

# OUTLINES OF SWEDEN

by

*E. Söderlund*

and

*Naboth Hedin*

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*New revised edition*

## INTRODUCTION

Sweden is one of the lands whence American folk and American culture sprang. Its institutions, its economic and social progress, its political stability and national solvency, as well as its high position in the arts and sciences, have aroused deep interest in the character of its people and the attributes of the land that have made such progress possible.

American ideas and ideals have not developed in a day; largely they represent heritages from the many European lands in which American culture has its roots. To benefit more fully from the centuries of European progress toward better civilization, to profit from the experiences through which our European ancestors have passed and the lessons they have learned, we must know something about their backgrounds—the geographies and histories of the lands which have moulded their customs, and shaped their destinies.

Ethnic attributes and cultural traits are sunk much deeper in the past than most of us realize, and to understand their own America our children must know as much as possible about the countries whence their forebears came. It is the unwritten dicta of age-old traditions rather than formal tables of enacted law that really govern.

It is particularly from Sweden's experiences and achievements in self-government and economic self help that we may learn something to help us solve our own problems. For various reasons we may not be able to apply the lessons directly, but at least they indicate the route we should like to travel and help us avoid the pitfalls into

which other nations have fallen. The clue to Sweden's success in social economy and democracy lies, in part, in its system of education, particularly in so far as it applies to moral training, but it also lies in the long, disciplined adaptation of the Swedish people to the physical characteristics of their country—the rigor of its seasons, its close contacts with the sea and its intimate relationship with Nature, particularly the forests. Especially inspiring is it to learn how the Swedish people have been able to control their own destinies and to help themselves economically.

Worcester, Mass. February, 1939.

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## PREFACE

In response to many requests for general information about Sweden, particularly from school children and college students, this booklet has been compiled from a variety of sources. "In our school we are studying about Sweden. Please send more information", runs the usual postal card request in childish handwriting. Ordinarily, these children are having their first lessons in European geography. The first chapter, therefore, tells in simple language the main facts about the geography of Sweden,—its location, boundaries, size, climate, vegetation, animals, population, and physical features.

The next chapter on "History" is a little more advanced, but yet simple enough for the average child in the closing grammar school grades. The following sections on Government, Industries, Social Reform, and Arts are intended for high school pupils who need outside material for courses in civil government or social welfare work. Even adult readers who are not otherwise familiar with Swedish affairs will here find authentic information in condensed form. Slightly different versions of the same text have already been published in a couple of languages. Like this one they are intended to satisfy the growing curiosity about Sweden, particularly on the part of young readers. More advanced students will find further details in the books listed at the end. Most of them ought to be obtainable at any good bookstore or library.

Stockholm and New York April, 1939.

*E. Söderlund*

*Naboth Hedin*

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