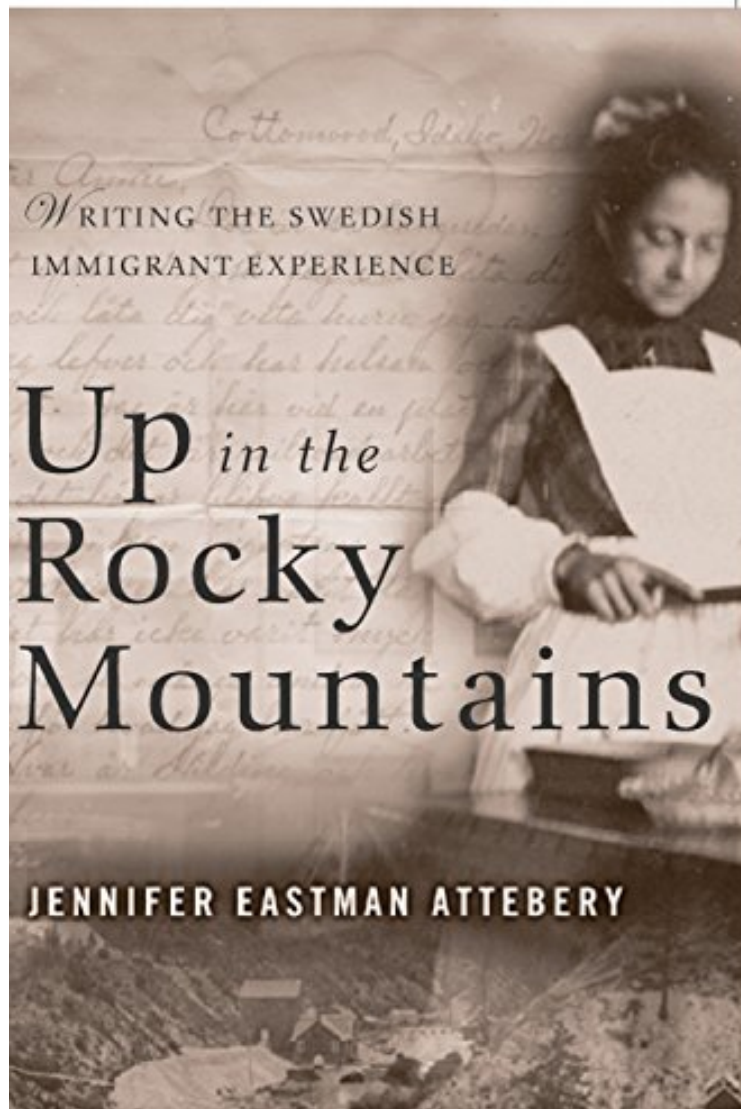


(Free download) Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience

Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience

Jennifer Eastman Attebery

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#3048097 in Books Univ Of Minnesota Press 2007-06-22Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .80 x 5.891, .94 #File Name: 0816647682320 pages | File size: 54.Mb

Jennifer Eastman Attebery : Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Not Just Lake WobegonBy Don R. LagoOur usual image of the Scandinavian immigrant is that of the Minnesota farmer. This isn't just because of Garrison Keillor. Most of the

history books about Scandinavian Americans have been written at Lutheran colleges in the Midwest, and they focus almost entirely on the Midwestern experience. Yet as Jennifer Eastman Attebery points out in this book, by 1920 some 20% of Swedish Americans were living in the West. Even in the Pacific Northwest, where there is a major Scandinavian museum, there have been very few books written on the western Scandinavian experience, and there is basically nothing about Scandinavians in the Rocky Mountain states. Attebery, based at Idaho State University, has been working to fill this void, and this book is a major contribution. In the West Swedes took part in all the adventures of the frontier: prospecting and mining, building railroads, cutting timber, cowboying. Their stories are far more diverse and entertaining than those of Midwestern farmers. Attebery tells their stories through their letters. This is a scholarly book, so the opening discussion of methodology may be a bit abstract for the general reader. But then she offers chapters organized around different aspects of immigrant experience, such as work, religion, and community, chapters offering an interesting cast of characters and stories. A 70-page appendix offers the actual letters.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, many Swedish men emigrated to the American Rockies as itinerant laborers, drawn by the regions developing industries. Single Swedish women ventured west, too, and whole families migrated, settling into farm communities. By 1920, one-fifth of all Swedish immigrants were living in the West. In *Up in the Rocky Mountains*, Jennifer Eastman Attebery offers a new perspective on Swedish immigrants' experiences in Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico from 1880 to 1917 by interpreting their letters home. Considering more than three hundred letters, Attebery analyzes their storytelling, repetitive language, traditional phrasing, and metaphoric images. Recognizing the letters' power as a folk form, Attebery sees in them the writers' relationships back in Sweden as well as their encounters with religious and labor movements, regionalism, and nationalism in their new country. By defining personal letters as a vernacular genre, Attebery provides a model for discerning immigrants' shared culture in correspondence collections. By studying their words, she brings to life small Swedish communities throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Jennifer Eastman Attebery is professor of English and director of American studies at Idaho State University.