

June Drenning Holmquist, ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981) xiii, 614 pp. \$45.00

It seems only fair to say that this book does for the ethnic groups in Minnesota what the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* does for all the groups in this country. Starting out with the American Indians (the Dakotas and Ojibways particularly), it surveys the more than sixty groups who have chosen to live in the state, ending in the 1970s with an account of the various groups of Indochinese refugees.

The sections were written by twenty-seven people, all academics or staff at the historical society, and the book is loaded (thus its cost) with maps, tables, and photographs.

Naturally, the Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes (consistently the largest groups in the censuses of 1880, 1930, and 1970 and numbering about 100,000 in each) are given proportionately full treatment (32, 28, and 29 pages respectively). But groups numbering fewer than 1,000 rather consistently in censuses, such as Hungarians, Icelanders, and Arabic speakers are not overlooked (17, 6, and 20 pages respectively).

As an example of the treatment of one group, look at Ann Regan's section on the Danes (13 pages). It contains a map of Denmark showing the districts from which the majority of the settlers came, a map of Minnesota showing their strength in the various counties in 1905, and a county-by-county listing of their numbers at the time of six censuses ranging from 1860 to 1970. There are five pictures—three more or less modern and two from the older days. The chapter is about evenly divided between the rural and the Twin Cities populations. This general format is followed in most sections.

Although the editor insists, "We regard this book as a beginning. It is not, and was never intended to be, an exhaustive treatment of Minnesota's ethnic history," it provides a very full treatment of its subject. Additional investigation can be facilitated by the very detailed documentation of sources.

If the purpose of ethnic studies is to emphasize the customs and contributions of distinctive groups of people and thus to bring about appreciation and cooperation among all of them—as I believe it is—this book certainly fulfills its purpose admirably.

—Phillips G. Davies
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