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Genealogical Workshop: Records of an Immigrant Family. Addendum

James E. Erickson

After sharing a rather complete set of Swedish and American records associated with my paternal great-grandparents in the previous four segments of Genealogical Workshop, I was fully prepared to begin a new topic for this issue of *Swedish American Genealogist*. But then I received a letter from Lorene Anderson of Paso Robles, California. She related the fact that her grandfather, Charles Anderson, was a passenger aboard the same two ships on which my paternal great-grandparents and their four children sailed to the United States (i.e., on the *Romeo* from Göteborg, Sweden, on 6 April 1888; on the *Catalonia* from Liverpool, England, on 12 April 1888).¹

The following two paragraphs, excerpted from Lorene's letter of 2 January 2001, help explain why I felt the need to attach an addendum to the original four-part series:

The emigrant contract detailed in the September 2000 issue was particularly helpful to me, since it was for the same date and ship that my grandfather was on! His emigrant contract wasn't among his papers when he died and my father didn't know why his father happened to land at Boston.

In case you don't have a *description of the trip* [emphasis mine] from your ancestors, I am sending copies of two brief descriptions that were among my grandfather's papers...

The first "description" included in Lorene's letter was a photocopy of a document written in English by Charles Anderson that said:

I left Sweden (Gothenburg) Apr. 6th at 10 kl. p.m. 1888 by steamer *Romeo*. Came to England Apr. 8th 9:30 a.m. Left Liverpool Apr. 12th 11:30 a.m. by steamer *Catalonia* of the Cunard line. Arrived at Boston U.S. Apr. 24th same year. Remained in state of Michigan one year and a half. Came to Templeton, Cal. Oct. 28th, 1889.

¹ For details see James E. Erickson, "Genealogical Workshop: Records of an Immigrant Family. Part 1," *Swedish American Genealogist* (September 2000): 176-179; James E. Erickson, "Genealogical Workshop: Records of an Immigrant Family. Part 2," *Swedish American Genealogist* (December 2000): 226-228.

Date of Declaration Aug. 20th 1890; Chas. W Dana, County Clerk of S.L. Obispo Co.

Date of Naturalization May 18th 1896. V. A. Gregg, Superior Judge. John Whicher, Clerk in San Luis Obispo Co., Cal.

Janne came to Templeton June 3rd 1891.

Herman came to Templeton May 5th 1894.

Wessman came to Templeton in Jan. 1894.

The second "description" was a photocopy of three pages from Charles Anderson's personal diary (see document 22). The translation is as follows:

Our journey to North America with the Cunard Line. The year 1888.

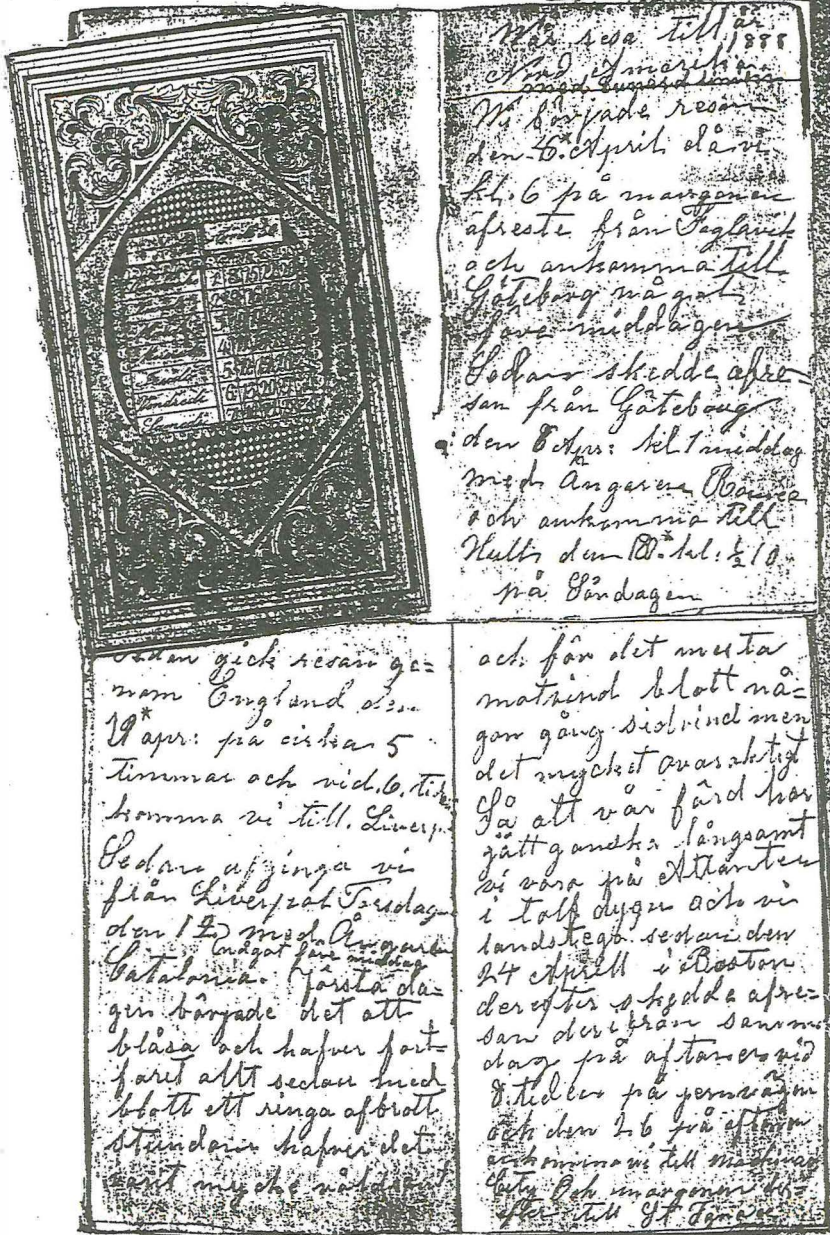
We began our journey April 6th, when we departed from Foglavik at 6 o'clock in the morning and arrived in Göteborg a little before noon. The departure from Göteborg took place April 6th at 1 p.m. with the steamer *Romeo* and arrival in Hull was Sunday the 8th at 9:30.

Then we traveled through England April 9th for about 5 hours and arrived in Liverpool about 6 o'clock.

Then we left Liverpool Thursday the 12th a little before noon with the steamer *Catalonia*. The wind picked up during the first day and it has continued to blow ever since with only a short break. At times, the wind has been very strong and mostly headwind. Only now and then side-wind and only for very short periods of time. So our journey has been rather slow. We spent twelve days on the Atlantic and set foot in Boston on April 24th. Thereafter, we departed from Boston the same day in the evening around 8 o'clock by train and on the evening of the 26th we arrived in Mackinaw City [Michigan]. We arrived in St. Ignace [Michigan] the morning thereafter.

The material highlighted above illustrates two "take-home lessons" for genealogical researchers: 1) you never know from what source your next piece of information will come, so expect the unexpected and expect to be surprised; and 2) whether your next piece of information is significant or insignificant, there is always more to learn.

In this case, the information gained was as seemingly insignificant and mundane as departure and arrival times and weather conditions on the Atlantic. But they, along with the myriad other details—some important, others less so—that get uncovered over time, ultimately help define/describe the larger whole that was the immigrant experience for my Erickson ancestors.



Document 22. Three pages from the diary of Charles Anderson.