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## The Legacy of Ida Lillbroanda

Arlene Sundquist Empie



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WINNER Gold Medal, Independent Publishers Group 2011; Silver Medal Ben Franklin award; Bronze IPPY award; USA BOOK NEWS National Best Books 2010 Awards Finalist in the Multicultural Nonfiction category and Finalist Narrative Non-Fiction --

The West didn't close in 1893, contrary to what American historian Frederick Jackson Turner proclaimed. There were opportunities for adventurous Nordic women who became part of America s westward expansion.

Seduced by stories of promised riches in the New World and America Fever, that intense desire to emigrate to America, seventeen-year-old Ida Maria Andersdotter Lillbroanda leaves her family in Ostrobothnia on the West Coast of Finland for a destination halfway around the globe to the wild western edge of the North American continent. Ida crosses over the little bridge Lillbroanda that is her namesake. Or is it the metaphysical, genetic, spiritual, metaphoric bridge to a new world, Ida being the link from the Old World to the new?

The compelling story about a young Finnish peasant girl follows Ida Maria Andersdotter Lillbroanda's trek across North America from her disappointing arrival in Quebec in 1893 where she is quarantined because of diphtheria aboard ship, to Minnesota and Telluride, Colorado where she marries an ore miner and manages their boarding house. Turbulent conditions at the mines prompt their return to Finland in 1901 for a visit. Her husband urges that they remain in Finland, but Swedish-speaking Ida Maria responds adamantly, Till Amerika vi go; Finland is an Autonomous Grand Duchy under Russian rule; her husband lacks appropriate papers, so Ida Maria enacts her stealth plan to get her husband aboard the ship to America.

The Legacy of Ida Lillbroanda retraces the life of an ordinary woman who attains extraordinary achievements in her time and place. Historical, cultural and genealogical material are skillfully woven into the immigrant story as well as personal recollections of the author and those of the prior generation. As her daughters attest, Ida Maria is a determined young woman with a goal in mind and a mind of her own. Despite adversities and family tragedies, Ida Maria Sundquist fulfills her American Dream on their own farm in the fertile Skagit Valley of Washington State.

Eight-time award-winning historical narrative nonfiction. The Legacy of Ida Lillbroanda is being translated into Swedish.

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