; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 201-203. Oakland's troubles did not end with Torell's arrival. His successor, H. R. Miller, was defrocked and removed from his pastorate for unknown reasons. One of the congregation's historians reported simply that "his services terminated abruptly in the summer of 1891, under circumstances that need not be detailed here." See [Carlton], After Fifty Years, p. 22. The minutes of the Nebraska Conference report a resolution

to remove and defrock Miller, but offer no clue as to why. See Referat öfver förhandlingarne vid Nebraska Konferensens 7:de Årsmöte i Svenska Ev. Luth. Bethlehems-församlingens Kyrka i Wahoo, Neb., den 21-26 Feb. 1893 (Omaha: Svenska Journalen-Tribunens Bok- och Accidenstryckeri, 1893), pp. 30-31.

30. Oakland, Nebr., Past and Present. Being a Review from its Pioneer Days, and Present State of Development (Oakland: Oakland Independent, 1907), pp. 8, 17-19; First Baptist Church, Oakland, Historical Sketch of the First Baptist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, 1869-1919 (Oakland: The Church, 1919), pp. 11-19, 23, 50, 54-56; Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America, pp. 68-69; Svenska Baptisternas i Nebraska Konferens, MinnesAlbum: Svenska Baptisterna i Nebraska, 1869-1919 (Omaha: Omaha Posten Printing, n.d.), pp. 5-8.

31. Liljegren et al., Svenska Methodism i Amerika, p. 465; Witting, Minnen från mitt liv, pp. 467, 471-472; Women's Society of Christian Service, comp., West Side Methodist Church 80th Anniversary Celebration, 1877-1957 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 8-9; Mrs. Bill Johnson, ed. and comp., Oakland Centennial: A Century to be Proud of a Future Unlimited ([Oakland, NE: n.p., 1963]), p. 55; Lola Lofgren, The Family Tree and Root: John and Maria Erickson ([Laurel, NE: n.p., 1982]), p. 7; David Marquette, A History of Nebraska Methodism: First Half-Century, 1854-1904 (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1904), pp. 444-445; Everett E. Jackman, The Nebraska Methodist Story (N.p.: Nebraska Conference Methodist Historical Society, 1954), 160-161; Oscar William Strombom, comp. and ed., "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska," typescript, 1944, p. [8]. A microfilmed copy of this work is found in the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

32. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 210-211, 216-217, 222-223; C. G. Samuelson, "Historical Sketch of Alma Lutheran Church, Given on 65th Anniversary by Rev. C. G. Samuelson, November, 1935" (Typescript, 1935), Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska, pp. 2-4.

33. Alma Lutheran Church, Mead, Nebraska, Minutes, May 4, 1875. The microfilmed records available at the Swensson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, were used in this study.

34. Ibid., January 27, 1876; Saunders County, Nebraska (n.p.: Saunders County Historical Society, 1983), p. 87.

35. Carl Albert Olson, Daybook, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1: 100, 103, 139, 143 (March 6, 1874), 145 (May 24, 1874). Olson's notebook contains daily diary entries, monthly and annual summaries of important events, a recounting of events prior to the time he began regular diary entries, and miscellaneous facts which he wished to record. When the reference is to an entry that is not dated, only page numbers will be given. If the reference is to a specific dated entry, the date in parentheses will follow the page number.

36. Ibid., 1: 126 (December 28, 1872), 133 (June 29, 1873), 141, 158 (May 4, 30, 1875); Alma Lutheran Church, Minutes, May 4, 1875; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, pp. 76-77.

37. Olson, Daybook, 1: 167 (January 27, 1876), 168 (February 4, 1876).

38. Ibid., 1: 168 (February 29, 1876), 169 (March 21, 1876), 170 (April 5, 1876), 171 (May 6, 1876); Nyvall, Travel Memories, p. 84-85. Saunders County, p. 87, gives a list of charter members. Olson dates the organization of the church to May 6; secondary.

sources, including congregational histories, give the date as May 3.

39. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 211, 218, 224; Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Swedeburg-församling, Swedeburg, Nebraska, Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Swedeburg-församlingen i ord och bild, Swedeburg, Nebraska, 1870-1910 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), p. 10; Samuelson, "Historical Sketch of Alma," p. 4; Olson, Daybook, 1:202 (October 10, 1878).

40. Olson, Daybook, 1: 173 (July 6, 12, 14, 1876), 175-189.

41. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 242-244, 255-257; Charles Perky, supervising ed., Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and Achievement (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 1: 163-165; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, p. 29.

42. Svenska Baptisternas i Nebraska Konferens, Minnes Album, pp. 15-30; Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America, p. 69; Perkey, Past and Present of Saunders County, 1:47; Saunders County, Nebraska, pp. 87-88; Centennial Book Committee, Mead Centennial, 1877-1977 (n.p., n.d.), p. 37; Virginia Pokorny et al., comps., "Uptown, Downtown--All Around the Town." depicting the History and Progress of Weston, Nebraska (n.p., 1976), p. 36.

43. Nebraska Baptist State Convention, The Nebraska Baptist Annual for 1889 (Wahoo, NE: Wasp Printing Co., 1889), pp. 113-114; Nebraska Baptist State Convention, Minutes of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Nebraska State Baptist Convention . . . and Minutes of Associations (Blair, NE: Pilot Book, Job and News Printing, 1895), pp. 54-55; Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America, p. 69; Saunders County, Nebraska, pp. 87-88; Wahoo's Century Round-up, 1870-1970 (n.p., n.d.), p. 31; Centennial Book Committee, Mead Centennial, p. 37; Pokorny, "Uptown, Downtown." p. 36; Nebraska Baptist State Convention, Annual Report, 1937-1938 (n.p., n.d.), p. 28.

44. Olson, By One Spirit, pp. 320, 790; Swedeburg Covenant Church, Swedeburg, Nebraska, Swedeburg Covenant Church Centennial, 1876-1976 (n.d., n.p.), pp. 5-6; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, pp. 44, 47, 52; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 210-211, 218, 224.

45. Stephenson, Religious Aspects, pp. 126-128; Frederick Hale, "Norwegians, Danes, and the Origins of the Evangelical Free Tradition," Norwegian-American Studies 28 (1979): 83-84, 86; A. Schön, "Fredrik Franson," Prärieblomman 9 (1909): 262-267. Carl Olson recorded a visit by Franson in September, 1878. The young man was evidently impressed with the evangelist, for he underlined Franson's name, something which he rarely did. Olson, Daybook, 1: 201 (September 2, 1878). Hale incorrectly identifies the community where Franson settled as Ensteina. Older histories sometimes use Esteina rather than Estina.

46. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 304-307; Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Swede Home, Nebraska, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1873-1948 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 7-9; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, pp. 98-99.

47. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 322-323, 327, 340.

48. Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America, pp. 69, 107-111; Svenska Baptisternas i Nebraska Konferens, Minnes Album, pp. 31-39; Mrs. Floyd Moore, 90th Anniversary of Stromsburg Baptist Church (Mimeographed, 1963), p. 2; L. J. Ahlstrom, John Alexis Edgren:

Soldier, Educator, Author, Journalist (Chicago: Conference Press, 1938), pp. 136-142, 149-155. In 1889, Stromsburg's original Baptist church had 156 members, twelve more than its next largest competitor, the Omaha church. See Nebraska Baptist State Convention, The Nebraska Baptist Annual for 1889, pp. 113-114.

49. Liljegren et al. Svenska Metodism i Amerika, p. 467; Strombom, "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska," pp. 32-40; Victor Witting, Historik öfver Svenska Metodism i Amerika från 1877 till 1903 (Worcester, MA: Burbank & Co:s Tryckeri, 1904), p. 24. Witting's work is bound in the same volume as his Minnen från mitt lif.

50. Mrs. Florence Donelson-Haverland, Historical Sketch of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Stromsburg, Nebraska (Osceola, NE: Record Publishing Co., 1920), pp. 1, 4; Stromsburg Baptist Church, Ninety Years of Baptist Work in Stromsburg (Mimeographed, 1963), p. 3.

51. Olsson, By One Spirit, pp. 331; Swedish Evangelical Free Church, Golden Jubilee, pp. 157, 172; Evangelical Free Church, Polk, Nebraska, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1900-1950: The Evangelical Free Church, Polk, Nebraska (n.p., n.d.), p. [2]. Another Free Church congregation developed in Stromsburg in 1910.

52. [C. S. Odell], Bethel Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, 1877-1927: Program and Historical Sketch (n.p., n.d.), pp. 5-8, B. E. Bengtson, Jubilee Album: A Short History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Fridhem Congregation of Funk, Nebraska (Funk, NE: Fridhem Congregation, 1919), pp. 99, 101, 105-107; Strombom, "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska," pp. 15-18; [C. O. Lonquist and A. J. Johnson], After Eighty Years: The Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Axtell, Nebraska, 1876-1956 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 24-25. It was the custom in many early church histories for former pastors to contribute reminiscences of their pastorate. Torell, who was serving Bethany at the time of the Fridhem trouble, did so for C. O. Lonquist's Efter Fyrtio År, Bethany's fortieth anniversary history. At the eightieth anniversary, the congregation reprinted Lonquist's book in translation and the current pastor, A. J. Johnson, added a history of the last forty years. Torell, in an unusually candid account of events leading to the controversy, blamed Rev. Elias Peterson, then serving as a missionary in the area, for encouraging Fridhem's organization in hopes of becoming its pastor. Peterson was later defrocked for misconduct. See Bergendoff, Augustana Ministerium, p. 31, for a short biography of Peterson.

53. Immanuel [formerly Westland] Lutheran Church, Bertrand, Nebraska, 100th Anniversary, 1883-1983 (n.p., n.d.), pp. [6, 8-9]; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 170-172, 175. Hedlund was one of a handful of laymen in Kansas and Nebraska who was licensed by the Augustana Synod to preach and perform certain ministerial duties. He and others like him helped fill the gap between the numbers of preaching places and congregations and the number of trained clergy available. Some of these went on to be ordained, but Hedlund declined to. See B. E. Bengtson, Pen Pictures of the Pioneers (Holdrege, NE: Progress Printing Co., 1926-1931), 1: 1-6; and Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 54-56.

54. Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Church of Moses Hill, Phelps County, Nebraska, Semi-Centennial, 1877-1927 (n.p., n.d.), p. 12; Swedish Evangelical Mission Church, Loomis, Nebraska, Golden Anniversary of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church, of Loomis, Nebraska, 1886-1936 (Loomis, NE: The Church, 1936), pp. 5, 7; Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years, pp. 101-103; Swedish Evangelical Free Church, Golden Jubilee, p. 156; Rolf Johnson, Diary, June 27, 1877, Rolf Johnson Papers, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. This collection

does not contain the manuscript diary. The document was published in serial form in the Holdrege Progress, and this collection is the undated newspaper clippings. The official date of organization for Moses Hill is February 3, 1877. Johnson, however, records digging a cellar in October, 1876, for Rev. Danielson, who was called to serve the congregation recently organized. Johnson Diary, October 10, 1976.

55. Westmark Evangelical Church, Loomis, Nebraska, Fiftieth Year Jubilee of the Westmark Evangelical Church (Loomis, NE: The Congregation, n.d.), p. 5; Holcomb Evangelical Free Church, Holdrege, Nebraska, Fiftieth Anniversary of the Holcomb Evangelical Free Church, 1899-1949 (n.p., n.d.), p. [10]; Trinity Evangelical Free Church, Holdrege, Nebraska, Golden Jubilee Anniversary Album, 1889-1939 (n.p., n.d.), p. 7; Swedish Evangelical Free Church, Golden Jubilee, pp. 159-161; 163, 169. There apparently was another free church called the Rose Hill congregation that merged into the Holcomb church at an unknown date.

56. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, p. 143; Strombom, "Historical Sketch of the Work of Swedish Methodism in Nebraska," p. 24; Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Church of Moses Hill, Semi-Centennial, p. 13; Olsson, By One Spirit, p. 329. The Methodist churches were in rural Holdrege, established in 1887, and in Holdrege, established in 1895. The Baptist church, also in Holdrege, was a small congregation founded in 1884 and numbering only twenty-one resident members in 1895. Another small Swedish Baptist church was established northeast of town in 1903. See Strombom, pp. 23-24; Svenska Baptisternas i Nebraska Konferens, Minnes Album, pp. 73-74; and Nebraska Baptist State Convention, Minutes of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Nebraska State Baptist Convention, p. 54. Bethany Lutheran in Kearney County had similar problems with both Franson's free church followers and Methodists, as well as a small colony from Bishop Hill. See [Lonnquist and Johnson], After Eighty Years, pp. 41-42.

57. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 31-32; Anton Peterson to Emory Lindquist, McPherson, Kansas, January 13, February 24, 1951, Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas [hereafter BC]. Hulda E. Thelander also recalled friction between Lutheran and Mission Covenant children while growing up in Minnesota. See Thelander, "The Immigrants' Children," Swedish-American Historical Quarterly 34 (July, 1983): 220-221.

58. Seleen, This Valley of Tears, p. 34; M. to Carl A. Swensson, Lindsborg, Kansas, March 23, 1878; C. J. E. Haterius to Sensson, Lindsborg, Kansas, April 15, 1879, Carl A. Swensson Papers, BC.

59. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 242-243; L. Bonander, "Historik öfver Bethlehem-församlingen i Wahoa, Nebraska," in Twenty-fifth Anniversary Album of Luther Academy and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1883-1908 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 88-89.

60. Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, p. 309.

61. Heiner, "Lindsborg, Kansas," p. 41; Lindsborg News, October 22, 1897; Svenska Evangelisk-Lutherska Swedeburg-församlingen, Svensk Evangelisk-Lutherska Swedeburg-församlingen i ord och bild, pp. 12-13.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION

In the fall of 1895, Aurora Rosberg, a fifteen-year old resident of Lindsborg, Kansas, lay dying of scarlet fever. On her deathbed she asked that her two favorite hymns be sung at her funeral, a request the grieving family complied with. The services, conducted at Bethany Lutheran Church, included sermons in both Swedish and English--as often was the case when Americans would be expected in attendance. The congregation sang one of the requested songs-- "Kom låt oss gå till Canaan"--at the church. The other, "Nearer My God to Thee," accompanied the interment at the cemetery.¹

In an era when medical science struggled with imperfect knowledge of illness and inadequate tools, such funerals were common. This one is distinctive, however, in that it illustrates the inroads that Americanization was making on Swedish life in the United States. Many Swedes considered religion to be the heart of their ethnic identity and the one area where their mother tongue must persist if they were to remain loyal to their nativity. They may have been willing to accept the forms of the American church life as necessary in their new home, but the language in which they had been taught to pray was nearly as sacred as the prayer itself. The English sermon at Aurora Rosberg's funeral was a concession to the Americans present, most likely her schoolmates and friends of the family. As such, it was a recognition that Lindsborg was a community in which various nationalities existed and intermingled rather than evidence of language transition. Her choice of hymns and the way they were used points to a critical trend in Swedish-American church life. The youth, particularly those born and educated in the United States, brought to the Swedish churches a willingness to use English not seen since before mass migration made possible the retention of Swedish by large numbers. The English hymn probably was as dear to Rosberg as the Swedish one. The fact that the Swedish hymn was used in the church and the English song was relegated to the cemetery--the outside world--is also symbolic.

English might be attractive to youths who mastered it as children; it was not yet acceptable as an alternative to Swedish for the adults who controlled congregations.

An American observing the various Swedish immigrant denominations in the late nineteenth century, would have, except for the attachment to a foreign language, found them little different from religious bodies of long standing in America. Church buildings, at least from the outside, rarely gave evidence of ethnic differences. Groups such as the Methodists and Baptists professed familiar theologies, albeit in a foreign tongue. Swedish Lutherans, although somewhat more conservative than the Germans who had settled in America during colonial times, did not introduce any beliefs that could be termed strange. The Mission Friends mixed Lutheranism, some elements of the Reformed tradition, some new concepts on atonement, and--at least with some of the Free Church people--millenarianism, but in a nation with as much religious diversity as the United States could not be considered peculiar. Both the Lutherans and the Mission Friends maintained ties with American bodies--the Lutherans with the General Council of the Lutheran Church in North America, an organization of conservative Lutheran bodies, and the Mission Friends with Congregationalists. The personal piety encouraged by Swedish-American church leaders was a welcome contrast to the perceived attitudes of Catholic churchmen. Indeed, in the Swedish churches, American Protestants found allies in the temperance cause, one of the major reform movements of the nineteenth century. But for the fierce loyalty to the Swedish language--and even here there were some signs of change--there was little that an American observer would find markedly different from his own religious experience.

The same American observer, had he been able to watch the life of a Swedish-American congregation over the course of a year, would have discovered more similarities to than differences from comparable American churches. He would have discovered that the Swedes had adopted American patterns of governance and that they had found alternate means of finance from the taxes they would have paid in Sweden. Nearly all of the organizations within the

church--women's aid societies, youth groups, and Sunday schools--would have been familiar. Although he might have thought the use of a summer parochial school odd, he would have found the Swedish commitment to the public school a welcome change from some groups' insistence on their own religious schools as alternatives to public education.

Yet differences existed, although it would have taken an astute observer to note all of them. Church decorations may have seemed out of the ordinary. The church calendar would include events and customs alien to this land, but might also celebrate holidays peculiarly American. Less obviously, the Swedish churches were likely to retain a system of internal organization that was so natural to them that they may never have taken time to record it formally. Through all of church life--with the exception of a few instances dealing primarily with youth--there was a faithfulness to the Swedish language that an American who had never tried to express his innermost feelings in a foreign language might have found irrational, especially since many Swedes had acquired enough English to function satisfactorily in the American economy.

In external appearances, there was little that distinguished the Swedish immigrant churches from their American counterparts. Architecturally, the early Swedish church buildings in Kansas and Nebraska had few carry-overs from their homeland, as might be expected of a frontier population that was more intent on functional structures within their modest means than buildings which matched the extent of their piety. The first house of worship often was a simple rectangular structure containing a single room and built of materials readily at hand. The first two Swedish Lutheran churches in Phelps County, Nebraska, were of sod, the same material the Swedish pioneers turned to for their homes in that tree-poor region. In Kansas, the Lutherans at Bethany and Salemsborg utilized the stone common to the region, aided by the fact that skilled stone masons were among the early settlers. A congregation such as Alma Lutheran in Saunders County, Nebraska, which opted to build its first church from lumber, might have to wait years before it could afford to complete the project.²

Most congregations built more than one church over the years. The first structure served

the immediate need of shelter, but soon proved inadequate for a rapidly growing membership. The second church, constructed when bountiful crops and improved transportation links brought a measure of prosperity to the community, was more likely to reflect the ethnic heritage of its builders. Even then, most Swedish churches in America outwardly resembled those of American denominations, a characteristic which one scholar attributes to the widespread availability of standardized church plans in America.³ One of the notable exceptions to this was the Mission Covenant congregation in Lindsborg, whose first home was a modest structure in the country. When that was destroyed by a tornado, the membership decided to rebuild in town. Their new church, designed by one of the members, was an imposing brick building with an octagonal tower topped by an onion dome, such as could be found on many Scandinavian churches of the day. Bethany Lutheran Church in Lindsborg, following a series of additions to the original structure, resembles the cathedral in Karlstad, Sweden, with which Olof Olsson was familiar.⁴

Church interiors were more likely to show Swedish influences than were exteriors, perhaps because of the symbolism involved, perhaps because small decorating projects could be accomplished at manageable expense over a period of years. Lutheran churches, which had a rich liturgical tradition, were likely to have the altar in a central location. Altar paintings of biblical subjects, some of them painted by Bethany College art faculty, often adorned the front of the church. The pulpits of Lindsborg area Lutheran churches resembled the panelled pulpits common in Sweden. Verses in Swedish sometimes decorated arches over the entrance to the church or over the altar.⁵

The means of church government in the Swedish immigrant congregations were like those found in most Protestant churches in the United States. Among the Lutherans, the membership consisted of all baptized individuals. Youths in their early to mid-teens, following the successful completion of confirmation, became communicants--those who were entitled to take communion. Although the pastor might be the primary authority on spiritual matters, the voting members of the congregation--typically adult male communicants--held substantial power. These laymen

voted on important questions at regular annual meetings and at special meetings called to address a particular need. In the interim, popularly elected church officers transacted routine business.

The 1897 constitution of Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg, reprinted in the congregation's first history, offers insights into the operations and balance of power within an Augustana Synod congregation at the turn of the century. The minister was called by a two-thirds vote of adult male communicants and could be removed for cause by the same majority or by the conference. The congregation held its annual meeting in January, a practice common in other Swedish-American congregations, when the pastor and church officers presented formal reports. At that time, deacons--who comprised the church council--and trustees were elected. The deacons' responsibilities included conducting divine services when the pastor was absent, rendering assistance to the ill and needy, overseeing the parish's educational programs, directing mission efforts, and disciplining wayward members. Prior to this constitution, deacons also examined applicants for membership to assess their spiritual state. Deacons, especially in the early days of Lindsborg and similar communities, viewed themselves as moral watchdogs guarding against intemperance, loose tongues, immodest behavior, membership in forbidden societies, and even reading unsuitable material. The trustees were responsible for maintaining the congregation's property and taking care of church finances.⁶

Accustomed to paying taxes to support the state church in Sweden, immigrants had to develop dependable means of financing their churches in America. The most common solution to this problem--perplexing as it sometimes was among agricultural pioneers with unsteady cash flow--was a system of communicant dues supplemented by free will offerings and special subscriptions. In addition, groups within the congregation sometimes raised funds from their activities for the general treasury or special projects.

The communicant dues structure usually began as a relatively simple fee, but often became more complex in recognition of varying degrees of wealth. In the early 1870s at Bethany in Lindsborg, for example, communicants were charged the per capita sum needed to pay off the

debt at the end of the year. For several years the congregation experimented with set dues ranging from three to ten dollars, sometimes charging less for women than for men. By the end of the decade the congregation decided on a system based on wealth, an arrangement which still prevailed at the turn of the century. In the early 1870s, Salemsborg Lutheran charged \$3.00 per couple, \$2.00 for unmarried men, and \$1.50 for single women, plus three bushels of wheat from each family.⁷ Bethel Lutheran in Holdrege, Nebraska, expected men to pay \$3.50 and women \$2.50 early in its history, but eventually established an elaborate dues structure that took into account whether a farm couple owned or rented their land and the income level of town dwellers. In rural Phelps County, Nebraska, Fridhem Lutheran assessed members \$6.00 per man and \$4.00 per women, although communicants under eighteen years of age paid only half the regular levy. Half this sum was payable on April 1st and the balance on October 1st. Dues were frequently in arrears in hard times so the congregation established collection districts to encourage prompt payments. Communicants at Fridhem and elsewhere who did not keep up with their commitments could be dropped from church rolls. These dues were sometimes a point of friction in congregations. Rev. John Seleen had one man leave his parish at Free Mount because he believed he would be charged less by Bethany in Lindsborg. At a Lutheran church neighboring Phelps County, a faction opposed the dues system altogether because it smacked of "legalism." The congregation there eventually arrived at a compromise whereby a small fee was charged and those able to pay more were encouraged to do so, being recognized by public announcements for their generosity.⁸

Although communicant fees seem to have provided the bulk of regular finances, churches also needed to raise funds from other means. The most important of these was the subscription, wherein individuals would pledge a certain sum toward a special project, particularly the construction of a church or the elimination of a debt. When a new congregation believed itself strong enough to build its first church or an older congregation found it was time to build anew or renovate its current structure, one of the first actions was the taking of a subscription to gather

the necessary funds. Thus when the Swedish Baptists in Oakland decided their rented hall was no longer sufficient, the congregation appointed a committee to gather pledges. When the local resources fell short of the goal, the pastor solicited donations among Swedish Baptists in Iowa and Illinois. The Swedish Methodists in Oakland received pledges from local Swedes, some nearby German Methodists, and a gift from an American Methodist mission board in their fundraising for a church. In Saunders County, Lutherans, Baptists, and Mission Covenanters all resorted to subscriptions to build churches or otherwise meet commitments.⁹ In addition to subscriptions, congregations also raised funds for the general treasury or for cash gifts to the minister through special collections or fees at special events such as suppers.¹⁰

Despite the organizational similarities which the Swedish churches had to American congregations, there was one facet of Swedish-American church life that seems to have had no counterpart in native denominations. In Sweden parishes were divided into geographical units called rotor. The singular form rote, derived from the same Latin word as the English term "route" but best translated as "district" in this context, was a subdivision of a congregation containing a number of families in a particular area. This institution was apparently so natural to the Swedes who came to America that they sometimes established it without formal mention in church records. In Sweden, the rote was used to partition the congregation for record-keeping purposes, such as when the minister would examine the catechetical knowledge of his parishioners. In the United States, the rote served a variety of needs, including representation areas for the church council, neighborhoods for church societies, and parochial school districts.¹¹

There is scattered evidence that such districts were part of the congregational life of a number of Swedish congregations in Nebraska and Kansas. At Alma Lutheran in Mead, Nebraska, the congregation was divided into six rotor in November, 1871, nearly two years after the church was organized. These districts were named after individuals within them--Berggren's Rote, August Anderson's Rote, and Allman's Rote, for examples--although rotor were sometimes

named for geographical features, regions in Sweden, or their location in relationship to the church. Before a church building was finished, religious services alternated among homes in the six districts. In the Lutheran church at Oakland, the church women were organized into at first two and eventually four sewing societies representing geographical regions around the church. At Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg, there were three districts, each of which had its own parochial school at one time. At Salemsborg, the deacons--each representing a district although probably elected at large as was the custom--were responsible for collecting subscriptions for mission causes in their districts.¹²

As congregations grew, some rotor separated from the mother congregation to achieve independent status. This occurred twice at Freemount Lutheran in Kansas, where the congregation was divided into five districts. In 1878 the district to the west departed to establish the church at Marquette. The following year, the Arkansas district to the southwest withdrew to create the New Andover congregation.¹³

The local church served far more functions than simply as a gathering place for like-minded worshipers. Through its organizations, people united in charitable acts they could not accomplish as individuals. In its Sunday and parochial schools, adults passed on to children a religious and ethnic heritage. In its youth groups, the young people of the congregation learned stewardship and responsibility, engaged in social activities acceptable to their parents, and frequently found marriage partners. The church was a place where local residents--including non-members--gathered to socialize. An American observer would have found in these activities much that was akin to his own experience.

Among the most active organizations in Swedish-American churches was the women's society. Typically organized in the first few years of a congregation's existence, the first women's group was often called the syförening, the sewing society or union. Composed of the adult women of the church, this society met regularly, sometimes in districts rather than as a whole, for devotions, socializing, and mission work. The original title derived from the fact that sewing

garments was one their primary activities. These articles were then auctioned off at an annual sale, the proceeds of which were used either for home or foreign missions or for special projects within the congregation. Such groups among Swedes are primarily an American development, representing the mission commitment of the immigrants in a free church setting, although at least one sewing circle developed in a Mission Friend society in Sweden.¹⁴

As the congregations grew and as the membership became more secure financially, the women's groups underwent change. As the female children of the pioneers reached confirmation age a society for young women--often called the quinnoförening--resembling an auxiliary of the original group sometimes appeared. This organization might also be known by a more descriptive title; at the Baptist church in Oakland it was called The King's Daughters. In the Mission Covenant church at Salina, two such auxiliaries developed--The Willing Workers for young women and the Buds of Promise for girls under sixteen. Toward the end of the century the women's societies sometimes abandoned sewing as their major activity and adopted new names representative of their mission interests. Thus the Swedish Baptist sewing society in Stromsburg became the Ladies Mission Circle in 1890 and the Assaria Lutheran society reorganized as the Women's Missionary Society in 1894. Some groups sometimes charged small membership dues, such as ten cents per meeting, as a way of raising funds.¹⁵

Meetings arranged by these groups were frequently community events which drew not only society members but also the congregation and local residents together. In 1881 the Swedish Methodist church women at Lindsborg held their sewing auction in conjunction with an oyster supper at a local hotel, netting about \$115 from the affair. The Lutheran women at Stromsburg chose a congregational picnic in 1890 for their sale. In the 1890s the women at Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg held an elaborate annual bazaar. At one in 1898, a chorus of five hundred children from the area sang patriotic songs and people were charged an admission fee of one cent per year of age, the funds going to Bethany College.¹⁶ This last event underscores an important function of some women's groups. They sometimes raised funds for church projects, such as

purchasing an organ or furnishing the congregation's kitchen.¹⁷

Another active organization in Swedish-American congregations of all denominations was the youth group. The first society created for young people in the Augustana Synod was in Iowa in 1872, the second at Free Mount Lutheran in 1874 under the direction of Olof Olsson who was serving that congregation in addition to his Lindsborg charge. Lay leaders in some congregations were suspicious of independent youth societies, concerned about dividing the work of the church, secularism, and proper chaperoning. The clergy often pressed for them, viewing them as a vehicle for channeling the time and talents of young people into approved activities. During the 1880s many of the Lutheran congregations in Kansas and Nebraska formed such groups. Mission Covenant churches also moved in this direction in that decade, but less decisively. The Swedish Baptists and Methodists rarely developed equivalent organizations until the 1890s. None of the Free Church congregations in the sample counties appear to have established a young people's society until after 1900.¹⁸

These youth organizations were known by a variety of names. Many Augustana Synod ones were known simply as the ungdomsförening--the youth society--at the outset, although by the turn of the century many were being termed Luther Leagues as were the youth groups of other Lutheran bodies. Some were formally organized as literary societies and carried some recognition of that in their title. The Swedish Methodists, taking the designation adopted by their American co-religionists, called theirs Epworth Leagues, and both Swedish and American Baptists used the term Baptist Young People's Union. In some cases different organizations existed for young men and young women.

Whatever their name, these organizations engaged in a wide spectrum of diverse activities, some of which had little connection with religion. Olsson planned musical training, literary activities, and lessons in church history for the Freemount society. At weekly gatherings, societies did such things as hold prayer meetings, discuss religious topics, or listen to speakers on subjects such as temperance. Some societies conducted debates over topics of

interest. These often were not religious, such as Falun Lutheran's debate on the greatness of Abraham Lincoln, but gave young people the opportunity to perfect public speaking skills which would be important for their future. Youth groups frequently staged public entertainments involving music and speaking, sometimes in conjunction with a meal, as a method of raising money.¹⁹ Whatever the intentions of the adult organizers, young people sometimes had their own agenda. C. A. Swensson organized youth groups around Lindsborg in the late 1890s because he disapproved of the "games that were closely related to dancing" that were popular among the youth. Anton Peterson, who began attending Swensson's meetings as a fourteen-year old, observed that the games were simply put off until the pastor left for the evening.²⁰

Youth groups were responsible for some of the earliest use of English in Swedish-American congregations in Kansas and Nebraska. Although children of Swedish immigrants almost invariably learned Swedish as their first language, they quickly acquired English in the common schools. Some remained comfortable in both languages, but others preferred English, particularly when they were among people of their own age. When the first youth group at Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg celebrated its first anniversary in 1881, there were speeches in both languages. The Baptist youth at Oakland, Nebraska, and the Lutherans at New Gottland, Kansas, used both English and Swedish in their meetings. Fundraisers involving entertainment and dinners must have made some provision for English-speakers, as indicated by the remarks of a Lindsborg editor--a man who claimed no proficiency in Swedish--on the hospitality of the young people at a Free Mount oyster supper. Societies that sponsored debates and literary readings brought their members into contact with literature and speeches in English. In 1899, for example, the Bethany Lutheran youth society presented one of its recent high school graduates with the works of Charles Dickens.²¹

Youth groups, like those for women, played a significant role in raising funds for church projects. Sometimes young people devoted their attentions to supporting missionaries abroad, but they were much more likely to invest the profits of their work in tangible needs in their own

congregation. Their gifts to their parish might have been additions to the library, altar paintings, musical instruments, or cash donations for general renovations. Interestingly, however, a number of youth leagues contributed toward innovations that modernized the church. Luther Leagues at Fridhem in Phelps County and at New Gottland in McPherson County both purchased gasoline lighting systems for their congregations. In 1906, the youth society at New Andover Lutheran installed the first telephone in the parsonage and in 1917 the Freemount youth paid for an electrical system for the church. The young people at New Gottland Lutheran purchased the congregation's first English hymnals in 1906. Youth societies, much more frequently than women's societies, were interested in providing their churches with the wonders of modern technology.²²

In Sweden public schools included religious education for the state church and dissenters adopted the American Sunday school to convey their particular religious message to their children. In the free church atmosphere of America, the common schools no longer met this need and the Swedish immigrants had to devise their own strategies for keeping their children within the ethnic and doctrinal boundaries they delimited. Consequently, all of the Swedish denominations made the Sabbath school a cornerstone of their church work, and it was frequently the first organization in new churches, sometimes even predating the congregation itself. The Lutherans and Mission Covenant also created summer parochial schools to supplement the Sunday school in religious education. These "Swede schools," as they were popularly known, combined the teaching of the Swedish language and history with religious instruction.

The Swedish-American Sunday school would have been familiar to members of the mainline Protestant denominations of the day. Although the earliest schools lacked a standardized curriculum, over time the Swedish churches developed series of lessons on Bible history and moral precepts designed for children of different ages. The Baptists eventually published periodicals specifically for Sunday school teachers to assist the development of better schools. As the children became adolescents, their religious education also included confirmation, a period of

instruction by the church's pastor culminating in full membership as a communicant. This was most important among Lutherans, who were accustomed to the catechization involving the memorization of numerous Bible verses and Luther's Small Catechism, but all the bodies eventually adopted a period of intense study as a route to church membership for youths.²³

There was even a measure of cooperation between American and Swedish Sunday schools in Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century, although the Lutherans appear to have been less willing to participate than the other Swedish denominations. When the Sunday schools of Richland township in Saunders County held a common Sunday school picnic in 1895, the Lutherans from Swedeburg did not attend. At Oakland Swedes and Americans established a union Sunday school for Baptist children with officers of both nationalities, although the effort collapsed when most of the Americans moved away. In Stromsburg, the Swedish Baptist church hosted a county Sunday school convention on at least one occasion. In Phelps County, the churches of a four-township area organized a district Sunday school convention in which Swedes served as officers, but their religious affiliation is unknown.²⁴

Despite this cooperation with Americans, virtually all the instruction in Swedish-American Sunday schools before 1900 took place in the Swedish language. Some of the earliest Sunday school work among the Lutherans included English, but that was at a time when church leaders expected rapid assimilation. The migration of large numbers of Swedes to America following the Civil War made possible the preservation of the native language in church work for generations. The congregational leaders who organized, directed, and taught Sunday schools recognized that if they wanted to insure the future of Swedish--the language of their spiritual life--children had to be educated in Swedish-language Sunday schools. Of the churches in the sample counties, only a handful began some English work in the nineteenth century. Olof Olsson experimented with English at Bethany Lutheran for a time and by 1896 an English Bible class had been re-established there. The New Gottland Lutheran congregation began an English Bible class in the mid-1870s, although this appears to have been intended for young adults rather than

children. The Stromsburg Baptists used some English before the turn of the century and in 1900 the Salemsborg Lutherans started an English class for Sunday school students. Many churches did not begin the language transition until the second decade of the twentieth century. Among the twenty-eight Mission Covenant congregations in that denomination's Kansas Conference in 1916, for example, only two conducted any Sunday school work in English and neither of those was in the Lindsborg area.²⁵

English made virtually no inroads on regular church services in any of the Swedish-American denominations before 1900. The "language question," as the controversy over the transition to English is often called, was not disturbing to congregations in Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century because they rarely had to address it. Regularly-scheduled English services appeared in only one of the congregations under study and then because of unusual circumstances. Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg began English sermons--at Sunday evening services rather than on Sunday mornings--in the mid-1880s for the students of Bethany College, a school whose students included Lutherans from other ethnic backgrounds and Swedes born in the United States. As Carl Swensson, the pastor of the church and president of the college, explained to one inquirer, Bethany was "a Lutheran General Council College" of Swedish origin which held "English services every Sunday, as a rule, in connection with the College."²⁶ English appeared in the Swedish churches for special occasions. Funerals at which Americans could be expected often contained a short English sermon. The churches, especially the Baptists and Methodists, invited visiting American ministers of their denominations to preach. In at least one instance, the Swedish Baptist minister of Stromsburg exchanged pulpits with a nearby American Baptist minister, who presumably used his native language when addressing his temporary Swedish congregation. These passing incidents, however, do not represent a significant language transition.²⁷

The Swedish immigrants in this country retained for decades at least some of the church holidays from their homeland. At Christmas Swedes of all denominations celebrated a festival

called Julotta by holding special services at 5:00 or 5:30 AM on Christmas day. American churches observed Christmas with divine services as well, but at mid-morning or in the evening. In Oakland, Nebraska, the Lutherans also celebrated Annandag Jul, the "second day" of Christmas as they had in Sweden. Some Swedish congregations also observed St. Lucia's Day on December 13. In Sweden Mid-summer's Day in June was a time of great celebrations across the land; in America the event apparently held less importance, but church groups sometimes held socials in recognition of the day.²⁸ Swedes in America quickly adopted peculiarly American holidays and observed them in their churches or in the meetings of their church groups. Lutheran churches or their youth societies in Kansas organized festivals for the Fourth of July on several occasions, arranging speakers in Swedish and English. Swedish churches held Thanksgiving services just as did American congregations.²⁹ Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg mourned the losses of James Garfield and the sailors aboard the USS Maine with special memorial services, and the students at Bethany College marked Lincoln's birthday in their morning chapel. The Swedish Baptist church in Stromsburg was the site of the community's GAR Memorial Day service. Americans attended some of these events and must have been impressed at how these immigrant churches were adopting the traditions and emotions of their new homeland.³⁰

Many of the early Swedish-American pastors, regardless of religious affiliation, were temperance advocates, often because of contacts they had with the movement in Sweden. All of the Swedish denominations in America advocated temperance for their members. The temperance crusade was one of the major reform causes of the late nineteenth century and the evangelical Protestants who provided the primary leadership for the movement found welcome allies among Swedish churchmen. At the local level, this cooperation led to joint temperance or prohibition meetings where both Swedish and American ministers spoke, such as the ones in Holdrege and Oakland where the Swedish Lutheran and American Methodist pastors addressed crowds. Sometimes temperance meetings were conducted simultaneously at American and Swedish churches. On other occasions, American temperance lecturers spoke to Swedish congregations at

evening meetings. When the women in McPherson, Kansas, organized a Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1891, one of the vice-presidents represented the Swedish Lutheran church in town.³¹

The Swedish-American congregation of the late nineteenth century owed much to American influences. With few exceptions, its church building resembled that of nearby American churches, although the interior was likely to bear evidence of its worshippers' ethnic origins. The patterns of governance and finance developed to cope with the lack of a state church followed American lines. Virtually all of the organizations within Swedish churches had counterparts in American congregations, and some were purposefully modeled after those in sister American churches. Even many of the characteristics which had Swedish roots were acceptable to Americans. The sermons and liturgy, although they were spoken in the Swedish language, presented few difficulties for Americans accustomed to religious heterogeneity, even though some Protestants depended on evangelical techniques more than Swedish Lutherans. Indeed, mainstream Protestants found much to their liking in the Swedish denominations, all of which established ties with American bodies.

It was the area of language that set the Swedish denominations farthest apart from the American ones. Although Swedes were willing to use English in their economic and social contacts with Americans and in church matters where the intermingling of the two nationalities was necessary or desirable, they were not willing to surrender Swedish in the realm of religious life. It was the language in which they come to know God; no other would suffice. The preservation of Swedish thus mandated its use in Sunday schools, summer parochial schools, and confirmation as a means of insuring the next generation would cherish the language in sacred life. In Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century, this strategy succeeded. Although Swedish children readily acquired English from their contact with the public school, they accepted Swedish--with few exceptions--in church matters. The growing influence of the second and third generation Swedes in America, combined with the pressure to shift to English that World War One brought,

eventually forced the language transition, but in 1900 that was still in the future.

CHAPTER 5

NOTES

1. Lindsborg News, October 11, 18, 1895. Dennis D. Engbrecht, "The Americanization of a Rural Immigrant Church: The General Conference Mennonites in Central Kansas, 1874-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1985), p. 93, also found the use of English at funerals.

2. [C. S. Odell], Bethel Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, 1877-1927: Program and Historical Sketch (n.p., n.d.), pp. 7-8; B. E. Bengtson, Jubilee Album: A Short History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Fridhem Congregation of Funk, Nebraska, 1879-1919 (Funk: Fridhem Congregation, 1919), p. 104; Ruth Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 72; Gustaf Erikson, "Salemsborg," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, ed. and trans. by Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Jaderborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), p. 29; C. G. Samuelson, "Historical Sketch of Alma Lutheran Church, Given on 65th Anniversary by Rev. C. G. Samuelson, November, 1935," (Typescript, 1935) Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska, pp. 3-4.

3. Robert C. Ostergren, "The Immigrant Church as a Symbol of Community and Place in the Upper Midwest," Great Plains Quarterly 1 (Fall, 1981): 229. See also Lena Andersson-Palmqvist, Building Traditions Among Swedish Settlers in Rural Minnesota: Material Culture--Reflecting Persistence or Decline of Traditions (Stockholm: The Nordiska Museet and The Immigrant Institute, 1983).

4. Elizabeth Jaderborg, "Swedish Architectural Influence in the Kansas Smoky Valley Community," Swedish American Historical Quarterly 32 (January, 1981): 75-77.

5. Ostergren, "Immigrant Church," pp. 234-234; Jaderborg, "Swedish Architectural Influence," p. 77; Lindsborg News, October 25, 1895.

6. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 101-106; Francis Johnson, "Our Deacons," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, pp. 58-59; Pheneas Peterson, "Our Trustees," in ibid., pp. 59-60. For a discussion of the Augustana Synod's approach to regulating moral behavior, see Emmer E. Engberg, "Augustana and Code Morality," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1960, ed. Emmer Engberg et al., Augustana Lutheran Church (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), pp. 122-149. C. A. Lonquist, the pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in western Kearney County, Nebraska, from 1896 to 1921 remarked that the early church council in his congregation often acted "as a detective bureau." See C. A. Lonquist and A. J. Johnson, After Eighty Years: The Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Axtell, Nebraska, 1876-1956 (n.p., n.d.), p. 47.

7. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 78, 106; Erikson, "Salemsborg," p. 31; Martin E. Carlson, "Stewardship: Christianity Lived Responsibly," in Centennial Essays, p. 263.

8. Eugene K. Nelson, ed., Seventieth Anniversary, 1877-1947: Bethel Lutheran Church, Holdrege, Nebraska (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, n.d.), p. 73; Bengtson, Jubilee Album, pp. 111-112; John Seleen, This Valley of Tears: The Memoirs of J. Seleen in Kansas and

Sweden, trans. by Ruth Billdt, ed. by Elizabeth Jaderborg (n.p., n.d.), p. 32; Lonquist and Johnson, After Eighty Years, pp. 17-18. The Lutherans were not the only denomination to use dues, but their history has been better preserved. The Mission Covenant church at Swedeburg, Nebraska, for example, charged an unspecified fee. See Swedeburg Covenant Church, Swedeburg, Nebraska, Swedeburg Covenant Church Centennial, 1876-1976 (n.p., n.d.), p. 6.

9. First Baptist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, Historical Sketch of the First Baptist Church, Oakland, Nebraska, 1869-1919 (Oakland, Nebraska: The Church, 1919), p. 35; Woman's Society of Christian Service, comp., West Side Methodist Church 80th Anniversary Celebration, 1877-1957 (n.p., n.d.), p. 9; Samuelson, "Historical Sketch," pp. 3-4; The Independent (Wahoo), April 22, 1886; Swedeburg Covenant Church, Centennial, p. 6.

10. It was common for congregations to present a purse containing such a collection to its pastor, sometimes in recognition of a significant date such as a wedding anniversary, but often without any special occasion. Friends of Rev. J. Ekholm of the Falun Lutheran Church, for example, surprised him with a purse of \$21.50. See Lindsborg News, March 15, 1895. In his annual report for 1898, the Bethany Lutheran treasurer reported income of \$4,227. Of this, \$2,554 came from communicant dues, \$162 from general collections, \$194 from Sunday school collections, and \$81 from the church women's group. The source of the balance--over \$1,200--was not reported. See Lindsborg News, January 20, 1899.

11. Emory Johnson, "The rote in the Rural Swedish-American Parish," Swedish American Historical Quarterly 33 (October, 1982): 274-287, is the best work that has been done on the subject. Johnson notes that at Chisago Lake, Minnesota, the rotor were so implicit in the very organization of the church that there was no mention of them until four years after the congregation's origin, and then only in passing. Ostergren, "Immigrant Church," pp. 232-233, also mentions the term, but uses the definite singular, roten, for the indefinite plural. He prefers the term "route" to "district." In the experience of this writer, Swedish-Americans who translated early histories of their congregations from Swedish to English invariably used "district" to convey the meaning of the term and Johnson prefers "district."

12. Alma Lutheran Church, Mead, Nebraska, Church Records, Swensson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, November 1871; Charles Frederick Sandohl, The Nebraska Conference of the Augustana Synod: Survey of Its Work (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), p. 211; [C. G. Carlton], ed., After Fifty Years, 1869-1919: Historical Sketch of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Oakland Congregation, Oakland, Nebraska (Oakland, n.p., 1919), pp. 20, 55-57; Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 77; Erickson, "Salemberg," p. 32. In 1895 Carl Swensson addressed an open letter in the local paper to his parishioners reminding the members of the three rotor to furnish food for a festival. See Lindsborg News, September 13, 1895. Daniel Gottfried recalled how the members of "Norra Roten" ("the North District") of Bethany held Sunday school in homes before the church was built. See Daniel Gottfried, "Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Lindsborg, Kansas, and Vicinity from 1868 through the 70's" (Typescript, n.d.), p. 10, Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas [hereafter BC].

None of the congregational or conference histories checked for this study mention the rote or district in conjunction with Swedish Methodist, Baptist, or Mission Friend congregations. The answer may lie in relative size, as the Lutheran congregations tended to be substantially larger than those of the other groups and some form of districting would have been more convenient.

13. J. P. Aurelius, "The Congregation in Fremont, Kansas," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, p. 98; Seleen, This Valley of Tears, pp. 31-32.

14. On the early development of such groups in America, see Burnice Fjellman, "Women in the Church," in Centennial Essays, pp. 202-204. At New Gottland Lutheran in Kansas, the congregation, apparently somewhat wary of the newly-organized sewing society, appointed a special committee to oversee the operations and finances of the group. For mention of a sewing society in Sweden in the 1860s, see Johan Augustin Pihl, God's People in a New Land, trans. and ed. by Vernon C. F. Holm (Lindsborg: Smoky Valley Historical Publications, n.d.), p. 30.

15. First Baptist Church, Oakland, Historical Sketch, p. 71; Oscar G. Larson, "Salina," in Strödda drag ur Missionsvännernes verksamhet i Kansas och Missouri (Topeka: Linderholm Bros., 1917), pp. 124, 127; Stromsburg Baptist Church, Stromsburg, Nebraska, Ninety Years of Baptist Work in Stromsburg (Mimeographed, 1963), pp. 1-2; Assaria Lutheran Church, Assaria, Kansas, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1875-1950 (Topeka: Myers & Co., n.d.), p. 24; Lindsborg News, October 29, 1897.

16. Smoky Valley News (Lindsborg), November 2, 1881; Stromsburg Headlight, August 7, 1890; Lindsborg News February 18, 1898. The Augustana Synod was not always comfortable with bazaars as a means of raising funds. See Carlson, "Stewardship," pp. 263-264; and Gene Jesse Lund, "The Americanization of the Augustana Lutheran Church" (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1954), p. 141.

17. Erikson, "Salemsborg," pp. 34-35; Aurelius, "The Congregation in Fremont," p. 100; [Odell], Bethel Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, p. 11; Fjellman, "Women in the Church," p. 203.

18. G. Everett Arden, Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1963), pp. 207-208; Sandahl, Nebraska Conference, pp. 400-401; Lund, "Americanization," p. 142; J. O. Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America: A History (Chicago: Conference Press, 1933), p. 148. For the dates of organization for the Swedish Methodists, see Viktor Witting, Historik öfver Svenska Metodism i Amerika från 1877 till 1903 (Worcester, MA: Burbank & Co's Tryckeri, 1904), p. 121. For the Baptists, see Nebraska Baptist State Convention, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of the Nebraska Baptist State Convention... and Minutes of the Associations (Blair, NE: Pilot Book, Job, and News Printing House, 1895), p. 35. The dates for the Lutheran, Mission Covenant, and Free Church congregations have been collected from congregational and conference histories.

19. Aurelius, "The Congregation at Fremont," p. 97; Smoky Valley News (Lindsborg), November 30, 1881; Lindsborg News, March 18, 1892; February 25, 1898; September 14, 1900; Stromsburg Headlight, April, 23, 1891; Wahoo New Era, February 2, 1893.

20. Anton Peterson, "Talk at a Luther League Box Social Sponsored at Trinity [Lutheran] in 1952," (Typescript, 1952), Emory Lindquist Papers, BC.

21. Smoky Valley News (Lindsborg), November 30, 1881; First Baptist Church, Oakland, Historical Sketch, p. 62; G. A. Dorf, ed. Historik öfver de första femtio åren i Evangelisk Lutherska New Gottland Församlingen, McPherson, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany Printing Co., 1922), p. 66; Lindsborg News, March 18, 1892; January 28, 1897; June 2, 1899.

22. V. Öblom, "New Gottland," in Strödda drag, p. 103; August Peterson, "Salemsborg, Kansas," in ibid., p. 154; Lindsborg News, March 8, 1895; January 28, 1897; Bengtson, Jubilee Album, pp. 121-122; Dorf, ed., Historik öfver de första femtio åren, p. 67; Aurelius,

"The Congregation at Fremont," p. 100; Andover Lutheran Church, Windom, Kansas, Andover: A Family Portrait, 1879-1979 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 4, 7.

23. Emmet E. Eklund, "Faith and Education," in Centennial Essays, pp. 76-78; Conrad Peterson, "The Beginning of Swedish-American Education [Prior to 1860]," Swedish Historical Society of America Yearbook 8 (1922-1923): 47-51; Backlund, Swedish Baptists in America, p. 98; Lund, "Americanization," p. 99.

24. Wahoo New Era, August 15, 1895; First Baptist Church, Oakland, Historical Sketch, pp. 23, 54-56; Stromsburg Headlight, November 19, 1891; Holdrege Citizen, July 11, 1895; June 4, 1897; May 20, 1898.

25. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 76; Lindsborg News, September 25, 1896; New Gottland Evangelical Lutheran Church, McPerson, Kansas, Blessings Through the Century, 1872-1972 (n.p., n.d.), p. 30; Stromsburg Baptist Church, Ninety Years, p. 3; Lindsborg News, July 13, 1900; O. E. Almström, "Predikantkonferensens bildande," in Strödda drag, pp. 288-289.

26. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, p. 97; Carl A. Swensson to D. N. Wolf, Lindsborg, Kansas, January 24, 1895, Carl A. Swensson Papers, BC. For examples of Sunday evening services in English, see Lindsborg News, September 7, 1888; March 2, 1894; and July 15, 1898. Sometimes these services were held at the college and sometimes at the church. When they were held at the church there was often a Swedish sermon in addition to the English one. Swensson, who was born in America and was fluent in both languages, sometimes preached the English sermon, although college faculty also did so.

27. Lindsborg News, January 31, 1890; March 26, 1897; Stromsburg Headlight, June 21, 1888; November 23, 1893. For the best discussion of the language transition nationally, see Sture Lindmark, "The Language Question and Its Resolution," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 23 (April, 1972): 71-95; and Lindmark, Swedish America, 1914-1932: Studies in Ethnicity with Emphasis on Illinois and Minnesota (Stockholm: Läromedelsförlägen, 1973), pp. 236-303.

28. Stromsburg Headlight, December 26, 1889; Oakland Republican, December 19, 1895; December 22, 1898; Lindsborg News, December 20, 1895; December 22, 1899; December 21, 1900; Fritz Herbert Larson, A Journey Back in Life: A Tribute to My Heritage ([Lincoln, NE?: n.p., 1983?]), pp. 9-10; George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), p. 408. On Mid-summer's Day, see Lindsborg News, June 17, 1892; June 24, 1899.

29. Smoky Valley News (Lindsborg), June 30, July 7, 1882; July 6, 1883; Lindsborg News, November 25, 1898; Stromsburg Headlight, November 21, 1889.

30. Smoky Valley News (Lindsborg), September 28, 1881; Lindsborg News, May 13, 1898, February 15, 1895; Stromsburg Headlight, May 28, 1891.

31. Holdrege Citizen-Forum, April 8, 1898; Stromsburg Headlight, November 2, 1899; December 2, 1886; October 24, 1895; Women's Christian Temperance Union, McPerson, Kansas, Minute Book, 1891-1896, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, p. 1.

CHAPTER 6

TO TRAIN UP A CHILD: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

Any ethnic group that hopes to withstand assimilation and the loss of its distinctive identity must develop a strategy for conveying its heritage to subsequent generations. Groups that devise successful means for inculcating their youth with the values--religious, linguistic, and cultural--which the group holds dear may endure in America for generations with relatively little change. The Amish, for example, have been remarkably adept at maintaining integrity despite the enormous changes taking place around them. A group that fails at this key task is inevitably lost in the dynamic American environment.

Groups may employ, consciously or unconsciously, a variety of institutions in the interests of preservation. For example, a child's family--frequently without serious forethought--establishes the initial setting in which the youngster acquires his or her first values. The institution in which all groups must eventually invest if they desire insulate their children from the influences of others is the school. Moreover, an educational system designed to maximize value retention must exclude ideas which conflict with the group's standards and meet student's needs from the elementary level to adulthood. Some groups, such as Catholics of all ethnic origins and some German Lutherans, chose this course in the nineteenth century and created sophisticated parochial school systems. Other groups, such as British Protestants, endorsed the American public school because it posed no serious cultural conflicts for them and they thus saw no need to create separate educational facilities.

The Swedes in America took a middle course between the options of establishing their own complete system and relying solely on the state to provide education. By and large, Swedes accepted the public school, both because they were familiar with the institution from their homeland and because they valued what it had to offer. Yet the common school did not fulfill all their requirements because it did not offer religious instruction. Thus all the Swedish-American

religious bodies created Sunday schools which laid the basis of religious education and all eventually endorsed a period of study like the Lutheran confirmation which fostered doctrinal loyalty. The larger bodies, particularly the Augustana Synod and the Mission Covenant, also encouraged summer parochial schools intended to supplement rather than supplant the public school. Frequently called Swede schools, these institutions filled a gap left by public schools by offering instruction in Swedish and in religion. To train young people for service and leadership, the Swedish denominations established academies, colleges, and seminaries. These institutions, particularly the colleges, eventually patterned themselves after American counterparts and, in so doing, provided their students with the experiences and skills to succeed in the world outside the ethnic group. Taken as a whole, the Swedish-American educational strategy did not isolate youth from American society. Indeed, in its acceptance of the public school, that strategy validated much of what America had to offer. The Swede school pointed to the exceptions--religion, in which children were expected to follow their parents, and the Swedish language, which youth should cherish as the language of worship.

The Swedish immigrants who came to America in the late 1840s brought with them a familiarity with public education. In 1842 Sweden had mandated compulsory education and the parish became the basic educational unit. Sweden, with its state church, included religious teaching in the public schools. The lack of such instruction in America troubled many of the early church leaders--understandable considering the religious character of the pre-Civil War migration--who undertook to establish Lutheran parochial schools in the 1850s. In 1854, Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois, believing that home instruction and the Sunday school were inadequate preparation for confirmation and fearing that Catholics would win control of public schools, called upon congregations to begin Christian day schools. The first such school had appeared a year earlier in Chicago and several more in Illinois and Minnesota followed it in the mid-1850s. In some of these schools, part of the instruction was in English because the founders expected a rapid assimilation in areas other than religion.¹

Despite this early commitment, full-time parochial schools did not become common in the Augustana Synod. Accustomed to public education before arriving in the United States, Swedes willingly attended American public schools, even if they objected to the absence of religious instruction. As pietistic Protestants, they found the tenor of the schools to their liking. For immigrants who were having difficulties building churches and paying ministers, the freedom from supporting parish teachers must have been welcome and good teachers were in short supply. The Swedes came in smaller numbers than the Germans and often lacked the necessary numbers to support adequate schools.²

In Kansas and Nebraska, Swedes participated in the public schools in every possible capacity. In school districts where there were large numbers of Swedes, the group had a substantial presence on school rosters. As Swedish-Americans became proficient in English and acquired the requisite training, they took positions as teachers. Where Swedes constituted a significant portion of the voting population, they elected members of their ethnic group to positions of responsibility on school boards. During the 1890s a Swede became the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of Kansas.

That the Swedes supported public education is evidenced by the group's enrollment in the common schools. Local newspapers regularly reported the names of students who had perfect attendance records during the recent session or who had done well on exams. When referring to districts where Swedes had settled, such accounts invariably contain Swedish names. Indeed, in some districts, they read like a passenger list from Sweden. School rosters and local histories also point to substantial Swedish patronage of the local schools in areas where Swedes settled. In Oakland, Nebraska, the town newspaper, in a report on the 1900 high school graduating class, printed a list of all the high school graduates since the school had begun. Of the ninety-five names, at least sixty are Scandinavian.³

Such impressionistic evidence shows that Swedes did in fact participate in the public school as students. The 1900 Federal Census, because it asked individuals how many months they

had attended school in the previous year, allows a comparison of attendance among groups. Table 6.1 displays the results of a sample of 575 people aged six to eighteen, the years when a person was most likely to be attending school.⁴

Table 6.1. Mean School Attendance by Months for Individuals Aged 6-18 in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.

	All Individuals		Individuals Actually Attending		% Not Attending
	Number	Mean	Number	Mean	
Entire Sample	575	5.46	448	7.00	22.07
Swedes	322	5.34	251	6.85	22.04
Americans	166	5.58	127	7.29	23.49
Germans	38	5.34	29	7.00	23.68
Other Scandinavians	19	5.26	15	6.67	21.05
Czechs	16	6.56	14	7.50	12.50
Other Groups	14				

Source: 1900 Federal Census Returns

Swedes and other Scandinavians, all of whom were Norwegians or Danes, had the lowest rates of attendance duration in the sample, yet these are not significantly different from the rate for Americans. The average Swede who actually attended school was present 6.85 months, less than half a month below the attendance of the average American. Assuming that the average month contained twenty school days--a reasonable estimate considering days off for weekends and holidays--the typical Swede attended school approximately 8.8 days less than his or her American neighbor in 1900.

Those students who lived in an incorporated community were more likely to attend school for nine months than were students in rural areas, presumably because the family farm required extra labor in the spring and fall. An examination of the fifty-seven Swedes and Americans in the

sample attending school in the Nebraska communities of Wahoo, Oakland, and Stromsburg in 1900 reveals little difference between the two groups. The Swedes averaged 8.71 months in attendance and the Americans 8.81 months.

There is a problem with this data. It is not clear from the census whether a student attended a public or a parochial school. The instructions to census takers made no mention of requesting such a distinction. A Swedish student could conceivably have spent seven months in the public school and two in a summer Swede school and be indistinguishable from an American who had attended the public school for nine months. Circumstantial evidence suggests that participation in a summer school may not have been counted as formal education. If it had been, one would expect to find a significant number of students who attended school for more than nine months. Only two of the 251 Swedes and one of the 127 Americans in school did so.⁶

The children who entered the public school typically did so between the ages of six and eight. The Swedes among them probably knew little English, unless they had an older sibling who had introduced them to the language of their new homeland. They had acquired Swedish, most likely a provincial dialect, from their parents and Swedish was the language of the home and church. They may also have learned to read Swedish. The first weeks of class were a struggle as they awkwardly mastered the new language, assisted by older students and by the teacher, who may or may not have been sympathetic to their plight. D. Verner Swanson, some eighty years after the event, could still recall his embarrassment when he asked his first question in school in Swedish, "much to the merriment of the other pupils of mixed backgrounds." In his case, the teacher--a cousin--could reply.⁷ Others were less fortunate and had to contend with instructors who spoke only English. The transition was hastened if there were other children who spoke English. A. W. Erickson, growing up in Decatur County, Kansas, complained that his first month in school was a waste because all the students were Swedes who spoke no English and the teacher was an American who understood no Swedish.⁸

The public schools reached more than children with the lessons in English. On a number of

occasions, adults recently arrived from Sweden attended the public school long enough to pick up enough English to survive in American society. In Saunders County one teacher even arranged a special night school for adults seeking help in learning the new language.⁹ More commonly, children carried their knowledge of English home to share with their brothers, sisters, and parents. In some families, the children spoke English to immigrant parents who replied in Swedish, each party understanding what the other said.¹⁰

Among the memoirs of those Swedes who recounted their public school experiences, one finds little evidence of a reluctance to learn English, once the initial difficulty was past. English frequently became the language of play and conversations within the peer group, while Swedish was reserved for church and relations with adults. Frank Waugh, an American who moved to New Gottland township in McPherson County in the 1870s found that half of his new schoolmates were Swedes who did not understand English, but that was "a defect they were quick to cure." In the 1890s, when he was a teacher in the same county, Waugh observed that "my pupils were largely Swedes, by this time wholly Americanized and as patriotic as native sons of California derived out of Iowa."¹¹

As Swedish immigrants and their American-born children graduated from Kansas and Nebraska public schools they started to accept employment in those same schools as teachers. In Saunders County, for example, none of the fifty-nine teachers who attended the 1879 summer teacher's institute, had Scandinavian names. The following school year, the county superintendent of public instruction wrote a district by district description of the county's schools, only one of which was taught by someone bearing a Scandinavian name. Five years later, three of the 120 teachers listed in a county school directory were obviously Swedish, one of whom was an 1885 graduate of the Wahoo high school. By 1897, twenty-one of the 153 people enrolled in the summer teacher's institute had Scandinavian names.¹² In Stromsburg, none of the teachers was of Swedish origin in the mid-1880s, but in 1891 a Swede who had previously taught in a country school joined the town's public school faculty.¹³

Swedes in Kansas and Nebraska also demonstrated their support for and vested interest in public schools by organizing district schools, serving on school boards, and running for county and state offices overseeing education. Olof Olsson, Lindsborg's early pastor, became McPherson County's first superintendent of public education a year after his arrival in America. Under his direction, the settlers established the first eight school districts in the county. Although the ethnicity of the early teachers in all these districts is not known, the ones in Lindsborg were not Swedish even though the Swedes had the votes to control the school board. Frank Nelson, once a professor at Bethany College, was elected state superintendent of education in 1898.¹⁴ At one time or another Swedes held positions on school boards in all the communities under study and in many cases controlled them. In the New Gottland District No. 75 in McPherson County, every officer for the first quarter century was Swedish, although only two of the sixteen teachers between 1879 and 1900 had Swedish names. In 1877, Swedes organized School District No. 9 of Phelps County. The first three board members were Swedes, the first teacher was a Swede who had been educated in Illinois, and at least twelve of the first fourteen students were Swedish.¹⁵

Regardless of the Swedes' overall support for the public school, there were individuals, particularly clergy, who agitated for full-time parochial schools because they objected to the secular nature of public education. Jonas Swensson, Carl A. Swensson's father and president of the Augustana Synod in 1872, argued that parochial schools should have precedence over the public school. These people were successful in some of the older and larger congregations in the East and Midwest. One study of Lutheran elementary education found fifty regular parochial schools in the Augustana parishes in 1875, a number which declined to 39 by 1890. There is no evidence of any such schools succeeding over the long term in Kansas and Nebraska, although Salemsborg in Kansas and Swede Home in Nebraska appear to have had full-time schools for a time. Even Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg, a church with nearly twelve hundred baptized members in the early 1890s, did not support a full-time parochial school.¹⁶

Swedish Lutherans and at least some Mission Friends found an acceptable compromise in

the form of the part-time parochial school, popularly called the Swede school, which operated during the summer months when children were not attending the public schools. As the Augustana Synod president reported at the 1892 synodical conference in Lindsborg, "The Parochial schools are growing, not as a substitute for the public schools, but as a necessary addition to them."¹⁷ There is no evidence suggesting that Swedish Baptists and Methodists developed such schools; apparently those denominations followed the lead of their American counterparts and relied on the Sunday schools for Christian education.

The Swede schools typically convened shortly after the close of the public school term and met for eight to twelve weeks. Parochial school statistics were sometimes reported in the statistical tables accompanying the Nebraska Conference minutes in the 1890s. In 1894, there were forty-four congregations in the conference. Of these, thirty-four sent in annual reports, twenty-five of which reported parochial schools. Most of these reported holding school for twelve weeks or less. Two reported school for thirty-two weeks, but one employed four teachers and the other two teachers. The conference president noted that those churches which had more than one teacher ran concurrent sessions in different locations and recorded the cumulative total of weeks. Of the churches in the four counties under study, only Adullam in Phelps County--a congregation which was excused from sending a delegate and which requested relief from its mission commitments--lacked a parochial school that summer.¹⁸

These schools were held in a variety of locations. Swedish children frequently returned to the same schoolhouse they had attended during the school year for their summer Swede school. The church itself was sometimes the site, especially if there was only one teacher who held classes in a single place. Some of the early schools were hosted in homes of church members. Some congregations conducted schools in each of the rotar or the school rotated among the districts of the church.¹⁹

Congregations recruited parochial school teachers from a variety of sources. The minister sometimes served in this capacity for an additional salary, but clergy generally had more than

enough demands on their time without the additional burden of teaching. Seminarists sometimes financed their theological studies by assisting ministers and teaching Swede school during the summer months. Church members with a particular interest in education or who were public school teachers sometimes filled the role. College students provided a major source of such instructors. Every spring the Bethany College news column of the Lindsborg paper reported a stream of students going out to congregations in Kansas and elsewhere as teachers for the summer. Indeed, the training of parochial school teachers was among the purposes for founding Bethany College and Luther Academy.²⁰

The Swede schools emphasized two subjects omitted in the public schools--religion and the Swedish language. Religious instruction was necessary to insure the next generation would share the faith and commitment of their parents and would be ready to assume the responsibilities of full church membership at their confirmation. The language instruction was necessary so that the children could know the heritage of their ancestors and would know God in the same terms. The Swedes supported public schools. They eagerly sought the skills and knowledge available there because they wanted to succeed as Americans--but, particularly for those in the Lutheran and Mission Friend churches, not at the cost of losing their religious identity.

The texts for these schools reflected the purpose. Students generally read the Bible and biblical histories, Luther's Small Catechism, and a Swedish grammar book, the latter so that they learned formal Swedish rather than the dialects they spoke at home. By the 1890s, congregations could also use a Swedish reader that contained biographies of prominent Swedes and Americans. The program likely also included memorizing hymns, Bible verses, and catechical texts the youth would have to know before confirmation. Students in Mission Friend schools used many of the same works Augustana Synod pupils read.²¹

G. E. Bengtson, a biographer and chronicler of the Swedes in central Nebraska, summed up the importance of the Swedish-American parochial school in his history of his own congregation:

The first thought of the parents for the child was of his religious training. All of the books especially prepared for the child and which taught the faith they wished their children to cherish were written in the Swedish language. Furthermore, the songs and hymns they loved they could not get in any other language. . . . Reading, writing and spelling, Bible History and a selection of the old hymns are the things taught in the parochial school, and this, like the Sunday school, is but a preparation for the confirmation period.²²

Like other areas of church work, the Swede school did not succumb to the pressure to use English until after the turn of the century, often not until the era of World War One. From the time Swedish-American children were six or seven until they completed their public school education, they spent half to three quarters of the year learning English. For most, that would be the language of their public world--the one in which they earned a living and interacted with Americans and other immigrant groups. For two or three months in the summer many of these children would study Swedish in the context of their religious life, affirming the importance of that language in spiritual matters. Whether for reasons of loyalty or practicality, the association between religion and Swedish endured. Carl Wallerstedt attended the Swede school in Lindsborg for several summers. When he was confirmed about 1910, he and most of his classmates chose the instruction in Swedish "because we had already learned most of this in the summer Swedish school, and we were too lazy to learn it over again in another language."²³

Not everyone approved of the Swede schools. H. E. Bruce, county superintendent of public instruction in McPherson County in 1893 argued that parochial schools that taught a foreign language were harmful because "the child-mind cannot successfully divide its energies between two languages, pursuing each three or four months per year." Forced to choose between two languages, children should learn English because "this is absolutely an English speaking nation; its business, its laws, its literature, its press, and its speech are one language and all others must eventually succumb to it. Hence to perpetuate an alien tongue, except for a purely classical purpose, in this country must prove a monumental waste of time and labor and a constant vexation of spirit."²⁴

Swedish immigrants became concerned about higher education in the 1850s when it became obvious that they would have to train clergy to serve Swedish congregations. They were willing to cooperate with American denominations in seminaries and in schools that could prepare students for entering seminaries, but, as noted previously, many of these joint ventures proved unsatisfactory. The Lutherans in particular created their own educational system. The other Swedish bodies depended to one extent or another on continued assistance from Americans. One of the first actions of the Augustana Synod after it broke from the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1860 was to found a new school, Augustana Seminary, which eventually became Augustana College and Seminary.

As extensive Swedish settlements developed outside of Illinois, Swedes complained about the long distance involved in sending their children to Augustana for education, particularly the younger ones who would attend the academy--the preparatory course for admission to the college--and the college before admission to the seminary. When Augustana was moved in 1862 from Chicago to Paxton, Illinois, a hundred miles south, Minnesota Swedes reacted by establishing their own academy--eventually to become Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter--which could not only prepare students for further studies but also train teachers proficient in both Swedish and English. When Swedes formed large communities in Kansas and Nebraska after the Civil War, Lutherans in those states--finding neither Illinois nor Minnesota conveniently close-- built their own schools.²⁵

In Kansas Olof Olsson hoped that the Smoky Valley settlers might support a school, but did not venture to start one before he left in 1876. Carl Swensson, who took charge of Bethany Lutheran in 1879, moved quickly to establish a school. Less than six months after arriving in Lindsborg he convinced his congregation that half the return from selling some church property should go toward an academy. In October, 1881, Bethany Academy opened its first session with two teachers, ten students, and classroom space in the church.²⁶

Nebraska Swedes had their own thoughts about school needs. Augustana pastors in the state

began discussing informally the desirability of an academy in 1881 and brought up the idea at a district meeting in 1882. Following a series of meetings in congregations to secure subscriptions for the proposed school, ministers and lay delegates met in Saronville in March, 1883, to decide on the school's location. Wahoo, Stromsburg, and Saronville--mindful of the economic as well as spiritual advantages of having the academy--all sought the institution. The first two communities had the advantage of formal offers of financial assistance and, after seventeen ballots, Wahoo won. The year 1883 being the four-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's birth, the school was christened Luther Academy and classes began in October. At the time Nebraska still belonged to the Kansas Conference, which was dominated by Kansas congregations. The belief that Luther would suffer unless it had the support of a separate conference was one of the major factors in the creation of a separate Nebraska Conference in 1886.²⁷

In some respects, the origins of the two schools presaged their futures. Bethany Academy began under the auspices of a single congregation led by a forceful minister. It was located in a solidly Swedish community in the midst of a large Swedish settlement from which it could expect support. Luther Academy was a point of contention among congregations and communities. None of the three towns that wanted the school was an ideal site. Saronville was unable to put together a formal proposal of aid before the meeting to determine the location. Stromsburg did not have enough Swedish Lutherans to establish a congregation until 1888; most of the Lutherans in the area lived to the northwest of the town. The Baptists were stronger in and around Stromsburg itself. Although Saunders County had strong rural Lutheran congregations, Wahoo did not have an Augustana church until after the academy brought more Lutherans to the community and the congregation frequently relied on college faculty to meet its pastoral needs. Bethany, in large measure due to Swensson's able and ambitious leadership, quickly achieved college status and experienced substantial growth. Luther remained an academy into the twentieth century, never evolved beyond a junior college, and eventually lost its identity through merger with another

Lutheran school.

Bethany Academy's rapid development was remarkable. Soon after its founding the school began adding new courses of study. By the school's third year, students could choose among classical, normal, and scientific, or musical tracks. Business courses, an art department, programs in oratory, and a model elementary school for teacher training soon followed. In March, 1886, the name was changed to Bethany Normal Institute, reflecting an increased emphasis on training teachers for public and parochial schools. In 1887 the school became Bethany College and Normal Institute and in 1889, Bethany College. New programs brought more students and necessitated additional facilities. In Bethany's first year, a total of twenty-seven students attended. The 1885-1886 academic year brought 161 students. Encouraged by such growth, the school embarked on a major building program, constructing a huge five-story structure costing \$55,000 with furnishings. Enrollment more than doubled the following year. In 1890-1891, student body numbered at 334, and in 1900-1901, 574 students attended Bethany.²⁸

Luther Academy's early history is not so impressive. There was a similar proliferation of programs. The school opened with normal and classical programs, added a commercial course in 1886, and a music program in 1893, and art courses in 1894. The music department produced no graduates until 1905, however, and a formal art department was not established until 1904. Luther Academy did not become a college until 1909, and then offered only a two-year program. Enrollment lagged far behind Bethany's. The number of students at Luther did not surpass one hundred until 1892 and fell to just sixty-five in 1897 due to the economic difficulties of the area. By 1900, the student body was at 106, less than a fifth of the number at Bethany that year. Luther's building programs were modest by the standards of the Kansas school.²⁹

Both schools shared a problem common to denominational schools--a serious debt. Bethany's construction in the mid-1880s was accomplished by putting the institution nearly \$40,000 in debt. Subscriptions met part of the commitment, but crop failures in the late 1880s

and early 1890s meant many of these pledges could not be met. In 1892 part of the college's property--including four thousand books--was impounded until a note was paid. In desperation, Swensson turned to real estate and mining ventures in hopes of realizing substantial profits, only to find disappointment. By 1895 the debt neared \$55,000 and the college could not pay full salaries to the faculty. In 1897 the Kansas Conference ordered an eleven-point program designed to restore the college's financial health. Among the plans were special assessments on all communicants in the conference, fund-raising by youth societies, and a new round of subscriptions. Later that year the primary creditor, an insurance company holding a \$35,000 mortgage, offered to settle for \$20,000. Swensson's success at raising that sum, while not ending the debt problem, put the college on more secure footing.³⁰ Luther's debt, while serious, did not reach the magnitude of Bethany's, a fact which the academy's officers noted with some pleasure. The original subscriptions were never paid in full and the school was forced to borrow funds to operate. Drought and depression in the late nineteenth century caused enrollment declines, made subscriptions unreliable, and almost forced the academy to close. Financial commitments from the conference and the return of agricultural prosperity averted disaster; by 1899 the school was out of debt.³¹

The competition for students and financial assistance occasioned some rivalry between the two schools--particularly when insolvency loomed during the 1890s. Swensson complained that Bethany did not get its share of Luther graduates because the academy's programs were designed to encourage students to go on to Augustana. The Luther president, S. M. Hill, charged that his fund-raising plans were damaged by Bethany's appeals to Nebraska congregations, that the Kansas school recruited in Nebraska, and that Swensson wanted Luther to fold. Neither of the men had much regard for the other, Hill suggesting that Swensson was too concerned with culture and the Kansan implying that Hill lacked it.³²

The original purposes behind the creation of schools such as Bethany and Luther had been to provide youth with a Christian education that would suit them to enter service to the church as

teachers and preachers. Young men bound for the ministry could do their college preparatory, and perhaps their college work near to their homes, but would go on to Augustana for their final training. Men and women who desired employment in education could complete the normal program and become teachers in congregational parochial schools, in the public schools, or both. The Swedes were cognizant of the importance of having acceptable teachers in their school districts.

This vision, although it remained central to the schools' mission, was too narrow for the institutions and their leaders. Once established, any institution includes in its goals survival and growth. Consequently, both Luther and Bethany, following patterns set by Augustana College and Gustavus Adolphus, added new programs to attract more students. Business courses aimed at students with a practical bend of mind appeared early at both schools. Improvements in the normal training, particularly the addition of a model school, sought to raise the standards of teacher education. Music and art programs came on the scene. Luther even developed a domestic science curriculum for women. This growth, while not destroying the original intentions for the schools, changed the institutions. Bethany and Luther, particularly the former, began to resemble more closely American liberal arts schools. They were, as institutions, moving into the mainstream of American higher education.³³

The early students attracted to Bethany and Luther intended to continue on to seminary or to teach. With the exception of those who would teach in the public schools--and many of these took jobs in Swedish communities--the graduates would remain closely connected with other Swedes. Their adult careers would be committed to the preservation of the Swedish Lutheranism and the Swedish language. As the schools expanded their programs, students with different goals--and, occasionally, from different ethnic groups--entered. The business offerings in particular attracted people who who did not share the same religious commitment, who sometimes professed a different religion, who may not have been Swedes, and who viewed education as a means to success in American businesses. By 1891, Bethany was graduating commercial students

who bore non-Scandinavian names. In 1898, three of the four graduates who were probably not Swedish were in the business track and the fourth was in music. Although Luther graduated no students with non-Swedish names from its business department until after 1900, its graduates sometimes went on to jobs that were clearly outside of the ethnic community, such as Carl Swanson, who took a position with Cudahy & Co. of Omaha.³⁴

These schools recognized from the outset that their graduates would have to function in American society even though they would serve the Swedish community. English was, therefore, part of the instruction from the beginning, often on an equal basis with Swedish. One of the first announcements of the forthcoming academy at Wahoo pledged instruction in the English language. At Bethany Academy in 1883 the students took reading in both languages in the sub-class, English grammar and Swedish orthography in the first class, English and Swedish grammar in the second class, and grammar and composition in both languages in the third class. In addition, the first and second classes studied American history, while the third class took Swedish history. When college work was added later in the decade, the parity of the languages remained. By the time a student in the classical course completed his sophomore year he would have taken, on a trimester system, three terms each of English and Swedish; five terms of German, the language of Martin Luther; and six terms of Latin and Greek. By 1890, a student in the college classical course took four years each of Swedish, English, Latin, and Greek, and two years of German. The Normal Department also required Swedish and English, although elementary students in the model school apparently used Appleton's and McGuffey's readers. The Commercial Department by 1890 included only English.³⁵ By the mid-1890s, college advertisements in the local paper made no mention of the Swedish language, even though some tracks required it. Carl Swensson, as president of the college, received letters from prospective students requesting catalogs. By 1894, such letters in English were far more common than those in Swedish. Swedish was still alive and well at the college. That same year Swensson informed a student who had dropped Swedish, "We are very anxious that you should know something about the language and literature

of your parents . . . and want you to resume or justify why you don't." But English was prospering, too.³⁶

Campus life at the schools reflected the mixture of the two languages. At Bethany during the nineteenth century students could join a variety of campus societies. The Svea Society and the "Swedish Society of Belles Letters" offered programs in Swedish and often dealing with Swedish literature and culture. Members of the Adelpic Society or the Lyceum studied English literature and debated topics of political and historical interest. In 1898, for example, the Adelpic Society sponsored a literary contest that challenged participants to locate sixteen items or phrases found in both Tennyson and the Bible. In 1900, the Lyceum debated the justification for the Mexican-American War. Students could hear the Sappho Quartet sing in Swedish and English or join the campus chapter of the YMCA. As national events impinged on campus life, students could choose between the McKinley-Roosevelt Club or the Anti-Imperialist Club, both formed just before the 1900 election.³⁷ The various classes sponsored public debates in Swedish and English. The American minister to Sweden established scholarships for the best orations in Swedish and English. Seniors in the classical department wrote essays in both languages as a graduation requirement and each of the graduating departments had one or more representatives speak in each language at commencement.³⁸

Events were similar at Luther College. The Wartburg Society, founded in 1884, included all students in weekly public debates and in its constitution specified that programs should alternate using Swedish and English. The Torpellian Circle studied British literature and, as the 1896 election approached, voted to make economics the subject of every other meeting. In 1905 Luther began oratorical contests, one in each language every year. Luther students, like their Bethany counterparts, celebrated American holidays such as Washington's birthday and "Columbian day."³⁹

The students at Bethany and Luther did not retreat into an ethnic conclave in which they insulated themselves from American life and culture. The schools' programs assured that they

know the language and heritage of their new homeland, and Swedish was most important for those likely to enter the ministry and parochial school teaching. The schools sought to instill a knowledge and love for the Swedish language and literature--and encouraged avenues such as the Swedish societies for students to pursue that goal--but also celebrated America and its language.

The Swedish-Americans in Kansas and Nebraska did not use education as a barrier to prevent assimilation. Their endorsement of public schools meant that their children would be fluent in the language and culture of the United States, capable of competing with Americans on an equal basis. The summer parochial school shielded what was most dear--religion--by helping forge the link between the Swedish language and spiritual matters. The academies and colleges provided the necessary recruits for the ministry and parochial schools, but also exposed students to American culture and provided paths to success in American society.

CHAPTER 6

NOTES

1. Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, 1846-1860 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), pp. 336-342; Emmet E. Eklund, "Faith and Education," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1960, ed. by Emmer Engberg et al. (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), p. 76; Walter H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 137-138; Conrad Peterson, "The Beginnings of Swedish-American Education [Prior to 1860]," Swedish Historical Society of America Yearbook 8 (1922-1923): 49.

2. Olson, Augustana Lutheran Church in America, Pioneer Period, p. 342; Eklund, "Faith and Education," pp. 76-77. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools, p. 140, attributes it to the unwillingness of the Augustana Synod ministers to serve as teachers. This is not consistent with the observation that pastors often taught the early parochial schools and that seminary students comprised an important source of faculty for summer schools.

3. For examples of such attendance reports, see Smoky Valley News, March 20, 1885; and Lindsborg News, October 11, 1895. For school records and local histories, see Teacher's Term Report, October 13, 1884 to January 2, 1885, West Kentuck School District, No. 69, McPherson County, McPherson County Historical Society, Lindsborg, Kansas; Velma Cooper, comp., Prairie View Years (n.p., n.d.), pp. 163-171; and Lyons [Nebraska] Heritage Book Committee, Lyons Heritage (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 34-35. For the Oakland high school graduates, see Oakland Republican, June 7, 1900.

4. This sample is a subset of a larger sample that will be used in later chapters. Three or four townships were selected for each of the six counties under study in 1900, the goal being to select two or three that were in the heart of Swedish settlement and one that was on the periphery or separated from it. From these townships in each county, a sample totaling about three hundred was taken using a systematic process following a random start.

5. Lindsborg was not included because there were virtually no Americans of native stock aged 6 to 18 in the sample of the community. Holdrege was excluded from the sample entirely because, with a population over 2,500, it was a city by census standards.

6. Robert G. Barrows, "Instructions to Enumerators for Completing the 1900 Census Population Schedule," Historical Methods Newsletter 9 (September, 1976): 211.

7. D. Verner Swanson, I Remember (Pages from a Story of My Life) (n.p., n.p., 1981), p. 12.

8. A. W. Erickson, Endgate Telescopes: Memories from Five Going on Six to Eighty-five Going on Eighty-six (Bellevue, WA: n.p., 1967), p. 36; Frank A. Adelson, (Typescript of interview, n.d.), Norden Club Project, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska (hereafter NSHS); Theodore W. Anderson, "God Has Directed My Way," trans. by Sigurd F. Westburg, The Covenant Quarterly 41 (May, 1983): 29.

9. A. H. Jacobson, The Adventures of a Pioneer Preacher (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1960), p. 27; Fritz Herbert Larson, A Journey Back in Life: A Tribute to My Heritage ([Lincoln, NE?, 1983?]), p. 19; Edna Nyquist, comp., Pioneer Life and Lore of McPherson County, Kansas (McPherson, KS: Democrat-Opinion Press, 1932), p. 73; The Independent (Wahoo), February 10, 1881.

10. Adelson, Interview; Mrs. Victor (Charlotte) Anderson, (Typescript of interview by Donald F. Denker, n.d.), Norden Club Project, NSHS, p. 2; Children sometimes learned some English at home or had at least been exposed to American or English literature in translation before they started school. Swanson, I Remember, learned about Jesse James through a book he found at home and his parents owned copies of Pilgrim's Progress and Uncle Tom's Cabin in Swedish. J. O. Stromquist's father kept several American school texts in his library to study. See Stromquist, "Mother and Dad," (Typescript, n.d.), McPherson County Historical Society, Lindsborg, Kansas [hereafter MCHS], p. 4.

11. Carl Wallerstedt, The Second Generation (Waco, TX: Davis Bros. Publishing Co., 1976), p. 28; Frank Albert Waugh, "Pioneering in Kansas," (Typescript, n.d.), Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas [hereafter KSHS], pp. 46-47.

12. The Independent (Wahoo), July 24, 31, 1879; December 2, 1880; February 3, 1881; November 27, 1885; Wahoo Democrat, June 17, 1897.

13. Stromsburg Headlight, November 18, 1886; September 4, 1890; April 16, November 5, 1891.

14. Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg, KS: Bethany College, 1953), pp. 54-55, 195-196; Lindsborg News, November 11, 1898.

15. Lindsborg News, January 17, 1890; January 19, 1894; Wahoo Democrat, December 9, 1897; Oakland Republican, October 4, 1897; Stromsburg Headlight, June 28, 1894; Holdrege Citizen, January 3, 1889; George Train, "A Short History of New Gottland, Dist. #75, McPherson County, KS," in "Early Day Schools in Kansas," comp. by Woman's Kansas Day Club, Volume 4, KSHS; Rolf Johnson, Diary, January 12, 16, 17, 18, 24, February 16, March 27, 1877, Rolf Johnson Papers, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. This collection does not contain the manuscript diary. The document was published in serial form in the Holdrege Progress and this collection consists of the undated newspaper clippings.

16. Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1910: The Formative Period (Davenport, IA: Arcade Office and Letter Service, 1956), p. 52; Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools, p. 145; Gene Jessie Lund, "The Americanization of the Augustana Lutheran Church" (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1954), pp. 98, 134-135; Gustaf Erickson, "Salemsborg," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, ed. by Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Jaderborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), p. 35; James Iverne Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1959), pp. 91-120; C. A. Swensson and L. G. Abrahamson, eds., Jubel-Album (Chicago: National Publishing Co., 1893), pp. 400-408.

17. Lindsborg News, June 3, 1892.

18. Nebraska Konferensens Referat, 1895, pp. 10, 19, 44-47. The cumulative total explains the puzzling report by the pastor of Bethany Lutheran in Kearney County that eight months of parochial school had been held during the summer of 1891. See C. A. Lonquist and A. J. Johnson, After Eighty Years: The Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Axtell, Nebraska, 1876-1956 (n.p., n.d.), p. 31. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools, p. 143, also notes reports of part-time schools which met for lengthy periods, sometimes totalling more than five hundred days per year.

The best work on the Swede school is Emeroy Johnson, "Swedish Elementary Schools in Minnesota Lutheran Congregations," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 30 (July, 1979): 172-182. See also Randolph E. Johnson, "Rural 'Swede Schools' of Isanti County, Minnesota," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 23 (April, 1972): 100-113; and Lund, "Americanization," pp. 156-158.

19. Lindsborg News, April 9, 30, 1897; Stromsburg Headlight, May 26, 1898; Allan Lindfors and Eleanor Burnison, Pioneers on the Prairie: A History of Marquette, Kansas (Lindsborg: News-Record, 1978), p. 123; Nyquist, Pioneer Life and Lore, p. 38; G. E. Lindsten, ed., Fridhem: Sixty Years, 1879-1939, Fridhem Lutheran Church, Funk, Nebraska (n.p.: Board of Administration of Fridhem Church, 1939), p. 20; Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Swede Home, Nebraska, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1873-1948 (n.p., n.d.), p. 15; Immanuel [originally Westland] Lutheran Church, Bertrand, Nebraska, 100th Anniversary, 1883-1983 (n.p., n.d.), p. [18]; Ruth Billdt, ed. Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 77; M. Wahlstrom, "Memories and Impressions from Lindsborg, 1878," in *ibid.*, p. 89. The Swede schools in Isanti County, Minnesota, relied extensively on the public school houses. See Randolph Johnson, "Rural 'Swede Schools,'" pp. 110-113.

20. Erickson, "Salemsborg," pp. 30, 35; Stromsburg Headlight, June 14, 1888, June 7, 1900; Anderson, "God Has Directed My Way," p. 31; Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, p. 15; Lindsborg News, September 8, 1893; May 20, 1898; July 20, August 17, 24, 1900. Swedes schools in Minnesota followed the same pattern. See Emeroy Johnson, "Swedish Elementary Schools," pp. 173-174.

21. The best discussion of texts is in Emeroy Johnson, "Swedish Elementary Schools," pp. 174-177. See also Randolph Johnson, "Rural 'Swede Schools,'" p. 112; Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1846-1860, pp. 343-344; Arden, Augustana Heritage, p. 107; Eklund, "Faith and Education," p. 78; Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools, pp. 145-146. For the texts used in a Mission Friend congregation in 1879, see Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, Fifty Years: The Swedish Evangelical Mission Association of Nebraska, 1886-1936 (n.p., n.d.), p. 34.

22. B. E. Bengtson, Jubilee Album: A Short History of the Swedish Ev. Lutheran Fridhem Congregation of Funk, Nebraska, 1879-1919 (Funk, NE: Fridhem Congregation, 1919), p. 155.

23. Wallerstedt, Second Generation, p. 29.

24. H. E. Bruce, An Educational History of McPherson County, Kan., from 1870 to 1893 (McPherson, KS: Democrat-Print, 1893), p. 16.

25. The best overview of the school movement among Swedish Lutherans is Richard W. Solberg, Lutheran Higher Education in North America (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), pp. 177-204. See also Paul M. Lindberg, "The Academies of the Augustana Lutheran

Church," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, edited by J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelie (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), pp. 93-105.

26. Emory Lindquist, Bethany in Kansas: The History of a College (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1975), pp. 1-4; Carl Swensson, "Huru Bethany College blef till," Prärieblomman 3 (1903): 81-82.

27. The best summary of Luther's origin is in Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 91-120. See also Charles Frederick Sandahl, The Nebraska Conference of the Augustana Synod: Survey of Its Work (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), pp. 359-364; Ernest W. Olson, Luther College in the Making (n.d., n.p.); S. M. H[ill], "Luther Academy (Historik)," Korsbaneret 26 (1905): 49-50; S. M. Hill, "Historical Sketch of Luther Academy," in Twentieth Anniversary Album and Souvenir of the Dedication of the New Building at Luther Academy, October 11, 1903 (Wahoo, NE: New Era, n.d.), pp. 3-9; J. Torell, "Historick öfver Luther Academy," Twenty-fifth Anniversary Album of Luther Academy and Bethlehem Lutheran Church (n.p., n.d.), pp. 9-11; O. J. Johnson, "Historical Facts About Luther Academy," in *ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

28. Lindquist, Bethany, pp. 4-15, 26; I. M. Anderson, "The Educational Institutions of the Augustana Synod," in The Augustana Synod: A Brief Review of Its History, 1860-1910 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), pp. 118-119; "Bethany College," in Jubel-Album, p. 154.

29. Augusta Flodman, "An Historical Sketch," in Fortieth Anniversary Album of Luther College, Wahoo, Nebraska (n.p., 1923), pp. 33-39; Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 148, 162-163.

30. Lindquist, Bethany, pp. 27-31; Lindsborg News, February 4, April 2, 30, July 16, October 8, 15, 1897; May 13, 1898. In 1895 the Conference permitted Bethany to accept promissory notes from students in lieu of tuition if faculty members would accept the notes as back pay. The faculty's reaction is not known. Lindquist cites \$40,000 as the sum of the mortgage from the life insurance company, but contemporary newspaper accounts set it at \$35,000.

31. Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 96, 116-117, 122, 146, 150-155, 159-161.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-159.

33. The curriculum additions are summarized in Lindquist, Bethany, pp. 7-15, 23-24; and Flodman, "Historical Sketch," pp. 33-39. On signs of Americanization at Augustana and Gustavus, see Conrad Bergendoff, Augustana... A Profession of Faith: A History of Augustana College, 1860-1935 (Rock Island: Augustana College Library, 1969), pp. 77, 97-98, 105-106; and Doniver A. Lund, "Augustana and Gustavus--Partners or Competitors," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition, pp. 84-85.

34. Lindquist, Bethany, p. 20; Lindsborg News, May 20, 1898; Charles Perky, ed., Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915): 1: 159-160; Wahoo Democrat, September 24, 1896. Faculty at Augustana complained that business students did not support religious courses and some clergy suspected there was "a silent influence coming from the business department that was not beneficial to the institution as a

whole." See Lindsborg News, June 10, 1892. At Gustavus, the commercial department was the first to attract non-Scandinavians and prompted a decline in the use of Swedish among students. See Doniver A. Lund, Gustavus Adolphus College: A Centennial History, 1862-1962 (Minneapolis: Gustavus Adolphus College Press, 1963), pp. 72, 94.

Dennis D. Engbrecht, "The Americanization of a Rural Immigrant Church: The General Conference Mennonites in Central Kansas, 1874-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1985), pp. 163-164, found that Mennonite schools also made it possible for individuals to move outside the ethnic group.

35. The Independent (Wahoo), May 10, 1883; Smoky Valley News, April 27, 1883; Lindsborg News, August 24, September 7, 1888; Lindquist, Bethany, p. 18.

36. Lindsborg News, March 17, 1893; September 4, 1896; Swensson to Vivian [surname illegible], Lindsborg, December 6, 1894, Carl A. Swensson Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. For examples of letters to prospective students in Swedish and English, see Swensson to Gustaf Lagerstrom, Lindsborg, November 19, [1894], and Swensson to Minnie Swenson, Lindsborg, November 19, [1894], Swensson Papers.

37. Lindsborg News, October 28, 1892; February 23, 1894; January 1, 1897; February 11, 1898; April 27, October 5, 1900; Lindquist, Bethany, pp. 239, 247.

38. Dowie, Prairie Grass Dividing, pp. 191-192; Wahoo New Era, March 3, 1896; Wahoo Democrat, September 24, 1896; Fiftieth Anniversary Album of Luther College, Wahoo, Nebraska (n.p., 1933), p. 100; Wahoo New Era, February 25, October 27, 1892

CHAPTER 7

SWEDES IN THE MARKET PLACE

In 1879, a decade following the settlement of large numbers of Swedes in the Smoky River valley, Lindsborg residents turned out to watch a long-sought prize arrive. Following an intensive campaign to secure a railroad, the community had the satisfaction of watching the first locomotive as it steamed into town. The mood was jubilant, for the rail link represented their town's bright future. With cheap and reliable transportation available in Lindsborg, the surrounding farmers would at last have efficient means of marketing their crops. The community would grow and prosper, confident in its economic security. Amidst the gaiety, however, there was a somber voice. One old man watched the spectacle and moaned, "Du arma Lindsborg" ("You poor Lindsborg.")¹

The elderly gentleman mourned the coming of the railroad because of the outside influences such close contact would inevitably bring. His voice was prophetic, for the line brought more outsiders to the Swedish settlement and made it easier for Swedes to leave. The voice was a solitary one, however; the rest of the community celebrated the newly-acquired symbol of their importance and prosperity. Few of the early settlers or those who followed had any intention of creating a self-sufficient society which could wrap itself in a pietistic isolation free from contamination from the outside world. America held many images for them and one of the most compelling was that of land of golden opportunity.

The Swedes who settled in Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century, although they invested considerable resources in the preservation of their religious and linguistic heritage, were eager to embrace the economic advantages of their new home. Many of them came to the rural communities of the central Great Plains only after years of work experience in states farther east, a period during which they had learned that opportunity came only with hard work and had acquired the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the American economy. Once in Kansas and Nebraska, many of them continued strong economic ties to Americans. They often

labored for Americans and American corporations to bolster their income before their farms produced a profit. Swedes relied on American links to market their crops and American businessmen to provide some of the goods and services they desired. In some cases, Swedes turned to Americans for permanent employment and business partnerships. Far from resisting assimilation in economic terms, Swedes frequently sought it.

The Swedes found in the sample counties may be divided into two groups--those who lived elsewhere in the United States before settling in one of the areas under study and those who moved there directly from Sweden. In each of the six counties, an important contingent of the pioneers were people who came from older Swedish communities in the Midwest. The colonization companies that initiated the Lindsborg settlement came from Chicago and the Galesburg areas of Illinois. Swedes from Illinois and Minnesota were among the early settlers in Saunders County, Nebraska, and Rev. S. G. Larson's efforts to induce Omaha Swedes to take land there helped make the county a major Swedish colony. Swedes from Illinois and Iowa were prominent in the early history of the Swedish settlements in Burt, Polk, and Phelps counties in Nebraska, the latter two because railroad land agents campaigned actively in the those states.

The importance of Swedes from eastern states in founding new Swedish communities in the plains states is to be expected. By the close of the Civil War, the Swedish settlements in Illinois and other midwestern states were well established. Individuals who had little hope of being able to afford land there or who wanted to secure larger farms to provide for their growing families sought the frontier of Kansas or Nebraska. Moreover, pioneering is not a simple process. It required some basic knowledge of American conditions and land laws. Familiarity with the English language, American agricultural techniques, and employment opportunities in the new area all made success more probable. Even with free land available through the Homestead Act and other liberal land legislation, pioneers needed capital to establish farms or businesses. The immigrant who had lived in America for a period of years, perhaps working to accumulate the money to finance a move westward, had basic advantages over the one fresh from Europe. Once

these seasoned Swedes had established new communities in the West, immigrants coming directly from Sweden joined them on the frontier, frequently due to the influence of family or friends who had been among the initial settlers. Thus Olof Olsson, on the invitation of a member of the First Swedish Agricultural Company, took his followers to central Kansas.

Inasmuch as their previous experience in America helped shape the skills that Swedes took with them to Kansas and Nebraska, it is useful to examine what their livelihood was in states farther east. Men moving to the rural areas of western Illinois most commonly found work as farm laborers, particularly if they had come from the farming classes in Sweden. In the early days of Swedish settlement in Illinois, Swedes could not find such employment among their own countrymen, for those were in no position to pay laborers. By hiring out to Americans and older, more established immigrants, Swedish farm laborers learned about American agricultural practices, acquired a working knowledge of English, and earned money they could use later to establish their own farms. Eventually Swedish farmers would be prosperous enough to employ laborers and more recent immigrants could take jobs offered by members of their own ethnic group. Although these later arrivals probably had a less jarring transition to English, the farming methods they learned were suited to the American scene. Thus N. P. Swensen, who emigrated to Chicago in 1865, found his first employment among American farmers in Illinois before taking land in McPherson County, Kansas. Frank Johnson, who migrated to Illinois in 1878, took his first job with an Irish farmer. Marten Hofstrand, although his destination was Dakota Territory rather than the states to the south, went to work for a fellow Swede shortly after his arrival. The pay--room and aboard--did not increase his financial resources, but the experience proved invaluable. As he wrote home to relatives, "It [the job] also gives us a chance to learn how to homestead. There is much to know--how to break sod, build claim shacks, file for land and other things. And we're learning more English."¹

America offered many other opportunities for young men, particularly if they brought a skill with them. J. G. Bergsten, one of the members of the Chicago company, followed his trade of

stonecutter with an Illinois firm for six years before going to Kansas. Johan Pihl, who also joined the First Swedish Agricultural Company, worked variously as a shoemaker, farm laborer, and construction worker in the Chicago area. C. J. Stromquist, who went to Kansas with the Galesburg company, worked as a carpenter in Chicago for two years before moving west. Peter Gibson and Olof Hedlund, pioneers in Saunders and Phelps counties respectively, both worked as blacksmiths in Illinois before migrating to Nebraska.³ Immigrants without skills but with strong backs could find employment in a variety of unskilled jobs.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, local histories containing brief biographical sketches were common in the Midwest. Although such sources have limitations--particularly because the information was self-reported and written to please--useful data can be gleaned from them. A study of two such volumes, one devoted to Saunders County and the other to the central Kansas region, suggests that a large proportion of the early settlers in those areas had had substantial contact with the American economy prior to arriving at their final destinations.

Charles Perky's 1915 Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska lists eighty-three men born in Sweden who migrated to that county by 1900 and whose biographies contain sufficient information to determine whether or not they immigrated directly to Saunders. Of the eighty-three, forty-eight--over 55%--lived for a time elsewhere in the United States before settling in Saunders County. Twenty immigrated to Illinois and from there moved to Saunders County. Ten lived in more than one other state before arriving in Nebraska. Seven migrated directly to Nebraska but lived elsewhere in the state before coming to Saunders County, chiefly in Omaha, where many Swedes found employment in railroad shops and on bridge construction crews. Several biographies did not list a former place of residence, although the time between immigration and settlement in Saunders County indicated a stay elsewhere. The remainder came from Iowa, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, New York.⁴

Less is known about the occupations these individuals held before coming to Saunders County. The person's livelihood between immigration and final settlement is not known for

twenty-seven of the forty-eight. Five were farm laborers and six were farmers at some time during that interval. Three worked for railroads, a common occupation for young immigrants in that era of immense railroad construction. Fourteen others indicated occupations ranging from common laborer to preacher, with most having blue-collar jobs. Inasmuch as the period between entering the United States and choosing a home in Saunders County represented a period of adjustment to an alien culture, it is likely that those for whom an occupation is not known had similar experiences.⁵

An 1893 biographical volume covering four counties in central Kansas contained useful material on twenty-seven individuals who had migrated to McPherson and Saline counties. Of those, twenty-two--over 80%--stopped elsewhere in the United States before settling in their final destination. Reflecting the importance of the Galesburg and Chicago colonization companies in sending immigrants to the Smoky River valley, fifteen of the twenty-two lived in Illinois before going to Kansas. Five had lived in two or more states; Iowa, Minnesota, and South Carolina each contributed one immigrant. The Kansas biographies reveal an occupational pattern similar to the one found in Nebraska. Seven did not list an occupation, seven had been farmers or farm laborers, and most of the remainder had jobs involving manual labor of some sort.⁶

Contacts with Americans in the economy did not end with migration to Kansas or Nebraska. Although most Swedes went to the Great Plains with the intention of farming, many had to supplement their farm income with outside employment during the first years. Others had to work several years before they could afford a farm. Still others found better opportunities in skilled trades or merchandising. Whatever path they chose, Swedes maintained significant economic contacts with groups other than Swedes. Failure to do so would only limit the very opportunities most sought.

Swedish male immigrants, even those who acquired land immediately after settling in Kansas or Nebraska, frequently took temporary employment to augment their capital. If others had preceded them to the area, many could find positions as farm laborers for established

farmers. If the immigrants were among the earliest pioneers, they often had to seek work elsewhere, such as on railroad construction crews. Johan Pihl, for example, joined a crew of Swedes that did stonework for the Santa Fe Railroad in Kansas while others had unskilled positions with lines in the state. Both the Union Pacific and Burlington provided job opportunities to Swedish immigrants in Nebraska. Some immigrants found brief employment in a variety of capacities. Carl Olson's father worked variously as a farm laborer, steamboat hand, and railroad worker during his first months in Saunders County.⁷

Evidence from biographical volumes suggests that those immigrants who spent at least some time working elsewhere in the United States were less likely to take temporary jobs where they eventually settled than were those who came directly from Sweden. Presumably the individuals with prior experience in America had made a sufficient adaptation to the American economy and, probably most important, acquired the necessary capital to enter their chosen livelihood--typically farming--without the delay occasioned by working for others. Perky's history of Saunders County contains biographies of forty Swedes whose principal occupation was farming and who lived elsewhere before coming to Saunders. Of these, only five mention any employment other than farming during their early years in Saunders County. In contrast, the biographies of sixteen of the thirty-one Swedish farmers who came directly from Sweden to the county mention other employment during the subject's first years.⁸

Swedish women also had opportunities in the American economy, albeit more limited than those open to males. Young women, typically single ones but sometimes including those who were married, found employment in American homes as domestic servants. They thereby not only supplemented their family's income, but also learned English and became acquainted with the practices, organization, and values of middle-class American households. Mathilda Sandell, the fifteen-year old daughter of an early settler in the Lindsborg area, became a servant in the home of a Topeka publisher in the late 1860s. As she recalled later, "It was hardest to learn the language, but we were eager to learn and went to evening school. Everything was so interesting,

and we were anxious to learn as we had not had experience in housework in Sweden" In addition to English, which she studied at night, Sandell learned "to bake pies and cakes and even bread" in the American home. When she and a sister had worked long enough to pay off the debt for their tickets to America, they traveled on their own to Lindsborg, a journey they could undertake confidently because of their newly-developed language skills.⁹

Americans sometimes specifically requested Swedish women as servants. One Wichita woman advertised in a Lindsborg paper for "an experienced Swede girl for general housework." Swedish immigrant women apparently took some pride in their positions in American homes. Ida Lindgren wrote home that a member of the party she was traveling with became a maid "i ett präktigt Amerikanskt hus" ("in a splendid American house"). Carl Olson, recounting his family's first year in Nebraska, noted that his mother worked in the homes of "de bättre familjerna" ("the better families"). Those women who held jobs with American families acquired more than an income from their positions. Although the money they earned was important to themselves and their families, the knowledge of the English language and American customs they learned was important in their own assimilation into American life.¹⁰

Although Swedish settlers in Kansas and Nebraska often relied on Americans for temporary employment, most intended to become independent farmers. Studies of immigrant agriculture, including some involving the central Great Plains, have consistently shown that immigrants largely conformed to the major patterns followed by native-born farmers in the areas where they settled. Like their American neighbors, immigrant farmers wanted profitable farm operations and thus planted those cash crops which were typical for the area. Those differences between Americans and immigrants that existed usually were in areas of production intended more for home use than the market or were subtle variations in such items as tenancy, financing, and intensity.¹¹

In the most ambitious study of ethnic agricultural practices in Kansas and Nebraska to date, D. Aidan McQuillan examined the patterns of Swedes, German-Russian Mennonites, and

French-Canadians in central Kansas. By choosing two townships for each group--one in which the ethnic group dominated and one in which they shared space with American farmers who served as a control group--and by tracing agricultural change through fifty years of state censuses, McQuillan was able to compile an impressive amount of data on his subjects. His Swedish townships were Union in McPherson County, a township where many of Olof Olsson's followers had settled, and Rockville in Rice County just west of McPherson County. The Swedes there, most of whom had lived in Illinois previously, were part of the Swedish community around the New Andover Lutheran Church. The German-Russian townships were Menno in southeastern McPherson County and Meridian in Marion County to the east. The French-Canadian townships were in Cloud County.

Of the three immigrant groups, McQuillan found that the German-Russians adapted best to the challenges of periodic drought and uncertain prices. They led the movement toward diversification as a means of reducing risk and, choosing smaller farms than Swedes, French-Canadians, or Americans, farmed more intensively. Coming from the steppes of Russia, they were better prepared than the other groups for the environmental conditions they found in Kansas. The French-Canadians--who, like the Rockville Township Swedes, lived in Illinois before settling in Kansas--proved highly responsive to changing market conditions, closely resembling American farmers on this point, but less adaptable to drought. The Swedes adapted most slowly to the climatic circumstances they encountered and "were slow to acquire the flexibility in farming decisions of the local American farmers, or even of the Mennonite and French-Canadian farmers." McQuillan attributes this hesitation to the fact that most of the Union Township Swedes came directly from Sweden rather than first adjusting to American agriculture in the Midwest. The drought and depression that plagued farmers in the 1890s, however, forced the Swedes to adapt quickly. By 1925, the end of the half century McQuillan studied, the differences among the three ethnic groups and the control groups were relatively small. Indeed, he suggests that the immigrant groups, particularly the Germans from Russia, had an influence

on the agricultural practices of American farmers.¹²

McQuillan found a number of other measures on which differences existed among the various groups. Swedish farmers had higher rates of persistence than the German-Russians, French-Canadians, or Americans, although the differences are not large. The French-Canadians always had higher farm values than their control group; the Mennonites and Swedes started out with lower values than Americans in their areas but managed to surpass their control groups by the end of the period. The German-Russians had the lowest rates of farm tenancy and they and the Swedes always had lower rates than did nearby Americans. The French-Canadians finished the period with the highest incidence of tenancy among all the groups. Both Swedes and German-Russians were more inclined to use mortgages as a means of financing their operations than were their control groups.¹³

A study comparing farm operations of Americans, Swedes, Germans, and German-Russians in several Nebraska counties discerned few distinctions between Swedish settlers and their American counterparts. Examining Germans and Americans in Madison and Pierce counties and all four groups in Clay County, Bradley Baltensperger concluded that the Swedes "retained few distinctive traits after 1885," although the Germans and German-Russians were slower to acculturate. The latter two groups experienced a revival of some Old World patterns following their initial adaptation to American agriculture, a characteristic known as "cultural rebound."¹⁴

The Swedes in Kansas produced one crop that few others grew. McQuillan found that Swedes devoted part of their efforts to raising broom corn, a crop used in the manufacture of brooms. In 1875, a little over five percent of labor on Swedish farms in Union Township--the township containing many settlers direct from Sweden--went into broom corn. Mennonites and Americans in the area invested less than one percent of their efforts in the crop. By 1885, the Swedes in Union and Rockville townships were putting twelve percent of their efforts in broom corn, making it their third most important crop. The American control group in Rockville Township followed the trend by putting nearly five percent of their labor into broom corn, but

the Mennonites and French-Canadians dropped their interest in it entirely. In 1895, the Swedes maintained about the same level of commitment, although the Union Township farmers decreased its importance relative to other crops, and the nearby Americans increased their investment in it to over eleven percent. By 1905, interest in the crop had waned; the Union Swedes gave it only six percent of their labor, the Rockville Swedes two percent, and the American control group less than one percent. By 1915 the crop no longer merited separate reporting.¹⁵

The Swedes found broom corn a profitable crop that had a local market. Broom factories operated in both Lindsborg and Marquette at one time or another. Interestingly, Swedes apparently dominated the manufacture of brooms and the marketing of the crop. In Marquette, the two known broom factories were both run by Swedes, and the Western Broom Corn Company, a commission company, had Swedes as the manager and directors. The 1900 Census shows that four individuals in Lindsborg mentioned brooms or broom corn as part of their occupation--one man who sewed brooms, one broom manufacturer, and two broom corn dealers. All were Swedish immigrants.¹⁶

Swedes in Phelps County, Nebraska, also showed an interest in broom corn. The Holdrege Citizen claimed in 1887 that the county "is the banner broom corn county of the state, producing last year over 2,700 tons, marketed almost entirely at Holdrege and Bertrand," two communities that were surrounded by Swedish farmers. The same newspaper identified two broom corn dealers in Holdrege, C. M. Sheldon and G. A. Hanson, the latter almost certainly Scandinavian. Rolf Johnson, a young Swede who moved from Illinois to Phelps County with his parents in 1876, recorded how he and thirty other Swedes handled broom corn for the railroad agents who had attracted them to Nebraska.¹⁷

The great majority of Swedes who settled in the six sample counties entered agriculture. Land, after all, was what drew them to the plains of Kansas and Nebraska. These people did not plan to establish self-sufficient farms that would provide for their every need. They were not romantics who sought a peaceful rural life, unfettered by material possessions. They were

businessmen whose business was farming. They expected to market their crops profitably and to use their gains to buy desirable goods. This commerce--the sale of agricultural production and the purchase of goods and services a person was unable or unwilling to produce himself--inevitably brought Swedish farmers into contact with American businessmen.

This does not mean that Swedes had no presence of their own along Main Street. Swedish artisans and merchants were among the early settlers in all substantial Swedish communities. In some towns where Swedes dominated, such as Lindsborg, they eventually controlled most businesses, although even in the most Swedish of communities American businessmen held important positions. For some items a Swedish consumer could remain entirely within the ethnic community, even to the point of purchasing goods imported from Sweden and making the transaction in the Swedish language. Other items may have been available only from an American who spoke English.

Businessmen are rational individuals who seek to maximize their profits. A merchant or professional who sees a realistic opportunity to tap an ethnic market will do so, particularly if he or she has competitors who might otherwise control that market. Someone who has a monopoly over a particular good or service, especially an essential one, can perhaps afford not to cater to ethnic consumers, as might someone whose prosperity is secure without ethnic patronage. Such is rarely the case, however. Many American businessmen in the sample communities attempted to attract Swedish customers by offering special goods they wanted or, more commonly, by hiring Swedes who could sell to their countrymen in their native language. Furthermore, in all the Swedish communities in Kansas and Nebraska, some Americans and Swedes found it in their mutual interests to establish partnerships, indicating a significant degree of economic assimilation for the immigrants involved.

One of the simplest means by which American businessmen could increase their business with Swedes was to hire a clerk of that nationality. Such individuals were typically young people who had attended the public schools and who had acquired a good command of English, thus being

able to converse with customers in either language. When Murphy & Day purchased the Pioneer Drug Store in Lindsborg in 1880, they announced that they had "Swede, German, and English clerks and can accommodate all classes and nationalities." Similarly, Allen Wilbur, an American insurance agent in Lindsborg, advertised that he had recently employed John Wickstrum, "who can talk to you in the Swedish language."¹⁸ In Wahoo, Nebraska, the local newspaper predicted that "Our Scandinavian friends . . . will be pleased to meet our young friend Fred W. Flodman in Joseph & Grafe's store," the owners of which were German. Killian Bros., a Czech-owned general store in Wahoo, hired a number of Swedish clerks in the 1890s.¹⁹ In Oakland, Nebraska, Harry Anderson obtained a position as a clerk with Predmestka & Crashe. When a Swedish clerk at R. Gold & Co. in Stromsburg resigned, he was promptly replaced with another Swede.²⁰ Outside companies sometimes sought agents among the Swedes. A marble works in McPherson, Kansas, advertised for "a good energetic Swede man" to serve as its local representative in Lindsborg. A Topeka life insurance company employed a Scandinavian agent and advertised in Swedish to attract customers in central Kansas. Swedish businessmen also looked for ways to increase their business from groups that did not speak Swedish. Thus a Wahoo newspaper was pleased to announce that "Frank Bartek, the accommodating Bohemian clerk, is now employed in Larson's dry goods and grocery store."²¹

Hiring clerks who could work with customers in a foreign language was a fairly common practice among businessmen in communities with heavy immigrant populations. Less common was the attempt by American merchants to offer Swedish goods to their customers. S. Y. Curtis, a druggist in Lindsborg, sold "E. A. Rosene & Co's. Svenska mediciner" in his shop. Although the editor of the Smoky Valley News was an American, he boasted that its print shop did "all kinds of Swede work . . . at the lowest possible rates." R. B. Beer, the Union Pacific agent in Stromsburg, Nebraska, advertised transportation "to and from Scandinavian points."²²

Swedish merchants and professionals were much more likely than non-Swedes to appeal to their kinsmen with products and services that had an Old World tie. Swedes in Kansas often had a

range of Swedish medical and medicinal services and products available to them. In 1880, a Doctor Bokman, "the only Swede druggist in Marquette," also served as a physician and veterinarian. In Lindsborg, Swedish pharmacists offered "special attention . . . to Sweedish [sic] prescriptions" and a wide variety of "well known Swedish remedies."²³ A Swedish physician advertised his expertise in "Swedish movements and massage" and a midwife assured potential customers that she had "diplomas from Stockholm and Chicago." When the community lost one of its physicians in the 1890s, Carl Swensson personally involved himself in the effort to find a Swedish doctor to replace him.²⁴

Swedes who wanted the familiar tastes of their homeland could sometimes find ethnic foods advertised in their local newspapers, particularly around the Christmas season. Hipse & Lindahl's in Oakland, Nebraska, offered "Fresh Cranberries, Lingon[berries], White Fish, Cod Fish, Herring, Anchovies, Hard Tack, and Imported Swedish Sausage" to its customers just before the holiday. Stores in Lindsborg enticed their customers with lutefisk (better known in the United States by the Norwegian term lutefisk), lingonberries, Jul ost (Christmas cheese), and an assortment of Swedish cakes and breads.²⁵

Lindsborg was large enough to support book dealers who carried a supply of Swedish books. Ekblad, Eberhardt & Goodholm purported to be the only firm west of the Mississippi that imported Swedish books for wholesale. Another businessman apparently specialized in religious literature in Swedish and English, with particular emphasis to the evangelical materials that would appeal to Mission Friends.²⁶

Swedish businessmen sometimes employed the Swedish language in their advertisements in the local English-language press. P. N. Elarth used Swedish to advertise musical instruction in the Stromsburg Headlight. In Holdrege, Nebraska, Ledlie & Rea reminded their Swedish customers to "betala upp!," (pay up). In Lindsborg, one firm promoted its "lek saker" (toys) just before Christmas. Another Lindsborg businessman, himself a Swede, parodied the broken English his countrymen used with a fictional conversation between John Johnson and John

Peterson: "'Vair yoo baj dat overcoat, Petterson [sic]?' 'I baj it o' Sundström, yu bet.'"²⁷

Swedes also offered their countrymen the means to keep in touch with their homeland. Swedes in Lindsborg, Oakland, and Stromsburg handled arrangements for steamship tickets to and from Sweden and in Wahoo the First National Bank, dominated by Norwegians, sold tickets for "\$30.85 from all the Scandinavian points and \$22.85 from Hamberg [sic] to Wahoo."²⁸ Once Swedes began taking over the local English press or establishing their own English-language newspapers, Swedish readers could subscribe to both the town paper and a Swedish newspaper published elsewhere for a single fee. Under the control of Eric Johnson in 1887, the Holdrege Citizen offered clubbing rates with Bladet, Hemlandet, Svenska Tribunen and the Skandinavisk Farmers' Journal, all of Chicago, and Svenska Herolden from Kansas City.²⁹

Most businesses in the towns containing a substantial Swedish element were owned by a single proprietor. Of the remainder, many were owned by partners of the same nationality. There were a number of firms, however, in which Swedes cooperated with other nationalities on an equal basis. In Lindsborg at one time or another, one could buy agricultural implements from Bradley & Jacobson, lumber from Lincoln [formerly Lindgren] & Dunbar, and stationery from Ekblad, Eberhardt & Goodholm, the middle member of which was of German stock.³⁰ In Wahoo, Claus Lubker, a Dutchman, and Al Hultberg, a Swede established an implement business, and the hardware firm of Stratton and Hanson sold bicycles.³¹ In Stromsburg in 1885 Olof Headstrom went into the implement business with Thomas Lake, a recent settler from Connecticut, Post & Hedstrom operated a general store, and Donelson & Myrberg ran a livery stable. At Holdrege, Dravo & Norberg had a law partnership, Johnson & Vanderhoof sold real estate, and Clary & Lindbloom ground flour.³²

Businesses that required substantial capital frequently had representatives of more than one ethnic group among the officers or on the board of directors. Not only did this distribute risk among the various groups, but, inasmuch as banks often fell into this category, it also gave immigrants access to financial services through channels with which they were comfortable. In

Lindsborg, the Farmers State Bank was organized in 1886 by two Swedes, two Americans, and a German. In 1900 there were two banks in town, both of which had American presidents and vice-presidents and Swedish cashiers. In nearby Marquette, there were no Swedes among the proprietors of the first bank, established in July, 1886, but Swedes controlled between a quarter and a third of a building and loan association formed shortly thereafter. The State Bank of Marquette, founded in May, 1892, had a Swedish president and four of the six resident directors were Swedes. That institution failed within six months, but was replaced by another bank in which ten of seventeen stockholders and four of seven directors were Swedish.³³ In Oakland, Nebraska, Swedes held the presidency and vice-presidency of the First National Bank while Americans served as cashier and assistant cashier. In Saunders County Swedes, Americans, and Czechs cooperated in banks at Wahoo and Colon.³⁴

Swedes and Americans often worked together in land companies, either for the sale of land within the communities they lived or as colonization efforts in other places. The Lindsborg Land Company was dominated by Swedes, as one might expect from their early settlement in the area, but the president and one director were Americans. A similar company in Marquette had fifteen original stockholders, seven of whom were Swedes. Land companies involved in promoting Swedish settlements in western Kansas and in Colorado had American or German officers and agents.³⁵

As economic distress due to drought and depression touched plainsmen in the 1880s and 1890s, Swedes and Americans worked together to guarantee their future. One solution that many farmers turned to was dairy production as a means of diversification. Successful marketing of such production required a local creamery company. In Holdrege, Swedes played an important role in creameries founded in 1889 and 1898. In Stromsburg, Swedes dominated the committee that examined the feasibility of a creamery and held three of eight positions on the business's board of directors in 1899.³⁶ When central Nebraska farmers were considering new crops in the 1890s, Swedes participated with Americans in the Phelps County Sugar Beet Association.

Ever mindful of the necessity of good marketing facilities, Swedes and Americans joined funds and forces to build elevators in their communities.³⁷

Despite this cooperation, there were some large-scale business ventures which involved only Swedes. Early in Oakland's history, Scandinavians in the community established the Scandinavian Mill Association. Incorporated with \$10,000 capital, the organization had thirty-four members, all of whom were Scandinavian in origin.³⁸ Insurance companies were much more common than mill associations. The Swedish farmers in central Kansas organized the Saline and McPherson Counties' Swedish Farmers Mutual Aid Association in 1872. It apparently did not last long, and a new company, eventually named the Swedish American Insurance Company, began in 1885. Intended solely for Swedes, the company did not extend coverage to non-Swedes until 1931. By 1900 the firm had 1,538 members and over a million and a half dollars in outstanding insurance.³⁹ In Wahoo, the Svea Mutual Insurance Association offered insurance to Swedes while Americans apparently turned to the Farmer's Mutual Insurance Company. In 1895, the Swedish company carried 280 members insured property totaling nearly \$350,000, a few thousand dollars short of its American counterpart. Around Stromsburg, Swedish farmers formed the Swede Home Mutual Insurance Company.⁴⁰

For reasons of economic self-interest if no other, Americans sought the business of Swedes and other ethnic groups and developed several strategies to attract it. Swedish customers could purchase many of their necessities from their countrymen on Main Street, but Swedes sometimes had to deal with Americans or other ethnic groups to obtain goods they wanted. Some Swedish businessmen found it in their best interests to form partnerships with Americans or other immigrants, each partner bringing a range of ethnic contacts to the firm as well as a set of skills or a store of goods. Moreover, independent Swedish businessmen must have had significant contact with non-Swedes as they tried to broaden their markets to attract customers outside their own ethnic group by doing such things as hiring clerks who could speak English or other languages. Many Swedish businessmen, particularly those who were not artisans, must also have

relied on American contacts to purchase and ship supplies or to market their production. Those enterprises requiring extensive capital or the participation of large numbers of Swedes to succeed generally brought both Americans and Swedes together in common cause. All of these items indicate a degree of economic assimilation that is essentially immeasurable.

It is possible to examine how Swedes fit into a local economy and how they compared with other groups by analyzing the occupational structure of a community. To do this, one classifies the occupations listed in the U.S. Census returns into five categories--high white collar, low white collar, skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled-menial labor. Historians can examine how each major ethnic group was distributed across those categories, how the groups compared with one another, and how the absolute and relative positions changed between censuses to reach some conclusions about the role and success of each group over time.⁴¹

To establish a data base for this, every person in Lindsborg, Kansas, and Wahoo, Nebraska, who listed a classifiable occupation and for whom ethnicity was available on the 1880 and 1900 federal censuses was placed into one of the five categories. Individuals were classified by their ethnic stock; Swedish immigrant and his or her American-born children were counted as Swedish. The grandchildren of the immigrant generation, of whom there were a few in the work force by 1900, were counted as Americans.

Swedes dominated the Lindsborg economy, comprising nearly sixty percent of the work force in 1880 (Table 7.1). By contrast, Americans made up only a quarter of the town's workers. No other group held as many as five percent of the jobs in the community. However, although Swedes were the most important group numerically, they were slightly under-represented at the higher ranks in the economy. Just over forty-six percent of the work force fell into the two categories that may be classified as white collar. About forty-three percent of Swedes were white collar. Over fifty-seven percent of Americans, on the other hand, were in the white collar ranks. Concentration of Americans in the white collar sector of the economy is not surprising. They likely brought more capital to Kansas, they certainly brought

better facility with the English language, and, if they were merchants, probably had closer connections to other American businessmen. Indeed, the fact that over forty percent of all Swedes

Table 7.1. 1880 Occupational Structure, Lindsborg, Kansas, by Ethnic Stock.

	%High White Collar	%Low White Collar	%Skilled	%Semi- Skilled	%Unskilled and Menial Service	N
TOTAL	6.8	39.5	24.1	4.3	25.3	162
Swedes	6.3	36.5	31.3	6.3	19.8	96
Americans	9.5	47.6	9.5	0.0	33.3	42
Other Scandinavians	0.0	62.5	0.0	12.5	25.0	8
Germans	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	2
British	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	4
Irish	0.0	40.0	40.0	0.0	20.0	5
Mixed	0.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	40.0	5

Source: 1880 U.S. Census, McPherson County, Kansas.

were white collar workers less than a dozen years after that nationality began large-scale colonization of the Smoky Valley suggests significant economic success.

Nearly a third of those Swedes who listed occupations fell into the skilled ranks in 1880, probably reflecting trades brought from Sweden, but relatively few Americans came with a skilled occupation. Americans, however, were over-represented in among the unskilled, a third of their number falling into that category; fewer Swedes were unskilled workers than one might expect given their proportion of the population.

In the two decades between the 1880 and 1900 censuses, Swedish immigrants and their children moved toward almost complete dominance of Lindsborg's economy (Table 7.2). Although the number of people grew by 150%, the actual number of Americans in the economy declined.

By 1900 eight-five percent of all employed persons in Lindsborg were Swedish. Americans held less than ten percent of jobs in the economy, and no other group, including those whose parentage was a mixture of other groups, amounted to more than three percent of the local workers.

Table 7.2. 1900 Occupational Structure, Lindsborg, Kansas, by Ethnic Stock.

	%High White Collar	%Low White Collar	%Skilled	%Semi- Skilled	%Unskilled and Menial Service	N
TOTAL	7.6	36.6	13.4	15.4	27.1	410
Swedes	7.2	36.9	13.3	13.5	29.1	347
Americans	9.5	42.9	17.1	17.1	14.3	35
Other Scandinavians	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	1
Germans	20.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	10.0	10
British	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	3
Irish	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	1
Mixed	8.3	25.0	0.0	41.5	25.0	12

Source: 1900 U.S. Census, McPherson County, Kansas.

The number of Swedes in Lindsborg's economy in 1900 was so large that it is almost difficult to speak of economic assimilation. The fifteen percent of non-Swedish businessmen and workers must have depended substantially on Swedes for customers and jobs. For non-Swedes to have survived at all, though, many Swedes must have been able to transact business with them in the English language.

The huge numbers of Swedes in the 1900 work force means that the distribution among the categories for the city as a whole is nearly the same as it is for the Swedes. Some important

trends in the data are evident, however. Although the proportion of white collar workers among the Swedes remained nearly constant, the percentage of skilled workers declined significantly while the proportions of semi-skilled and unskilled rose substantially. Although less than twenty percent of Swedes could be classified as unskilled in 1880, nearly thirty percent could be two decades later. During the same interval, the proportion of Americans in unskilled jobs fell from a third to less than fifteen percent. The reasons for this shift are unknown. There seems to have been declining opportunity for Swedes over time. Perhaps the maturing of the agricultural economy made it difficult for young men to enter farming and growing numbers of these found unskilled positions in the town's economy. Lindsborg, because of its heavily Swedish population, acted as a magnet in attracting many Swedes who immigrated after the community was founded. At least some of the young unskilled workers in Lindsborg in 1900 were immigrants who had been in America only a short while and who were going through the same kind of adjustment process their predecessors had experienced a generation earlier. Because Lindsborg was so Swedish, it is unlikely that many non-Swedes migrated from any distance to the Smoky Valley town in search of economic opportunities.

A statistical measure known as an occupational index provides a convenient means of comparing groups overall position along the spectrum from unskilled to high white collar workers. Each rank in the work force is assigned a numerical value, ranging from +2 for high white collar workers to -2 for unskilled workers, which is then multiplied by the percentage of that ethnic group in that particular rank. The index which results from the addition of the scores for each of the ranks indicates whether or not a group is generally above or below the status of skilled worker and by how much. A score of +2 would indicate that all members of the group are white collar workers, of -2 that all members were unskilled, and of 0 either that all members were skilled workers or that the combined values for white collar workers equalled those for semi-skilled and unskilled workers.⁴²

Lindsborg's work force in both 1880 and 1900 fell slightly below the level of skilled

worker (Table 7.3). Swedes, because of their important role on Main Street, had an index above 0 in 1880. The growing proportion of unskilled Swedish workers by 1900, however, pulled

Table 7.3. Occupational Index for Lindsborg, Kansas, 1880 and 1900.

	1880	1900
City	-.018	-.178
Swedes	+.032	-.204
Americans	.000	+.340

Source: Calculated from occupation data, 1880 and 1900 U. S. Censuses, McPherson County, Kansas.

that index--and the one for the city as a whole--down. Americans, because of the combined effect of significant numbers of white collar workers and a large percentage of unskilled blue collar workers in 1880, were perfectly balanced between the upper and lower halves of the occupational structure. By 1900, however, with declining numbers of unskilled employees and continued prominence in white collar positions, Americans increased their occupation index substantially.

Lindsborg and the surrounding townships were settled primarily by Swedes and Swedish domination of the town's work force was a natural consequence. Wahoo was a much more diverse area despite the extensive Swedish settlements to the west, south, and east of the community. By 1880, only a little more than a tenth of the community's work force was Swedish and Swedes were only the third most important group numerically (Table 7.4).

In contrast to the advantageous position which Swedes held in the Lindsborg community, Swedes in Wahoo were far less secure. Over forty percent--more than any group of consequence--were unskilled workers, traditionally the most marginal sector in the economy. Moreover, no other group--with the exception of the Danes and Norwegians, who had an extraordinarily high proportion of people in white collar positions--had a smaller percent of

 Table 7.4. 1880 Occupational Structure, Wahoo, Nebraska, by Ethnic Stock.

	%High White Collar	%Low White Collar	%Skilled	%Semi- Skilled	%Unskilled and Menial Service	N
TOTAL	10.2	39.8	20.2	7.3	22.4	410
Swedes	4.6	31.8	20.5	0.0	43.2	44
Americans	16.4	39.0	23.6	6.7	14.4	195
Other Scandinavians	13.3	60.0	6.7	0.0	20.0	15
Germans	0.0	43.8	18.8	6.4	31.3	32
British	15.0	35.0	25.0	10.0	15.0	20
Irish	0.0	55.6	16.7	5.6	22.2	18
Czechs	2.0	32.0	14.0	14.0	38.0	50
Other	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	4
Mixed	6.3	46.9	18.8	15.6	12.5	32

Source: 1880 U.S. Census, Saunders County, Nebraska.

its work force in the skilled and semi-skilled ranks. In a community where half of the work force was white collar, only about thirty-five percent of Swedes could be classified in the two categories with the highest status. Only the Czechs ranked behind the Swedes in holding the white collar positions in the economy, and then only slightly.

Wahoo differed from Lindsborg in important respects. The Saunders County community was the largest in the county. Centrally located, it served as the county seat and, as a consequence, was the residence for many of the county's officers. Moreover, businessmen choosing a new location would likely be more attracted to a town possessing a central location and county government than one lacking both. Lindsborg, once the county seat in McPherson County, lost its role to McPherson, in large part due to the latter's location nearer the center of the

county. If the occupational survey had included McPherson, one might have found that Swedes held a position there much like they held in Wahoo. Conversely, had the survey examined one of the small villages around Wahoo--Mead or Malmo, for example--one likely would have found Swedes more in control of the community's economy than they were in Wahoo.

By 1900, Wahoo Swedes had substantially improved their position in the economy (Table 7.5). They had doubled their proportion of the community's work force and had emerged as the second most important ethnic group. Czechs, who had formed the second largest group in the 1880 census, more than doubled their actual numbers but only increased their proportion of the work force by three percent. The growing numbers of Swedes in Wahoo's economy can be attributed to several factors. Young men and women from the surrounding rural districts, which were heavily Swedish, would have looked to Wahoo as a logical job market if they could not or would not enter agriculture. The 1883 decision to locate Luther Academy in Wahoo--a decision which, given the small number of Swedes in the town's economy, was risky--certainly helped identify the community as a Swedish center, brought Swedish faculty and students to Wahoo, and may have attracted Swedish businessmen.

More important than this numerical growth, Swedes narrowed the gap between their occupational structure and that of the community as a whole. In the twenty-year interval between censuses, Swedes managed to come within a single percentage point of the community's proportion of high white collar, low white collar, and skilled workers. At the bottom two rungs of the occupational ladder, although Swedes were somewhat less likely to be semi-skilled than the work force as a whole, their proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled laborers combined was almost exactly the same as for the group as a whole. Swedes continued to lag behind Americans in the overall occupational structure, with Americans having greater representation among white collar workers. Although Swedes were somewhat more likely to be skilled blue collar workers than Americans were, people born in America of American parents were less likely to be unskilled.

Table 7.5. 1900 Occupational Structure, Wahoo, Nebraska, by Ethnic Stock.

	%High White Collar	%Low White Collar	%Skilled	%Semi- Skilled	%Unskilled and Menial Service	N
TOTAL	7.8	39.3	11.9	16.0	25.0	787
Swedes	6.8	39.9	12.3	12.3	28.8	163
Americans	10.9	43.4	9.5	15.8	20.4	304
Other Scandinavians	2.8	36.1	22.2	8.3	30.6	36
Germans	0.0	46.2	18.5	10.8	24.6	65
British	3.7	29.6	29.6	18.5	18.5	27
Irish	10.0	46.7	10.0	20.0	13.3	30
Czechs	5.4	26.8	8.1	23.2	36.6	122
Other	25.0	37.5	0.0	25.0	12.5	8
Mixed	9.5	33.3	11.9	21.4	23.8	42

Source: 1900 U.S. Census, Saunders County, Nebraska.

Most other ethnic groups lost ground in Wahoo's economy between 1880 and 1900. In the city as a whole, although the proportion of the work force in white collar occupations did not change appreciably, there was a significant decline in the number of skilled workers and a consequent increase in the proportion of semiskilled and unskilled workers. A comparison of the occupation indexes for the major groups in Wahoo (Table 7.6) reveals that the Swedes, Germans, and Irish were the only groups to register gains during the period. Czechs, who had the lowest occupational index in 1880, dropped even farther by 1900. That group as a whole did not experience the sort of occupational mobility Swedes exhibited, although the two groups had had similar occupation indexes in 1880. Americans dropped from a strongly white collar distribution to one only slightly so. Although the indices for the other groups should be used with

caution because of the small numbers, especially for 1880, Germans registered a modest gain and

Table 7.6. Occupational Index for Wahoo, Nebraska, 1880 and 1900.

	1880	1900
City	+ .081	- .111
Swedes	- .454	- .164
Americans	+ .434	+ .086
Other Scandinavians	+ .466	- .278
Germans	- .251	- .138
British	+ .250	- .185
Irish	+ .056	+ .201
Czech	- .540	- .588

Source: Calculated from occupation data, 1880 and 1900 U. S. Censuses, Saunders County, Nebraska.

Irish fared somewhat better. Danes and Norwegians had a very high index for 1880 because nearly three-quarters of the group fell into the white collar categories. By 1900 over sixty percent of the other Scandinavians were blue collar workers. The British, half of whom had been white collar workers in 1880, experienced a similar downward movement along the occupational spectrum.

In economic respects, Swedish immigrants adapted readily to their new homeland. Upon their arrival in America, large numbers of immigrants spent a period of months or years working either for Americans or for earlier immigrants who had already begun to assimilate into the economic life of the United States. During this time of seasoning, which for the Swedes who settled in the Great Plains was frequently in Illinois or another midwestern state, immigrants acquired a working knowledge of English, perhaps an introduction to American agricultural methods or business patterns, and the financial resources to enter farming or another of business in Kansas or Nebraska.

Those Swedes who chose agriculture--and this was the major attraction to the areas under study--quickly adopted the prevailing crop and livestock patterns found among American farmers in the vicinity. Those ethnic variations that existed or reappeared after a number of years in America were typically minor in relationship to the agricultural operations as a whole. The communal ties among groups, including between Americans and Swedes, were more important than the differences.

In the small towns that were likely to develop in the rural counties Swedes settled, American businessmen actively courted Swedish customers with a variety of marketing strategies. Precisely how successful they were at this cannot be measured, but the fact that Americans continued to implement policies such as hiring Swedish-American clerks suggests that it was profitable. Swedes who wanted to purchase goods or services with which they had been familiar in Sweden could likely find them offered by one of their ethnic group rather than by an American, although a few Americans carried ethnic products. Swedes, Americans, and other groups cooperated on an equal basis in business partnerships, in capital-intensive projects, and in economic development schemes, although Swedes appear to have placed greater trust in their own mutual insurance companies than in those outside of the group. Economic self-interest, either for oneself or for one's community, could generally transcend ethnic barriers.

Swedes fit with varying success into the local economy of these country towns. In Lindsborg, Swedes held a majority role by 1880 and in 1900 dominated the work force. Swedes could be found in almost every line of work there by the end of the century, even though Americans--minority though they were--were more likely to be white collar workers. One might expect that sort of domination in Lindsborg, which had been founded by Swedes in the midst of an extensive Swedish settlement. In Wahoo, Americans formed about half of the work force and Swedes held only a little more than ten percent of jobs in the economy in 1880, many of those at the lower end. By 1900 Swedes had improved their overall position in the economy both in quality of job and quantity of workers. Indeed, by 1900 the Swedes nearly matched the

occupational distribution of the city as a whole and had significantly closed the gap between themselves and the Americans.

With some exceptions, such as the continued desire for some Old World products, the organization of some business enterprises as solely Swedish or Scandinavian venture, and minor agricultural patterns, Swedes sought economic assimilation. Economic success was, after all, one of the primary motivations for the Swedes who settled Kansas and Nebraska.

CHAPTER 7

NOTES

1. Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), p. 43.

2. Allan G. Bogue, From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 238; Eric Englund, "Farmers," in Swedes in America, 1638-1938, ed. by Adolph B. Benson and Naboth Hedin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 84-85; Everett E. Edwards, "Their Road Led West: How Swedish Pioneers Became American Farmers," American Swedish Monthly 42 (June, 1948): 64; Carl W. Johnson, "A Kansas Pioneer," American Swedish Monthly 42 (June, 1948): 53; Richard K. Hofstrand, ed., With Affection, Marten (Charleston, IL: Bench Mark Publications, 1983), p. 41. For a Norwegian example, see Jon Gjerde, From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 168, 170.

3. Edna [Bergsten] Lindquist to Emory K. Lindquist, Bemidge [sic], MN, December, 1949, Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas; Johan Augustin Pihl, God's People in a New Land, trans. by Vernon C. F. Holm (Lindsborg: Smoky Valley Historical Publications, 1984), pp. 38, 41-42; C. J. Stromquist, "Some Memories from the Early Settlement in Fremont, Kansas," (Typescript, n.d.), Lindquist Papers, p. 1; Gwen Rice and Robert [sic] M. Howard, "Peter Gibson: Adventurer, Blacksmith, and Prosperous Farmer," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 27 (January, 1976): 46, 48; B. E. Bengtson, Pen Pictures of Pioneers (Holdrege, NE: Progress Printing Co., 1926), 1: 3.

4. Charles S. Perky, ed., Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), Volume 2, passim. This count includes some individuals for whom information was available from their sons' biographies. The sons, being born in the U.S., were excluded.

5. Several individuals listed more than one occupation and are counted under each. For example, a farm laborer who became a farmer while still in Illinois was counted under both occupations. Twenty-one men listed occupations; the tally of men in all occupations totaled twenty-eight.

6. Portrait and Biographical Record of Dickinson, Saline, McPherson and Marion Counties, Kansas (Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1893), passim.

7. On Kansas, see Pihl, God's People in a New Land, p. 45; and Mathilda (Sandall) Sundstrom, Autobiography (Mimeographed, n.d.), Sundstrom Papers, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois [hereafter SSIRC]. The "Register of Descendants of Pioneer Families, McPherson County, Kansas, 1859-1870," McPherson County Historical Society, Lindsborg, Kansas, contains several brief biographies that mention farm labor or railroad work. See those of Franc [sic] Oskar Aurell, Gustav Johnson, Carl Johan Landgren, and Andrew Peter Nelson.

For Nebraska, see Carl Albert Olson, Daybook, Olson Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE [hereafter NSHS], 1: 101-102, 107; J. E. Olson, "Brief Historical Sketch

of a Nebraska Pioneer Family--John Peter Olson," (Typescript, n.d.), SSIRC, p. 1, and Albert P. Strom, ed., Swedish Pioneers in Saunders County, Nebraska: A Collection of Family Histories of Early Settlers in Nebraska (Pittsburgh, PA: n.p., 1972), pp. 5-6, 39, 41.

8. Perky, Past and Present of Saunders County, Volume 2, *passim*. People with occupations other than farming were omitted because some were professionals or businessmen who came to the county long after they had immigrated and sometimes decades after the county had been settled.

9. Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, trans. by Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 96; Matilda (Sandell) Sundstrom, Autobiography, pp. 3, 5-6. Married women who could not leave their home to work sometimes took in laundry to supplement the family income. See Ellen Larson, "Aunt Ellen Remembers," Swedish-American Historical Quarterly 38 (July, 1987): 130.

10. Lindsborg News, January 28, 1897; Ida Lindgren, Brev från nybyggerhemmet i Kansas, 1870-1881 (Malmö: Skänka Litografiska Aktieföretaget, 1911; rpt., Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktieföretag, 1960), p. 17; Olson, Daybook, 1: 104. For other examples of Swedish domestic servants, see John Oscar Stromquist, "Mother and Dad," (Typescript, n.d.), McPherson County Historical Society, Lindsborg, KS, p. 2; the biography of Selma Brandt Aurell in the "Register of Descendants of Pioneer Families"; and Fritz Herbert Larson, A Journey Back in Life: A Tribute to My Heritage ([Lincoln, NE?]: n.p., [1983?]), p. 5. Janice Webster Reiff, "Domestication and Americanization: Scandinavian Women in Seattle, 1888 to 1900," Journal of Urban History 4 (May, 1978): 275-290, argues that single Scandinavian women who worked as domestic servants before marriage later established household patterns that were essentially middle-class American.

11. See for example Terry G. Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966); Gjerde, From Peasants to Farmers, pp. 168-201; Robert Ostergren, "A Community Transplanted: The Formative Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Community in the Upper Middle West," Journal of Historical Geography 5 (April, 1979): 208-212; John G. Rice, "The Role of Culture and Community in Frontier Prairie Farming," Journal of Historical Geography 3 (1977): 155-175. For a study of Swedish agriculturalists in a climate substantially different from the Great Plains, see Phebe Fjellström, Swedish-American Colonization in the San Joaquin Valley in California: A Study of the Acculturation and Assimilation of an Immigrant Group (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1970), pp. 86-91.

For general overviews of immigrants in agriculture, see Theodore Saloutos, "The Immigrant Contribution to American Agriculture," Agricultural History 50 (January, 1976): 45-67; and Robert P. Swierenga, "Ethnicity and American Agriculture," Ohio History 89 (1980): 323-44.

12. David Aidan McQuillan, "Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups to Farming in Central Kansas, 1875-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975), pp. 333-338. The quotation is from page 336. See also McQuillan, "Farm Size and Work Ethic: Measuring the Success of Immigrant Farmers on the American Grasslands, 1875-1925," Journal of Historical Geography 4 (January, 1978): 57-76; and McQuillan, "Territory and Ethnic Identity: Some New Measures of an Old Theme in the Cultural Geography of the United States," in European Settlement and Development in North America: Essays on Geographical Change in Honour and Memory of Andrew Hill Clark, ed. by James R. Gibson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 136-169.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 172, 196-197, 215-217, 223.
14. Bradley H. Baltensperger, "Agricultural Change among Nebraska Immigrants, 1880-1900," in Ethnicity on the Great Plains, ed. by Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 170-189, especially pp. 186-187. For a full discussion of cultural rebound, see Jordon, German Seed in Texas Soil, p. 199.
15. McQuillan, "Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups," pp. 306, 311, 314-315, 319, 323, 348.
16. Allan Lindfors and Eleanor Burnison, Pioneers on the Prairie: A History of Marquette, Kansas (Lindsborg: News-Record, 1978), pp. 32, 98-99; Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 68-69, 158; 1900 U. S. Census, McPherson County, Kansas.
17. Holdrege Citizen, December 30, 1887; Rolf Johnson, Diary, September 4, 1877, Rolf Johnson Papers, SIRRC. This collection does not contain the manuscript diary. The diary was published serially in the Holdrege Progress and this collection consists of the undated newspaper clippings. Bradley H. Baltensperger, "Agricultural Adjustments to Great Plains Drought: The Republican Valley, 1870-1900," in The Great Plains: Environment and Culture, ed. by Brian W. Biouet and Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 51-52, found some interest in broom corn as a crop in the Republican River Valley during the late nineteenth century.
18. Lindsborg Localist, January 17, 24, 1880; Smoky Valley News, February 19, 1886.
19. The Independent (Wahoo), September 17, 1884; Wahoo Democrat, September 24, 1896; March 2, 1899. The ethnic origins of the store owners are available in the 1880 U.S. Census, Saunders County, Nebraska.
20. Oakland Republican, December 22, 1898; Stromsburg Headlight, May 14, 1891.
21. Smoky Valley News, February 12, 1886; Lindsborg News, August 10, 1900; The Independent (Wahoo), September 10, 1884.
22. Lindsborg Localist, January 3, 1880; Smoky Valley News, August 13, 1886; Stromsburg Headlight, March 24, 1898.
23. Lindsborg Localist January 24, April 8, 1880; Lindsborg News, March 8, 1895.
24. Lindsborg News, October 9, 1896; January 5, 1894; Carl A. Swensson to H. C. Miller, Lindsborg, Kansas, January 7, 1895, Carl A. Swensson Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas.
25. Oakland Republican, December 22, 1898; Lindsborg News, December 12, 1890; December 13, 1895; December 8, 15, 1899; January 19, 1900. See also Olaf F. Alfred, Interview (Typescript, 1956), Norden Club Project, NSHS, p. 3.
26. Lindsborg News, August 26, 1887; February 8, 1895, February 11, 1898.
27. Stromsburg Headlight, December 3, 1885; Holdrege Citizen, January 24, 1889;

Lindsborg News, December 12, 1890; October 28, 1887.

28. Smoky Valley News, June 5, 1885; Oakland Republican, November 23, 1899; Stromsburg Headlight, December 3, 1885; The Independent (Wahoo), June 4, 1885.

29. Holdrege Citizen, December 2, 9, 1887. See also Stromsburg Headlight, April 14, 1898; and Lindsborg News, July 20, 1900.

30. Smoky Valley News, June 5, 1885; Lindsborg News, June 6, 1890; November 6, 1896.

31. The Independent, (Wahoo), December 24, 1895; Saunders County New Era, June 1, 1900.

32. Stromsburg Headlight, October 1, November 12, 1885; Holdrege Republican, June 5, 1885; Holdrege Citizen, December 30, 1887; June 1, 1900.

33. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 160; Lindsborg News, June 6, 1900; Lindfors and Burnison, Pioneers of the Prairie, pp. 47-49.

34. Oakland Republican, June 7, 1900; Wahoo Democrat, June 14, 1900; Perky, Past and Present of Saunders County, 1: 129.

35. Lindsborg News, March 17, April 8, 1892; August 19, 1887; Lindfors and Burnison, Pioneers of the Prairie, pp. 13-14.

36. Holdrege Citizen, January 31, 1889; Holdrege Citizen-Forum, June 3, 1898; Stromsburg Headlight, November 11, 1897; January 5, 1899.

37. Holdrege Citizen, February 23, 1892; Smoky Valley News, June 23, 1882; Oakland Republican, July 9, 1896.

38. Douglas C. Sutherland, A History of Burt County, Nebraska, from 1803 to 1929 (Wahoo, NE: Ludi Printing Co., 1929), p. 75.

39. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 161-162; J. O. Stromquist, A Venture in Mutual Insurance, being a History of the Swedish American Insurance Company of Kansas of Lindsborg, Kansas (n.p., n.d.), pp. 3-4; [Elizabeth Jaderborg], Some Talk about Lindsborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1963), p. 7; Smoky Valley News, March 20, 1885; Lindsborg News, January 5, 1900.

40. Wahoo New Era, January 10, 1895; Stromsburg Headlight, January 26, 1893; Frank A. Adelson, Interview (Typescript, n.d.), Norden Club Project, NSHS; Alfred, Interview, p. 3.

41. The occupational classification employed for this analysis is a modified version of the one Stephan Thernstrom used in The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 290-292. Thernstrom's classification system required some modifications because it was intended for use in an urban setting rather than in rural areas and some occupations needed to be added. Moreover, the classification of several occupations was changed because it was believed

Thernstrom's original did not adequately categorize them.

Thernstrom made no provision for farmers or for farm laborers. For this study, farmers have been considered low white collar workers. It is painfully obvious to anyone who grew up in a rural area that agriculture, particularly under the circumstances prevailing in the nineteenth century, involves substantial manual labor. However, farmers were businessmen who used their capital resources--land which they owned or rented--to make a living. As such, they resembled the owners of businesses along Main Street and were counted as proprietors. Farm laborers were treated as unskilled laborers.

Thernstrom's original occupational ranking viewed teachers as high white collar workers. Inasmuch as one could teach in the public schools with a high school diploma and perhaps attendance at one or two summer teachers' institutes, this seemed too high. Many beginning teachers were themselves still teenagers when they began their teaching years and many women stayed in the profession only until they married. See Richard E. Dudley, "Nebraska Public School Education, 1890-1910," *Nebraska History* 54 (Spring, 1973): 69. Professors at Bethany College were counted as high white collar workers; public school teachers and the teachers at Luther Academy, which did not offer college credit until after 1900, were treated as low white collar workers.

Thernstrom ranked domestic servants as part of the semi-skilled and service sector. Inasmuch as many servants were teenaged girls who worked in service at domestic chores for a few years before marriage, they were classified in the unskilled and menial service category. Housekeepers, on the other hand, were generally mature women who presumably had more responsibilities. These were counted as semi-skilled.

In Thernstrom's system self-employed artisans were treated as low white collar workers because they were essentially proprietors. The census did not indicate whether or not a person was self-employed. To remedy this, a record was made of all ads in the local newspaper for the first issue in June in the census year. Those artisans who ran advertisements were treated as self-employed. Although it is possible that some self-employed artisans did not advertise their products or labors, this method at least reduced the number who were treated as artisans when they should have been considered proprietors.

Occupations which could not be classified, a few of which were found, were omitted, as were individuals who listed an occupation but were retired.

42. For an application of the occupational index, see Gary B. Cohen, "Ethnic Persistence and Change: Concepts and Models for Historical Research," *Social Science Quarterly* 65 (December, 1984): 1029-1042. The value assigned to each of the categories was: high white collar = +2; low white collar = +1; skilled = 0; semi-skilled = -1; unskilled = -2. The percentage of the group in each category was multiplied by the value for that category. The summation of the results is the occupational index. A group that was 10% high white collar, 30% low white collar, 20% skilled, 15% semi-skilled, and 25% unskilled would have an occupational index of $-.150 [2(.10) + 1(.30) + 0(.20) - 1(.15) - 2(.25)]$.

CHAPTER 8

THE SWEDES AND PUBLIC LIFE

In October, 1895, residents of Lindsborg and the surrounding communities staged an impressive two-day festival. The first day, October 3, was termed Forefather's Day and centered on a celebration of the Swedes' ethnic heritage. The morning opened with a biblical reading and prayer by Rev. A. W. Dahlsten, one of the first Lutheran ministers in the area. Throughout the morning, afternoon, and evening programs a Grand Choir of three hundred people accompanied by a one hundred twenty-five piece band entertained the large crowds with Swedish secular and sacred music such as "Hail dig, du höga Nord!" ("Hail to You, High North"), "National Söngen" ("The National Song"), "Lyft up[ö] din panna, du är Svensk" ("Lift Up Your Face, You Are Swedish"), and "Nu Herrns dag det är" ("Now It Is the Lord's Day"). Interspersed among the musical selections were orations by prominent Swedes and several Americans, all of whom lauded the Swedish character. One of the morning's key events was the presentation to the community of a Swedish flag donated by King Oscar II, Sweden's monarch. With the exception of the American orations and one American hymn, the entire program was in Swedish.

The following day Lindsborg celebrated its Patriotic Festival. The musical pieces of the day were ardently American, including such favorites as "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "The Army and Navy," "Stand by the Flag," "America," "Home Sweet Home," and "Nearer My God To Thee." The most prominent speakers were American politicians. Mirroring the flag ceremony of the previous day, the community received an American flag donated by the governor of Kansas. The central event was a parade consisting of bands, carriages and floats, including models of the Monitor and Merrimac on wheels and--suggesting that Swedes had adopted American racial stereotypes--"a monster watermelon with nigger head protruding." With the exception of two Swedish songs, the day's events were in English.¹

The Swedes in Lindsborg and other Swedish-American communities took an understandable

pride in their ethnic heritage. The music and language of their homeland were things to be cherished and handed down to their American-born children, perpetuated through immigrant institutions such as the church and Swede school. An occasion like Forefather's Day, itself apparently a development of an earlier Svenskarnes Dag (The Swedes' Day), allowed Swedes to reminisce about their native land and hear speakers praise their Nordic roots and character. Its coupling with the Patriotic Festival is symbolic of a continued love of an older life--or at least selected aspects thereof--despite a willingness to embrace a new life in America. The timing of the two-day festival is also symbolic. One day the Swedes revelled in their European past. The next day, putting that past behind them, they immersed themselves in the American language and culture. They did not forget their ethnicity--the replica of the Civil War naval engagement honored the contributions their countryman, John Ericsson, made to maritime technology and the Union cause--but their attachment to America, including its faults, was clear. As the local editor summarized the day, "The Starry Banner floated everywhere. There was no lack of patriotism."²

The Swedes who settled in Kansas and Nebraska, although they maintained some loyalties to Sweden and its culture, generally identified themselves and their future with America. They sought the privileges of citizenship through naturalization. They took an active role in local, state, and national politics, usually affiliating with the Republican party. Swedes participated in and sometimes led civic affairs in the communities in which they settled. They could wave the flag as vigorously or sing a patriotic song as enthusiastically as native-born Americans of old stock. Swedes in the Great Plains watched with interest the growing troubles with Spain in the late 1890s and, when hostilities opened, went to war in American uniforms.

Americans took note of such actions. Nineteenth and early twentieth century commentators on ethnicity frequently wrote favorably about the Scandinavians' interest in public affairs, taking it as a commitment to the American system and a measure of the group's desirability. Albert Shaw maintained that the Scandinavians "enter naturally and appreciatively into the spirit of our institutions" and "get their full share of the offices." The group, as Prescott

Hall pointed out in 1913, "take part in politics, usually on the side of good government." American pietists welcomed Scandinavian allies on temperance and prohibition issues. Swedes generally "became citizens with no delay beyond the legal requirement."³ Moreover, some writers claimed that the Scandinavians sought citizenship and adopted American political ways faster than other groups. Hall argued that Swedes and Norwegians were more likely to exercise the right of the ballot box than were groups such as the Germans, Irish, and Italians. Kendric Babcock, noting that Scandinavians in Minnesota took out their first citizenship papers sooner than Germans, proclaimed, "Certainly no class makes greater effort than the Scandinavian to become naturalized; none enters upon the rights and duties of American citizenship with more enthusiasm or honest, intelligent appreciation of its high privileges."⁴

Kansas and Nebraska newspapers echoed the sentiment that Swedes were valuable citizens, although editors often did so with an eye toward patronizing an important block of customers or voters. The editor of the Salina Sun, mending fences after running an editorial from an exchange which had criticized Scandinavians, declared "'The Scandinavians average up with the virtues and good qualities of any class of people on earth'" and complimented them on "'their prosperity and good citizenship.'" A Kansas City paper attacked an article critical of Swedes by insisting "'there is no better immigrant than the Swede'" and arguing that, even though the immigrant generation maintained a sense of its ethnicity, the second generation were among the most American of all groups. A Nebraska editor made a similar point by describing the Swedes in his county as "a nationality who, while retaining a loyal memory of Fatherland, as soon as they come among us go at once to work to become, in every sense of the word, American citizens."⁵

Census data allow some testing of the claim that Swedes sought citizenship more rapidly than other groups. The 1870 U.S. Census included a query about whether an individual was a male citizen of the United States, aged twenty-one or over, who could vote or who was barred from voting for reasons other than crime or rebellion. Adult males for whom neither of these columns in the manuscript census was checked presumably were not citizens. In 1870 four of

the six sample counties had settlements containing some Swedes--McPherson and Saline counties in Kansas and Burt and Saunders in Nebraska. Although Polk County, Nebraska, was organized by 1870, only one Swede lived there. Phelps County had not yet been formed. A systematic sample of these counties produced 1,182 individuals, of whom 246 were adult male immigrants.

Table 8.1. Rates of Citizenship Among Immigrant Groups in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1870.

Group	Number Claiming Voting Rights	Number of Adult Males in Group	% Claiming Voting Rights
Swedes	116	149	77.9
Non-Swedes	83	97	85.6
Other Scandinavians	17	17	100.0
Germans	11	13	84.6
Irish	14	14	100.0
Czechs	1	10	10.0
Other Groups	24	26	92.3
All Immigrants	199	246	80.9

Source: 1870 Census Sample

Rather than confirming the claim that Swedes naturalized quickly, the census data suggest that they had among the lowest rates of citizenship (Table 8.1). Although slightly over eighty percent of immigrants were listed as citizens entitled to vote, slightly less than that proportion of Swedes could be so categorized (77.9%). Only the Czechs in Saunders County, only ten of whom appeared in the sample, had a lower rate of naturalization--the extremely low rate of ten percent.

This pattern can be attributed to several factors. First, all four of these counties had recently become or were in the process of becoming major Swedish settlements. Large numbers of

the earliest Swedish immigrants were people who had lived in midwestern states and had had the opportunity to initiate the naturalization process. A portion of those Swedes living in the sample counties in 1870, however, were recent immigrants who had been drawn directly to Kansas and Nebraska by the lure of available land in growing Swedish-American communities. At least some of these would not have applied for citizenship by the time the census taker made his canvass, but intended to do so shortly. Similarly, the Czechs--to use the most common term for immigrants from Bohemia--tended to come to America later than Swedes and would have had less time to become citizens in other states before settling in Nebraska. This would confirm the findings of an earlier study. Edmund Brunner, in a 1929 examination of immigrants in agriculture, found that Scandinavians and other groups from northwestern Europe had the highest rates of citizenship of all immigrants. He concluded that time in America may have been as valid an indicator of naturalization as was ethnicity, for those groups with low rates arrived in this nation later.⁶

A second factor which might explain the 1870 rate of naturalization for Swedes is that the presence of substantial numbers of their countrymen may have made American citizenship a less pressing issue for some Swedish immigrants than it would have been had they settled in areas dominated by other groups. Within the comforting folds of a strong ethnic community, Swedes may have judged a political commitment to the United States less important. Third, because the townships from which the sample was taken were either heavily Swedish, contained substantial numbers of Swedish settlers, or were near Swedish settlements, these areas probably held less attraction for new immigrants from other countries who most likely would have sought the comfort of more solid communities of their own ethnicity. Immigrants who had already begun the shift toward an American identity--one manifestation of which would have been naturalization--might have been more comfortable in Swedish townships than their less Americanized peers because they relied less on an ethnic community for support. The fact that the Czechs in the sample, who exhibited the lowest rate of citizenship, lived in Bohemia Township in northern Saunders County--a township almost exclusively Czech--would seem to confirm this.

There are some problems with the 1870 data. The number of individuals in some immigrant groups is quite small and might not be representative of their group. However, inasmuch as adult males from northwestern Europe apart from Sweden all had high rates of citizenship--ranging from about eight-fifty to one hundred percent--and the group from central Europe had a very low rate--precisely what one might expect given the time of arrival and the relationship of the ethnic cultures to the American core culture-- it would seem that the results are reliable. A more serious question lies with variations by county within the Swedish group. As Table 8.2 indicates, less than forty percent of the Swedes in Saline County were counted as

Table 8.2. Citizenship of Swedes in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1870.

County	Number Claiming Voting Rights	Number of Adult Males in County	% Claiming Voting Rights
McPherson	71	73	97.3
Saline	16	44	36.4
Burt	19	22	86.4
Saunders	10	10	100.0

Source: 1870 Census Sample

citizens, while over eight-fifty percent of adult Swedish males in Burt County and virtually all of them in McPherson and Saunders counties were. Two factors might account for this considerable variation. The Saline County Swedes might have included significant numbers of recent immigrants who had not yet taken time to seek citizenship. However, many of the early Swedish settlers there had lived in Illinois before coming to Kansas with the Galesburg company. Indeed, some of them had settled in the Bishop Hill area in the 1840s and 1850s. A more likely explanation is that the census enumerator applied a more rigid definition of citizenship. To

become a citizen, an immigrant needed to file his declaration of intent to become a citizen and wait at least five years before citizenship could become final. In McPherson County, evidence suggests that individuals who had filed their first papers were counted as citizens with voting rights, even though they were not technically citizens. Olof Olsson, leader of the group from Värmland who settled around Lindsborg, arrived in Kansas in June, 1869. He filed his intention to become a citizen several weeks later, which entitled him to vote and run for elective office, but not actually become a citizen until 1876. Yet the census enumerator counted him as a citizen in June, 1870. If the census takers in Saline County had applied a strict definition of citizenship--and there is no way of knowing this with available resources--and counted as citizens only those who had completed the naturalization process, it would explain why more than sixty percent of adult Swedish males in that county were not listed as citizens. The same circumstance could account for the low rate of citizenship among the Czechs of Saunders County.⁷

The 1900 U.S. Census also collected information concerning citizenship, but in greater detail. Census takers inquired whether an immigrant was an alien, had filed the first papers to become a citizen, or was naturalized. Moreover, enumerators asked when the immigrant had entered the United States. This allows historians to compare how quickly a group became citizens. A systematic sample of selected townships in the six counties under study produced a total of 2,037 individuals. Of these, 206 were adult male Swedes for whom information on citizenship and year of immigration was complete. Another thirty-seven Swedish men turned up in the sample, but the census taker failed to obtain data on years in the United States or on citizenship. There were fifty-one adult male immigrants of other groups in the sample, of whom forty-five have complete information. Immigrant women apparently rarely sought naturalization--only one was listed as a citizen in the sample--and have been omitted from further study.

A substantial proportion of Swedish immigrants initiated proceedings for citizenship within a few years of their arrival in America (Table 8.3). Of those Swedes who had been in the United States between six and fifteen years, eighty to eighty-five percent had declared their

Table 8.3. Citizenship by Years in U.S. for Swedes in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.

Years in the U.S.	% Alien	% First Papers	% Naturalized	N
0-5	100.0	0.0	0.0	3
6-10	16.7	66.7	16.7	18
11-15	18.4	45.5	36.4	22
16-20	5.9	45.1	49.0	51
21-25	0.0	14.3	85.7	21
26-30	0.0	14.8	85.2	27
31-35	1.7	1.7	96.6	58
Over 35	0.0	0.0	100.0	6

Source: 1900 Census Sample

intention to become citizens or were already naturalized. In the sample counties in 1900, virtually all Swedish immigrants who had been in America for two decades or more had taken steps to become citizens.

The small number of adult male immigrants from lands other than Sweden in the sample makes generalizations hazardous (Table 8.4). However, it appears that other groups were somewhat quicker to seek the advantages of citizenship than were Swedes. Of forty-four immigrants who had been in the United States for more than five years, only one--2.2%--remained an alien. By comparison, 5.4% of the Swedes who had been in America more than five years (11 of 203) were aliens. The contrast is much stronger for Swedes who had resided in the United States between six and fifteen years. Over seventeen percent of this group (7 of 40) remained aliens. Thereafter, there was little difference in the rates of citizenship between the two groups. This lends credence to the suggestion that residence in a strong ethnic

Table 8.4. Citizenship by Years in U.S. for Non-Swedish Immigrants in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.

Years in the U.S.	% Alien	% First Papers	% Naturalized	N
0-5	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
6-10	0.0	75.0	25.0	4
11-15	0.0	60.0	40.0	5
16-20	10.0	30.0	60.0	10
21-25	0.0	50.0	50.0	6
26-30	0.0	7.1	92.9	13
31-35	0.0	0.0	100.0	2
Over 35	0.0	0.0	100.0	3

Source: 1900 Census Sample

community could impede the transition to American citizenship. Virtually all immigrants in the sample counties eventually surrendered allegiance to the land of their birth. Swedes in heavily Swedish communities felt less need to do so, at least during their first two decades in this nation.

Apart from the franchise, there was a tangible reason why immigrants in Kansas and Nebraska would want to become citizens. Immigrants who had declared their intention to become American citizens could claim up to one hundred sixty acres of public land under the Homestead Act. In areas where railroad companies had been granted land to encourage construction, homesteaders could claim only eighty acres. To receive final title for such land, immigrants had to complete the naturalization process, as the clerk of the district court in Saunders County reminded immigrants with a notice in the local paper: "All foreigners holding government lands must have their Full Citizen Papers before they can make Final proof. FINAL PAPERS must be obtained during the session of the district court." Early Swedish settlers in Saunders County and

elsewhere frequently took an eighty acre homestead and purchased a like amount of railroad land. Although the supply of good public land was quickly taken, the Homestead Act proved one incentive to become an American citizen.⁸

Once an immigrant male had filed his intention to become a citizen, he was eligible to vote. Swedish-Americans in the decades following the Civil War generally allied themselves with the Republican party, doing so for a variety of reasons. T. N. Hasselquist as editor of Hemlandet and as a prominent Swedish-American churchman influenced many Swedes to join the Republican fold in the 1850s. That party backed issues dear to Swedish immigrants-- opposition to the spread of slavery, the preservation of the Union, and liberal land laws. Most Swedes in antebellum America had settled in northern states and the Civil War further cemented the group's attachment to the Republican cause, several thousand of them enlisting for the Union cause. The various Swedish religious groups that found their way to America carried a pietism that made the Republican party, with its emphasis on reform and the positive state, a natural choice for many Swedish immigrants.⁹

The Swedes who moved from midwestern states to the Great Plains in the years following the Civil War carried this loyalty to the Republican party with them, and immigrants going directly to Kansas and Nebraska typically acquired their political allegiances from countrymen who had more experience in America. Moreover, some of the most influential leaders in Swedish communities-- particularly in Kansas-- were active in Republican circles.

Olof Olsson, the early spiritual leader of Lindsborg, not only participated in the American political system as a citizen and voter, but also sought elective office. In May, 1870, he became Superintendent of Public Instruction in McPherson County in a special election; the first school districts in the county were established under his direction. The following November, the county's voters returned him to that office and elected him to the state house of representatives as a Republican candidate. As a legislator, he promoted bills and resolutions to publish copies of the Constitution in Swedish, to protect cattle from diseases brought by Texas herds, and to allow the

construction of a flour mill in his county. His constituents were apparently satisfied with his efforts. Re-elected in 1871, Olsson spent the 1872 legislative session working for a better herd law and an improved mechanic's lien law.¹⁰

Olsson's political activities pale before that of his successor. Carl Swensson became one of the most prominent Swedish-American Republicans in the late nineteenth century, sometimes traveling thousands of miles on speaking tours in support of Republican candidates. As pastor of Lindsborg's Bethany Lutheran Church in the 1880s, Swensson began his political career as a strong advocate of prohibition in Kansas. Later in the decade, with growing interests in economic development, he moved into the mainstream of Republican thought. With his new college in Lindsborg heavily in debt, Swensson campaigned for additional railroad construction in central Kansas and became interested in colonization schemes in the western part of the state. By 1886 he was gaining a reputation as a political speaker and spent part of 1888 campaigning for the Republican cause among Swedes in Illinois and Wisconsin. In November of that year, following Olsson's precedent, Swensson ran successfully for the state legislature.¹¹

Swensson was fond of claiming that Swedish voters were synonymous with Republicans. He once told a crowd in Illinois, "A Swede is the best thing in Europe, an American is the best thing in the United States, and a Swedish American Republican is the best thing in the world." In 1888 he had declared before a meeting of the Kansas State Historical Society, "The Swedes of Kansas and Iowa, as a class, have worked for prohibition, and that as good Republicans--because every Swede is born a Republican, and will remain such if no unforeseen accidents overtake him."¹²

Swensson had not foreseen the impact that drought and farm depression might have on the political behavior of Swedes.

As agricultural distress struck Great Plains farmers in the late 1880s and early 1890s, many farmers--Swedes included--sought political solutions to their problems, first by using the Farmers' Alliance as a pressure group and eventually by establishing an independent movement that came to be known as the Populist party. Many Scandinavian farmers found the

reforms advocated by the Populists much to their liking and abandoned their traditional Republican loyalty. Of the dozen townships with extensive Swedish settlements in Saline and McPherson counties, only four returned Republican majorities in 1890; the balance voted Populist.¹³

Swensson responded to the Populist challenge by becoming even more deeply involved in politics. In Lindsborg, in accordance with a clause in the church constitution forbidding membership in secret societies, Bethany Lutheran excommunicated several members who belonged to the Farmers' Alliance. Swensson toured Swedish communities in Kansas and Illinois in 1892 in an attempt to keep his fellow Swedes within the Republican circle. His efforts met with some success, for the swing toward Populism was checked in most of the townships surrounding Lindsborg. Swensson also enhanced his national reputation as a spokesman for Swedish Republicans. One Illinois paper, recounting one of his speeches in that state, reported that he was "known as the Jim Blaine of his race."¹⁴

The Lindsborg pastor continued his fierce defense of the Republican party through the remainder of the decade, although Bethany College's heavy indebtedness made the Populists' monetary arguments appealing to him. The Populist decision to back the Democratic candidate for president in 1896, William Jennings Bryan, disenchanted Swedish voters and many returned to their former Republican loyalties. Early in the 1896 campaign the Lindsborg News judged that Swensson had "so closely identified the Swedish voters of Kansas to the Republican party that a Swedish Populist or a Swedish Democrat is as hard to find as a resubmission [referring to the resubmission of the Kansas prohibition law] Methodist minister."¹⁵ Like most political papers, the News was given to exaggeration. However, Swensson had managed to earn himself a national reputation as a Swedish-American spokesman and had helped his party keep the votes of Swedes in central Kansas.

In contrast to Olsson's and Swensson's substantial involvement in politics, none of the religious leaders in the Nebraska communities under study became successful in the arena of

partisan politics. The Augustana minister in Holdrege, P. J. Brodine, campaigned for office, but failed despite Swensson's tour of Phelps County on his behalf. Laymen had little more success in Nebraska politics. The same Nebraska county produced one state officer when P. O. Hedlund became deputy state auditor, but this was an appointive rather than an elective office. Although Nebraska Swedes typically inclined toward the Republican party as did Swedes elsewhere, they never developed the quality of ethnic leadership in politics that characterized the Lindsborg settlement.¹⁶

Swedes took an active role in local politics in all of the counties where they comprised a significant portion of the voting population. Their influence might have been handicapped initially by a lack of familiarity with the American language and political forms, but once they overcame these deficiencies Swedes could play a decisive role in the political life of a county. Those Swedes who had adjusted to American life through a stay in states farther east often assumed political responsibilities shortly after their arrival in Kansas and Nebraska. In McPherson County, for example, Swedes were among the first officers elected in eight of the twenty-five townships, and in one Swedes filled all three available offices. In Phelps County, Nebraska, Swedes recently arrived from Illinois denounced what they called "the Phelps County ring" and ran two of their own candidates--successfully--in the November election. In Center Township there Swedes won every single office, from assessor down to the two clerks of election.¹⁷

Swedish political power was seldom so easily achieved. Even in McPherson County, the northern townships of which were dominated by Swedish settlers, Swedes spent a number of years with only token recognition from Americans of their substantial block of voters. Lindsborg's editor lamented this sad state: "For some years the Swedish republicans [sic] had been shabbily treated by the party. Their candidates might be nominated but when it comes [sic] to voting that was another question, and they got left while every other nominee would get there." He went on to blame the GOP's poor showing in the 1883 county elections on the failure to

support Swedes for office, warning his fellow Republicans to mind the Swedish vote.¹⁸

The advent of Populism in the 1890s brought heated political contests which often worked to the advantage of Swedes with aspirations for public office. Swedes generally had not found much to attract them to the Democratic party in the post-Civil War era, but the Populist movement offered them a pietistic party that called for agricultural reforms Swedish farmers sometimes found desirable. The Democratic party, with its philosophy of the negative state, rejected government intervention into affairs of a moral character. Swedish pietists, seeking to use the power of the state to achieve reforms such as temperance, allied themselves with the Republicans until Populism gave them a viable alternative. Politically ambitious Swedes had a new avenue to office through the Populist party. Moreover, the Republican party, determined not to lose a critical part of its voting strength, often played ethnic politics by nominating more Swedes for elective positions.

The course of this bidding for the ethnic vote can be followed through local newspapers. In Saunders County, Nebraska, only one Swede was nominated for county office in 1885--and then only for coroner--out of the thirty candidates put forward for the thirteen available offices. In 1893, however, the various parties placed the names of four Swedes before the voters for more influential positions such as register of deeds and treasurer. Two years later, the Republicans nominated three Swedes, the Democrats two, and the Populists one.¹⁹ In Polk County, two Swedes were mentioned as possible candidates for office in 1885, but neither appeared on the ballot in November. In 1889, the two Swedes--one as a Republican and the other on the Prohibition ticket--who ran for county office both lost. In 1893, three Swedes received nominations, one from the Populist party and two from the Prohibition party. Two years later, the Republicans ran two Swedes, the Populists two, and the Prohibitionists one. Swedes apparently found Populism more to their liking in Polk than elsewhere; in 1897 three Swedes ran for county positions, all of them as Populists, and all won.²⁰ In Phelps County, where Swedes appear to have had a dominant voice in local politics, the effect of the Populist revolt was to increase from

three or four to six or eight the number of Swedish candidates voters could choose.²¹

One local issue in which Swedes were particularly interested was the regulation or prohibition of alcohol. For many immigrants a commitment to the temperance movement predated their migration to America because the pietists in Sweden had attacked the abuse of alcohol which seemed so prevalent in Swedish society. Early church leaders of the Swedish denominations in America took forceful stands against the evils of drink and cooperated with the American temperance movement. Swedes carried this attitude with them to Kansas and Nebraska, where they often became allies with pietistic Americans in state prohibition or local control of alcoholic beverages. All of the communities under study experienced some sort of action along these lines.²²

In Lindsborg, both Olof Olsson and Carl Swensson took public positions against alcohol and saloons. Olsson, for example, once learned that a druggist in town had circulated a petition to start a saloon and that some of his parishioners had signed it. At the next Sunday service, he passed around his own petition against such an establishment and insisted that no one leave before signing it. Swensson's early political activity in Kansas began with his interest in prohibition and he regularly denounced drunkenness in his annual pastoral report. This opposition was effective enough so that the historian of Bethany Lutheran Church could write in 1909, "There has never been a saloon in Lindsborg."²³

In Kansas, state law mandated prohibition in 1880. Nebraska temperance advocates were less successful at marshalling the power of the state behind their cause. Although Nebraska did not adopt a prohibition amendment during the nineteenth century, the issue was frequently a topic of political controversy. The Prohibition party, although it was never a major force in the state's politics, often had local tickets in the Swedish counties. In some cases, temperance tickets in city elections promised to prohibit the sale of liquor locally or to establish high license fees to discourage saloons. In Saunders County, for example, the Prohibition party county convention elected a central committee of eleven members in 1884. Four of them were Swedes, including a

Mission Covenant preacher, a Lutheran minister, and a professor at Luther Academy. The convention nominated its own candidate for the county commissioner race.²⁴ In Stromsburg, the Swedish churches held union temperance meetings, touring Swedish prohibitionists conducted camp meetings, and Swedes participated in city and county temperance tickets. Phelps County Swedes were active in the movement to achieve constitutional prohibition. Forty percent of the officers and committee members of the Non-Partisan Prohibitory Amendment League there in 1889 were Swedes.²⁵

American pietists viewed this commitment to moral reform with satisfaction and Swedish spokesmen boasted of their group's temperance activity. Americans--at least those in temperance circles--were pleased that a European immigrant group worked on behalf of their cause rather than opposing it, as the Germans and Irish were prone to do. Swedes could point to their record as proof that they were a desirable immigrant group.²⁶

But not all Swedes shared the prohibitionists' attitude toward alcohol. Even defenders of the Swedes and other Scandinavian peoples were forced to admit that overindulgence was a vice to which many Scandinavian immigrants were given. In Lindsay, where state law and public opinion forbade a saloon in the nineteenth century, druggists regularly sold alcohol for "medicinal" purposes. Ernst Skarstedt found that one drug store did a thriving business dispensing drinks there on the Fourth of July. He also remarked how many "sick" animals had to be cured with alcohol. The local press reported periodically that someone in town had been fined for drunkenness or for selling liquor. In 1898 the editor of the Lindsay News threatened to publish the names of all those found guilty of such crimes as a "fair warning to those who indulge to[o] freely." When Anton Peterson began attending Bethany College in 1900, "anybody could buy a pint of whiskey at the drug store by signing a statement that it was for a cold, or stomach trouble."²⁷ In Nebraska Swedes who wanted a drink did not need to resort to such subterfuge. One of their countrymen ran a saloon in Stromsburg in the late 1880s. In the 1897 town election in Oakland, the victory of two Swedes running for the city council was viewed as a gain

for the liquor interests by the local newspaper.²⁸

Swedes participated in civic affairs apart from politics in the communities where they settled. With Americans and other ethnic groups, they took pride in their towns, served in various public capacities, and worked for economic development. In Lindsborg Swedes held a majority on the committee established to convince the Burlington Railroad to build a line to the town, helped organize the first hook and ladder company, claimed half of the offices in a protective association intended to prevent horse theft, and joined Americans in petitioning for a city library.²⁹ In Stromsburg, Swedes comprised about half of the fire department and served as non-commissioned officers in the local militia. Swedes often held positions of responsibility on fair boards and in agricultural societies and sometimes gave presentations at farmers' institutes.³⁰ It is difficult to judge, but Swedes' representation in such associations was probably somewhat below their proportion of the communities' population in the nineteenth century. Certainly a limited command of English barred some from full participation in activities in which they might have otherwise have partaken. Nevertheless, at least a segment of the Swedish community had substantial contact with public affairs through organizations of a civic nature.

By late in the nineteenth century, large numbers of Swedes in Kansas and Nebraska had begun to identify with institutions and holidays that are peculiarly American. A Swede who observed the Fourth of July in Kansas in the 1880s had no tangible link to the events that day commemorated. He or she had no forefathers in America at the time of the Revolution, probably had not studied American history in school, and may not have thoroughly understood the English-speaking orators who were a mainstay of the day's festivities. Yet in celebrating Independence Day, perhaps even planning part of it, the Swede claimed part of the American heritage and made it his or her own. By 1900 Swedes in the Great Plains--but particularly at Lindsborg--were publicly and enthusiastically celebrating an American past and culture which was theirs by adoption.

Swedish immigrants were quick to claim July 4th as a holiday. Lindsborg commemorated the day bilingually as early as 1880. Several years Carl Swensson served as the day's major speaker, as in 1891 when he spoke in Swedish in the morning and in English in the afternoon. In 1897, the community's celebration--including a reading of the Declaration of Independence, a school child's oration on "The American Flag," a baseball game and a tug-of-war contest--differed little from any other village's festivities, apart from the fact that most of the participants were Swedish. Committee lists published in the local press in the 1890s indicate that two-thirds or more of the individuals involved in planning the events were Swedish. In nearby Marquette in 1881, Swedish youths dressed up in red, white, and blue and marched through town carrying wooden guns.³¹

If newspaper accounts are an accurate guide, July 4th celebrations in the Nebraska communities were somewhat subdued compared to the patriotic atmosphere of Lindsborg. At Wahoo in 1885, a local minister spoke--as had Swensson--to a crowd treated to ice water by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The reporter who chronicled the day's events made no mention of Scandinavians. In 1893 a local lodge sponsored a speech by one of its state officers and provided a fireworks display, but the Czech Catholics and Swedes picnicked in separate locations. In 1900, the organizing committee consisted of only six people, one of them Swedish--only a quarter to a third the size of similar committees in Lindsborg.³² The committee in charge of Stromsburg's Fourth of July in 1894 had ten members, but none of them were Swedish. Swedes seem to have been almost absent from the planning and programs of several Independence Days in Polk County, although J. E. Olson, who arrived in the county at the age of nine in 1881, remembered attending such events. Swedes in the Holdrege area had a greater visibility both in serving on steering committees and in taking part in that town's July 4th celebrations, but lacked the dominance that Swedes in Lindsborg had.³³

Lindsborg Swedes engaged in a variety of other activities which represented a visible identification with an American heritage. This was particularly true in the last half of the 1890s

and often involved events at Bethany College. The American flag began to assume a prominent role in public events, generally displayed with the Swedish flag. When Bishop von Scheele of the Church of Sweden spoke at the college's 1893 commencement, the flags of both nations were flown. Such might be expected in honor of the visiting dignitary, but the flags were also on stage at such events as an oratorical contest and student society programs. In 1898 one of the local Swedish businessmen flew an American flag in honor of George Washington's birthday.³⁴

Celebrating the birth of our first president became a community event in Lindsborg. In 1895 the town held a parade, had bands from the Bethany and Freemount churches perform, and invited a U.S. senator to speak in commemoration of Washington's birthday. In 1899, college classes were cancelled for the day and speakers addressed crowds in both English and Swedish. Later in the year the college observed the centennial of Washington's death by decorating the chapel "with flowers and flags and a splendid picture of George Washington."³⁵ The Swedish residents of this community gave great attention to a national hero with whom neither they nor their ancestors had direct experience. Abraham Lincoln, a president under whom some of them had lived and fought, received substantially less attention. There were no community-wide celebrations of his birth, although at Bethany College in 1895, "The services in the chapel . . . were 'patriotic[,]' it being Abraham Lincoln's birthday."³⁶

This adoption of symbols of American culture also included music. By 1897, the song "America" became common at events, especially those at the college. In January of that year the annual oratorical contest at the school began with the audience singing the piece. The 1897 commencement opened with the same music, as did the 1897-1898 academic year. At the Bethany Lutheran bazaar in 1898 a children's chorus of five hundred voices offered "America," "Hail Columbia," and "Nearer My God to Thee." There is an irony in the use of "America." Swedish-Americans could sing the opening lines--"My country, 'tis of thee/ Sweet land of liberty,/Of thee I sing"--with honest fervor. But the next line--"Land where my father died"--must have made little sense to an immigrant people.³⁷

This development of an elevated sense of patriotism was far more pervasive in Lindsborg than it was elsewhere, particularly before the Spanish–America War. Newspapers and other accounts of life in the Nebraska communities under study rarely mention such a public display of American symbols. The difference seems have been Carl Aaron Swensson. This American–born son of a Swedish clergyman grew up in a household that treasured Swedish culture, and as a young man he esteemed it more than American culture. He never lost that love of his ancestral heritage, but as a clergyman, educator, and politician in Kansas, however, he also developed a deep devotion to America and its character. It is no accident that many of the incidents involving an outward expression of Americanness occurred at Bethany College, an institution that he founded and led. That many of the incidents also involved the larger community is testimony to his influence and widespread acceptance of his goals.³⁸

The growing tensions with Spain and the outbreak of the Spanish–American War in 1898 granted Swedes an opportunity to demonstrate a visible commitment to an American identity. All of the communities under consideration responded in some fashion, some more warmly than others. As might be expected, Lindsborg greeted the news of war with enthusiasm. People in the area had been following events in the Caribbean closely and had been involved in raising food and money for Cuban relief. Word of the war's declaration brought out American flags in front of many homes and businesses. Young men, most of them Swedish and many of them college students, began to volunteer for military service. The student society programs that marked the end of the school year invoked a patriotic atmosphere, especially appropriate because several of their members were then in army camp. The stage had an American flag as a backdrop and was flanked by two pillars, one bearing another American flag and the other draped in the Swedish colors. At an evening reception for graduates, Swensson asked the audience to stand and sing "America" at the time a troop train carrying the Lindsborg contingent was scheduled to pass through Salina en route to San Francisco.³⁹

Responses differed across Nebraska. Both Oakland and Holdrege had had campaigns to gather

funds for Cuban relief before the war. In Stromsburg the initial reaction was muted. Although a militia company was organized in mid-April, there was no immediate flocking to the colors. The local paper did not report a public display of the flag until mid-May, when it noted that the Stars and Stripes now flew from a pole in the park. By early June, the company had enrolled seventy-one volunteers, seventeen of them Swedes. In Wahoo, the American Baptists sponsored a memorial service for the sailors of the Maine, in which at least one Swede took part. Of the community's first nine volunteers, two were Norwegian but none were Swedish. Of Saunders County's seventy-two volunteers, fourteen bore Swedish names.⁴⁰ Only in Phelps County could one find a response as immediate and enthusiastic as that found in Lindsborg, and the small villages around Holdrege--each typically surrounded by Swedish farms--seem to have been more fervent than the county seat itself. From Loomis, where the town was alive with "a display of flags and the shooting of the cannon," came the proclamation, "Get your gun. Every body has joined the Jingoos." A Funk correspondent reported, "The stars and stripes [sic] topmost, and the Cuban flag beneath, can be seen floating in the breeze from the top of the high flag poles erected since the outbreak of the war."⁴¹ In Axtell, a Swedish settlement just inside Kearney County to the east, a writer reported that his town "was almost enveloped in stars and stripes . . . over the Cuban resolutions" and, two weeks later, that "The business places are constantly decorated with flags and bunting and the firing of anvils is a daily occurrence, except Sunday and rainy days."⁴² In Holdrege, the firm of Nelson & Little flew the American and Cuban flags from a flag pole in front of its store, and a local man began forming a militia company. The first twelve volunteers, two of them Swedes, left for the army two weeks later.⁴³

By the close of the nineteenth century, Swedes in Kansas and Nebraska were playing an important role in the public life of the communities in which they settled. Although statistical evidence does not substantiate the claims by some that Scandinavians had the highest rates of naturalization, nearly all male Swedes did become American citizens in time and a slight lag for the group can probably be attributed to the presence of strong ethnic communities that made the

necessity of naturalization somewhat less pressing. Swedes played an active role in American politics, first as voters. As the Populist party joined the arena of partisan politics, Swedes had greater opportunities for political office, not only because more candidates ran for any given office, but also because the major parties nominated Swedes more often in efforts to attract ethnic voters.

By the 1890s public displays of American patriotism and celebration of American holidays were common in Lindsborg, although somewhat less so in the Nebraska communities. In Kansas, Carl Swensson, as a community and church leader and as a major Swedish-American Republican spokesman, encouraged such public identification with the Swedish immigrants' new homeland and its heritage. In 1898 Swedish-Americans reacted to war with Spain much like other Americans--often with enthusiasm but sometimes with reticence. Young men with Swedish surnames donned the American uniform and went to war, not as Swedes but as Americans.

Such means of public identification with the United States and its culture did not mean that the Swedes surrendered a love and respect for their ancestral homeland. Its language was still alive in their homes and churches, in private conversations and public speeches. But their public life--their political and civic affairs--was increasingly marked by a strong sense of American identity.

CHAPTER 8

NOTES

1. Lindsborg News, September 20, 27, October 4, 1895.
2. Lindsborg News, October 4, 1895. Svenskarnes Dag was celebrated in October, 1892. See Lindsborg News, October 7, 1892.
3. Albert Shaw, "The Scandinavians in the United States," The Chautauquan 8 (December, 1887): 171, 172; Prescott F. Hall, Immigration and Its Effects upon the United States, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1913), p. 62; Edward Albert Ross, The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American Life (New York: Century Co., 1914), p. 76; Louis Adamic, A Nation of Immigrants (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944), p. 131.
4. Hall, Immigration and Its Effects, p. 185; Kendrick C. Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," The Forum 14 (September, 1892): 106.
5. Lindsborg News, June 5, 26, 1896; Holdrege Citizen, December 30, 1887. An American who grew to adulthood in McPherson County observed of the Swedes, "They were naturalized and Americanized with great rapidity and have been ardent in their loyalty to a degree comparing unpleasantly with the older Yankee tribes." By contrast, the Russian-German Mennonites "resisted much more stoutly than the Swedes the catalysis of American ideas." See Frank Albert Waugh, "Pioneering in Kansas" (Typescript, n.d.), p. 47, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.
6. Edmund DeS. Brunner, Immigrant Farmers and their Children (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), pp. 247-249. Similarly, Niles Carpenter, using the 1920 census, found that Swedes had the fifth highest rate of taking steps to become naturalized. Immigrants from Luxemborg, with 80.2%, had the highest rate, while 77.5% of Swedes had become citizens or had taken out their first papers. All of the other groups ranked ahead of the Swedes--Germans, Danes, and Welsh--were members of the so-called "old immigrant" groups. See Niles Carpenter, Immigrants and Their Children, 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 262-263.
7. Emory Lindquist, Vision for a Valley: Olof Olsson and the Early History of Lindsborg (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1970), pp. 25, 68; 1870 U. S. Census, McPherson County, Kansas.
8. The Independent (Wahoo), April 5, 1883; Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," p. 105. See Charles S. Perky, supervising ed., Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 2: 90-91, 174-175, 337-338, 470-473, for biographies of Swedes who started their farms with eighty acre homesteads and then purchased railroad land. See Henry Steele Commager, ed., Documents of American History, 7th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 1: 410-411, for the text of the Homestead Act.
Patsy Adams Hegstad, "Citizenship, Voting, and Immigrants: a Comparative Study of the Naturalization Propensity and Voter Registration of Nordics in Seattle and Ballard, Washington,

1892-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1982), pp. 183-184, examines citizenship among Scandinavian immigrants in an urban setting and finds a somewhat higher propensity to seek citizenship among Swedes there than was evident in Kansas. In her sample, of the Swedes in the United States five to nine years, nearly fifty-five percent had been naturalized. The differences disappeared after the immigrants had been in the United States twenty years or more.

9. Oscar Fritiof Ander, T. N. Hasselquist: The Career and Influence of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist and Educator (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1931; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1979), pp. 152-159; Nels Hokanson, Swedish Immigrants in Lincoln's Time (New York: Harper & Bros., 1942), pp. 52-56; 60; Ella Lonn, Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 61-64, 579; "Participation of the Swedes in American Politics," in The Swedish Element in America, ed. by Erik O. Westman and E. Gustav Johnson (Chicago: Swedish-American Biographical Society, 1931), 1: 92; Sten Carlsson, "Swedes in Politics," in From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration, ed. by Harald Runblom and Hans Norman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 291; Sten Carlsson, "Scandinavian Politicians in the United States," in Scando-Americana Papers on Scandinavian Emigration to the United States, ed. by Ingrid Semmingsen and Per Seyersted (Oslo: American Institute, University of Oslo, 1980), p. 153; Richard Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 80-81.

10. Lindquist, Vision for a Valley, pp. 68-73.

11. Daniel Merle Pearson, The Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1977), pp. 21-22, 35-38, 45-47; Daniel M. Pearson, "The Two Worlds of Carl A. Swensson, 1873-1888," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 28 (October, 1977): 265-267.

12. The Moline speech is cited in Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), p. 134. The second quotation comes from Carl A. Swensson, "The Swedes in Kansas," Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society 4 (1886-1888): 288.

13. The Augustana Synod opposed membership in secret lodges, believing the rituals used by such organizations conflicted with Christianity. See Emmer E. Engberg, "Augustan and Code Morality," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, ed. Emmer Engberg (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), pp. 138-143. On Swensson and Populism, see Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 67-69; Daniel Merle Pearson, "Swedish Immigrants and the Early Populist Movement in Kansas, 1890-1894" (M.A. Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1964), pp. 40-44. For the reaction of the Swedes elsewhere to Populism, see John Raubold Kleinschmidt, "The Political Behavior of the Bohemian and Swedish Ethnic Groups in Nebraska, 1884-1900" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1968), pp. 123-125, 131-133; and Terrence J. Lindell, "South Dakota Populism" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1982), pp. 202-205. For Swedish attraction to another reform party, see Bruce L. Larson, "Swedish Americans and Farmer-Labor Politics in Minnesota," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration, ed. by Nils Hasselmo (Chicago: Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1978), pp. 206-224.

It should be noted that not all Swedes followed the Republican party. Anton Peterson, "Factors in Election Results in Selected McPherson County Townships," (Typescript, 1962), Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, observed that Falun and Smolan

townships in Saline County had many Swedish Democrats which he attributed to the presence of "ex-Janssonists from Bishop Hill."

14. Pearson, "Swedish Immigrants and the Early Populist Movement," pp. 55-56, 74-82; Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 75-87; Lindsborg News, October 28, 1892.

15. Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 121-131; Kleinschmidt, "Political Behavior," pp. 195-196; Lindell, "South Dakota Populism," pp. 205-206. In 1896 the Holdrege Citizen ran a series of letters to the editor from "Ole Peterson." Using a heavy mimicry of the Swedish accent many of the Swedes in the area must have had, "Peterson" attacked the Populist fusion with the Democrats. See Holdrege Citizen, July 17, 31, 1896.

16. Carl A. Swensson to P. J. Brodine, Lindsborg, November 13, 1894; Swensson to Br[other John] Enander, Lindsborg, January 3, 1895, Carl A. Swensson Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. Lindsborg produced one elected state officer in the late nineteenth century, Frank Nelson, who served as State Superintendent of Instruction.

17. Edna Nyquist, comp. Pioneer Life and Lore of McPherson County, Kansas (McPherson, KS: Democrat-Opinion Press, 1932), *passim*; Rolf Johnson, Diary, November 6, 7, 18, 1876, Rolf Johnson Papers, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois [hereafter SSIRC]. This collection does not contain the manuscript diary. The diary was published serially in the Holdrege Progress and this collection consists of the undated newspaper clippings.

18. Lindsborg News, November 6, 1885. See also C. J. Stromquist and A. V. Anderson, "Politics," in Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas, trans. by Ruth Billdt (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 145. Opponents of the Republican party sometimes attempted to use this to their advantage. A common tactic was to claim that the Swedes were little more than "voting cattle" whose support was expected but not rewarded. For examples, see Lindsborg News, November 4, 1887; July 29, 1898; and Stromsburg Headlight, January 14, 1886.

19. The Independent (Wahoo), November 5, 1885; Wahoo New Era November 2, 1893; November 28, 1895.

20. Stromsburg Headlight, October 8, 15, November 19, 1885; November 11, 1889; November 9, 1893; November 7, 1895; November 4, 1897.

21. Holdrege Citizen, November 14, 1889; November 10, 1891; November 9, 1893; November 7, 1895.

22. George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; rpt., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 16-19; Ander, I. N. Hasselquist, pp. 195-202; Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, pp. 70, 80; Lar Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, trans. by Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), pp. 35, 140.

23. Billdt, Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 95-100, 143; Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 21-22; Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 81.

24. James C. Olson, History of Nebraska, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 211, 224-225; The Independent (Wahoo), September 11, 1884.
25. Stromsburg Headlight, May 16, 1889; August 28, 1890; March 16, 23, 1893; June 21, 1894; March 24, 1898; Holdrege Citizen, December 19, 1889.
26. Ross, The Old World in the New, 72-73; Babcock, "Scandinavians in the Northwest," p. 106; Swensson, "Swedes in Kansas," p. 288; Carl A. Swensson, The Swedes in America (Topeka: Kansas Publishing Co., 1889), p. 11; The Independent (Wahoo), June 25, 1885.
27. Emory Lindquist, An Immigrant's American Odyssey: A Biography of Ernst Skarstedt (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1974), p. 55; Lindsborg News, November 18, 1898; Anton Peterson to Emory K. Lindquist, McPherson, KS, February 24, 1951, Lindquist Papers. For examples of arrest and conviction reports, see Lindsborg Localist, January 10, 17, 1880; Lindsborg News, March 24, December 1, 1899.
- One Swede running for a county office in McPherson County was advised to "send beer to some [possibly Germans in the southern part of the county] and give talks at other places about the dangers of alcohol." See J. A. Udden, "Memories of My Sojourn in Lindsborg," in The Smoky Valley in the After Years, ed. and trans. by Ruth Bergin Billdt and Elizabeth Jäderborg (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1969), p. 83.
28. Stromsburg Headlight, May 2, 1889; Oakland Republican, April 8, 1897.
29. Smoky Valley News, March 23, 1882; April 6, 1883; Lindsborg News, September 8, 1893; May 7, 1897.
30. Stromsburg Headlight, February 6, 1890; November 16, 1893; January 11, 1894; January 3, 17, 1895; Oakland Independent, October 21, 1897; The Independent (Wahoo), December 19, 1878; February 17, 1881; Wahoo New Era, March 3, 1891; Wahoo Democrat, April 21, 1898; March 2, 1899; Lindsborg News, March 6, 1891; Salina Herald, May 8, 1880.
31. Lindsborg Localist, June 3, 1880; Smoky Valley News, June 26, 1885; Lindsborg News, June 5, 19, 26, 1891; June 26, 1896; July 2, 1897; June 9, 1899; Allan Lindfors and Eleanor Burnison, Pioneers on the Prairie: A History of Marquette, Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1978), p. 41.
32. The Independent (Wahoo), July 9, 1885; Wahoo New Era, June 29, 1893; Wahoo Democrat, June 14, 1900. Carl A. Olson, who arrived in Omaha from Sweden in 1869 and who eventually settled in Saunders County, recorded that he "firade 4de i Omaha--Såg 1sta firecrackers" ("celebrated the 4th [in 1869] in Omaha--Saw 1st firecrackers"). At the time, he had been in this country less than two months. Olson, Daybook, 1: 101, Carl Albert Olson Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.
33. Stromsburg Headlight, July 1, 1886; July 7, 1888; June 14, 1894; J. E. Olson, "Brief Historical Sketch of a Nebraska Pioneer Family--John Peter Olson," (Typescript, n.d., pp. 7-8, SIRRC; Holdrege Republican, June 12, 1885; Holdrege Citizen, June 16, 1891; July 11, 1895; July 10, 1896.
34. Lindsborg News, June 2, 1893; February 25, May 20, 1898; February 24, 1899.

35. Lindsborg News, February 22, March 1, 1895; February 24, March 3, December 15, 1899.
36. Lindsborg News, February 15, 1895.
37. Lindsborg News, January 1, May 21, September 10, 1897; February 18, 1898; September 8, 1899. The lyrics to "America" may be found in J. E. Bryan, The Farmers' Alliance: Its Origins, Progress and Purposes (Fayetteville, AR: n.p., 1891), p. 151. Ironically, it was also a song frequently sung by the Farmers' Alliance.
38. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, pp. 126-127; Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 135-136, 153-155; Wayne D. Wheeler, "An Analysis of Social Change in a Swedish-Immigrant Community: The Case of Lindsborg, Kansas" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1959), pp. 157-158.
39. Lindsborg News, April 1, 29, May 20, 1898.
40. Oakland Republican, April 7, 1898; Holdrege Citizen-Forum, April 15, May 6, 1898; Stromsburg Headlight, April 28, May 12, June 2, 1898; Wahoo Democrat, April 28, May 5, 1898; Perky, ed., Past and Present of Saunders County, 1: 188-189.
41. Holdrege Citizen-Forum, April 22, May 6, 1898.
42. Holdrege Citizen-Forum, April 22, May 6, 1898. "Firing the anvil" was a nineteenth-century tradition in small towns. On festive occasions, particularly the Fourth of July, a charge of gunpowder would be placed in the hollow base of the village blacksmith's anvil. When ignited, the explosive would blow the anvil into the air with a loud report.
43. Holdrege Citizen-Forum, April 29, May 13, 1898.

CHAPTER 9

THE SWEDES AND INTERACTION WITH OTHER GROUPS

In the rural communities of the Great Plains, there was significant interaction between immigrants from Sweden and other groups, especially Americans. Even in towns such as Lindsborg where the Swedes dominated the local economy, Swedish immigrants regularly came into contact with settlers of native stock or from other immigrant groups. Adults from different groups, particularly males, met one another in their business affairs, whether they were farmers selling crops, buying supplies, and arranging credit or were Main Street merchants trying to attract and keep customers. Just as the market place drew individuals from diverse cultural groups together, so did the polling place. Americans who wanted political office in counties settled by large numbers of Swedes actively campaigned for the ethnic vote and Swedish politicians recognized the importance of securing support from non-Swedish voters. People of all groups worked together to achieve common public goals and cheered the flag with one another when patriotism was the spirit of the day. The children and grandchildren of the Swedish pioneers in Kansas and Nebraska attended the same public schools, learning the same lessons and playing the same games as children from other groups that backed public education, even though they might attend their own summer parochial schools.

Such varied interaction inevitably affected the course of assimilation into American society. English became the language of business for most, although storekeepers often found it in their interest to have ethnic goods on their shelves and clerks proficient in Swedish. In time, immigrant groups established themselves across the entire occupational spectrum rather than being clustered in one particular area. Eventually Swedes could define the world of work and business as an English world. Participation in politics brought Swedes into contact--usually in cooperation, but sometimes in conflict--with American society, its values, and its institutions. Swedes who voted did so with at least some awareness of the issues involved. Swedish politicians

had to have the requisite language skills and knowledge of the system to succeed both in election and performance, and they generally needed the assistance of American allies. Swedes and Americans recognized their common interests and future when they formed fire companies, library associations, and agricultural societies. Swedish-American children learned that Christopher Columbus discovered their homeland and that George Washington was the father of their country. They admitted schoolmates of other nationalities into their circles of friends and into the pool of potential marriage partners.

There were gradations in this adaptation to American culture. Some immigrants never sought or achieved a full accommodation to their new home. Most acculturated by some measures, but reserved to one degree or another some portion of their lives for an identity that was more Swedish than American. A handful of Swedish-Americans no doubt rejected their ethnic origins and struggled to become thoroughly American.

One might identify models among immigrants based on their willingness to participate in the life and culture of the nation in which they had settled. At the lowest level of interaction, a Swedish immigrant might have only passing contact with American society. Most of his economic life might be within the ethnic community, although it was likely that he had to purchase some goods and services from or market some products through people who did not belong to his group. His involvement in politics might be as perfunctory as simply voting a straight ticket for the party most of his ethnic leaders supported. Civic issues might be the province of others who had more time or more desire to participate. Swedish might be the sole language of the home; children who brought from school more desire to learn English than to speak the tongue of their parents might be scolded for disregarding their linguistic heritage and the language of the church. Occasionally, such a person might not be able to adjust to America at all and either returned to Sweden, lived here in misery, or lost the ability to cope altogether. The latter was the case for one young woman in Oakland, Nebraska, whom the local newspaper described as "afflicted with a kind of homesickness, whic[h] amounts to almost total mental derangement. She will probably

soon be sent to the hospital at Norfolk." A stay at that mental institution was thought to cure her, but a year and a half later the paper noted that she was again "a little unbalanced" and was returning to the hospital.¹

More common would have been a Swedish immigrant who had significant contact with American society, but still regarded certain areas of his life to be essentially Swedish. His economic ties were likely to be with both Americans and Swedes, each group providing desirable and necessary products. While he might feel more comfortable in Swedish, such a person had learned enough English to accomplish his goals and to socialize with speakers of English. He might also vote a straight party ticket, but perhaps after attending political rallies where Americans spoke and after reading about the issues in an American or Swedish newspaper. When circumstances required or allowed, he might join in some community enterprise or organization, meeting and growing friendly with people of other nationalities as a result. He would encourage his children to learn well the lessons of the public school, but he might remind them that Swedish was not only a beautiful language, but also the one with which to address God. Swedish prevailed in his home and in his church.

Still another immigrant--or, more likely, the child of immigrants--might take an occupation which required substantial use of English and contact with American society, although Swedish customers would find him a welcome alternative to dealing with someone who did not understand their language and particular needs. Such a person might feel at home in both languages and in the company of both Swedes and Americans, but the former reminded him of the past when he was more intent on the future. Community affairs were not a burdensome necessity, but an avenue of opportunity, an arena in which he could advance his interests and those of his town, make valuable contacts with other businessmen, and demonstrate his capabilities. His church might be Lutheran, but it also might be a Swedish Methodist or Baptist congregation; it might even be an American congregation. His weekday evenings might be taken up with the social activities of American lodges. The language of his home might be English, a decision necessitated

marriage to a non-Swede or a recognition that his children needed the language of America more than the language of his ancestors. A. E. Agrellius in Lindsborg, Kansas, was this sort of person. Born in the United States of Swedish immigrants, Agrellius settled in McPherson County in the 1870s and became involved in banking. Although a member of the Swedish Methodist congregation in town, he organized and directed both the band and orchestra at Bethany College. In the late 1890s he held offices in three Lindsborg lodges, all of them American organizations.²

At the extreme, an immigrant--but much more probably a second- or third-generation American--might consciously choose to dissociate himself from the people, institutions and symbols which reminded him of a past that delayed his acceptance by an American society whose opportunities outweighed the value of his Scandinavian heritage. Anything Swedish--food, language, religion, ethnic societies, marriage partner, perhaps even family name--was to be avoided. Such a person might thrust himself on American society, picking associations and activities that demonstrated his total commitment to the United States.

Previous chapters have discussed some degree of interaction between Swedes and others in a variety of areas. Sometimes this was of necessity. Swedes depended on Americans and others for employment and for certain goods and services that they could not purchase elsewhere. Swedish immigrants had to deal with government officials of other nationalities, sometimes had to rely on the votes of other groups to achieve office, and often did not have a Swedish candidate to choose for a particular post. Sometimes the interaction was by choice. Swedes by and large sent their children to the common school, both valuing public education and recognizing the contact with American children that such schooling would surely bring.

The Swede who worked as a farm laborer for an American farmer in Illinois or Iowa before moving to Kansas or Nebraska, the Swedish farmer who took a job on a railroad construction crew once in the Great Plains, and the Swedish-American youth who began his working life as a clerk in an American-owned grocery store in a rural community all developed relationships of one sort or another with their employer or supervisor, and perhaps even

socialized with them at the end of a day's work. The Swedish customer who bought coffee at an American's general store or sold wheat to an American grain dealer established a business relationship that could lead to casual conversation about the weather, family life, and community events. The Swedish storekeeper knew that common interests in fire protection and railroad connections united him with businessmen of other nationalities.

Similarly, the Swede who took part in the elaborate political campaigns of his day as more than just a voter found a kinship with others with the same party loyalties. Although Swedish speakers making tours of major Swedish settlements were often part of national campaigns, Swedes could and did attend speeches by Americans, presumably understanding at least part of what was said. Swedes with political aspirations generally had to work within the local party structure, which was typically dominated by Americans, to be nominated for office. Once on the ticket, they campaigned for the party's other candidates as well as for themselves. If elected to a county or even a township office, their constituents probably included many who were not Swedish but who had needs and interests to attend to. In the entire process Swedes established a partisan identity that tied them to others regardless of national origin.

In the classroom and the schoolyard, children of all nationalities studied and played together. Their lessons were the same, although the immigrant children often had the additional task of learning a new language. Indeed, once Swedish children had overcome the initial language barrier, English became the common speech of children, in and out of school, when they were among other school-age children. Swedish children partook in the games and pastimes of their native-stock peers. Baseball was a common activity, with town teams, which surely drew both immigrants and natives together, competing against similar groups from rival communities. One might reasonably speculate that school programs brought together parents of different ethnic groups, united by a common pride in their offspring. Swedes shared control of school boards, talked about educational problems in teachers' institutes, and divided responsibilities in alumni associations with other nationalities.³

All of these spheres provided contexts for socialization between Swedes and other groups, which in turn dissolved some natural barriers and made further interaction likely. Precisely how much such interaction took place is indeterminable. From the perspective of the twentieth century one cannot know what greetings Swedes and Americans exchanged on the streets of Lindsborg, whether Germans aided their Swedish neighbors in a barn-raising in Saunders County, who joined together in an impromptu tug-of-war contest at a July 4th celebration in Stromsburg, or how often teams in children's games cut across ethnic lines.

Impressionistic evidence points to a degree of interaction on an informal basis when neighbors needed assistance or when they had time to visit. While Frank Waugh's family was moving to a new home in McPherson County in December, 1872, a mishap damaged their sled. A Swedish woman in a nearby house, though barely able to communicate with them, invited the family to take shelter in her home and fed them while the men repaired the damage. The Waughs also socialized with the Nils Anderson family in New Gottland township. Anderson's wife had recently arrived from Sweden and "she couldn't speak a word of English." Despite this language barrier, she and Waugh's mother found means of making themselves understood. Anderson and Waugh's father "picked out several tunes, some Swedish, some German, and some unquestionably American" to play on an accordion.⁴

Reminiscences that treat this sort of socializing are uncommon. The local news section of town newspapers is a more useful source for identifying circumstances under which Swedes and others came together in social settings, particularly when the editor provided his curious readers with a list of people attending. For example, when some of the young people in Wahoo picnicked in Berggren's Grove in July, 1893, eleven of the twenty-nine participants bore Scandinavian names, four of them being Norwegians. At the Leap Year Dance in the same community several years later, Scandinavians accounted for at least six of the fifty-two present. When Nellie and Lulu Thomas hosted a carpet rag party in Oakland in 1896, eleven of the twenty-three attending were Scandinavians. When the youth of Lindsborg undertook to perform the temperance drama

"Ten Nights in a Bar Room," two of the nine cast members were Swedes. At the birthday party the C. J. Johnsons of Lindsborg arranged for their daughter's eighth birthday, adults of two of the seven families present were Americans, one of them being the pastor of the local American Methodist congregation.⁵

Every small town of the era had a range of organized societies, some of which had national ties--especially the lodges--and some of which were of local origin. At one time or another in the nineteenth century, Swedes could be found on the membership roles of most of both types. In Oakland, socially-minded Swedes could join the Twentieth Century Club, a third to half of the members of which were Scandinavian. The club's meetings tended toward the intellectual; at one meeting people gave presentations on English political history and at another they had to answer the roll call with a quotation from Shakespeare.⁶ In Wahoo, Swedes could join the Social Club. In Stromsburg, Swedish-American men participated in the Athletic Club while women joined the Helping Hand Society and the Women's Club.⁷ Swedish women associated with their American counterparts in the Lindsborg Sewing Society and the Round Table Club, while members of both sexes could study subjects of interest in the Reading Circle. The musically-inclined could make a joyful noise in the Anti-Harmony Mandolin Club. The participation by Swedes was likely to grow over time, as was the case with the Marquette Literary Society. The group's first program, held in 1881, had no Swedes involved. By 1897, all four of the officers came from that nationality.⁸

These organizations were all unique to their particular locality, although most resembled similar clubs elsewhere. Swedes also joined the local chapters of national organizations. Swedes played a major role, for example, in the Young Men's Christian Association in Lindsborg, which was particularly active at Bethany College. In one committee list from 1899, Swedes held seventeen of twenty-three committee positions in the Lindsborg organization. The Women's Christian Temperance Union attracted Swedish women in McPherson and Saunders counties. Although there were never large numbers of Swedish veterans of the Civil War in these communities, those present often joined posts of the Grand Army of the Republic.⁹

Swedish men and women also sought membership in the fraternal lodges and secret societies that were popular in the late nineteenth century. No town's life was complete without a Masonic, Odd Fellows, or Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.) lodge. Communities of any size boasted several. Such lodges flourished in all the towns under study and Swedes eventually secured positions of responsibility in them. These organizations--which typically had secret rites of membership--met weekly, sponsored social gathering such as dances and dinners, and often offered members or their survivors benefits in case of sickness or death. The A.O.U.W. in Lindsborg provided its members \$2,000 in life insurance and owned a hall used by many other civic groups. In addition to this fraternal group, one so inclined in Lindsborg could enter the Masons, Modern Woodmen of America, Odd Fellows, or Good Templars, the latter being a lodge devoted to temperance.¹⁰ In Holdrege, one could choose from among all of these plus a different Masonic order and the Knights of Pythias. For farmers interested in lodge membership, a second lodge of the Good Templars met at the R. D. Johnson residence five miles west of the city. The Royal Arch Masons, the A.O.U.W., and the Odd Fellows all had auxiliaries to involve members' spouses in the fraternal orders.¹¹ Swedes in Wahoo, Oakland, and Stromsburg had similar opportunities.¹²

Newspapers often printed directories of the local lodges, including the names of prominent officers. Furthermore, accounts of elections in these lodges were published periodically. Samples of these demonstrate that Swedes successfully achieved offices in fraternal organizations and sometimes exercised a dominant role. In Holdrege in 1887, for example, three of the ten officers of the Knights of Pythias, one of the nine leaders of the Modern Woodmen, and two of the twelve officers of the Arch Masons were Swedes. In Oakland in 1895, four of the ten A.O.U.W. posts and five of the seven Modern Woodmen of the World offices were won by Swedes. In Lindsborg in 1897, Swedes took six or seven of the twelve offices in the Select Knights of the A.O.U.W., five of the thirteen in the regular A.O.U.W., and two of the eight available in the Modern Woodmen of America. One Swedish-American, A. E. Agrellius, held offices in all three and two

others had offices in two of the lodges.¹³

The concentration of such a range of social organizations in towns did not mean that rural dwellers were left without opportunities to mix. Farmers who lived close to town could attend gatherings in the community without great difficulty. More importantly, farmers had their own organizations which typically met in rural schoolhouses. During the 1870s the Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange, was a popular agricultural organization that drew together farmers who wanted educational and cultural events as well as fellowship with others who understood their needs. Of the twenty-five charter members of the Riverside Grange No. 684, formed near Marquette in late 1873, seven were Swedes.¹⁴ In the 1880s the Grange was superseded by the Farmers' Alliance, which, like the Grange, began with social and educational functions, but soon became a political pressure group and eventually spawned the Populist party of the 1890s. Swedes held various positions of responsibility in a number of alliances established in the counties where they lived. In Phelps County, Swedes served as officers or executive committeemen in the Sheridan Township No. 754 Alliance. Their countrymen held similar posts in alliances in Saunders and Polk counties. In the Lindsborg area, some Swedish-Americans were particularly active in alliance and Populist affairs.¹⁵

Several conclusions might be drawn from these examples. In the Great Plains communities where Swedes settled, they interacted with other groups, particularly Americans, in various social settings. That they joined American-led social organizations in numbers proportionate to their population is unlikely, but their representation in such groups grew over time as the children of Swedish immigrants grew to adulthood and sought social links in their community. Those most likely to join the available social societies were town dwellers, for the trip in from the country for evening meetings would have discouraged farm families who lived any distance away, although farm organizations such as the Grange and Farmers' Alliance are exceptions. Holdrege's rural Good Templars lodge was a rare instance when a fraternal lodge actually was convenient for farmers. The people most likely to join were also probably of

middle-class status, perhaps had connections on Main Street, and had greater intellectual or cultural interests than other Swedes. These are the people who would have had the time and energy to devote to such pursuits, would have had business and social interests which contact with Americans could advance, and would have had the educational background to discuss something as far removed from their immediate experience as English history or great novels.¹⁶ It is also probable that young adults who attended the public schools in America and who felt comfortable discoursing in English would have entered such organizations at much higher rates than older people who, having arrived in this nation as adults, lacked confidence in their ability to express themselves in a new language.

Virtually all Swedish-Americans had some contact with Americans and American institutions through their economic life, through attending or watching their children attend the public school, and through participating in the public life of this nation. A more selective group--and precisely how selective is difficult to judge--participated in the various organizations and societies noted above. This is not because most immigrants did not need some human contact outside their immediate families. Rather, it is because another institution--the church--provided a wide range of activities that provided such socialization, but within a context that was generally exclusive both in ethnicity and denomination.

A child born into any of the Swedish denominations would go through organizations intended to keep him or her within the church's fold. As a child he or she would start Sunday school and attendance there would continue at least until the teenage years; some congregations also sponsored adult education classes. Although the child spent much of the year in the public school--adopted for what it offered--six or eight weeks of the summer went to reinforcing the necessity of retaining the mother tongue and preparing for confirmation, particularly if the home church was part of the Augustana Synod. During the teen years, youths entered a church youth group, whether it was a Luther League or some similar organization that offered continued Christian fellowship and acceptable social activities. Some of the programs--which might

include secular events such as debates and games--would probably be in English. Young women might also enter a junior sewing society or a mission group. Young people of either sex, but particularly males, might join a congregational band. As these adolescent years stretched into adulthood, the congregation would watch with satisfaction as the young people found mates from within the congregation, something for which church activities had provided ample opportunity. Some talented youths would go on to college, perhaps to return as parochial school teachers and seminarians assisting the pastor during the summer months. Those who remained in the congregation would dutifully assume the roles expected of them. Women joined the ladies' sewing society and cared for the interior of the church. Once or twice a year they might gather in small groups to continue the old tradition of making cheese for the minister.¹⁷ Men lacked a specific organization until after the turn of the century--presumably because they were expected to be too busy earning a living--but would involve themselves in the upkeep of the church property. They might volunteer to teach Sunday school and, if respected by their peers, be elected to a church office such as deacon or trustee. In time a new generation would repeat the cycle.

The church provided ample opportunity for visiting with one's neighbors. Services on Sunday morning and in the evening, in addition to mid-week worship, brought the congregation together frequently. Holidays and congregational meetings added to the occasions when people gathered. Sunday school and youth group programs, concerts and society meetings, weddings and funerals all contributed to making the congregation one of the strongest social groups available. Those Swedes who gave priority to the church did not want for socialization.

Moreover, the Augustana Synod-- the largest of the Swedish denominations-- actively opposed some of the very organizations that might have provided alternative social contacts. Any secret society that imposed an oath upon its members and used a set of rituals akin to the liturgy of the church was looked upon as a form of idolatry. The Synod opened its attack on lodges in the 1860s with particular concern about the Masons. The front broadened as new lodges formed and made appeals to Swedish immigrants who sought the company and advantages of American

societies. By the 1890s even the G.A.R., the veterans' organization of the Civil War, was under seige. This was a struggle, however, which the Synod would not win. By 1900 there was a basic split within the body; conservative rural congregations continued fierce opposition to lodges but more liberal urban parishes found that too many of their members had ties to lodges to discipline them.¹⁸

The Augustana Synod opposed the Grange and Farmers' Alliance, for those organizations were also defined as secret societies. The Synod linked the Grange to the Masons and, despite the farm group's avowed purpose of aiding farmers, was unacceptable. To quote Jonas Swensson in his 1873 report to the Synod, "In its inner workings, however, this society with its horrible oath, its ceremonies, and its principles is just as much at enmity with Christianity as any other."¹⁹ This opposition was extended to the Farmers' Alliance in turn, and church members who persisted in retaining membership in such organizations could be excommunicated.²⁰

All of the secular organizations considered thus far have been American organizations which Swedes joined. The Swedish immigrants, like those of other lands, also formed their own ethnic societies. Three major national orders developed as Swedish counterparts to the American benevolent lodges. The Independent Order of Svithiod originated in 1880 in Chicago, where the Independent Order of Vikings also developed a decade later. In 1896 the Vasa Order of America was created in Connecticut. These lodges not only offered their members benefits similar to the one Swedes could find in American organizations, but also afforded opportunities to celebrate the culture of the old country and to pass it down to successive generations. Swedes also founded a separate branch of the Good Templars. None of these Swedish lodges established themselves in the Great Plains communities under study during the nineteenth century, although Oakland acquired Viking Lodge Starke No. 42 of the Independent Order of Vikings in 1912 and an auxiliary nearly thirty years later.²¹

Most of the strength of these fraternal orders lay in the cities where large concentrations of the immigrant group could be found. In such urban settings Swedes also erected an array of

other ethnic associations beyond the lodges. Some of these were devoted to the appreciation of Scandinavian culture, others drew together the musically-inclined, still others attracted the politically-active or those interested in drama. In Chicago and Minneapolis, as well as in smaller Swedish centers like Jamestown, New York, Swedish-Americans had abundant opportunities for such fellowship with their countrymen.²²

There were similar organizations in some of the small communities in Kansas and Nebraska, but they were rare. Bethany College and Luther Academy both hosted a number of societies, some of which specifically supported Swedish culture, but membership in these organizations was limited to students, even though some of the programs they sponsored were open to the public. Lindsborg boasted Norden, a men's singing society in the 1890s, which had particular appeal to the town's businessmen. Swedes who wanted membership in an organization outside the church almost invariably had to turn to an American organization.²³

Several reasons may be forwarded for this circumstance. First, the Swedish congregations, the strongest ethnic institutions the Swedes created in these rural areas, offered most of the social benefits one could find outside the church. Second, the Augustana Synod found Swedish lodges just as objectionable as the American ones, even the temperance-minded Good Templars. Third, people who wanted an active social life in addition to or instead of their church commitments often sought useful economic or social ties to American society and may therefore have preferred American groups to Swedish alternatives.²⁴

Swedish participation in American groups demonstrates that there was indeed social interaction between the nationalities occurring outside of the inevitable contacts fostered by economic need, educational goals, and political activism. Certainly some of this interaction was superficial, without great commitment by Americans to admit Swedes into intimate circles or by Swedes to surrender their sense of ethnicity. A Swede could play an instrument for a town band without forming lasting relationships with non-Swedes in the same organization. However, some of this interaction certainly marked the acceptance of Swedes by Americans into American society

and into their lives. Sociologist Milton Gordon defines a group's entrance into the host society as structural assimilation and delineates two categories of relationships. In "secondary relationships" the minority group establishes contacts with the receiving society in such arenas as economic and public life. To these should also be added relationships in social organizations where there is only passing contact. "Primary relationships," however, "create personal friendship patterns, frequent home intervisiting, communal worship, and communal recreation." The end result of extensive structural assimilation is substantial intermarriage between the two groups. And, as one scholar has noted, "intermarriage is the surest means of assimilation and the most infallible index of its occurrence."²⁵

The extent of intermarriage can be gauged through the decennial federal census, which recorded marital status and place of birth for respondents and their parents. This makes it possible to measure the extent to which Swedes married people who were not Swedish. This approach is not without faults. It does not detect marriages between Swedes of different provincial origins, something which surely affected the way the spouses defined their own identities and shaped those of their children. The method cannot determine the religious affiliations of the partners. Endogamous marriages among Swedes in this era were almost certainly to be between Protestants, but the friction between the Augustana Lutherans and the other Swedish denominations might well have affected how two people of differing faiths related to each other, their families, and the Swedish community in general. This technique also includes large numbers of marriages contracted in Sweden where there was little likelihood of intermarriage with other groups. Unless a distinction is made between generations, it does not measure youths in comparison with their elders, except when two different censuses are compared. Thus a rapidly changing rate of intermarriage among young people in the late 1890s would be masked by the large numbers older marriages. Inasmuch as the purpose of this analysis is to determine the extent to which the family--an institution of critical importance to the long-term survival of ethnic distinctiveness--was being changed by intermarriage, the use of

the census suffices.²⁶

Table 9.1. Endogamous Marriages among Ethnic Groups in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1880.

	Male		Female		Both Sexes	
	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%
Swedes	187/190	98.4	142/144	98.6	329/334	98.5
Americans	139/147	94.6	95/105	90.5	234/252	92.9
Other Scandinavians	9/9	100.0	7/11	63.6	16/20	80.0
Germans	14/19	73.7	9/13	69.2	23/32	71.9
British	4/13	30.8	5/9	55.6	9/22	40.9
Irish	9/12	75.0	2/5	40.0	11/17	64.7
Czech	16/16	100.0	12/12	100.0	28/28	100.0
TOTAL	378/406	93.1	272/299	91.0	650/705	92.2

Note: Seventeen individuals of mixed ethnicity or of other groups were dropped from the analysis.

Source: 1880 Census Sample

Swedes living in the townships covered in the 1880 census sample were remarkably endogamous (Table 9.1). Less than two percent of the married Swedes who turned up in the sample had selected people outside their ethnic stock as marriage partners. Americans of native stock, the only other large group in the sample, also had a high proportion of in-group marriages. Nearly all the remaining groups had significantly higher proportions of marriages outside their ethnic stock, although all the males from the other Scandinavian countries managed to find mates from Norway or Denmark--and the combination of those two nations into a general Scandinavian category obscures unions between men and women from different Scandinavian

countries. The notable exception is the Czechs in the sample, most of whom lived in Bohemia Township, Saunders County.

Moreover, as Table 9.2 indicates, the Swedes exhibited little variation by county in the extent of intermarriage. Regardless of whether they lived in Kansas or Nebraska, whether they

Table 9.2. Endogamous Marriages among Swedes in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1880.

County	Male		Female		Both Sexes	
	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%
McPherson	49/49	100.0	24/24	100.0	73/73	100.0
Saline	60/60	100.0	39/41	95.1	99/101	98.0
Burt	31/32	96.9	19/19	100.0	50/51	98.0
Saunders	9/9	100.0	2/2	100.0	11/11	100.0
Polk	11/12	91.6	16/16	100.0	27/28	96.4
Phelps	27/28	96.4	42/42	100.0	69/70	98.6
TOTAL	187/190	98.4	142/144	98.6	329/334	98.5

Source: 1880 Census Sample

resided in a county settled in the late 1860s or in the mid- to late-1870s, or whether they were male or female, Swedes overwhelmingly preferred marriage partners of their own ethnicity.

In the twenty years that followed the 1880 census, one might expect a trend toward intermarriage. Swedish-American children attended the public schools and intermingled with children from other groups, no doubt forming friendships. Many young Swedish men had substantial contact with Americans in the economy and would have met some American women in

the process. Despite an additional two decades of contact, however, there was almost no change in the degree of marital assimilation for Swedes (Table 9.3). More than ninety-five percent of all married Swedes in the sample had united with other Swedes.

Table 9.3. Endogamous Marriages among Ethnic Groups in Selected Townships in McPherson and Saline Counties, Kansas; and Burt, Phelps, Polk, and Saunders Counties, Nebraska, 1900.

	Male		Female		Both Sexes	
	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%	Endogamous/Total	%
Swedes	190/196	96.9	166/175	94.9	356/372	95.7
Americans	60/76	78.9	95/116	82.8	156/192	81.3
Other Scandinavians	7/9	77.8	5/8	62.5	12/17	70.6
Germans	11/19	57.9	15/24	62.5	26/43	60.5
British	8/11	72.7	2/11	18.2	10/22	45.5
Irish	2/8	25.0	4/15	26.7	6/23	26.1
Czech	12/12	100.0	8/8	100.0	20/20	100.0
TOTAL	290/331	87.6	296/357	82.9	586/688	85.2

Note: Eighteen individuals of mixed ethnicity or of other groups were dropped from the analysis.

Source: 1900 Census Sample

Nearly every other ethnic groups demonstrated greater marital assimilation by 1900. Proportionately, the Americans, Germans, and other Scandinavians all decreased their in-marriage by about ten percent between the two censuses. Irish endogamy fell precipitously, from nearly sixty-five percent in 1880 to just over twenty-five percent in 1900. The British, the only group that was more likely to marry outside the group than inside it in 1880, actually

increased the degree of endogamy slightly. The Czechs in the sample remained steadfastly loyal to their group.

Most studies of intermarriage that have included Swedes either as a separate entity or as part of a Scandinavian group examine twentieth century data rather than focusing on the nineteenth century. In one study that does correspond with the period of this work, Swedes in Jamestown, New York, exhibited a comparable rate of endogamy--94% in 1880, declining to about 79% in 1915. Scandinavians in New Haven, Connecticut, had a low rate of in-marriage in 1870--only 40%--but a rate of 82.8% in 1900. Studies that treat the first two decades of the twentieth century produced endogamous rates ranging between sixty and eighty-five percent, while those that examine the 1920s and 1930s generally found in-group marriage rates ranging from about sixty-five percent to thirty-five percent.²⁷

Several factors explain the low rate of intermarriage for Swedes, even as late as 1900. A major reason for the high rates of endogamy among the Swedes in the sample is their dominance in most of the townships under study. Young Swedes searching for potential mates had many of their own ethnicity from which to choose. People from other groups would have had fewer such choices and have thus been more prone to marry out of their group. Lowry Nelson has demonstrated that the members of a majority group in a rural Minnesota county were significantly more likely to select mates of their nationality than were members of a minority.²⁸ The efforts of those individuals--ministers, land agents, and landseekers--who worked for group migration to the Great Plains produced strong communities that could perpetuate themselves into the twentieth century.

Another factor in limiting intermarriage was religion. Protestantism in general established boundaries that individuals were reluctant to cross. Protestants tended to marry other Protestants instead of seeking mates among Catholics, for example.²⁹ The various Swedish denominations created barriers as well. Augustana Synod clergy, for example, were anxious to keep their flock within Lutheranism as well as within Protestantism, and would have been

displeased to see young people marrying outside that faith if the marriage partner did not have a commitment to joining the Lutheran confession. The social functions of the congregation provided young people with frequent opportunities to mix with others in the parish or neighboring parishes and thereby find future spouses.

Cultural differences beyond religion may also have contributed to relatively low rates of intermarriage among Swedes. As one early historian of the Lindsborg community maintained, "Marriage with non-Swedes was looked on with some disfavor. The tradition existed that American girls were not good workers and were extravagant. Then, too, the other party was likely to be non-Lutheran. 'Children of such marriages were likely to find themselves homeless and adrift,' is the rationalization of a clergyman to account for such opposition." At least some Swedes in Lindsborg viewed their American neighbors as shiftless and unreliable.³⁰ Whatever the reason, Swedes in the Kansas and Nebraska communities under study found little need to intermarry with non-Swedes.

In the Swedish settlements in Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century, immigrants had extensive contacts with American society in one context or another. Swedes and Americans cooperated and competed in the the market place in search of economic success. They met the the arena of public affairs, usually as allies but sometimes as opponents. They joined together to achieve common civic goals. Swedish-American children played and studied together in the public schools. All of these opened additional opportunities for socialization between these groups and with other nationalities.

Some Swedes chose to extend their contact with Americans by joining various American organizations, ranging from literary societies to social clubs to fraternal lodges. Some of these social contacts had only minor influence on one's identity, particularly if the contact was of brief duration. Some, however, involved extensive intermingling with Americans and demonstrated a strong willingness to assimilate. Indeed, those Swedish Lutherans who took membership in lodges and secret societies risked alienation from their congregation because of that membership. To use

Milton Gordon's terminology, secondary and primary relationships were being formed between Swedes and Americans, the result of which was the beginning of structural assimilation.

Swedes may have been willing to associate with Americans socially, but as late as 1900—more than two decades after the Swedish settlements were founded—few Swedes were willing to marry Americans. Marital assimilation was not yet taking place to any significant degree. This would change during the twentieth century as the older rural communities began to break down. However, in 1900 the family was still a powerful ethnic institution into which Americans were not admitted.

CHAPTER 9

NOTES

1. Oakland Republican, April 7, 1898; September 16, 1899.
2. Ruth Billdt, trans., Pioneer Swedish-American Culture in Central Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1965), p. 71; Emory Lindquist, Bethany in Kansas: The History of a College (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1975), pp. 171, 174; Lindsborg News, January 1, 1897; December 22, 1899.
3. Carl Wallerstedt, The Second Generation (Waco, TX: Davis Bros. Publishing Co., 1976), p. 28; Mrs. Victor (Charlotte) Anderson, Interview (Typescript, n.d.), p. 2, Norden Club Project, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska [hereafter NSHS]; Milton Hawkinson, "Stories and Memories" (Typescript, 1966), p. 30, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas [hereafter KSHS]; Lindsborg News, June 20, 1890; July 16, 1897; Wahoo Democrat, June 10, 1897.
4. Frank Albert Waugh, "Pioneering in Kansas" (Typescript, n.d.), pp. 11- 12, 44-46, KSHS.
5. Wahoo New Era, July 6, 1893; Wahoo Democrat, November 26, 1896; Oakland Republican, February 6, 1896; Smoky Valley News, November 11, 1881; Lindsborg News, June 29, 1900.
6. Oakland Republican, April 29, November 4, 1897; February 10, 17, 18 98.
7. Wahoo Democrat, February 16, 1899; Stromsburg Headlight, January 11, July 12, 1894; March 25, 1897.
8. Smoky Valley News, June 26, 1885; Anna Carlson, "The Round Table Club, Lindsborg, Kansas" (Typescript, n.d.), Emory Lindquist Papers, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas [hereafter BC]; Lindsborg News, January 14, April 23, 1897. On the Marquette Literary Society, see Smoky Valley News, November 16, 1881, and Lindsborg News, July 16, 1897. It should be noted that there were social organizations in which Swedes may not have participated. For example, the Star Club, formed in Holdrege in 1892, had no Swedish charter members. The Acme Literary Society in Stromsburg had no Swedes in attendance at its January, 1894, meeting, which may or may not be evidence that Swedes belonged to the organization. See Holdrege Citizen, September 20, 1892, and Stromsburg Headlight, January 3, 1894.
9. On the YMCA, see Lindsborg News, September 29, 1893; April 30, 1897; and December 1, 1899. For the WCTU, see Wahoo New Era, March 5, 1891; Wahoo Democrat, August 3, 1899, and Women's Christian Temperance Union, McPherson, Kansas, Minute Book, 1891-1896, Minutes of October 28, 1891, KSHS. On the GAR, see Lindsborg News, January 17, 1890, and William E. Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans (New York: Lewis, 1918), 5: 2538-2539.
10. Smoky Valley News, March 13, 1885; Lindsborg News, June 6, December 12, 1890; June 26, 1891; December 6, 1895.

11. Holdrege Citizen, December 2, 1887; April 13, 1893; January 12, 1900.
12. Wahoo Democrat, December 9, 1897; Oakland Republican, April 29, 1897; Stromsburg Headlight, October 1, 1885.
13. Holdrege Citizen, December 30, 1887; Oakland Republican, December 19, 1895; Lindsborg News, December 17, 1897.
14. C. R. Peterson, untitled typescript concerning W. Byron Walker Diary (Typescript, n.d.), p. 7, C. R. Peterson Papers, McPherson County Historical Society, Lindsborg, Kansas [hereafter MCHS], lists the members of the Riverside Grange. Walker moved to McPherson County from the Waterloo area of Iowa in 1870. His diary was found in a house being razed in 1963. A transcript for part of the 1870 entries can be found in the Elizabeth Jaderborg Papers, BC. For a brief published description of Walker and the diary, see Allan Lindfors and Eleanor Burnison, Pioneers on the Prairie: A History of Marquette, Kansas (Lindsborg: Lindsborg News-Record, 1978), p. 3. Peterson concludes that there was little interaction between Swedes and Americans in the area because Walker mentioned only a few Swedes by name in his diary. However, Walker was a charter member of the local grange, of which nearly thirty percent of the members were Swedish.
15. Holdrege Citizen, November 14, 1889; Wahoo New Era, February 4, 1892; February 2, 1893; Stromsburg Headlight, February 27, 1890; Lindsborg News, June 12, 1891; Daniel M. Pearson, The Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1977), pp. 48, 68-70.
16. O. Fritiof Ander, "An American Immigrant Community during the Progressive Era," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, ed. by J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelie (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), p. 158.
17. Edna Nyquist, comp. Pioneer Life and Lore of McPherson County, Kansas (McPherson, KS: Democrat-Opinion Press, 1932), pp. 144-145.
18. The lodge question is best treated in Emmer E. Engberg, "Augustana and Code Morality," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, ed. Emmer Engberg et al. (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1960), pp. 138-143. See also Paul W. Spaude, The Lutheran Church under American Influence (Burlington, IA: Lutheran Literary Board, 1943), pp. 123-146, especially pp. 131-132; and Wesley Westerberg, "Swedish-American Religious and Secular Organizations," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration, ed. by Nils Hesseimo (Chicago: Swedish Pioneer Historical Society), p. 202.
19. Cited in O. Fritiof Ander, "The Immigrant Church and the Patrons of Husbandry," Agricultural History 8 (October, 1934): 123.
20. Pearson, Americanization of Carl Aaron Swensson, pp. 75-76, describes how several members of the Farmers' Alliance were excommunicated from Bethany Lutheran Church. Swensson's own political loyalty to the Republican party may have influenced this action, as Pearson suggests. However, he had long been critical of secret societies in Lindsborg. His annual reports to the congregation, summarized and extensively quoted by Alfred Bergin in the congregation's first history, included complaints in 1887, 1891, 1892, 1895, 1896, and

1897. In the last report, Swensson noted that the church board had ruled membership in secret societies contrary to the goals of the congregation and that people who refused to surrender such membership could be disciplined. See Billdt, ed. Pioneer Swedish-American Culture, pp. 97-101.

21. Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, trans. by Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), pp. 122-123; Allan Kastrup, The Swedish Heritage in America (St. Paul: Swedish Council of America, 1975), p. 637; Julius Lincoln, "Cherities and Self-Help," in Swedes in America, 1638-1938, ed. by Adolph B. Benson and Naboth Hedin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 148; Bertil G. Winstrom, "The Vasa Order," in The Scandinavian Presence in North America, ed. by Erik J. Friis (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1976), pp. 86-87; Mrs. Bill Johnson, ed. and comp. Oakland Centennial: A Century to be Proud of a Future Unlimited ([Oakland, NE: n.p., 1963]), pp. 80-81.

22. Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, pp. 122-123; Westerberg, "Religious and Secular Organizations," pp. 200-201; Wesley Westerberg, "Secular Organizations," in The Swedes in Minnesota, ed. by Byron Nordstrom (Minneapolis: T. S. Dennison & Co., 1976), pp. 60-63; Paul A. Spengler, Yankee, Swedish and Italian Acculturation and Economic Mobility in Jamestown, New York, from 1860 to 1920 (New York: Arno Press, 1980), pp. 126-137; Ulf Beijbom, Swedes in Chicago: A Demographic and Social Study of the 1846-1880 Immigration (Stockholm: Läromedelsförlagen, 1971), pp. 266-287.

23. Lindsborg News, June 14, September 20, 1895; Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), p. 228.

24. Westerberg, "Religious and Secular Organizations," pp. 203. As O. Fritlof Ander noted, "Membership in the societies was often regarded by immigrants as a rise in the social ladder and their acceptance in the larger American community." See Ander, "An Immigrant Community," p. 158.

25. Milton M. Gordon, "Assimilation in America: Theory and Reality," Daedalus 90 (Spring, 1961): 79; Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940," American Journal of Sociology 49 (January, 1944): 331.

26. John G. Rice, "Marriage Behavior and the Persistence of Swedish Communities in Rural Minnesota," in Perspectives on Swedish Immigration, pp. 136-150, examines differing marriage patterns among provincial groups. Richard M. Bernard, The Melting Pot and the Alter: Marital Assimilation in Early Twentieth-Century Wisconsin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), pp. xxiii-xxviii, examines some of the methodological difficulties in measuring intermarriage.

27. Spengler, Yankee, Swedish and Italian Acculturation, p. 125; Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot," p. 333. The various studies dealing with the period past 1900 are conveniently summarized in Charles H. Anderson, White Protestant Americans: From National Origins to Religious Group (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 54; and Sture Lindmark, Swedish America, 1914-1932: Studies in Ethnicity with Emphasis on Illinois and Minnesota (Stockholm: Läromedelsförlagen, 1973), pp. 50-63. Bernard, The Melting Pot and the Alter, pp. 55, 63, found exogamy rates of 60.7% for Swedish immigrants and 32.1% for their children in Wisconsin in 1910. Kennedy does not provide the size of her sample, but the low rate of endogamy suggests that the Scandinavians were a small group in 1870.

Endogamy apparently continued to be the norm in Lindsborg for decades. In a 1920 study

of language assimilation in the community, only six percent of a sample of households used English because one of the parents was a non-Swede. See Carl Terence Pihlblad, "The Language Assimilation of a Swedish Community in the Middle West" (M.A. Thesis, University of Missouri, 1920), p. 41.

28. Lowry Nelson, "Intermarriage among Nationality Groups in a Rural Area of Minnesota," American Journal of Sociology 48 (March, 1943): 588-589. Hildegard B. Johnson had the same result in her study of Germans in Minnesota. See Johnson, "Intermarriages Between German Pioneers and Other Nationalities in Minnesota in 1860 and 1870," American Journal of Sociology 51 (January, 1946): 303.

29. Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot," pp. 331-339.

30. Terence C. Pihlblad, "The Kansas Swedes," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 13 (June, 1932): 39; Valdemar Carlson, "A Kansas Town in the Early 1900's," The Kansas Magazine (1955): 88-90.

CHAPTER 10

THE PROGRESS OF ASSIMILATION

In February, 1904, Carl A. Swensson traveled to California in the company of friends. The Lindsborg pastor planned to attend sessions of the Augustana Synod's California Conference and participate in services at Swedish Lutheran churches in the state, as well as find time to relax. Aboard a train between San Francisco and Los Angeles, Swensson took ill. A doctor examined the minister after he reached his destination and, diagnosing heart trouble and pneumonia, admitted him to a local hospital. In the early morning hours of February 16, Swensson roused from his sleep briefly. When the attending nurse asked him how he felt, he replied, "Oh, I feel splendid" and dozed off again. He died minutes later.

A week later the people of Lindsborg paid their last respects to the man who had been their spiritual leader for a quarter of a century. In what was surely the largest funeral in the community's history, thousands of people--reports range from three to six thousand--gathered to honor the man who had done so much for Lindsborg, for Bethany College, and for the Augustana Synod. The casket, attended by a student honor guard, remained in the college auditorium for hours while mourners filed past. Following the memorial service, a large crowd escorted the coffin to the place of interment in a local cemetery.¹

Messages of comfort poured in from around the nation as the Swedish-American community responded to Swensson's death. Some of these were collected in a memorial volume published in Swensson's honor. This document illustrates the progress of assimilation in the lives of Swedish-Americans. Almost without exception, those groups connected with churches sent condolences in Swedish. The groups whose interests lay in politics, education, and business conveyed their sorrow in English.

All of the groups that responded in Swedish were religious organizations. The Kansas and California conferences of the Augustana Synod, as well as districts of the Kansas, Illinois,

Minnesota, and New York conferences expressed their sorrow in Swedish, the language of worship. So did Lutheran congregations in Kansas, Illinois, and Colorado, and the other Swedish congregations in Lindsborg. The Bethany College alumni at Augustana Theological Seminary wrote in Swedish, as did the Synod's Women's Missionary Society and the Lutheran youth group at Camden Place, Minnesota.

The latter group stands in contrast with youth societies from Swensson's own congregation and elsewhere, the rest of which responded in English, as did the Men's League of First Lutheran in Galesburg, Illinois. With the sole exception of the Bethany alumni in seminary, every other Swedish group connected with education--including Bethany College, Augustana College and Seminary, Gustavus Adolphus College, Luther Academy, North Park College, and Bethany College alumni clubs from New Haven to Denver--sent messages in English. So did the Lindsborg City Council, the Lindsborg Commercial Club, the Republican Electors of McPherson County, the Swedish Republican Club of Denver, the Swedish Sick-Benefit Society in Princeton, Illinois, and the Swedish-Americans of Holdrege, Nebraska.²

The language in which these various groups communicated their sense of loss over Swensson's untimely death points to the extent of assimilation among Swedes in America. Religion remained the province of Swedish, and Swedes--even those born in America and educated in the public schools--typically worshipped in the language of their forebears. That was the language of the spirit, and the students at Augustana Seminary--young men who had probably been born on this side of the Atlantic--felt constrained to use it in their condolences. By the early twentieth century, however, the future of Swedish in the church was apparent; five of the six church youth groups that sent messages used English. One might expect the civic groups from Lindsborg and McPherson County to use English because the organizations included non-Swedes. The choice of English by the Swedish-American groups from Denver, Holdrege, and Princeton was deliberate and underscored the fact that Swedes viewed part of their identity as American. The overwhelming use of English by organizations associated with education is evidence that the

leadership of Swedish America would become more and more American.

Other sources point to the same division in the public and private lives of Swedes in the United States. Carl A. Olson's daybook is a mixture of Swedish and English. His daily entries were typically in Swedish, but he sometimes used English words to record events. In a description of his contact with the public school he wrote, "Miss harvey [sic] teacher." He kept in touch with national political events and noted, "Tweed convicted," "Election vote for Hayes president [sic]," and "Garfield shot," as those events occurred.³ In the first part of his daybook Olson recorded events, information, and dates of interest to him. Some he wrote in English, others he reserved for Swedish. These, too, illustrate how he defined his world. He listed his expenses for such items as taxes, land and improvements, furniture, utilities, clothing, and groceries in English. He kept track of his farm's production and livestock in English. He recorded odd collections of facts--railroads between New York and Chicago, urban population in the United States, the wealth of nations, important inventions, the world's largest ports, and astronomical observations in English or, in the case of statistical tables, with English headings. He chose Swedish to describe his illnesses, critical periods in his life and those of his family, a list of girlfriends, memories of his parents, dates of Easter, and the floor plan of a church in Sweden. For Olson topics dealing with his family, his spiritual life, and private matters were best expressed in Swedish. The world of business and politics belonged to English.⁴

Doniver A. Lund's work on Gustavus Adolphus College and its students indicates a similar dichotomy. A. P. Johnson, who enrolled in the college in 1879, recorded his impressions of church services--even those services that had been conducted in English--in his ancestral language, but he kept his financial records in English. He also typically reported his schoolwork in Swedish. The letter files of P. A. Mattson, president of the college from 1904 to 1911, also demonstrate the separation of Swedish-American life into Swedish and American spheres. Lutheran ministers almost invariably used Swedish in their correspondence with Mattson. Students, their parents, and lay members of the college's board of directors were most likely to

express themselves in English.⁵

The Swedish immigrants who settled rural communities in Kansas and Nebraska in the nineteenth century readily adopted American ways in some areas of their lives. Most came to America and to the Great Plains for economic reasons and quickly discarded Swedish customs which were less useful than American patterns. Swedes were prone to take part in the public life of the communities where they settled and exhibited strong commitment to the public school system. By the end of the century they were joined American organizations and establishing social relationships with other groups.

Many Swedes began their adjustment to the American economy and prevailing agricultural practices before they ever migrated to the Great Plains. Swedish immigrants commonly spent a period of months or years in one of the states farther east. There they found jobs using skills they had brought from the old country or they worked as unskilled laborers. Many took jobs as farm laborers for Americans or Swedes who had arrived earlier and were sufficiently established to need labor and to pay for it. Whatever the employment, such immigrants acquired enough knowledge of the American economy and sufficient skill in English to function in the United States. They also acquired capital they would use to purchase land and establish a farm on the Great Plains. Even those Swedes who migrated directly to Kansas or Nebraska frequently went through a seasoning period during which they learned from those with experience what would work in the Plains environment.

Swedes who went into farming--and the availability of land was what drew most to Kansas and Nebraska--closely followed the major crop patterns of their American-born neighbors, although in Kansas both seem to have learned from Germans who had adapted to the steppes of Russia before coming to America. Crops intended primarily for home consumption or that produced a relatively small proportion of farm income allowed greater experimentation and perhaps retention of some Old World patterns.

Once in the Plains states, Swedes maintained close economic ties to Americans. Many

depended on at least temporary employment from American businessmen and farmers or from corporations in order to earn cash during the lean years until their farms began to show a profit. Swedish farmers with crops to market often sold them through American agents and virtually everyone had to deal with American railroad companies. American businessmen actively sought Swedish customers by stocking ethnic goods and employing clerks who could converse in Swedish. Some Americans even became business partners with Swedes.

Although most Swedes came with the intention of farming, some availed themselves of the economic opportunities to be had in the small towns on the Plains. As newcomers to the economy, many began at the lower end of the occupational ladder, especially in communities where the Swedes did not dominate the population. Over time, Swedes were able to advance their fortunes to the point where their occupational distribution closely resembled that of the community as a whole.

Economic assimilation came relatively easily for the Swedes. Material success was one of their primary goals and they eagerly adapted to new conditions in order to achieve it. Because of their early arrival in the Plains counties under study, they were able to secure extensive tracts of land and enter agriculture in large numbers. They proved prosperous farmers, able to acquire the new agricultural patterns the American landscape and environment demanded. Those who chose urban occupations proved equally successful at creating a niche for themselves in the economy.

The Swedes also demonstrated assimilative tendencies in their public life. Most Swedish male immigrants eventually applied for American citizenship--in part because some American land laws required citizenship before an immigrant could secure final title to public lands. The Swedes did not, however, exhibit a rate of citizenship as high as most of the other groups in the sample, a result that calls into question the image of Swedes as rapid assimilators. The differences, which were not large and disappeared over time, can be attributed to several circumstances. The areas from which the sample was drawn were areas that continued to attract

recent immigrants from Sweden, individuals who would have had less time to take action toward becoming a citizen. Because Swedes were so numerous in these counties, new immigrants from other groups would have been less interested in the areas, preferring to seek homes in places where their countrymen predominated and had strong ethnic institutions. The existence of a large Swedish community probably delayed action to become a citizen for some immigrants who found most of their needs met within a network of ethnic ties. In time, however, virtually all Swedish male immigrants who stayed in the United States sought the advantages of American citizenship.

Swedes were typically active in politics, usually in the ranks of the Republican party--a loyalty that can be traced to the Swedes' national and local leadership, the group's tendency to settle in northern states, historical developments such as the Civil War and the Homestead Act which cemented their allegiances to the GOP, and the pietism of many early immigrants. Late in the nineteenth century the Populist movement attracted many Swedes--at least temporarily--with its programs to solve the agrarian distress of the Great Plains. Some Swedes found the Republicans' reluctance to address the prohibition issue in a forthright manner disillusioning and gave their votes to the Prohibitionist ticket. Although the Swedes managed to capture some political offices early in their settlement in Kansas and Nebraska--Olof Olsson, for example, won offices in county government and the state legislature before he even became a citizen--the group was not rewarded with nominations in substantial numbers until the fierce political competition of the 1890s forced parties to mind the ethnic vote more carefully.

Swedish immigrants were visible participants in civic affairs in the communities where they resided, particularly so in Lindsborg where Carl Swensson's influence seems to have made a difference. Immigrants from Sweden joined with Americans and members of other ethnic groups in economic development schemes, fire companies, agricultural societies, and protective associations--all of which demonstrated a commitment to the future of their communities. Swedes rapidly adopted the days Americans set aside to honor this nation's past--indeed, Swedes were a driving force in the July 4th celebrations in Lindsborg--although the immigrants also

observed Mid-summer's Day as they had in Sweden. When international events involving Spain and Cuba called for an American response, Swedes answered as Americans, waving the flag and donning the American uniform.

Swedes exhibited their willingness to adopt American ways in their educational choices as well. Unlike some groups that erected elaborate systems of full-time parochial schools, the Swedes opted for patronizing the public schools. The Swedish community as a whole-- although there were some dissenting voices-- accepted the common school as a suitable vehicle for educating their children. Swedes were not entirely satisfied with public education, but they had no deep cultural conflicts with American society that prevented them from enrolling their children in public schools. This decision had two significant impacts. Swedish youngsters studied the same lessons Americans did; they grew up accepting American society and history as their own. Moreover, they had substantial contact with their peers from other groups, particularly Americans. This encouraged friendships and other relationships that transcended ethnic lines and speeded the Swedes' assimilation.

Swedish-Americans faulted the public schools for the lack of religious instruction. This was not cause enough to prompt outright rejection of the system, but it did encourage Swedes to seek supplemental means of teaching a critical subject. Swedish churches turned to two primary institutions to achieve this end-- the Sunday school and the summer "Swede school." The former, which has its origin in the United States, had been adopted by the pietist movement in Sweden and became commonplace in all the Swedish denominations in America. The Swede school-- which combined religious subjects with instruction in the Swedish language-- developed in America as Swedes here experimented with ways of adapting their educational expectations to the public school system.

A fundamental division existed in the way in which Swedes divided their educational efforts. There was a public world in which it was acceptable, even encouraged, to adopt the standards and values of American culture. What better way to do so than through the common

schools? But there was a private world, bounded by religious values and the Swedish language, that Swedes guarded from invasion by creating Sunday and Swede schools. In some respects, this division in education continued in the Swedes' colleges and academies. Those institutions, which included Bethany College in Kansas and Luther Academy in Nebraska, trained the future leaders of the Augustana Synod. Each offered programs that would help prepare young men for seminary and careers in the ministry. Yet those institutions also established normal and commercial programs that opened paths into the American economy beyond the ethnic group.

Each of these areas--economics, politics, and education--brought Swedes into contact with other groups. From this interaction and from a natural integration among groups sharing a geographic space and working toward common goals came a degree of social assimilation. Swedes did not just transact business with Americans and go home. They did not simply vote on election day and return to their own private ethnic world. Swedish children did not segregate themselves in one corner of the classroom or the schoolyard and ignore other cultural groups. All of these arenas provided contexts within which Swedes could pursue additional social relationships with non-Swedes.

Certainly some of these relationships were superficial and transient. A Swede could converse with an American about the weather, crop prospects, and local gossip without much impact on his identity as a Swede. But other relationships carried Swedes into the mainstream of American life. Those Swedes who took membership in American organizations, particularly secret societies which the Augustana Synod condemned, developed a network of associations that could draw them away from the ethnic group. The young Swedish man or woman who found the company of non-Swedes desirable or preferable widened the circle from which he or she would choose a mate and, in all likelihood, opened wider the door into American society for the next generation.

There were, however, limits to the degree of assimilation Swedish immigrants were willing to accept. They were eager for the material wealth America offered and quickly adopted

the methods that would bring it to them. Similarly, Swedes accepted the privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship, participated in American politics, and took an active interest in the public life of their communities. They voluntarily mixed with other groups in social settings. Swedes were even willing to entrust the public school with primary responsibility for educating their children. But certain aspects of their lives and heritage were too precious to trade away regardless of what America had to offer.

The church was central to these rural Swedish-American settlements from the very beginning. Religion had influenced at least some of the early Swedish settlers in Kansas and Nebraska to emigrate from Sweden in the first place. The desire for a Lutheran religious community was one of the motivations behind the First Swedish Agricultural Company of McPherson County, the group that founded Lindsborg. Clergymen such as Olof Olsson in Kansas and S. G. Larson in Nebraska played crucial roles in locating their followers near other Swedes and organizing congregations that would keep their countrymen within denominational boundaries. Scattered Swedes who desired church fellowship chose their destinations in Kansas and Nebraska to be near co-religionists. Even the bitter theological divisions that splintered most Augustana Lutheran congregations can be viewed as evidence of the importance religion had in the lives of the Swedish settlers on the Plains.

The church came to be the strongest ethnic institution in the rural Swedish settlements in Kansas and Nebraska, doing far more than simply gathering worshipers for weekly services. The congregation also provided a wide range of activities designed fulfill the various needs of its members and maintain their loyalty from birth to death. A person was baptized into the congregation as an infant. His or her early socialization with others of the same age often occurred at church social functions. Upon reaching school age, the child would spend weekdays for much of the year in the public school, learning English and interacting with non-Swedes. But at Sunday and mid-week church services, the Swedish language and the comforting folds of a

religious community prevailed. Youths spent summers in Swede schools learning of their parents' land, honing their skills in Swedish, and receiving religious instruction. The church youth groups that became common in the late nineteenth century gave young people opportunities to socialize in a suitable setting with people of whom the congregation approved. Within this restricted environment many young adults chose marriage partners and assumed the varied church duties they were expected to fulfill. At the end of one's life--a life which probably included membership in one of the women's societies, minor duties in the upkeep of the church property, committee service, Sunday school teaching, and hosting the youth group--one could be laid to rest in the shadow of the church, secure in the knowledge that children and grandchildren would maintain their religious heritage.

The church--with its religious instruction, its almost dogmatic commitment to the preservation of the Swedish language, its theological distinctions from and disputes with other groups, and its enveloping social activities--defined a world that was private, in which outsiders could not fully participate. In this private world, Swedish prevailed. No other language, not even the language of the business place and school yard, sufficed to express one's innermost feelings.

The church shared this private world with the family. Swedish remained the major language of the home for the immigrant generation. Their children learned Swedish as the first language and acquired English only after contact, either directly through attending or indirectly through an older sibling who attended, the public school. Although the second and third generation in America inevitably had a broader spectrum of relationships with non-Swedes because of public education, Swedes typically chose members of their own group as marriage partners. Even as late as 1900, two or three decades after the communities under study were established, the overwhelming majority of marriages contracted by members of the group were to other Swedes.

Swedish-Americans in the late nineteenth century lived in two worlds. Their public world was characterized by ready adaptation to their new country. Swedes learned how to

function and prosper in the American economy. They became American citizens, voted and ran for office, and joined civic activities. They attended the public schools, earnestly studied the language of the land and became knowledgeable about their new country. Swedes socialized with Americans in all aspects of this public world and gained entry into American social organizations. But the Swedes also maintained a private world bounded by church and family. Here people spoke Swedish. The values and culture of this sphere were those brought from an old homeland and were to be cherished, protected, and passed on to the next generation. The church--even though it as an institution had changed in the American environment--was the principal guardian of this private world, utilizing its own educational instruments and social activities to separate that world from the public one.

Swedish-Americans moved back and forth between these worlds, shifting from one to the other as circumstances required. Some individuals spent most of their lives in the private sphere; others visited that world only on formal occasions or retreated to it in times of duress. The balance between the two shifted over time as Swedish immigrants and their descendents felt more and more comfortable in the public, English-speaking world. These worlds could not be entirely separated from one another. Religion shaped Swedes' political values in the late nineteenth century and churches sometimes restricted the American social groups to which their members could belong. English sometimes intruded into the private world as Swedish schoolchildren brought their new language home with them. In time that private world would become less and less distinct from the public one. In 1900, however, the private sphere remained a potent force.

One question this study hoped to answer was whether or not Swedes were rapid assimilators, as both contemporary observers and historians have frequently maintained. In some respects Swedes did assimilate into American life. They adapted quickly to the American economy and politics, although Swedes sometimes sought their own goals in the political arena. They utilized the public school rather than segregating their children in parochial systems. They

took part in and sometimes led American social organizations rather than rejecting those in favor of their own ethnic societies. An American who looked at the public world of Swedish-Americans in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries saw a group that prospered in the United States, with large numbers in farming and skilled crafts, and found them a welcome change from the unskilled masses arriving from Europe and filling city slums. The same observer found Swedes well-represented in the ranks of the Republican party, the majority party in many of the states where Swedes settled, and vocal advocates of pietistic reforms that were popular among at least some other Americans. The American discovered that Swedish children, almost without exception, attended the public schools and made the language and history of this nation their own. He looked at the Swedish names on the rosters of American social groups, at the Swedes marching in Fourth of July parades, and at youths of Swedish descent going to the defense of American honor and interests in the Spanish-American War, and concluded that members of this group intended to become American rather than isolating themselves in ethnic enclaves or planning to return to the land of their birth after a few years of working in America. Virtually every indicator of the public life of this immigrant group pointed to rapid assimilation. Even the churches--central to the private world though they were--evidenced signs of Americanization, with their religious competition, Sunday schools, youth groups, lay authority, and voluntary financing. And the pietistic Protestantism of these churches was allied against a Catholic challenge that was growing. On those unusual occasions when an American attended a service at one of these services--such as the funeral of a close associate--he or she was likely to find an English sermon that eased the discomfort of being in a strange church and perhaps recognized the tune of the hymns if not the words.

The same observer might have missed signs indicating a reluctance to assimilate, to admitting American ways into a private sphere. Enthusiastic about the Swedish support of the common school, he or she might have ignored the Swede schools taught in the summer and the use of Swedish in the Sunday school. Impressed that a Swedish-American clergyman could preach in

English, he or she might forget that the minister rarely did so. Struck by the similarity Swedish congregations and their social activities bore to their American counterparts, the observer might have disregarded the fact that those same activities insulated church members from American society. Approving of the Swedes' struggle to learn English, the American might have overlooked the preference for Swedish in the home, a linguistic choice made possible by low rates of exogamy.

Swedish-American settlers in Kansas and Nebraska divided their lives into two worlds. In their public world they adopted American forms, had substantial contact with other groups, and typically spoke English. In the private world--a world American observers did not examine closely enough--Swedes preserved aspects of their culture, particularly religious values and their ancestral language, which they were not willing to surrender. The public world--with its English language, American ways, and intermingling with others--would eventually overwhelm that private world, but had not done so by the dawn of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 10

NOTES

1. The events surrounding Swensson's death and funeral can be followed in Emory K. Lindquist, Smoky Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg: Bethany College, 1953), pp. 143-145; J. E. Floren, "Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson," Korsbaneret 20 (1905): 190-193; and Ernst Skarstedt, "Läroverkspresidenten Carl Swensson," Prärieblomman 5 (1905): 87-90. There is some minor disagreement concerning the days and dates in the matter. Lindquist reports that Swensson died "during the night of Monday, February 16" and that the College was notified on Tuesday, February 17. In 1905, February 16 fell on a Tuesday and Swensson died in the early morning hours of that day. Lindsborg no doubt received word hours after the death. Moreover, Floren reports the funeral was on Tuesday, February 22. Lindquist agrees with the date and does not mention the day of the week. Skarstedt reported the funeral was on February 23. In 1904, February 22 was a Monday, not a Tuesday.

2. In Memoriam: Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson ([Lindsborg, n.p., 1904]), *passim*. Emmet K. Ekiund makes a similar observation in "Faith and Education," in Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1960, ed. by Emmer Engberg et al. (Rock Island: Augustana Press, 1963), p. 85, although he fails to note that the seminary students used Swedish, that youth groups preferred English, and that all groups not associated with a religious body used English.

3. Carl Albert Olson, Daybook, March 6, 1872; November 19, 1897; November 7, 1876; July 2, 1881; Olson Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. Olson was not old enough to vote for Hayes in 1876, so he presumably was recording his father's political preference.

4. *Ibid.*, 1: 2-98

5. Don'ver A. Lund, "Augustana and Gustavus--Partners or Competitors," in The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, ed. by J. Iverne Dowie and Ernest M. Espelle (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 1963), p. 82; Lund, Gustavus Adolphus College: A Centennial History (Minneapolis: Gustavus Adolphus Press, 1963), p. 94.

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