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What did the emigrants pay for their tickets?

Some examples

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

The answer to this question depends on when the emigrant travelled, and how far.

The railroad companies and the shipping lines worked together, so it was possible to buy a ticket directly from Målilla in Kalmar county, Sweden, to Red Wing, Minnesota.

The emigrant agents

The big shipping lines had agents in the ports of departure. These could be either Americans or Swedes. For instance, the *American Line* had an agent called F.P. Denovan from 1874, and the *Allan Line* a man named David Lyon 1868-1871, who was succeeded by C. J. Möllersvärd 1871-1874, who in his turn was followed by J.P. Fehrlund.

These agents in the port cities had sub-agents all over the country, often school-masters, who were able to increase their meager income by selling tickets for the shipping lines. In this way it was possible to find easy access to tickets for America without even leaving the home parish and traveling to the nearest city.

It was also possible to write to the general agent in the port cities and ask for ticket prices and conditions in the U.S. or Canada. The agents spent lots of money on advertising, so their names became well-known all over.

Very few archives have been saved from the agents business activities. By chance one was discovered in the 1950s in a dilapidated barn in the vicinity of Göteborg. This was the archive of the *Bröderna Larsson* [Larsson brothers] who were very active as emigrant agents during the 1870s. Elis Larsson worked as an

agent for the *Guion Line* 1876-1877, then his brother Samuel took over during the years 1878-1880.

The Larsson archives have been microfilmed and can be searched through the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. There are thousands of letters from prospective emigrants in the archive, asking for prices and other things.

The index to the Larsson letters is to be found on the CD *Emigranten Populär* from 2006. The letters themselves will be published on a DVD in the near future.

Some examples of ticket prices

1883

Immigrant descendant *Kaye Wachter* wrote:

My Swedish relatives left Gothenburg in April 1883 for St. Peter, MN, on the *S.S. Romeo* of the Wilson Line to England and the *S.S. Catalonia* of the Cunard Line from Liverpool to Boston, MA.

The fare from Gothenburg to St. Peter, MN, paid to Charles A. Berglund, general agent for the Cunard Line in Gothenburg, was \$28 for an adult, \$14 for a 7-year-old child and \$1.40 for an infant under the age of one year. The total for one adult and two children was 208 crowns [*kronor*]

and 80 pennies [*öre*], the equivalent of \$43.40 in U.S. currency in 1883.

1899

Tickets from Scandinavia to New York with the White Star Line (*Hvita Stjern-Linjen*) and the ships *Britannic*, *Germanic*, or *Cymric* are sold in New York for \$26. (*Svenska Amerikanska Pressen*, Feb. 9, 1899.)

1910

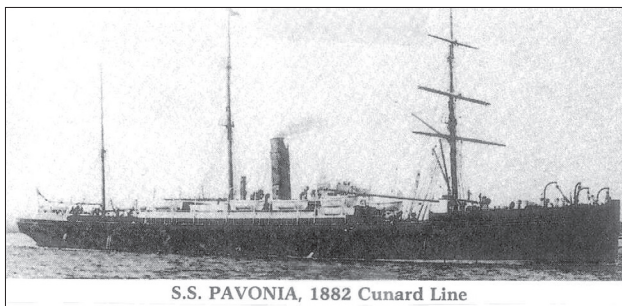
Immigrant descendant *Ann Bergstrom of San Anselmo, CA*, wrote "My grandmother, *Mathilda Bergström* of Piteå, travelled from Gothenburg to Seattle, Washington, for the sum of \$106.50. She (and her 1-year-old son) departed Gothenburg on the 11th of May to Hull or Grimsby in England, then by rail to Liverpool, and on to Quebec, Canada. She then went by Canadian Pacific Railroad to the state of Washington.

She travelled on the *SS Victorian*, a ship of the Allan Line."

1923

In 1923 a ticket from Göteborg to New York cost 450 kronor for 1 adult. In 1923 a ticket from Göteborg to Kansas City cost \$256 for 1 adult and 1 child. Just the boat ticket cost \$202.

(Above examples from the exhibition at Ellis Island, New York.)



S.S. PAVONIA, 1882 Cunard Line

Hufvudkontor i Liverpool:
19 James Street.
Repr. i Quebec:
Allans, Rae & Co.

ALLAN-LINIEN.

(Allan Bros & Co. U. K. Limited.)

Repr. i St. John:
H. & A. Allan.
Repr. i Halifax:
S. Cunard & Co.

Utvandrarekontrakt N:o L 3071 emellan

AXEL H. LAGERGREN, Göteborg, befullmäktigad utvandrare-agent, samt nedanstående utvandrare:

Jag Axel H. Lagergren förbinder mig härmed på sätt här nedan närmare omförmåles, från Göteborg till Seattle, Wash. i Nord-Amerika befördra nedan antecknade utvandrare mot en redan till fullo erlagd och härmed kvitterad afgift af \$ 16.50 hvarti jemväl inräknats de yid landning i Amerika förekommande afgifter af allmän beskaffenhet.

Resan sker från Göteborg den 11/5 med ångfartyg & mellanlandsplats till Hull eller Grimsby i England och derifrån, senast efter 48 timmar efter slutad tulleexpedition med järnväg & 3:de klass till Liverpool samt från Liverpool senast inom 12 dagar efter utvandrarens ankomst dit, med oceanångare & mellanlandsplats till Quebec, St. John eller Halifax. Från Quebec, St. John eller Halifax befördas utvandraren senast efter slutad tulleexpedition och öfriga formaliteter med järnväg 3:de klass till Seattle, Wash.

För ofvansagda afgift erhåller utvandraren, utan vidare ersättning, god och tillräcklig kost jemte vård från Göteborg till landstigningsplatsen i Amerika, logis under uppehållet i England samt betördrän och vård af effekter till 10 kubikfots utrymme å ångfartyg och 150 skåp, vikt å järnväg. För barn mellan 1 och 12 år befördas reseffekter endast till hälften af hvad nu sagts till Amerika, hvarest ingen får befördan af reseffekter för barn under 5 år eger rum.

Utvandraren är berättigad att bekomma kontramärke å de effekter, som han ej själv har om hand, och erhåller för desamma, som utgöra

kolly och äro märkta med N:o ersättning till ett belopp af högst kronor femtio, för hvarje passagerare öfver 12 år, samt högst tjugofem kronor för barn mellan 1 och 12 år, derest effekterna icke vid landstigningsplatsen i Amerika riktigt utkommas mot återlemnande af sagda kontramärke; dock ämnas ingen ersättning för effekterna om skada eller förlust försäkras genom sjöolycka.

Skulle utvandraren vid ankomsten till den främmande verisdelen varda af vederbörande myndighet derstädes förbjuden att invandra och kan det icke ådaga-läggas att detta förbud är föranlett af förhållanden, som inträffat efter det detta kontrakt upprättats, utfäster jag mig att återgå utvandraren betalning för bortresan samt på min bekostnad besörja utvandrarens återresa till (Göteborg) i Sverige tillika med underhåll till återkomsten samt betördrän och vård af med-förda reseffekter.

Härjämte förbinder jag mig att, om sådant från utvandrarens sida påkallas, låta alla tvister om detta kontrakt tyding och utvandrarens rätt till öfver-trädelse af desamma afgöras af fem gode män, utaf hvilka utvandraren utses två, jag eller i händelse jag tredskas, Konungens Befälningshafvande här i läret två och bemälda Konungens Befälningshafvande den femte.

Anser sig utvandrare ega anledning till klagan der-öfver att han icke åtnjutit den rätt och de förmåner, som på grund af detta kontrakt bort honom tillkomma, bör anmälan derom göras hos vederbörande konsul, så fort omständigheterna medgifva.

Antages:

Matilda Bergström

I, Axel H. Lagergren, hereby undertake, upon the following terms, to forward from Gothenburg to Seattle, Wash. in North America, the emigrant named below for the sum of \$106.50 ~~which~~ which amount has been duly paid and includes all ordinary charges upon landing in America.

Utvandrarnes namn	Alder	Sednaste vistelseort
<u>Matilda Bergström 29 Pites</u>		
<u>Erik H.</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>"</u>

Göteborg den 11/5 1910.

Axel H. Lagergren

The journey takes place from Gothenburg the 11/5 by steamer steering passage to Hull or Grimsby in England and thence, within 48 hours after having passed the customs, to Liverpool by rail 3rd class and from Liverpool within 12 days after arrival there, by Ocean steamer steering passage, to Quebec, St. John or Halifax. From Quebec, St. John or Halifax the emigrant will be forwarded immediately after having passed the customs and complied with other formalities, by rail 3rd class to Seattle, Wash.

At the abovementioned fare the emigrant will be supplied with good and sufficient provisions and attendance from leaving Gothenburg until arrival at place of landing in America, lodging during the stay in England and conveyance and care of effects not exceeding 10 cubicfeet space by steamer and 150 Lbs weight by railway. Effects of children between 1 and 12 years are carried free at the rate of half of what has been before stated for effects to America, where no free conveyance of effects of children under 5 years is allowed.

The emigrant is entitled to a check for such effects, as are not under his own care, and will receive for same consisting of _____ packages and numbered _____

_____ a compensation not exceeding Kronor 50 pr adult, in the event of non-delivery of the effects on surrender of said check upon arrival at place of landing in America but no compensation will be allowed for loss or damage of effects caused by sea accident.

Should the emigrant on arrival in foreign country be refused by the authorities to immigrate and if it cannot be proved that this prohibition has been caused by circumstances come to pass after this contract was made out, I do hereby agree to repay the emigrant for the passage and at my expense have him returned to Gothenburg, Sweden; likewise his maintenance on his return and forwarding and care of his baggage.

Likewise do I agree, if so required by the emigrant, to let all controversies about this contract's explication and the emigrants justice of compensation for non-fulfillment of the same to be decided by five arbiters, of whom the emigrant appoints two. For in case I refuse, the Kings governor in this government two, and the before said governor the fifth.

If the emigrant has any reason for complaint of not being treated in accordance with the terms stipulated in this contract, a report thereof should be made to the nearest Consul as soon as circumstances admit.

Uppvisadt och godkänt såsom upprättadt i öfverensstämmelse med Kgl. Förordningen den 4 Juni 1884, och tillägg af den 28 Sept. 1893, intygas:

Göteborg i Poliskammaren den 11/5 1910

Arthur Josephsson

The ticket for Matilda Bergström and her little son from Göteborg to Seattle in 1910.

Traveller beware!

On the back of the ticket above was some information in Swedish about persons that were not allowed entry to the U.S. The text reads:

"Read this carefully before departure from Göteborg!

"According to the American Law of Immigration the following classes of strangers are denied entrance to the Unites States, viz.:

"1:o Persons who are idiots or out of their minds.

"2:o Persons who are suffering from contagious diseases, amongst which now count tuberculose illnesses as consumption, the Egyptian eye disease (trachoma), and others.

"3:o Persons who have been sentenced according to law for dishonorable crimes, which show moral decay. Among those crimes do not count political cases.

"4:o Persons who favor polygamy (Mormons).

"5:o Persons who have promised to do labor in the U.S.

"6:o Persons who are dependant on public care, are unable to work, or are so destitute that they are liable to become public charges after arrival at their destination.

In the last point are also included elderly men and women, that is, over 60 years of age, cripples or deformed persons, unmarried pregnant women accompanied by illegitimate children,


widows accompanied by underage children, and orphans under the age of 16. But such persons may be allowed to land if they have testimonies from relatives that they are willing to accept and provide for them. Such a testimony must, to be accepted, be notarized before a notary public in America."

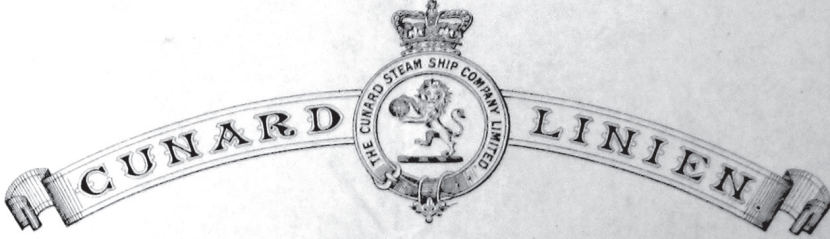
[Editor's note] These rules are not that different from those that one has to sign on a document when coming into the U.S. today.]

The Emigration Survey


Not until more than 50 years had passed since the start of the Big Emigration did the Swedish government begin to ponder the conse-

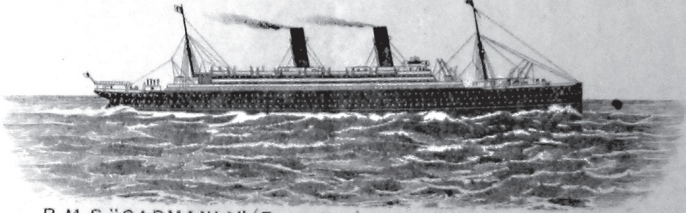
GULD MEDALJ





GULD MEDALJ





R.M.S. "CARMANIA" (TURBINE) & "CARONIA" 20,000 TONS.

Göteborg. (3) 190

AXEL. H. LAGERGREN,
GENERAL-AGENT FOR CUNARD-LINIEN,
28 POSTGATAN,
GÖTEBORG.

TELEGRAF-ADRESS:
CUNARD.
GÖTEBORG.
RIKSTELEFON: 1533.

quences of the country losing so many young and able individuals. In 1907 the parliament decided to do a detailed survey of the emigration. This survey, called *Emigrationsutredningen*, resulted in a set of 7 printed books, with much interesting information, which will be discussed in the next SAG.

Supposedly the basic material for the survey should be kept at the Swedish National Archives (*Riksarkivet*) in Stockholm. However, on a recent visit there it was found that most of that material was lost!

Only a few archival boxes still exist, but they had some good information on the ticket prices from Göteborg to the U.S.

Below we have information about the ticket prices for children around 1908. The White Star line charged half the price for an adult ticket for children ages 1–12, and only 15 *kronor* for children below the age of 1 year. Cunard was 5 *kronor* more expensive for infants, and it seems the other lines followed their prices. Just the Allan Line had some differences: children 1–10 years half ticket, and below 1 year cost £1, which was the same amount as 18.22 *kronor*.

The age of the children was important. It happened that a child had to stay home, as the family could not afford a full ticket for him/her at the same time.

Barnbiljetter

Line	Year	Age Group	Price
White Star line	(1905)	För barn mellan 1 och 12 år	half biljet
		under 1 år	15 kr
Cunard l.	(1908)	För barn mellan 1 och 12 år	half biljet
		" " under 1 år	20 kr (£1)
Anchor l.	(1908)	Do	Do
American l.	(1908)	Do	Do
Dominion l.	(1908)	Do	Do
Canadian Pacific l.		Do	Do
Skandinaviske Amerikals l.	(1908)	Do	Do
Allan l. (Tatte Bryche)		Barn mellan 1 och 10 år	half biljet
		" " under 1 år	£1

This list shows the prices for tickets for children aged below 1 year, and between 1 year and 12 years for the various shipping lines. (Source: *Emigrationsutredningen*).

Exchange rates

This table shows how many *kronor* that one had to pay to buy \$1.

Year	Kronor
1865	2.33
1866	2.61
1867	2.69
1868	2.67
1869	2.82
1870	3.25
1871	3.32
1872	3.31
1873	3.27
1874	3.37
1875	3.29
1876	3.38
1877	3.61
1878	3.75
1879	3.78
1880	3.78
1881	3.80
1882	3.77
1883	3.78
1884	3.78
1885	3.78
1886	3.77
1887	3.78
1888	3.76
1889	3.76
1890	3.77
1891	3.76
1892	3.75
1893	3.76
1894	3.74
1895	3.74
1896	3.76
1897	3.76
1898	3.78
1899	3.78
1900	3.77
1901	3.76
1902	3.76
1903	3.77
1904	3.76
1905	3.76
1906	3.79
1907	3.79
1908	3.77
1909	3.75
1910	3.75
1911	3.75
1912	3.75
1913	3.75
1914	3.80
1915	3.86
1916	3.50
1917	3.13
1918	3.09
1919	3.96
1920	4.92

Source: <http://www.historia.se/>

Lines and steamers.	Rates.
ALLAN LINE, Liverpool.	
S/S Victorian, Virginian	Kr.145:-
" Corsican, Tunisian, Ionian, Parisian,	}
" Pretorian, Sicilian, Corinthian,	
" Mongolian, Numidian	
ALLAN LINE, Glasgow.	
All Services.	Kr.140:-
AMERICAN LINE, Southampton.	
S/S St. Paul, St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia	Kr.150:-
AMERICAN LINE, Liverpool.	
S/S Friesland, Haverford, Merion, Noordland,	}
" Westernland	
ANCHOR LINE,	
S/S Caledonia, Columbia, California, Astoria,	}
" Furnessia	
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY CO. (Atlantic S/S lines)	
S/S Empress of Britain, Empress of Ireland	Kr.145:-
" Lake Manitoba, Lake Erie, Lake Champlain	Kr.140:-
CUNARD LINE	
S/S Lusitania, Mauretania	Kr.170:-
" Caronia, Carmania, Campania, Lucania	Kr.157:-
" Ivernia, Saxonia	Kr.160:-
" Etruria, Umbria	Kr.145:-
DOMINION LINE	
S/S Canada, Dominion, Kensington, Ottawa,	}
" Southwark, Vancouver	
	Kr.140:-
DONALDSON LINE	
S/S Cassandra, Athenia	Kr.140:-
WHITE STAR LINE, Southampton	
S/S Oceanic, Adriatic	Kr.157:-
" Majestic, Teutonic	Kr.150:-
WHITE STAR LINE, Liverpool	
S/S Baltic, Cedric, Celtic	Kr.157:-
" Arabic, Canopic, Republic	Kr.150:-
" Cymric	Kr.145:-
SCANDINAVIAN AMERICAN LINE	
S/S Oscar II, Hellig Olav, United States	Kr.157:-
" C.F. Tietgen	Kr.150

This list was also found in the records of the Emigrationsutredningen. It shows the ticket prices in kronor, and is dated Dec. 5 1908, signed by Axel Lagergren, the emigrant agent for the Cunard Line. Most of the ships mentioned are found in the Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals (Reprint by Genealogical Publishing Company 1998). This book shows ports of arrivals.