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Henry
Ericsson
1942.

SIXTY YEARS
A BUILDER





Sixty Years a Builder

The Autobiography of
Henry Ericsson



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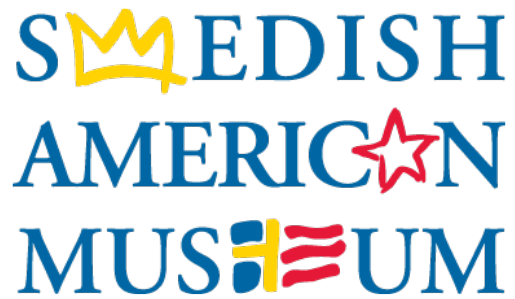
FOREWORD

WHEN SEEKING my first job in America, my meager and faulty English did not enable me to do better than to reply, "I can work long and hard" to the question, "Are you a good bricklayer?" As the incident comes to my memory through the haze of sixty years, it reveals to me more clearly than ever the opportunity that I came to seek in America.

It is, however, not with the purpose of attempting a "close-up" of how "long and hard" I have toiled that I am setting down my observations and experiences after the manner of an autobiography, but rather — again in the language of the cameraman — to offer a "long shot" of the story of modern building as I have seen it unfold and as I have been carried along with it. I do not know how better to express it than to say that when I came to America in my twentieth year, no building had reached to a height above seven stories. So, in my lifetime, I have seen building come into possession of new powers, tame the ageless hostilities of gravity, decay and fire, and make nature a friendly ally. In a word, I have seen building come of age.

When I arrived from Sweden, I found America busy building. The fevers and financial distempers of the 1870's had subsided. The country, it seemed, had adopted building as a national exercise by which to restore its health — its economic health, at least. In the three score years since, I have seen building occasionally cease, and industrial activity paralyzed through four or five long distressful periods — from what sickness, I have never been able to make out for sure. Nor have I understood much better the inner workings of the causes by which pent-up building activities were again somehow unleashed and the faces of men in our streets once more brightened. May we profit by the work of the early builders who believed that to build was to create, and that anything less was unworthy of the name of builder!

H. E.



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