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CD Reviews

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CD Reviews

Databasen CD-Emigranten NR 1 & 2 / 2001.¹ Databases on 2 CDs published by the Göteborgs-Emigranten project in cooperation with the Swedish Emigrant Institute and the Emigrant Register in Karlstad.²

The last edition of *Emigranten* was published in the fall of 1996 and was quickly sold out. Since then, researchers have anxiously awaited the promised new and expanded edition, which was finally available during the Genealogy Days in Borås.

The new *Emigranten* is available on two CDs and contains a number of historical databases:

1. *Emihamn* (about 1.4 million entries) includes emigrants via Göteborg (mostly), Malmö, Stockholm, Norrköping, Kalmar, Helsingborg, Copenhagen, and Hamburg.
2. *Emibas Göteborg* (about 52,000 entries), emigrants who lived at least 5 years in Göteborg before emigrating.
3. *Emisjö* (about 17,000 entries), sailors 1812-1913 who were registered in the shipping offices in Göteborg, Strömstad, Lysekil, Uddevalla, and Marstrand, and either died or jumped ship outside of Europe.
4. *Emipass* (about 16,000 entries) includes people who applied for foreign passports during the years 1783-1860.
5. *Emisal* (about 242,000 entries) includes people who traveled with the Sweden-America Line 1915-1950.
6. *Emiwas*a (about 43,000 entries), people who were members of The Vasa Order of America.
7. *SAKA*, a list of the approximately 2,000 rolls of Swedish-American church register films available in Växjö.
8. *Fartyg*, a smaller database with information about the Wilson Line's regular and extra emigrant steamers. Also contains pictures of ships such as *Rollo*, *Romeo*, and *Ariosto* and others.

Obviously, there are many good things for those who are interested in the various aspects of our emigrants. But one disappointment is that so little has been done in the area of data technology to improve these basically excellent databases.

To a certain extent, the program has been adapted to Windows, but does not fill up the screen like other programs. Clicking the maximize-button does not change the viewing area much; the light-yellow area increases.

¹ This review first appeared in *Släkthistoriskt Forum* 4/01, p. 27, under the title "*Emigranten seglar vidare*" (*Emigranten Sails Along*). Used with permission.

² Editor's note: Swedish and/or English versions of the new version of *Emigranten* can be ordered from Riksföreningen Sverigekontakt, Box 53066, 400 14 Göteborg, SWEDEN. The cost is \$130.

The most frustrating thing regarding *Emihamn*, the biggest database by far, is that the opportunity to standardize the names was neglected. The old spellings have been retained and one has to search for *Vetlanda* under both *Hvetlanda* and *Vetlanda*. This applies to all parishes beginning with Hv/V, not very many, but still. One would also wish for standardization of geographical auxiliary terms such as *Stora*, *Sankt*, *Västra*, *Östra*, etc. to something uniform. Also, no effort has been made to find obvious misspellings or proofing mistakes. For example, *Bogslösa* parish in Östergötland is probably mistaken for *Rogslösa*. *Ljusnarsberg* is often called *Kopparberg*, but those who are not aware of this will not be able to find the 232 emigrants from this area, or the 362 people who left from *Nya Kopparberg*. This requires the researcher to seriously draw upon his imagination to figure out how the parish has been entered, probably a healthy but unnecessary brain exercise. And one can only guess how the destinations have been transformed. *Ishpeming*, Michigan, for example, has at least 10 variations.

One nice feature in the search program, not available in the manual, is the possibility to click the "insert" button to return to the previous search in the search window and be able to edit it.

It is a big nuisance not to be able to cut and paste in the search results. Imagine searching for a relative, finding him or her, and then wondering whether he or she had a traveling companion. To find out, one has to copy the source code number and do a new search, typing it in by hand instead of just copying it in the appropriate spot. This could most likely have been easily accommodated with a modern database program.

Another oddity is that after 5 years, there are still no excerpts of those who traveled over *Malmö 1887* and who are still missing. *Malmö 1887* was forgotten in the first filming, but has been available on micro card for a long time and could have been added.

A positive thing is that *Copenhagen* and *Hamburg* are included this time.

The other registers are also valuable, smaller and, therefore, easier to leaf through.

Despite these shortcomings, I warmly recommend *Emigranten*.

Elisabeth Thorsell, Järfälla, Sweden

oOo

Scandinavia Vital Records Index: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001. 7 CD discs, \$16.50)³

³ Book review from *Minnesota History*, 57 (Winter 2001-2002): 438. Used with permission.

Present-day family history researchers are fortunate to have at their disposal an ever-growing number of powerful electronic indices that provide quick and easy access to original records. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently released an inexpensive and user-friendly Vital Record Index (VRI) on CD-ROM that should be of special interest to all researchers with Scandinavian ancestry. It contains data extracted by Church volunteers from approximately 3.5 million birth/christening records and one million marriage records for Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden covering a period from the 1500s to 1905. Search possibilities associated with this new database fall into three main areas—individual searches, parent searches, and collection searches.

The individual search screen is divided into four sections that enable you to search the VRI in various ways for either the birth/christening or marriage record of an individual. Every search requires a minimum of two actions. You must first decide which record type—birth/christening or marriage—you want to search and you must always type the given name(s) and/or last name(s) of the individual in question in the fields provided. Searches can be further limited by year, country, county, or city/town or by the names of the father and mother or the spouse.

The VRI contains a number of very useful features. For example, an <erase> button on the search screen clears all information currently selected and/or typed into a field and an <options> button on the search screen enables you to change default settings. In addition, the VRI automatically capitalizes the first letter of any name typed into the given name(s) or last name(s) fields. And you don't need to worry about the exact spelling of a name being searched, because the VRI automatically finds most spelling variations of any name typed into the first or last name fields. For example, a search of Värmland, Sweden, for all females named *Christina* born in 1859 yielded *Christina*, *Christine*, *Kristina*, *Kerstin*, *Kjerstin*, and *Stina*. Similarly, a search of Danes with the surname *Henriksen* produced *Henriksen*, *Henricksen*, *Henrichsen*, *Hinrichsen*, *Henricisen*, *Hendriksen*, *Hendrickson*, *Hendrichsen*, *Hindricksen*, and *Hindrichsen*.

The parent search and collection search features are extremely important ancillary capabilities of the VRI. When a particular individual is located in a birth/christening record, the names of the parents are usually listed. You can then do a parent search, which locates all other children of this couple included in the database. This search feature, when used carefully, enables you to quickly find an entire family. For each search resulting in a match, the number of the FHL microfilm (and thus the source of the specific record) is provided. This is of inestimable value for the researcher who wants to check the veracity of the information in the VRI with the original record. In fact, the collection search feature enables you to locate not only the FHL film number but also the time period covered and the exact number of records extracted from the film.

Two final comments—one a substantive criticism and the other merely a voiced frustration—need to be made. First, I was surprised to discover that the extra letters found in various Scandinavian alphabets (e.g., å, ä, ö, ø) do not appear in personal names and place names in this database. This omission—it is clearly not an oversight—is unacceptable and should be corrected in future versions.

Second, the Church readily admits that the VRI for Scandinavia is “a partial collection of the records available from the countries and time periods represented.” So, in spite of the 4.5 million vital records (and the estimated 10 million total names) included in the database, it will prove frustrating and/or totally inadequate for a significant number of potential users. To begin with, the four countries are unequally represented in the database. Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish records comprise 40%, 30%, 26% and 4%, respectively, of the total. Furthermore, the database is, for all intents and purposes, in its infancy. For example, Swedish researchers will quickly discover that only 13% of Swedish parishes are represented, that 4 of the 24 Swedish counties (Jämtland, Norrbotten, Västernorrland, and Östergötland) are not represented at all, and that 8 of the 20 Swedish counties included in the database are represented by 3 or fewer parishes.

In spite of the reservations noted above, this database is a significant first step in indexing vital records from Scandinavia. The VRI is a powerful albeit limited research tool that can be purchased at a bargain price. No Scandinavian genealogist should be without it.

James E. Erickson, Edina, Minnesota

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Swedes in Canada

A Project to Research and Write a History of Swedes in Canada

The Lakehead Social History Institute takes pleasure in announcing the Swedes in Canada Project, with the goal of producing a history of the Swedes in Canada, from the beginning of their immigration in the late nineteenth century through their experiences in Canada to the present day. The history of the Swedish experience in Canada has not been described at book length and the institute has undertaken to rectify this shortcoming.

The Lakehead Social History Institute, an organization of Lakehead University and community-based researchers in Thunder Bay, Ontario, includes among its members Elinor Berglund Barr, an historian of Swedish origin whose various publications include a bibliography of the Swedish experience in Canada