

SWEDISH EMIGRATION RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that approximately 1.3 million persons emigrated from Sweden between the mid-1800s and 1930. Most went to the United States, but some immigrated to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America, and other countries. Between 200,000 and 300,000 returned to Sweden but most left permanently. Sweden lost between 20 to 25 percent of their populations. Only two other European countries, Norway and Ireland, lost a greater percentage of their population.

NEW SWEDEN

While there was little emigration before 1840, a royal colony was established along the Delaware River in 1638—between 700 and 800 Swedes and Finns in the area. The settlement was overtaken by the Dutch in 1655. Many of these early settlers did remain. For more information about the colony and settlers, visit The Swedish Colonial Society's website (<https://colonialswedes.net/>) and the American Swedish Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (<https://www.americanswedish.org/>).

LARGE EMIGRATION

The significant emigration from Sweden began in the 1840s and ended around 1930. The peak was around 1879 to 1893 when about 495,000 persons departed. The primary reason for leaving was economic, but some left for religious freedom and to avoid the military draft. The availability of free farmland in the United States because of the Homestead Act of 1862, work opportunities to make money in America, and letters sent home from previous emigrants talking about the great life in North America drew many to leave Sweden.

TRAVEL TO NORTH AMERICA

During the first half of the 19th century, the trip was made on sailing ships and took about 1.5-2 months. These ships departed from many Swedish harbors. One large emigrant harbor in the 1840s was Gävle, as well as Göteborg and Stockholm. Early emigrants are documented in Nils William Olsson's books *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York 1820-1850* and *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in U.S. Ports 1820-1850*, later combined in the book *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in the United States 1820-1850*.

Travel by steamships began in the 1840s. Many transatlantic companies competed for travelers: White Star Line, Cunard Line, Wilson Line, etc. The most common route at this time was from the Swedish harbor, Göteborg, over the North Sea to Hull, England, a trip of about two days. From the railway station in Hull, one traveled via rail to Southampton or Liverpool, a travel time of about one day. Before 1900 the travel time between Liverpool and New York was about fourteen days, and after 1900 about a week.

The Swedish American Line began direct trips between Göteborg and New York in 1915.

There were many variations of travel routes. Some traveled from Copenhagen, Denmark, Norway (Kristiana, Bergen, and Trondheim), and even Germany (Bremen and Hamburg). The most common North American destination was New York, but there were other ports such as Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Portland (Maine), Halifax, Montreal, and Quebec.

SWEDISH EMIGRATION RECORDS

CHURCH BOOKS (HOUSEHOLD/CONGREGATION & MOVING OUT)

In Sweden, when anyone moved from a parish to another parish in Sweden or outside the county, they were required to notify the minister about the move. The minister would give the person a moving out certificate and then note the movement in the household/congregation and moving out books.

MOVING OUT BOOK INDEXES

In the 1990s and early 2000s, a project was established between the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies and the Swedish Institute of Emigration to index the Swedish church moving out records of persons leaving Sweden. In 2004, this resulted in the creation of the CD, Emibas, with over a million names. This CD is no longer being produced, but the information has been digitized and is available on Ancestry and Emiweb (both subscription sites).

- Sweden, Emigrants Registered in Church Books, 1783-1991
<https://www.ancestry.com/>
- <https://www.emiweb.se/EmiWeb/showemigrationinfo.x>

PASSPORTS TO 1860 (PASSHANDLINGAR OR PASSJOURNALER)

Until 1860, a passport was required in Sweden for domestic and international travel. A passport was required for a person traveling to another place in Sweden where they were not known, and it needed to be shown if someone asked to see it. These passports were recorded in passport journals (*passjournaler*). While only some of these records have been preserved, some have been digitized.

ArkivDigital has passport journals for Blekinge, Gotland, Gävleborg, Göteborg och Bohus, and Västernorrland counties. Indexes are available for Gävleborg and Västernorrland counties. You can find these passport journals by going to ArkivDigital's online search window, clicking on advanced options, and selecting the archive type, country cabinet (*landskansli*). You will find passport journals for Jämtland, Gävleborg, Västernorrland, and Luleå at Riksarkivet,

The Genealogiska Föreningen (<https://www.genealogi.net/>) is digitizing and indexing these internal passports. This service is available to members. Over 489,000 passports are accessible on this site. Fifty percent are between 1813-1821, 40 percent between 1822 and 1860, 9 percent before 1813, and 1 percent after 1860.

MOVING OUT EXTRACTS (SCB RECORDS)

Beginning in 1860, the parish minister was required to send yearly a list of all the persons who emigrated to a central government agency *Statistiska centralbyrån* (Statistics Sweden) or abbreviated SCB. These extracts exist for the years 1860 to 1947.

Since 1875, lists have been available for immigrants. These records are available on Emiweb and the Riksarkivet. Within Emiweb, they are name-searchable.

PASSENGER SHIP RECORDS

SWEDISH PASSENGER SHIP RECORDS

Swedish passenger lists record the people who departed from Swedish ports. The Swedish police authorities kept the records. Most Swedish emigrants left from the port of Göteborg and others from Malmö, Helsingborg, Norrköping, and Stockholm. Types of information you will find on these records are departure date, port, ship's name, destination port, passenger's name, age, birthplace or last place of residence, and destination. Below is the record coverage of years for these Swedish ports.

Göteborg	1869-1951
Malmö	1874-1939
Helsingborg	1907-08, 1929-1950, 1956-1964
Norrköping	1869-1919
Stockholm	1869-1944

Swedish passenger ship indexes and manifests are found online: ArkivDigital, Ancestry, Emiweb, Family Search, and Riksarkivet.

DANISH PASSENGER SHIP RECORDS

Some Swedes, many from Southern Sweden, departed from the port of Copenhagen, Denmark. You can find an index at the Danish Demographic Database - https://ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm. The index covers the years from 1868 to 1908 and includes 394,000 names. To find Swedes, it is best to search by name and last place of residence, *Sverrig*. The index also exists on Emiweb.

NORWEGIAN PASSENGER SHIP RECORDS

Many Swedes departed from Norwegian ports. It was chiefly emigrants from Dalmland, Värmland, and Jämtland. Trying the Norwegian passenger lists is good if you can't find an emigrant in the Swedish passenger lists. The common Norwegian ports were Kristiana (current name Oslo), Trondheim, and Bergen. You can find Norwegian passenger ship manifests on the Norwegian Digital Archives site <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/>. You can find Norwegian emigration lists and images on both Ancestry and MyHeritage.

- Ancestry 1867-1970 <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61757/>
- MyHeritage 1867-1959 <https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-11013/norway-emigration-registers-1867-1973?s=275764761>

GERMAN PASSENGER SHIP RECORDS

- Breman passenger lists – <http://www.passengerlists.de/>
- Hamburg passenger lists 1850-1934 Ancestry and Family Search
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1068/>
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/43289?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

SWEDISH LATTER-DAY SAINT EMIGRANTS

- Scandinavian Mission Emigration Records 1852-1920 Index – Family Search and Emiweb
- Sweden, Swedish Mission Emigration Records 1905-1932 Index – Family Search

LARSSON BROTHERS ARCHIVE

The archive includes written letters between 1879 and 1911 to the shipping agents Larsson Brothers & Company. The archives consist of 50,000 letters from emigrants and about 12,000 responses from the Larsson brothers. The original letters are held at the regional archive in Göteborg. You can find digitized records on Riksarkivet and Emiweb.

NATIONALITY REGISTERS (*NATIONALITETSMATRIKLAR*)

In 1906, a requirement was introduced for the Swedish consulates abroad to keep a nationality register of Swedish citizens. In many places, however, this registration was introduced much earlier. In 1924, Sweden received a new citizenship law, reinforcing the need for more well-kept nationality registers. In 1977, the requirement for nationality registers ended.

The nationality registers provide more or less detailed information about the individual emigrants, their marriages, children, addresses, moves, deaths, etc. Some registers, such as those for Hamburg and Lubeck, contain thousands of records, while others may only have a few hundred. In the case of Hamburg and Lübeck, it is about the large numbers of "migrant workers" who came to Germany to work in agriculture. Many journeymen and artisans probably traveled to the country to build on their professional skills.

You will find an index and digitized records for some consulates on Rotter.se. You will need to become a premium member to access these records. To find the records:

- Go to <https://www.rotter.se/>
- Click *Logga in* to access premium services
- Enter your username and password
- Click on *Faktbanken*
- Click on Premium
- Click on *Nationalitetsmatriklar*

CITIZENSHIP DOCUMENTS (MEDBORGARSKAPSHANDLINGAR)

A law was enacted on October 10, 1894, regarding the acquisition and loss of citizenship. Because of the large number of persons emigrating from Sweden, there was a need to document which emigrants could still be considered Swedish citizens. The limit was set at ten years. If one had been absent longer, then they lost their Swedish citizenship unless they went to the nearest consulate and requested a reservation to keep it.

The applications or reservations were written according to a template and were very detailed. The content varied, however, but most have the following information: applicant's name, date of birth, place of birth, year of emigration, parents and their date of birth and place of birth, spouse with birth details, and all children born in Sweden or abroad, including their date of birth and place of birth. In addition, there is often an explanation of where the applicant has lived in the years since emigration, information that is invaluable and cannot be found in other sources.

The reservations cover over 10,000 files, and with an average of four personal names in each file. Many of the names are Swedes living in the USA, but the largest percentage is Swedes residing in other countries. This is probably because the Swedes in the USA already had the opportunity to become American citizens after seven years and were not so interested in continuing to be Swedes.

KEY ONLINE SITES FOR SWEDISH EMIGRATION RECORDS

ANCESTRY - [HTTPS://WWW.ANCESTRY.COM/](https://www.ancestry.com/) \$

- Swedish church books, emigrants registered in church books, and passenger lists
- To see the complete list, go to:
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/places/europe/sweden/>

ARKIVDIGITAL - [HTTPS://WWW.ARKIVDIGITAL.NET/](https://www.arkivdigital.net/) \$

- Swedish church books,
- Passenger ship indexes and manifests for ports: Göteborg, Helsingborg, Malmö, and Stockholm; passenger ship manifests for Norrköping
- Internal passports for parts of Sweden

EMIWEB [HTTPS://DB.EMIWEB.SE/EMIWEB/SHOWSTART.X](https://db.emiweb.se/emiweb/showstart.x) \$

- Emigrants and immigrants registered in Swedish church books
- SCB Emigrants and immigrants with indexes
- Swedish passenger ship lists
- Danish passenger ship lists
- Mormon Scandinavian passenger lists
- Larsson Brothers records

FAMILY SEARCH - [HTTPS://WWW.FAMILYSEARCH.ORG/EN/](https://www.familysearch.org/en/) - FREE

- Swedish church books
- Mormon Scandinavian passenger ship lists
- Passenger ship indexes and records from Göteborg, Stockholm, and Malmö
- Some SCB extracts
- Larsson Brothers records

RIKSARKIVET - [HTTPS://RIKSARKIVET.SE/START](https://riksarkivet.se/start) - FREE

- Swedish church books
- SCB Emigrants and immigrants
- Swedish passenger lists
- For the complete list of emigration resources, go to:
<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/amnesomrade?infosida=amnesomrade-emigration>

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