

9-1-1985

Swedish Emigration to North America via Hamburg 1850-1870

Sten Aminoff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Aminoff, Sten (1985) "Swedish Emigration to North America via Hamburg 1850-1870," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 5 : No. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol5/iss3/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

Swedish Emigration to North America via Hamburg 1850-1870

Sten Aminoff*

In a very interesting article entitled *Emigrant Traffic on the North Sea* in the December issue 1984 of *Swedish American Genealogist* (Vol. IV, No. 4, pps. 158-163) Nils William Olsson has given us information on the Swedish emigrant traffic from Göteborg via the North Sea to England for further passage to North America. The described passenger service between Göteborg and England during the early period until 1870 seems to be of special importance in finding the various emigration routes to America. Possibilities seem to exist not only to trace the number of Swedish passengers but also their names and origins in Sweden during this period of emigration.

Olsson mentions that many emigrants found it preferable to travel to Germany and then proceed via Hamburg or Bremen to America. He emphasizes that other embarkation ports outside Sweden for crossing the North Sea to England were Copenhagen as well as Esbjerg on the west coast of Jutland. In this connection it should be pointed out that ports in Norway, especially the port of Kristiania (Oslo), were also used to a considerable extent by Swedish people coming from the western part of Sweden. The Norwegian National Archives in Oslo contains very well kept passenger lists, detailing names, places of birth, final destinations, etc.

During my stay in Hamburg from 1980 to 1984 I found in the Hamburg City Archives passenger lists of vessels, both sailing ships and steam ships, from 1850 to 1870. These vessels were used to a great extent by Swedish emigrants mainly going to North America. The archives of Bremen were unfortunately destroyed by fire shortly after the end of World War II.

I decided to examine all passenger lists of vessels in Hamburg, destined to ports in North America as well as other countries from 1850 to 1870 and to excerpt all names of people whose origins were given as Sweden. The result of this extensive work was that a total of about 13,000 Swedes were found to have emigrated from Hamburg to New York during this period.

Most of these emigrants came from the southernmost parts of Sweden. In the early 1860s, however, many emigrant groups also came from the provinces of Östergötland (Ödeshög Parish for an example) and Jönköping. Some groups also came from Västergötland, Värmland, Dalarna and the

*Sten Aminoff, retired Swedish ambassador to New Zealand and most recently Swedish consul general in Hamburg, now resides in Bern, Switzerland.

northern part of Sweden, usually known as Norrland. The Swedish emigrants travelled mostly from their domiciles to the nearest port on the east or west coast of Sweden and from there they continued by ship to Lübeck in northern Germany. From Lübeck they then proceeded via the short stretch to Hamburg either by coach or by train.

As will be shown in the statistical table below, the majority of the passengers travelled on ships destined directly to New York, but approximately 30% of the emigrants went to New York via an indirect route, which meant that the first part of their voyage was to England, mainly to Hull, from where they were then transported to Liverpool or to Leith in Scotland before reaching the second ship which was to take them the remainder of the way across the Atlantic.

The passenger lists of vessels originating in Hamburg contain the full names of the emigrants, their sex, age, profession, the country from which the journey started and sometimes the final destination. Usually the nativity of each passenger is also given. As to the passengers from Sweden, usually only the name of the province is named as the place of origin, but occasionally the specific parish or town is also given. During this quite early period of emigration, the main part of the emigrants consisted of entire families or groups of families and therefore it should be easier to properly identify the emigrants themselves. Single passengers often had prepaid tickets from relatives in America.

The names of the emigrant vessels in Hamburg are also stated on every passenger list as well as the departure date from Hamburg.

It should be emphasized that the passenger lists in Hamburg do not include all passengers who were born in Sweden. Many Swedes had emigrated at an earlier time to Denmark and northern Germany, in the 1850s and 1860s, and a portion of these people, who had been living in these countries under difficult economic conditions, decided to extend their journey by continuing on to North America. Other Swedish emigrants took passage from Copenhagen to Hamburg and are often identified in the passenger lists as "coming from Denmark."

I have donated these lists of Swedish emigrants to North America via Hamburg to the Emigrant Institute in Växjö, Sweden, where they will be available for those who may be interested.

These lists should provide a good basic source for finding the roots of the immigrants who made their way to America, and whose origins are in Sweden. My hope is that similar passenger lists for other European ports outside of Sweden also will be excerpted. A clearer picture of the Swedish emigration to North America during the years 1850-1870 would thereby be

gained, and would additionally be a continuation of Nils William Olsson's historic works, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York 1820-1850* and *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in U.S. Ports 1820-1850 (except New York)*.

Statistical Summary

Emigration of persons from Sweden, who left via passenger vessels from Hamburg to New York, as well as other parts of North America during the years 1850-1870.

Year	Emigrants by direct passage	Emigrants by indirect passage	Total emigrants
1850	44	—	44
1851	10	—	10
1852	37	—	37
1853	69	—	69
1854	108	247	355
1855	122	41	163
1856	133	67	200
1857	342	110	452
1858	182	81	263
1859	281	5	286
1860	143	8	151
1861	219	9	228
1862	725	17	742
1863	1,078	42	1,120
1864	1,142	302	1,444
1865	1,949	816	2,765
1866	739	434	1,173
1867	357	681	1,038
1868	345 ¹	600 ¹	945 ¹
1869	231	800	1,031
1870	330	149	479
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	8,586	4,409	12,995

¹ Passenger lists for 1868 have not been found. Only name lists without statement as to the country of origin are available. The number of Swedish people is therefore an approximation.