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Genealogical Workshop: Emigration and Immigration Records⁺

Jill Seaholm*

Harbor police started keeping track of emigrants leaving Sweden's largest port, Göteborg, in April 1869. Although a few Swedish ports have earlier records, only a handful of people are included in them and they are incomplete. Finding departure records for Swedes who left between 1850 and 1869 will often not be possible. Prior to that, there is some U.S. arrival information compiled in *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in the United States 1820-1850* by Nils William Olsson and Erik Wikén and there is an index of Swedes arriving in New York between 1861-1869.

For 1869 on, most departure records have been indexed alphabetically and microfilmed. In the 1990s those indexes were published on a CD-ROM called *CD-Emigranten*. There were several databases on the CD. The passenger index database was called *Emihamn* and covered ca. 1869-1930. I will concentrate on this source because it has become the primary source for emigration searches. Also included in *CD-Emigranten* were the databases *Emibas* (emigrants from parishes in the city of Göteborg 1700s-1930) and *Emisjö* (sailors who jumped ship outside Europe 1812-1930).

There were a few problems with the original *Emigranten* that we put up with for five years, including many misspellings and omissions. For example, it took me some years to put it all together, but the *Emihamn* database skips emigrants from the port of Malmö for the year 1887. Unfortunately, I did not notice the pattern until it was too late to tell anyone. Similarly, many of the "dependent travelers," i.e., those traveling under a "head of household," were omitted for 1879 from the port of Göteborg. There may be other mass omissions that I have not yet noticed.

At times we would find men in *Emihamn* traveling alone from Swedish ports whom we were certain should have been accompanied by their wives and children. We knew they had families with them when they left their parishes. We would go to the microfilmed port indexes, from which *Emihamn* was made, and find that their families did indeed leave the port with them.

None of the *Emigranten* databases would print the Swedish characters on some American inkjet printers and it did not print at all on others (networked). In addition, it defaulted to A4 Swedish-size paper, so it would nearly always print a

* This article was first presented as a lecture by Jill Seaholm on ?? October 2001 at the *Swedish American Genealogist* Genealogy Workshop in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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second page with only the last line that should have been at the bottom of the previous page.

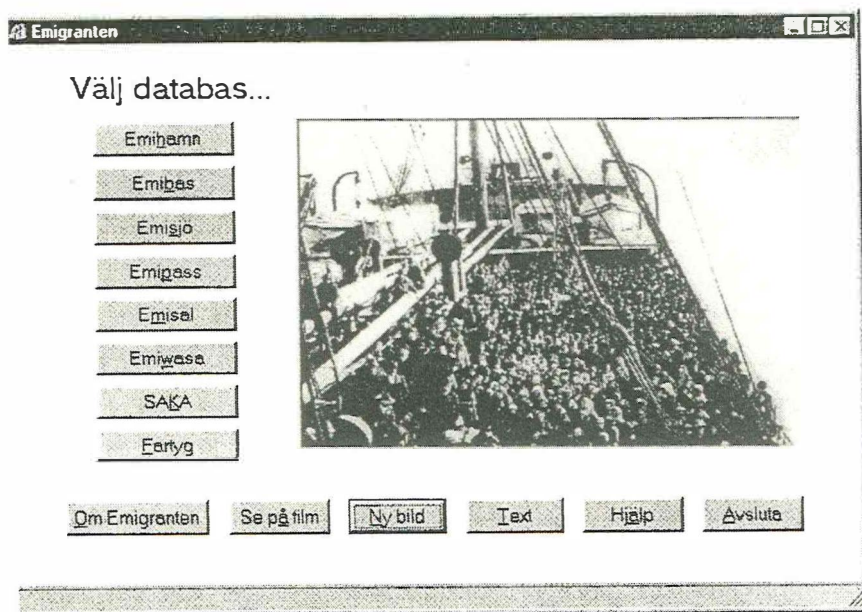


Fig. 1. Home page “Välj databas...” of the Swedish version of *Emigranten*. Note buttons for the various databases arranged vertically on the left and buttons for various actions arranged horizontally across the bottom of the page

The people at Göteborgs-Emigranten promised an update of the CD for quite some time and some glitches caused it to take a year or two longer than anticipated, but the Swedish version was ready at the end of 2000. It is currently available from Göteborgs-Emigranten and The Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies. They anticipate that the English version will be ready as early as March 2002. Check their website for updates: <<http://www.goteborgs-emigranten.com/>>.

The new version (Version 2) consists of two CDs and now has some minor printing problems ironed out. All of our printers will now print from it and it always includes the Swedish characters. The mass omissions are still omissions. They have corrected “obvious” misspellings and errors where they had entered things into incorrect fields. One feature we miss is the ability to copy text from the search results and paste it into a word processing document or an e-mail message. We have not yet found a way to do that.

The *Emihamn* database in Version 2 has been increased to include years up to 1950, when records were available for the included ports. Records from a few additional ports (Helsingborg, 1929-1950; Copenhagen, 1868-1898; and Hamburg, 1850-1891) have also been added to *Emihamn*. There is a new database of passport journals (called *Emipass*, 1783-1860) that was not previously in database form. It is very incomplete, as were the originals from which *Emipass* was made. Other new databases are *Emisal*, which includes passengers on the Swedish-America Line between 1915-1950, and *Emiwasas*, an index of members (43,000 of them) of the Vasa Order of America. There are also pictures of ten Wilson Line ships (*Fartyg*) that can be printed or saved to a file, as well as some interesting photos to choose from to look at while you're searching the various databases, with text accompanying each photo.

There are even two short films that you can watch if you have the computer capacity to do so. One is a black and white silent film from 1910, with an anti-emigration theme, depicting a couple in Sweden who went to America, did not prosper there, and returned to Sweden where they were happy again. The other film is a fourteen-minute color commercial for the Swedish-America Line, featuring the *Kungsholm*.

The passenger index database *Emihamn* is the first one to use to look for emigrants from Sweden between 1869 and the 1950s. It covers the ports of Göteborg, Malmö, Stockholm, Norrköping, Kalmar, Helsingborg, Copenhagen, and Hamburg. Database searches have gotten a bit easier. You can enter Hansson (with one 's') and get results for both Hansson and Hansson (but not Hansdotter). Since it only sees single and double sses, it is wise to enter "Hans" alone. It will then display anything starting with Hans_. In the same way, if you ask for Karlson with a 'K,' it will give you Carlsson, Carlson, Karlsson, and Karlson, but it does not give you Ws and Vs together in names starting with those letters.

When the name that you are looking for is very common, you will obviously have many more hits and possibilities from which to choose, so it is important to start out with a decent amount of information. In a search for a Pehr Ludvig Andersson living in Rock Island, Illinois, born 1859 in Västergötland, and emigrating in 1879, I found one that I thought could be the right man (see figure 2). This P. L. Andersson left the port of Göteborg on 9 May 1879 at the age of 20, with Chicago as his destination. The name is common enough that I require a little more proof. According to the age given, this man could have been born in 1858 or 1859 and I need to be sure that he was born in 1859.

I searched for others with the same contract number and found none, which meant that he was traveling alone. I went to the microfilmed records to be sure that his family had not been omitted from *Emihamn* and found that there was indeed no family with him, as my Pehr Ludvig should not have had. I then searched *Emihamn* for people with consecutive contract numbers to see if anyone who bought tickets immediately before or after him could have been related (see figure 3). There was a J. A. Höglund just below him traveling from the same parish to Chicago. My guess—probably a friend!

EMIHAMN / EMIGRANTEN / 2/1/2002

Förnamn: P L

Efternamn: ANDERSSON

Ålder: 20 Kön: M

Församling: LYRESTA Län: R

Utresehamn: GÖTEBORG

Utvandrdag: 1879 05 09

Destination: CHICAGO

Medåkande: NEJ

Källkod: 13:201:5495

Fig. 2. Individual printout, in this instance for PL Anderson, from *Emigranten's* passenger index database *Emihamn*. The fields represented are *Förnamn* (first or given name); *Efternamn* (surname); *Ålder* (age); *Kön* (sex/gender); *Församling* (parish); *Län* (county); *Utresehamn* (port of emigration); *Utvandrdag* (date of emigration); Destination; *Medåkande* (traveling with); and *Källkod* (contract number).

EMIHAMN / EMIGRANTEN / 2/1/2002

Källkod: 13:201:

Antal funna: 21

Efternamn	Förnamn	Ålder	Församling	Län	Utvdrår	Destination
BÅTELSON	LARS	28	HAFDHEN	I	1879	ST PAUL
NORDQVIST	VICTOR L	21		A	1879	MELBOURNE
ANDERSSON	ANDERS	63	RÖK	E	1879	CHICAGO
JOHANSSON	LOVISE	20	TREHÖRNA	E	1879	ROCK ISLAND
ANDERSSON	G	40	FALKÖPING	R	1879	CHICAGO
JOHANSON	SWEN	24	HOFMANTORP	G	1879	LONG LAKE
STRÖM	GUSTAF	45	URÅSA	G	1879	LONG LAKE
CARLSSON	JOHAN	24	HOMANTORP	G	1879	LONG LAKE
MAGNUSSON	J M	23	Ö THORSÅS	G	1879	LONG LAKE
CARLSSON	D O	22	Ö TORSÅS	G	1879	LONG LAKE
CARLSSON	C J	25	OSCARSHAMN	H	1879	NEW YORK
NILSSON	C A	21	MISTERHULT	H	1879	CAMBRIDGE
PETTERSON	EMIL	21	OSCARSHAMN	H	1879	CHICAGO
ANDERSSON	AUGUST	19	OSCARSHAMN	H	1879	CHICAGO
JANSON	LUDVIG	31	SÄFSNÄS	W	1879	MOINGONA
JANSSON MAL	JOH	34	SÄFSNÄS	W	1879	WAHOO
MALM JANSO	JOH	34	SÄFSNÄS	W	1879	WAHOO
ANDERSSON	P L	20	LYRESTA	R	1879	CHICAGO
HÖGLUND	J A	21	LYRESTA	R	1879	CHICAGO
ANDERSSON	ALMA	16		A	1879	NEW YORK
SAMUELSSON	STINA	25	BERGA	G	1879	WORTHINGTON

Fig. 3. *Emihamn* printout showing a list of emigrants with consecutive contract numbers (starting with 13:201). Note PL Andersson and JA Höglund near the bottom of the list.

[illegible]

Fig. 4. First page of the annual extracts of parish registers (*Svenska Befolkningsstatistiken*) for Lyrestad Parish. The heading, in translation, reads as follows: A summary information of the population of Lyrestad Parish of the Norra Wadsbo rural deanery, Skaraborg County, for the year 1879.

The next page lists the names of the parish's immigrants and emigrants for the year (see figure 5). I went to the pages for Lyrestad Parish in Skaraborgs län for 1879 to see if my man was born in 1859, and he was, which makes it more likely that I have the right man.

Förteckning å de från församlingen till främmande land under året utflyttade (emigranter).
 Här utåtna redogörelse för årets utvandring (ärova mindre betydelse). Här årova emigrationen årt rum, gärova härårn uttrycklig årtedning.

Nr.	Namn.	År.	Födelsår.	Det land, årt utflyttningen uppgärova årted årt.
1	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1855	N. Amerika
2	Thad Alfred Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
3	Per Alfred Andersson	Årt	1861	Årt
4	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
5	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
6	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
7	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
8	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
9	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
10	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
11	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
12	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
13	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
14	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
15	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
16	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
17	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
18	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
19	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
20	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
21	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
22	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
23	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
24	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
25	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
26	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
27	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
28	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
29	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt
30	Anders Andersson	Skaraborg	1859	Årt

Fig. 5. Second page of the annual extracts of parish registers (Svenska Befolkningsstatistiken) for Lyrestad Parish in 1879. The heading, in translation, reads as follows: Register of those emigrating from the parish to foreign lands during the year. Note the names of Per Ludvig Andersson and Johan Alfred Högglund toward the bottom of the page.

Not all Swedes left from Swedish ports. Many times they weren't always the most convenient ports for them to get to. For example, people from western and northern Swedish counties were often much closer to Norwegian ports.

I have found a number of people who were from Västernorrlands län in Sweden leaving from the port of Trondheim, Norway. Fortunately, the National Archives of Norway has made their port record indexes searchable on the World

Wide Web at the following address: <<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/cgi-win/wc/webcens.exe?slag=meny&kategori=5&emne=1&spraak=>>. I have a link to it on the genealogy page of our Swenson Center web site. (For those of you that do not have access to the Internet, I apologize for swaying this so heavily toward technology. If you do not have Internet access, I recommend getting friendly with someone who does. Otherwise, in just about every case, the records exist on microfilm here at the Swenson Center or elsewhere, but the web indexes are many times faster to use and, in many cases, are in English.)

Their links to individual ports start with those closest to Sweden (Fredrikstad, then Oslo) and work their way around the coast to the south and on up the west coast

You may pick the field to search in and then ask it for words that are the same (*er lik*), contain some of the same text (*inneheld*), or start with the same letter or letters (*børjar på*). After that, you may do additional searches within those search results (I am very fond of this feature). In order to print the results in the best way, you will need to maneuver your print settings to use 8 1/2" x 14" paper and to print them "landscape" instead of "portrait."

An interesting web site—<http://www.norwayheritage.com/ships/index.asp>—that talks about emigrant ships from Norway is put together by some people named Solem, Swiggum, and Austheim. I include this information here not just because some Swedes left from Norwegian ports, but because many of the ships leaving the Norwegian ports had originated in Sweden.

One statistic that the nice people at the Danish Emigrant Archives in Aalborg told me and that runs through my mind is that "56,000 Swedes left from Danish ports." Those emigrant Swedes would typically be from the far southern parts of Sweden. The Copenhagen port indexes are searchable in English on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.emiarch.dk/search.php3?l=en>>. Because people's names were sometimes entered using Danish spellings, your Carl Petersson's name could be spelled Pedersen. To get around such spelling differences, you can use the percent symbol (%) as a wildcard. For example, entering Pe%ers%n will result in almost every possible Danish and Swedish spelling of Peterson.

There is also a Copenhagen Police Records CD-ROM that can be purchased for about \$30 from the people at the same web site, but I find myself going back to the web version. I have found many Swedes in the database at this web site. It does not say where the Swede was from within Sweden, but it is still useful.

There are two different lists that the Copenhagen departure database is searching: the Direkte, those going by ship directly to their destinations, and the Indirekte, those who changed ships in Hamburg or England. If you find a person going the Direct route from Copenhagen, the database usually provides the name of the ship. If they changed ships somewhere, it does not.

To explain a bit about when and why passengers would change ships somewhere, I found an article on the Norwegian shipping index web site called *Feeder Service Norway to England* by Børge Solem, and it seems to apply well to the Swedish and Danish departures, too. Solem states:

Before 1865, only a minority of the emigrants traveled via Britain. Most of the emigrants traveled on sailing ships going directly from Norwegian ports to New York or Quebec. In the years between 1865 and 1870 this gradually changed. The transatlantic steamship companies that operated out of British ports took a larger percentage of the Norwegian emigrants every year. The main reason for this was the much better conditions on these ships, and the fact that they were much faster. Many people had suffered and died during the transatlantic crossing on the sailing ships. The suffering and the risk of dying was much lower on the faster steamships. The passage fee on the steamships became lower each year, due to the competition between the different lines. There was a growing need for passenger transportation between Norway and Britain, as the number of emigrants traveling via Britain increased...¹

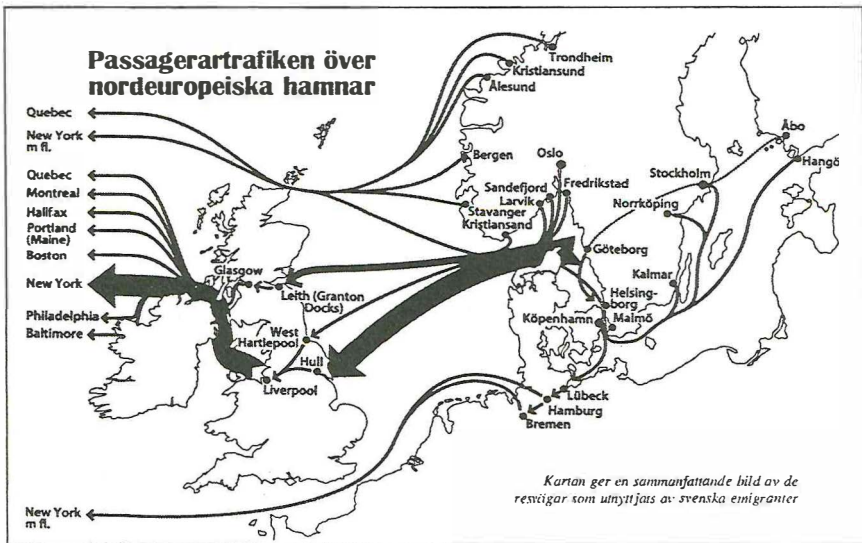


Fig. 6. Map illustrating the passenger traffic of northern European ports. Reprinted from *Emigrantfjörsk! Steg för steg* by Per Clemensson and Kjell Andersson (LTs Förlag: Stockholm, 1996). Used by permission.

An index to the passenger arrival records from Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924 is now available at <ellislandrecords.org>. Although this site is a real treasure, it is not terribly easy to use when looking for Swedish patronymic surnames. A man in San Francisco has developed a search engine for the Ellis Island web site—<http://home.pacbell.net/spmorse/ellis/ellis.html>—that allows

¹ From <<http://www.norwayheritage.com/ships/w-index.htm>>.

you to enter several search criteria from the start, rather than just a name. When you do find someone, it usually says where he or she was from in Sweden, at least approximately. It is not only fun to play around with and get to know but it also contains a wealth of information. You still need to register to use the Ellis Island records site, but it is not too much trouble.

The other records for passenger arrivals to the U.S. are not indexed from 1847-1896, but they exist in most cases. They are available at the New York Public Library, at the National Archives branches around the U.S., and through most LDS Family History libraries, to name a few. At this web site <<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/immigration/immigrat.html>> is a list of U.S. ports where you may click on a port to find sources for its passenger arrival records. To locate someone in arrival records, we recommend starting in New York records and looking through ships arriving ten days to four weeks after the Swedish departure date. If you know that an emigrant's voyage from Sweden ended up in Hull, England, then it might be fitting to search U.S. arrivals coming in from Liverpool, since the emigrants arriving in Hull usually traveled by train to Liverpool for the trans-Atlantic crossing. For Canadian arrivals, contact the National Archives of Canada at <http://www.archives.ca/08/08_e.html>.

Do not forget other U.S. ports and Canadian ports of arrival for your Swedish immigrants. We have found some Swedes who were headed to northern Minnesota or the Dakota Territories, who bought tickets only as far as Quebec or other Canadian cities. They would then make their way across Canada to get to northern U.S. destinations, not to mention Canadian destinations. I have not found all Canadian records on the web, but <Ancestry.com> had one site to search that was only open to their subscribers. The immigrant Ship Transcribers Guild had some Canadian arrivals transcribed. The Canadian National Archives should have them on microfilm, and they should even have them here in this library. There are bound to be others that I have not yet come in contact with.

Emigration and Immigration Record Sources: A Summary

- **CD-Emigranten** (Swedish and English language versions)

Göteborgs-Emigranten
Box 53066
SE-400 14 Göteborg
SWEDEN

Web site: <http://www.goteborgs-emigranten.com/>

- **Norwegian Passenger Index Databases**

National Archives of Norway
Folke Bernadottes vei 21
Postboks 4013 Ullevål stadion
N-0806 Oslo

NORWAY

Web site: <http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/cgi-win/wc/webcens.exe?slag=meny&kategori=5&emne=1&spraak=>

- **Norwegian Shipping Index**

Web site: <http://www.museumsnett.no/mka/ssa/index.htm>

- **Danish Passenger Index Database**

The Danish Emigration Archives
Arkivstræde 1
PO Box 1731
DK-9100 Aalborg
DENMARK

Web site: <http://www.emiarch.dk/search.php3?l=en>

- **Hamburg Passenger Index Database**

Hamburg State Archives
Kattunbleiche 19
22041 Hamburg
GERMANY

Web site: <http://www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm>

- **Arrival records at U.S. National Archives**

National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20408
USA

Web site: <http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/immigration/immigrat.html>

- **National Archives of Canada**

395 Wellington St
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N3
CANADA

Web site: http://www.archives.ca/08/08_e.html

- **Family History Center**

35 N West Temple St
Salt Lake City UT 84150-3400
USA

Web site: <http://www.familysearch.org/>