



Utvandrarna

Vilhelm Moberg

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Moberg's most famous work is a series of four novels (a tetralogy) written between 1949 and 1959 that describe one Swedish family's migration from Småland to Chisago County, Minnesota in the mid 19th century. This was a destiny shared by almost one million Swedish people, including several of the author's relatives. These novels have been translated into English: The Emigrants (1951), Unto a Good Land (1954), The Settlers (1961), The Last Letter Home (1961). His literary depiction of the Swedish-American immigrant experience is comparable to O.E. Rolvaag's work depicting the experience of Norwegian-American immigrants.

Utvandrarna Details

Date : Published 1974 by Bonniers (first published 1949)

ISBN : 9789100297107

Author : Vilhelm Moberg

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Classics, Fiction, European Literature, Swedish Literature, Cultural, Sweden, Scandinavian Literature



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Reem says

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Kip Herbst says

This is a great historical fiction of Swedish Emigrants during the mid 1800's.

When I'm reading it I can picture our great-grandparents enduring similar events. The book is not romanticized at all, very realistic including the grit and hardship, but it shows what makes our country great:

gratefulness for WORK, freedom to work hard and be diligent, and importance of God, His principles, and relationship -not what man distorts and twists to his own power and greed. I've read the first two books in THE EMIGRANTS series and was excited to see the next two available to purchase, since these were published in 1951.

Matt Luedke says

I'm about half Swedish, and after I read "The Namesake," which I loved, I was curious about the story of my own family coming to the US. I really don't know much about my specific family, and sadly both grandparents with Swedish connections have died so I can't ask them anything. So I read the first book in this series to kind of use as a fictional surrogate. The main family comes to the Midwest at around the same time as my ancestors, so it's a reasonable substitution I suppose. I enjoyed it and I intend to read the following books in the series sometime soon.

This book takes place mostly in Sweden as the characters make their various decisions to leave for America. There are several different motivations and characters, all of them good stories written with great care. There are some seeking religious freedom, others running from failed pasts, and Karl Oskar, the main character who really just wants a better life when the crop yield starts really sucking. His wife isn't really into the idea at first, but she becomes (somewhat) more used to the idea over a long period of time.

Then we get onto the boat, which was a trip that royally sucked. The in-depth and well-researched conditions are one of my favorite parts of the book, even though they are hard to accept sometimes. The book was written in the 1950's, and takes place 100 years before that. So it's a long enough time ago that there is a little bit of mythology around it, but recent enough that the historical details seem pretty accurate.

Just as I was able to get a lot out of "The Namesake" even though the experience is not exactly my own, I think anyone will be able to get something out of this book. I look forward to the second!

PS There is also a movie version, and note that there are two movies: one that covers books 1 and 2, and the second of books 3 and 4. I haven't seen either since I want to read book 2 first. The only place I could find the first is for rental for \$2 on Youtube. If interested: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPiEFt...>

BookSweetie says

Who is Vilhelm Moberg? He is a person I would very much like to thank for his gift of this classic 1951 first-in-the-series book of historical fiction THE EMIGRANTS, translated from the Swedish by Gustaf Lannestock. Moberg grew up in Sweden hearing first-hand the stories of those who emigrated to the United States and then, after undertaking much careful research, has provided us with this insightful treasure. Moberg's prose in translation is not especially elegant, but the impact of the content more than compensates for the somewhat stodgy, straightforward language.

In particular, Moberg communicates a vivid, historically-based image of the stresses of farm and village life in Sweden in the 1850s as well as providing an insightful look at the feelings, thoughts, and motivations of a range of characters who end up on one ship, headed for the young United States. Moberg introduces us to people, men and women, old and young, literate and illiterate, and makes us feel their ignorance,

desperation, and yearning.

He portrays the precariousness of an existence marked by unrelenting hard work that cannot truly guard against hunger or financial calamity. A spike in population leads to land divisions, until there is no further division possible, and youngsters end up being legally bound out for years as poorly paid laborers by even caring parents to masters who may be stingy and harsh. Add in the vagaries of nature, limited educational options, deep uncertainty about the future, the strangling impact of debt, and an inflexible social and religious system. Suddenly, the burden of embarking on a costly, unpleasant, and dangerous sea journey emerges as almost logical.

In this first volume, the story finishes with the sea voyage coming to an end for key characters Karl Oskar and wife Kristina, along with the other survivors of the unpleasant Atlantic crossing.

Molino says

Första intrycket: 2 stjärnor. Slutgiltigt betyg: 0,000000000000...1 stjärna

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Karyn says

I love this book!

Zachary says

Vilhelm Mobergs bokserie om ett gäng småländska bönder som utvandrar till Amerika är en sådan där serie som folk gärna pratar om när man diskuterar klassiker – och speciellt svenska klassiker. Vilket kanske inte är så konstigt eftersom den handlar om en historisk händelse som rör större delen av den svenska befolkningen än i dag. Min familj var visserligen i Finland under de åren som böckerna utspelar sig men jag har många jämnåriga släktingar runt om i USA som är min mormors morfars fasters barnbarnsbarn - och dyligt. De flesta släktträd har ett par grenar som bestämde sig för att sticka till USA. I min lite mer närliggande släkt var det däremot prat om Australien... vilket som tur nog aldrig hände för då skulle jag inte sitta och skriva på denna recension. I alla fall, den nyaste pocketutgåvan av Utvandrarserien är så vacker att jag insåg att jag kan faktiskt inte skjuta på denna klassiker längre. Det var helt enkelt dags att läsa den.

I generationer har släkten levt och dött i den lilla byn i hjärtat av Småland. De har brukat samma jord och legat i samma säng fram till den dagen då den äldsta sonen tar över gården för att kunna gifta sig och föra

släkten vidare. Men i den här generationen är det annorlunda. Äldsta sonen Karl Oskar har alltid varit en bra bonde men det börjar bli trångt med alla ungar och hans åldrande föräldrar i undantagsrummet. De har den jord de har och den räcker knappt för mat till hela familjen. När deras äldsta flicka dör efter att ha smygatit gröt för att hennes mage inte klarade av så mycket mat på samma gång inser Karl Oskar att han inte kan fortsätta att försörja sin familj på den lilla jordplätt de har att bruka på – inte om han inte vill se fler barn dö på grund av svält.

Samtidigt har hans yngre bror Robert stora planer om att en dag ge sig av från det enda hem han någonsin haft för att ta sig över Atlanten och finna lyckan i Amerika – ett land för de fria och ärliga som är det närmaste ett paradies man kan komma här på jorden. När han får reda på att hans bror går runt med samma tankar som han själv börjar planerna bli mer än bara en dröm. Men det visar sig snart att det kommer fler prövningar innan de sätter fötterna på den amerikanska kontinenten.

Den enda riktiga erfarenhet jag hade av Utvandrarserien var ett försök att se filmen för flera år sedan tillsammans med min mor – och vi såg knappt fem minuter. Den var otroligt seg och för mig som har otroligt svårt att koncentrera mig så var det nästan uteslutet att ens försöka igen. Av den anledningen var jag orolig att böckerna skulle vara likadana och jag såg framför mig hur jag skulle kämpa mig igenom alla fyra böcker med tårar rinnande nerför kinderna... men det var inte fallet. Utvandrarna är möjligtvis en av de mest underhållande böckerna jag har läst. Karaktärerna är underbara och komplexa – och har beter sig otroligt bisarrt ibland (det är mest Danjel jag tänker på som är säker på att Jesus Kristus bor inom honom). De känns otroligt äkta och även om de har åsikter som jag inte kan hålla med om så känns det verkligen som att det är karaktärerna som har den uppfattningen, inte själva författaren. Det är sådan stor skillnad på en bok som är sexistisk och på karaktärer i en bok som är sexistiska. Moberg har gjort ett bra jobb med att låta karaktärerna ha åsikter och lämna ute sina egna åsikter.

Nu är jag man och har absolut ingen rätt (eller lust) att tala för kvinnor när det gäller sexism men i min åsikt var manliga och kvinnliga karaktärer rätt jämställda när det gäller skrivandet – trots att de självklart styrs av 1850-talets tänkande, vilket definitivt inte var det mest jämställda. Men karaktärerna får vara sig själva; och de varierar mycket. Som sagt, en del karaktärer är problematiska men de är det utan att boken är det. Det kändes som en stor lättnad eftersom boken var skriven i slutet av 40-talet; och den utspelar sig på 1850-talet. Däremot kände jag mig väldigt obekvämt när n-ordet användes men jag förstår varför det är med där – och jag vill bara utbilda dessa 1800-talskaraktärer.

Jag ser verkligen fram emot nästa del i denna bokserie (som jag för övrigt inhandlade idag... tillsammans med de andra två resterande delarna) för jag bryr mig verkligen om hur det går för dessa karaktärer i den nya världen... och sedan är det en historisk novell om nybyggare. Jag är svag för sådant. Jag är svag för 1800-tals USA, vilket är rätt... bisarrt när man tänker på det.

Hani Al-Kharaz says

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mai ahmd says

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evelina says

About 3 years ago I watched the musical "Kristina från Duvemåla" which is an adaption of this book series and now I decided that I wanted to read the books. I feel like this book was a bit dragged out but otherwise I really enjoyed it.

Lisa says

History and literature in happy marriage!

I have grown increasingly impatient with historical fiction in recent years, but this opus magnum in four heavy volumes by Vilhelm Moberg is still one of my favourite reading experiences of all time. I must have read the books at least three or four times, and I can't even recall how many times I watched the well-made movie. I even went so far as to travel to Karlshamn and to stand in reverence and awe in front of the Emigrant Monument, featuring the two main characters of the series, Karl-Oscar and Kristina Nilsson. In accordance with their personalities, Karl-Oscar looks straight forward facing the ocean, while Kristina hesitantly turns around towards the Swedish country-side she will always call home, but never see again, once she boards the ship for America.

I love the musical as well, created by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the two Bs in ABBA. Hardly a day goes by without me asking my son to play the theme "Guldet blev till sand" on the piano while I cook dinner, telling the story of a young Swedish adventurer who returns completely broken to his farming brother Karl-Oscar in Minnesota after failing to succeed in the Californian gold rush.

This 4-volume novel encompasses the quintessence of Swedish emigration and integration into American society in the 19th century. The first volume is concerned with the reasons they left the poverty and brutal social conditions in Sweden. The group which the reader follows is a mixed bag: from farmers who give up working themselves to exhaustion only to see their children starve, to adventurous youths who refuse to let their masters beat them into disability, to single-mum involuntary prostitutes who suffer from rigid moral codes and hypocrisy, to religious dreamers who collide with the harsh rules of the intolerant Swedish state church.

They pack their chests, and bring their most cherished valuables and customs, then face the ocean, and land on American soil after a dramatic sea journey. What they experience there is the typical immigrant story: the first generation struggles to settle, and pines for the "old country", while trying to keep up the traditions they once considered absolute truth and indispensable for life quality.

They register a change in their children, who slowly but steadily adopt a different way of life, and a different language. The once heavy Swedish rural dialect is lost, and English words appear instead, an early version of the now omnipresent Swenglish.

The last volume of the series, called "Sista brevet till Sverige", or "The last letter to Sweden", closes the chapter of their Swedish heritage and completes the transformation into Americans: full of Anglicisms, and of reports on the adventures of a disconnected offspring, the letter from old Karl-Oscar to his sister in the

Swedish village "at home" symbolises closure. After his death, the natural links to Sweden are broken, and what remains is an identification with the original country on the other side of the ocean that has almost mythical aspects, but is not founded on knowledge anymore.

It strikes me as incredibly sad that the descendants of Karl-Oscar and Kristina seem to have forgotten how fortunate they were to be given a chance in America, and how they prospered as a result. They fled the religious and social repression of Sweden, and found an open society.

That is history. And literature. Highly recommended!

Linda says

"Utvandrarna", "The Emigrants", was published 1949 and is the first in a tetralogy about the Swedish emigrants during the 1800's. The conditions for the Swedish people back then were terrible, especially for the farmers. The ground was rocky and dry, nothing grew. The possibilities were very limited in the countryside. The men ended up with the same kind of work as their parents, often taking over their work on the farm, or becoming a farm boy somewhere else. The women were married to other farmers. Everyone fought against poverty and famine.

Karl Oskar and Kristina are fed up with their life in Småland and decide to embark on a small ship to Amerika, the mystical country where everything seems to be possible, and where there are no priests that decide what is right and wrong and you address everyone the same. Their opinions are without criticism. Amerika seems to be the perfekt place. The emigrants from Småland - Karl Oskar and Kristina, the young and curious Robert, the mistreated Arvid, the prostitute Ulrika and the religious Daniel, the latter belonging to "åkianerna", a group of a kind of puritanism - embark on the ship to Amerika. The crowded journey becomes a great challenge. It's interesting to be able to see the world from their perspective, their reflections of life and theories about the sea.

This is a glimpse of Swedish history. Many people have fought like these people for survival in a country with limited opportunities. The change Sweden has gone through in a hundred years is mind-blowing. When reading about priest's house calls examinations and the way farmers treated their workers, it's difficult to realize it's the same country as today. The hunger and poverty were wide-spread in the countryside. Everyone should think about and thank our ancestors for fighting so hard, it's through them we are living today.

Ahmad Al-eskafi says

Stina says

This is a truely wonderful book that I am very happy to have read. Its amazing to read about what my ancestors lives might have been like (I am Swedish myself). I highly recommend every Swede and American to read this book!

?????? says

Bettie? says

SUMMER 2011:

Utvandrarna (1971) - I have caught hold of the film so a story re-visit with Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann can't be bad.

Interesting bit today in the swedish press:

Researchers study how Swedish is spoken in the United States a century after the great Swedish migration to North America.

Read here: <http://www.thelocal.se/34324/20110613/>

Pat says

I picked this book up by chance for something to read while visiting my poor mom who had a stroke and was moved to a nursing home. A 2nd generation Swedish American who spoke only Swedish as a child, I cannot help but marvel at what she and her parents and grandparents went through. The harsh economic conditions

in Sweden in the 1850's, the grueling journey in a tiny boat, the serious misinformation these brave people had. Well, it's a marvel we're all here. Hang in there, mom, 93 years old.

Laurie says

I came to these stories when, recovering from 'flu, I happened upon the film of this book (in Swedish with subtitles) on the television. I come from Swedish-American stock, and I was astounded at how closely the story in the film mirrored the experience of my own ancestors, who left Sweden at about the same time and arrived in the same place in Minnesota territory about the same time. I couldn't find the books, but a cousin had an ancient, cheap and tacky paperback edition from the 50s or 60s she gave me (the sort of book your teacher would have snatched away on the grounds that paperbacks were junk not fit for children). It was later that I purchased this edition, published by the Minnesota Historical Society. I've now re-read this many times. Of course, it appeals at least in part because its story is part of MY story, but Moberg was nothing if not a thorough researcher, so what he wrote in this and the subsequent three novels rings very true. In Lindstrom, Minnesota you can see a statue of Karl Oscar and Kristina (matching statue in Karlshamn, Sweden) and visit the Nilsson/Nelson house, complete with astrakhan apple tree (a pioneer house built at about the same time and moved to a park).

What this book is very good at is examining the question of "why go?" -- push factors and pull factors, the sheer effort to wrest a new life from wilderness, the failures of some to prosper, the difficulties of adapting to a new culture and new language. Thus Kristina always looks back, while Karl Oscar looks forward.

April says

Effectively conveys what it may have felt like to be an emigrant to the United States in the 1840s.

Nothing I've read has ever come close to making me "feel" the emigrant experience.

Things that struck me:

- how desperately badly off were many rural farmers in Sweden;
- how little information emigrants had on which to base their (often life-and-death) decisions
- how incredibly dangerous was the voyage over.

Because of how hard it is to get to their destination (Minnesota) and to survive the early years, it is heartwarming when the family starts to establish more security in their lives. This part of the book gives a real sense of what that meant to these people.
