

# How to Trace Your Roots in Finland

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Siirtolaisuusinstituutti  
Migrationsinstitutet  
Institute of Migration



# The Institute of Migration

The Institute of Migration was founded in 1974, and has its headquarters in Turku. The Institute is maintained by a non-profit-making trust and is basically financed by an annual operating grant from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Institute carries out and promotes research in the field of migration, historical as well as contemporary and also collects and stores different kinds of material relating to migration and ethnic questions. The Institute maintains a register of researchers working in these fields, arranges seminars and conferences to promote scholarly collaboration. The Institute is responsible for six series of scholarly publications and publishes its own quarterly periodical *Siirtolaisuus-Migration*.

The Archives of the Institute contain approx. 220 meters of documents, ca. 14 000 photographs, letters, post cards, interviews, musical recordings, museum pieces etc.

The Institute Library specializes in scholarly and other publications relating to international and domestic migration. The Library subscribes to most of Finnish newspapers and magazines

published in other countries around the world and to many specialist periodicals dealing with migration. The library counts more than 7 000 titles, and information service is available for the public. One important way in which the Institute promotes a greater awareness of migration is through arranging exhibitions.

The Emigrant Register was established in 1989 as a service for genealogists and the descendants of Finnish emigrants. The foundation of a computerized register was a part of the Delaware 350 Anniversary, to commemorate the beginning of Finnish Emigration to North America. The data is mostly related to the migration event, the databases of the main sources of information, official passport registers and passenger lists of the Finland Steamship Company are available on the Internet.

The web site of the Institute at <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi> provides articles, reports, the institute's periodical, statistics, picture galleries, exhibitions, a web shop where you can buy books, useful links and other information concerning Finnish migration.

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# Introduction

The popularity of tracing one's roots seems to be constantly increasing. Many genealogists feel at some point in their research that they have reached a point where no more information can be dug into daylight and those who are tracing their overseas roots are more likely than others to run into what seems to be a brick wall. To carry on the search for their relatives, the information needed is to identify the place where the ancestors lived. Those who have Nordic ancestry are better off than others, as the parishes have kept good records, which reach hundreds of years back, but the genealogist still needs to know where to search. Many start with great enthusiasm and high hopes, but the abundance of information on the internet easily leads astray and guidance is needed through the jungle

of information. For those who plan to visit Finland to find their roots, good preparation is crucial, as much of the information can be gathered in advance and the better they prepare, the more they can find during their trip.

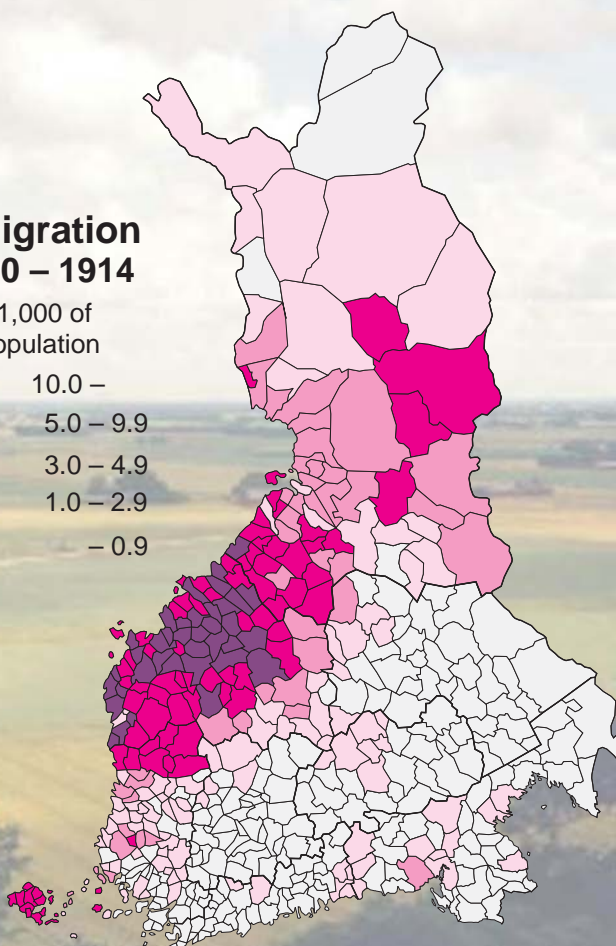
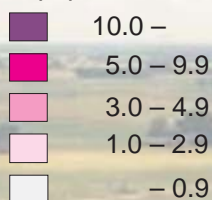
The purpose of this booklet is to help Finnish descendants to trace their roots. In the following pages the most important information sources in Finland are described and what the genealogist can expect to find. Many of the sources can be utilized at home, through the Internet, by mail or telephone, but some of the basic information can only be researched on the spot. The reader should not expect a complete guide to genealogical sources in Finland, but these pages give an outline where to find the most important sources.

**The number of emigrants by province in 1870–1914**

Province	Persons	%
Uusimaa	13 200	4,4
Turku-Pori	43 800	14,5
Häme	8 800	2,9
Viipuri	16 000	5,3
Mikkeli	5 000	1,6
Kuopio	9 900	3,3
Vaasa	158 400	52,3
Oulu	47 700	15,7
Total	302 800	100,0

**Emigration 1870 – 1914**

Per 1,000 of population



# Overview of Finnish Migration to America

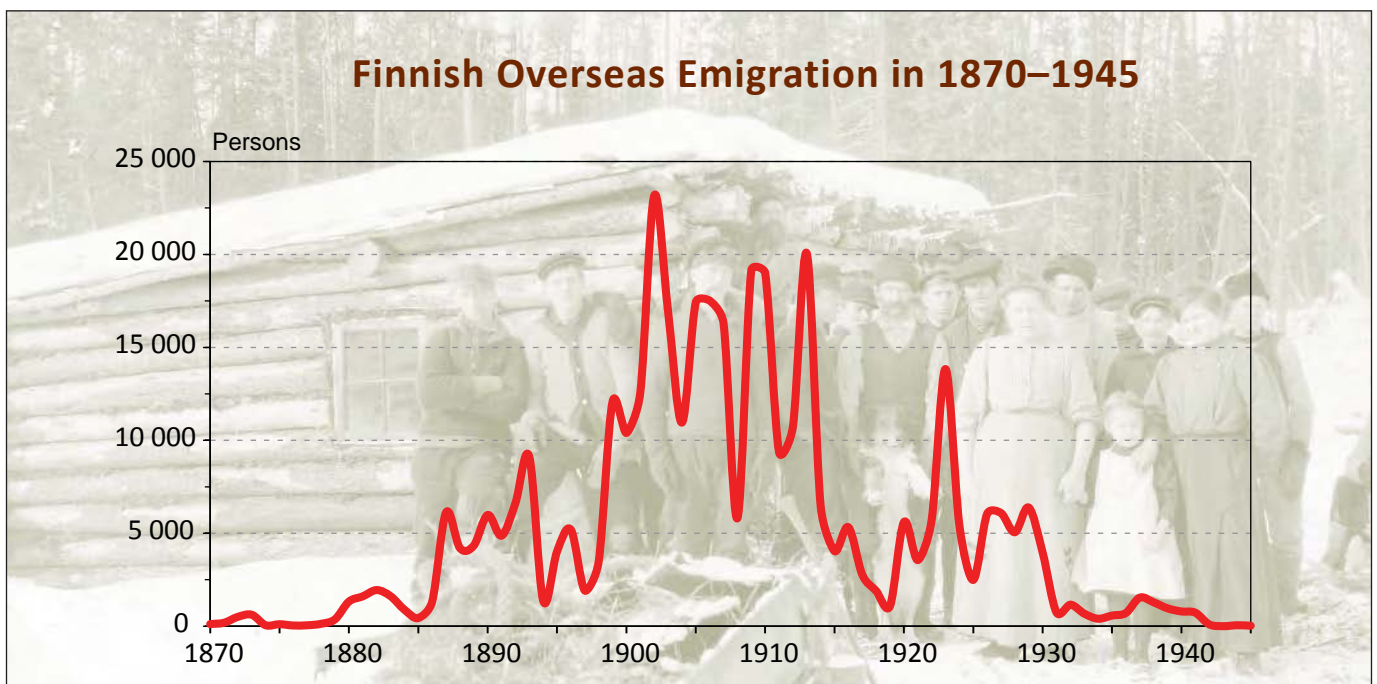
The great migration of Finns to North America occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Between the years 1864 and 1914 well over 300,000 Finns settled in the USA and Canada. The “America Fever” started in the 1870s and became a mass movement in the following decade. The crest of the wave was reached the year 1902 when over 20,000 Finns emigrated. Emigration continued on a large scale until the outbreak of World War I. When the U.S. Government began to restrict the admission of immigrants in the 1920s, Finnish emigration shifted to Canada. The Finnish emigration to the U.S. was higher than the official statistics of these years reveal, because many immigrants who officially were not admitted to the U.S. went first to Canada and then crossed the border between the countries.

The Finnish emigrants to America originated mainly from north western Finland. Nearly half of them came from the province of Vaasa. They were young people, around 20 years of age; the majority was men and unmarried. The structural change in agriculture had created a population surplus, and jobs outside agriculture were scarce in Finland. In North America work was available for men in mines, lumber camps, factories and railroad construction. Women gained employment as maids in the homes of wealthy Ameri-

cans. The Finnish settlements concentrated in Minnesota, Michigan and Massachusetts. Also in Oregon and New York the Finns were numerous.

In Canada about 60 per cent of the Finnish population lived in Ontario, especially in Toronto, Sudbury and present Thunder Bay. Many Finns also settled on the West Coast, but relatively few in prairie territories or the French-speaking areas. Although the Finns formed less than one per cent of the European immigration to North America their concentration, e.g. in Michigan and in Thunder Bay in Canada had a considerable impact on the local population. In mining in upper Michigan the Finns were quite visible, especially in the industrial strikes. A study made at Northern Michigan University drew the conclusion that the American Finns had influenced the English spoken in northern Michigan.

Since the Second World war Finnish migration to North America has been quite insignificant; around 15,000 emigrants went to the United States and 27,000 to Canada. In North America there are about 45,000 first generation and 180,000 second generation Finns. Including later generations there are over a million people of Finnish extraction – a substantial contribution to the ethnic and cultural mosaic of the United States and Canada.





# Start Your Search in North American Records

## Family Papers

Tracing your roots and genealogical research often means compiling bits and pieces of information together. Sometimes a paper of seemingly little interest or a remark by a relative can be an important push forward. Archives, offices and libraries often provide lots of material for constructing the family tree, but before gathering and studying official documents for filling the blanks in your family history, you should start at home with the material in the possession of your family and relatives, oral information as well as written.

The most important task is to determine the place in Finland where the family originally came from and what was the original Finnish name of the ancestors, which may have changed after arriving in America, intentionally or through marriage. If the ties and contacts to the old home country and the relatives there still remain, crossing the Atlantic is easy, but if there are no family ties left, finding the family on the other side of the Atlantic might require lots of work and effort.

Parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and other elderly relatives remember details about persons and what happened in the past. Interviewing a relative can give lots of information, which cannot be found in any document. Notes about births, marriages and deaths in the old family bible provide valuable information when starting genealogical research. This information might, however, be incomplete and incorrect. Almost every family keeps birth-, marriage- and death certificates in their home archives, which are of great interest. Also old school-, military- and retirement records as well as membership records of associations and organizations give information on life of old. Often documents like deeds of estate distribution, land acquisition and the like can be found at home. It is also a common habit to collect obituaries and anniversary notices from newspapers about family members.

All Finnish emigrants did not apply for American citizenship, but Certificates of Intention of becoming US citizens and Certificates of Naturalization are important documents when re-

searching your family history. They do not necessarily list the place of origin in Finland, but always the arrival in America and often the name of the ship and port of arrival.

The family member who once arrived in America might have brought along photographs and documents from the old country, which some relative could have in his possession. The most valuable document is the emigrant's passport, because it shows the original name in Finland, date of birth, home parish, profession and the date of emigration. Sometimes the emigrant also had an extract from the parish register (*virkatodistus*, *papinkirja*, *muuttotodistus*) issued for the purpose of emigration.

Old photographs are interesting, but unfortunately the names of the persons appearing are seldom written down. Notes and diaries written by the emigrant are very valuable as well as letters and postcards sent from Finland. These may contain addresses, names of persons and places, information on relatives and more. These documents are usually in Finnish or Swedish, which means that the genealogist needs assistance if he does not know the languages.

## Official Records in North America

This section assists in doing genealogical research using official records in North America. It is most important to exhaust these before venturing into archival searches in Finland. Surprisingly much information as basis can be found quite close.

## Vital Records

In tracing the history of immigrants and their descendants, the public records of their new country are important sources of information. In North America, there is no national poll register; population records are the responsibility of State, Coun-

**ORIGINAL**  
TO BE GIVEN TO  
THE PERSON NATURALIZED

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

No. **6734515**

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Religion No. 224621

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Age 52 years, sex Female  
 complexion Fair color of eyes Blue color of hair Br height 5 feet 3 inches  
 weight 150 pounds, visible distinctive marks Scar on left temple  
 Marital status Married former nationality Finnish

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

+ Hilja Lydia Sundell  
 (Complete and true signature of holder)

EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN S.S.  
 SOUTHERN DIVISION

Be it known, that at a term of the \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Court of  
 The United States \_\_\_\_\_  
 held pursuant to law at \_\_\_\_\_ Detroit \_\_\_\_\_  
 on June 14, 1948 \_\_\_\_\_ the Court having found that  
 Hilja Lydia Sundell  
 then residing at 12736 Twelfth, Detroit, Mich  
 intends to reside permanently in the United States (when so required by the  
 Naturalization Laws of the United States), had in all other respects complied with  
 the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be  
 admitted to citizenship, thereupon ordered that such person be and (she was  
 admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 14th  
 day of June in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and  
 forty-eight and of our Independence the one hundred  
 and seventy-second

GEORGE M. READ  
 Clerk of the U.S. District Court.  
 My \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Clerk.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

It is a violation of the U.S. Code (and punishable as such) to copy, print, photograph, or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

ty or City officials. Each state has the equivalent of a bureau of vital records. It's generally called the "Bureau of Vital Statistics," "Division of Records and Statistics," "Division of Public Health," "Vital Records Division," or some similar title.

Vital records document important events of an individual's life: birth, marriage, death and divorce. In general, vital records weren't kept in the United States until the early 1900s, only some local records in state archives and libraries go further back. The information in the documents varies. Usually they contain the full name of the individual involved in the event, the date of the event, and the county, state, or town where the event took place. Many vital records contain much more information than this.

To request a copy of a vital record you normally need to contact the appropriate state agency. States require a fee for each certificate. In most cases, you pay first and then wait for the state agency to mail the record to you. Response time

varies widely and can range from a week to several months. A comprehensive guide to vital records can be found at <http://www.vitalrec.com>.

Much of this also applies for Canada, but as modern Canada is the merger of French and English colonies, each with its own language and record keeping methods, problems may arise. The privacy laws are also stricter than in the US. Generally, the Canadian provinces where most Finns went have local administrations not differing much from their American counterparts. Being part of the British Commonwealth, some Canadian records are kept in Great Britain, e.g. military archives from the First and Second World War.

**Census**

Censuses are good sources for genealogical information, since they also give information on household and family level. The United States



PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME	RELATION	HOME DATA	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	EDUCATION	PLACE OF BIRTH			MOTHER TONGUE OR NATIVE LANGUAGE, IF FOREIGN BORN	CITIZENSHIP, ETC.	OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY		EMPLOYMENT	VETERAN
						FATHER	MOTHER	OTHER			OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY		
Finland	Lauri Anna	Head	520	F W 42 W 20	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	1916 AI 76	None	None	None	None
Finland	Jane	Wife		F W 19 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	John	Son		M W 17 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 15 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 13 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 11 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 6 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 5 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 4 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 3 M 21	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		F W 31 M 20	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		F W 8 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 53 W 30	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	1902 AI 76	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		F W 19 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 37 S	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	None	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 46 M 14	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	1904 AI 76	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		F W 52 M 14	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	1904 AI 76	None	None	None	None
Finland	Yours	Son		M W 78 W 62	None	Finland	Finland	Finland	Swedish	1891 AI 76	None	None	None	None

Congress requisitioned the first official census in 1790 to ensure that each state was assigned a fair number of congressional representatives. One census is completed every ten years. The first time that Finns were listed separately in the US Census was in 1900. Earlier they were classified as Russian. The most recent records open to genealogists are those for the 1930 census.

Information is given on e.g. name, marital status, number of children born (to the wife, widow or divorcee), year of immigration, whether naturalized or alien, whether able to speak English, occupation and much more data, depending on the year of the census.

As in the United States, censuses were conducted in Canada every ten years. Returns from all of the censuses up to and including 1901 are freely available. The paper returns for censuses after 1901 (up to 1991) were destroyed after the records were put onto microfilm. These microfilms, under the control of Statistics Canada, are stored at the National Capital Region Federal Records Centre of the National Archives.

Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com>) hosts online census records from 1790–1930 for both US and Canada.

**The SSDI**

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) is a good resource for finding information on Americans who died after the 1960s. Most of the information included in this index is from 1960's to the present, although some data is from as early as 1937. A record will contain some or all of the following information: last name, first name, birth date, death date, Social Security number, the state of residence where the Social Security number

(SSN) was issued, the last known residence and the location where the last benefit payment was sent. For individuals who died while residing outside of the U.S., the record may also include a special state or country residence code. SSDI is available at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

**Church Records**

In addition to the public records, most churches also kept records of their members. In the Lutheran congregations set up by the Finnish immigrants, Finnish archive practices were observed: births, marriages and deaths were listed annually in chronological order. This information was then also recorded in the Congregation Records by family. Some 20 per cent of the Finnish emigrants were members. There were hundreds of Finnish and Swedish Finnish parishes in both the United States and Canada, but no complete list of these exists. The Genealogical Society of Finland gathers information of Finnish-American churches at <http://www.genealogia.fi/church/index.htm>

Original records and microfilms of Finnish-American church records are kept at the Finnish-American Heritage Center at Finlandia University (former Suomi College) in Hancock, Michigan. The Center also has archival material on temperance and other societies, newspapers, periodicals, personal papers and more (<http://www.finlandia.edu/heritage-center-in-finnish.html>).

**Other Documents**

The officials dealing with immigrants produced a large amount of documentation. Researchers often overlook the importance of these as a source



### ...Marriage Certificate...

This Certifies, That the undersigned, Edwin M Randall Jr  
 by authority of a License bearing date the 28th day of Oct A. D. 1899  
 and issued by the County Auditor of the County of King did, on the 28th day of Oct  
 A. D. 1899, at the 622 Union St., City of Seattle  
 County and State aforesaid, join in **Lawful Wedlock** Matt Kittila  
 of the County of Skagit and Mary Matson  
 of the County of King with their mutual assent, in the presence of  
August Schonfeldt and Anna Johnson, witnesses.

In Testimony Whereof, Witness the signatures of the parties to said ceremony, the witnesses and myself  
 this 28 day of Oct A. D. 1899

Witnesses: <u>August Schonfeldt</u>	Parties: <u>Matt Kittila</u>	Officiating Clergyman or Officer: <u>Edwin M Randall Jr</u>
--	---------------------------------	--

RESERVE RED FOR BINDING FADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD	1 PLACE OF DEATH		MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH		Copy Register No. <u>13</u>
	County.....		Division of Vital Statistics		
	Township.....		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
	Village.....		No. <u>Eloise Infirmary</u> St. (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number)		
	City.....		City <u>Detroit</u> Mich. (If non-resident give city or town and state)		
	2 FULL NAME <u>Edward Olson</u>		a) Residence No. <u>1023 LaBross</u> St., Ward <u>Detroit</u> Mich. (Usual place of abode)		
	Length of residence in city or town where death occurred		yrs. <u>2</u> mos. <u>5</u> ds. How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.		
	PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
	3 SEX <u>Male</u>	4 Color or Race <u>White</u>	5 Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced (Write the word) <u>Married</u>	16 DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year) <u>Jan 8 1928</u>	
	5a If married, widowed or divorced HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of		17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Nov 3 1927</u> to <u>1-8 1928</u> that I last saw him alive on <u>1-7 1928</u> and that death occurred on the date stated above at <u>7:30 a.m.</u> The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Tuberculous Peritonitis</u>		
6 DATE OF BIRTH (Month, day and year) <u>Sept. 4 1891</u>		CONTRIBUTORY <u>Intermittent Nephritis</u> (Secondary) (duration) <u>1</u> yrs. <u>1</u> mos. <u>1</u> ds.			
7 AGE Years <u>36</u> Months <u>4</u> Days <u>4</u> If LESS than 1 day... hrs. OR ... min.	8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work <u>Laborer</u> (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) (c) Name of employer.		18		

of family history information. Such are Naturalization records, land records (including "Plat Books"-map collections), probate records, taxation, military service, court records and inheritance records. They can be found from local officials and from the National Archives in USA and Canada. For genealogists the most important documents relating to the naturalization are the duplicate copies made after 1906, which are stored at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Many of above mentioned records are available for a user fee at <http://www.ancestry.com>

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1887)			
SERIAL NUMBER	1. NAME (Print)		ORDER NUMBER
U. <u>1101</u>	<u>KARL TOIVONEN</u>		
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) <u>4301 - 43rd Parkway King's Bay</u>			
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]			
3. MARRIAGE ADDRESS <u>Same</u>			
[Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If none insert word none.]			
4. TELEPHONE	5. AGE IN YEARS <u>58</u>	6. PLACE OF BIRTH <u>FINLAND</u>	
	DATE OF BIRTH <u>5-1-1870</u>	(Town or county) <u>FINLAND</u>	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE			
D. S. N. FORM 1 (Revised 4-1-22)		10-21630-2 <u>Karl Toivonen</u>	



# Documents Related to the Journey

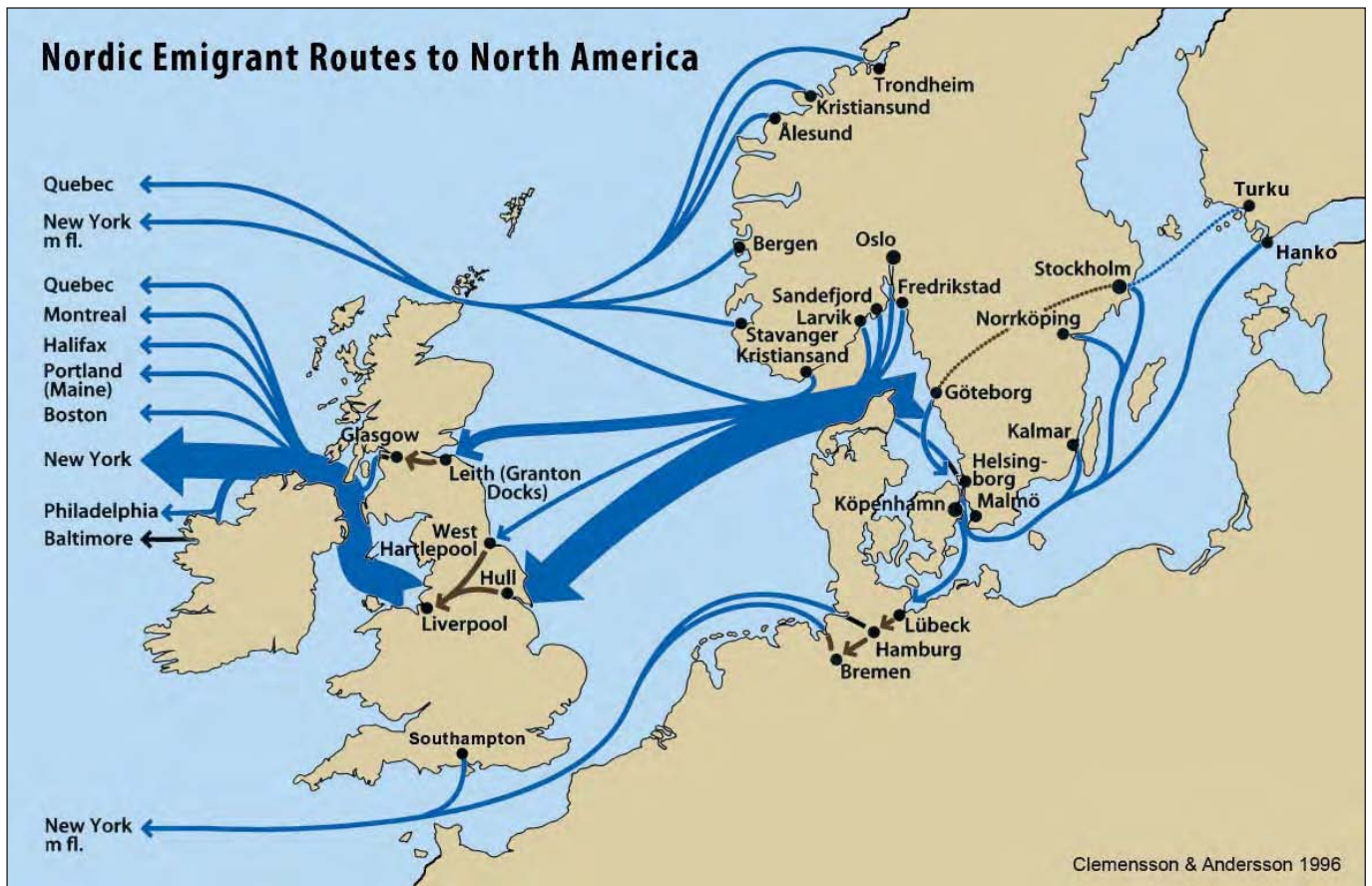
Most of the Finns emigrated to North America over England. A small part of the Finnish emigration went through Germany. In the 1870's and 1880's it was also possible to travel directly to America through Norway, a possibility that many emigrants from North Finland used. Some Finnish emigrants chose to board an ocean liner in Copenhagen. In the 1920s a great many Finns took the route from Gothenburg in Sweden directly to New York.

The journey from Finland started in the 19th century at first with coastal vessels to Sweden, mainly to Stockholm, from where it was possible to take a ship directly to England or Germany. In 1874 the Wasa-Nordsjö Steamship, Inc. sailed a few times per summer from Vaasa to Hull, England. The most popular option, however, was to take the train from Stockholm to Gothenburg and continue with a ship to England. It was also possible to board a ship in Malmö.

The travel route changed substantially at the end of the 1880s when the German shipbrokers

Norddeutscher Loyd and HAPAG started trafficking from Hanko, the southernmost harbor in Finland, to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Lübeck and further to Hull in England. In the autumn of 1891 the Finnish Steamship Company started regular traffic between Hanko and Hull. The company also made an agreement with the Companies running the Ocean Liners from England to America. From the beginning of the 20th century most of the emigrants from Finland traveled with the Finnish Steamship company. During World War 1914–1920 no ships went from Hanko and the emigrants had to leave through Sweden again.

In England, the Finns arrived in Hull and continued by train to Liverpool, Southampton or Glasgow. They continued their journey with ocean liners to North America, arriving in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia or Portland. In Canada the arrival ports were Halifax, Quebec, Montreal and St. John. Totally the journey from Finland to North America usually lasted an average of two weeks.









All passenger records are kept in the National Archives of USA and Canada arranged by port, arrival date and ship and they have been microfilmed. The microfilms can be ordered from local archives and the LDS Family History Centers (FHC).

The lists of arrivals are also indexed and computerized. The databases of arrivals in US and Canada are available for a user fee at <http://www.ancestry.com>

There is also an Internet database of those who arrived in the US through Ellis Island, New York, containing 22 million names including thousands of Finns, at <http://www.ellislandrecords.org>.

## St. Albans Border Crossings

Sharing a border with the United States meant residents of the two nations moved back and forth, not always leaving traces in official records. St. Albans border crossing records are records of immigrants who crossed the border between Canada and the U.S. between 1895 and 1954. While they're collectively known as St. Albans records, they also contain records of immigrants crossing over in Washington, Montana, Michigan, New York, North Dakota, and Minnesota, in fact all along the U.S. Canadian border. They are very similar to ship lists and in fact do contain some actual Great Lakes passenger records. There are two collections from Canadian and American ledgers, which can be found at The National Archives of Canada (<http://www.collectionscanada.ca>) and USA (<http://www.archives.gov>).

United States Department of Immigration and Naturalization have microfilmed records of these crossings. The manifests are also available on the Internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

## Lists of Departures

Passengers from Swedish ports are listed since 1869. Most of the Finnish emigrants through Sweden can be found in the passenger lists of Gothenburg, but also among those who departed from Stockholm and Malmö. Most of the Swedish passenger lists (Gothenburg 1869–1930, Malmö

1874–1930, Stockholm 1869–1939, Norrköping 1859–1919 and Kalmar 1880–1893) have been compiled to a database available on a CD named "Emigranten". The CD is available from Emigranternas Hus i Göteborg (<http://emigranter-nashus.se>)

The emigrants from Norway used the ports of Bergen, Fredrikstad, Kristiansand, Kristiansund, Larvik, Oslo (Kristiania), Sandfjord, Stavanger, Tromsø, Trondheim and Ålesund. The emigrants from Finland commonly used the ports of Trondheim and Bergen. The Norwegian passenger lists are available at <http://www.norwayheritage.com/ships>.

The passenger lists from Copenhagen in Denmark 1868–1940 include also some hundred Finns and are available on the homepage of the Danish Emigrant Archives at <http://www.emi-arch.dk/home.php3>

German ports used by emigrants were Bremen and Hamburg. The Bremen passenger lists were lost during the war, but the Hamburg lists for 1850–1934 have been preserved. They are being computerized and are available at <http://www.linktoyourroots.hamburg.de/index>

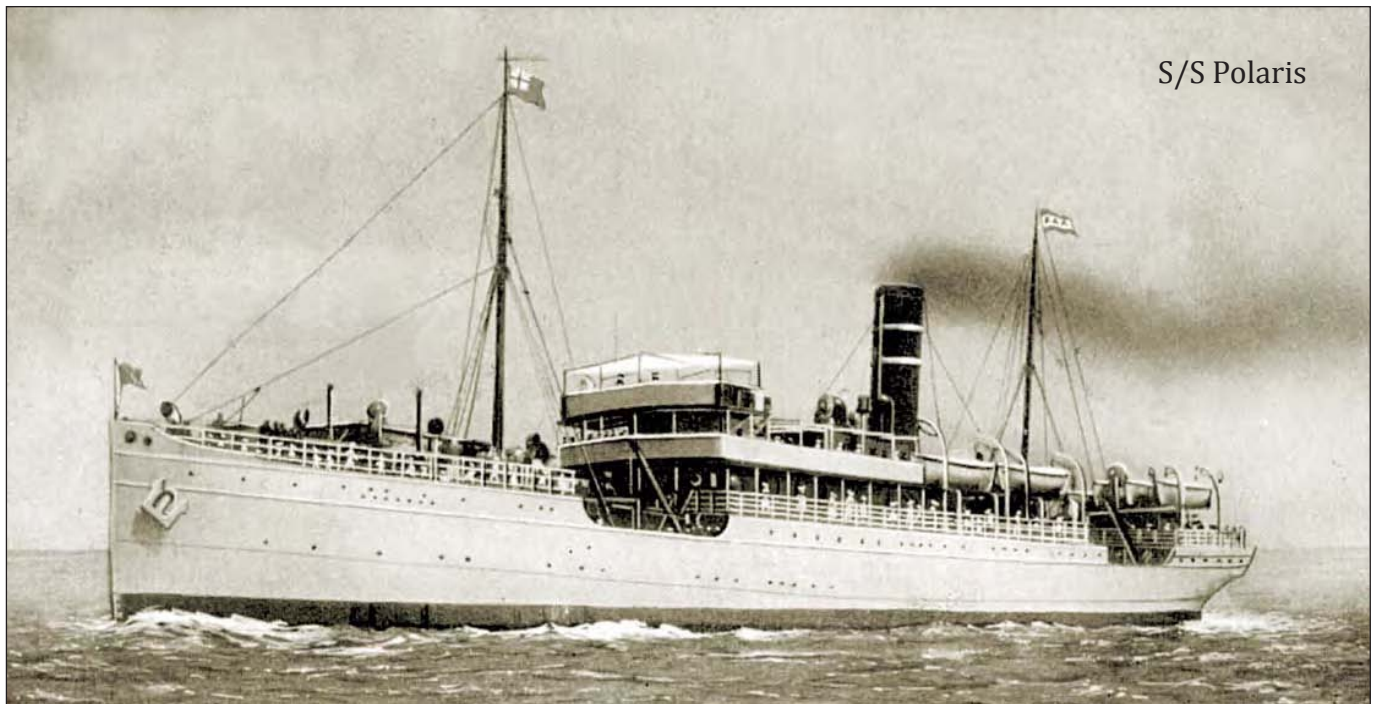
The database at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) includes also lists of departures for many European ports.

## The Passenger Lists of the Finland Steamship Company (F.Å.A)

The Finland Steamship Company (Suomen Höyrylaiva Osakeyhtiö, Finska Ångfartygs Aktiebolaget, F.Å.A.) started regular traffic from Hanko to Copenhagen and Hull in the autumn of 1891. The passenger lists are available for the period 1891–1896, 1899–1914 and from 1920 into the 1960s. The collection totals 145 folio-sized bound books arranged according to shipping company. There are numerous deletions and cancellations on the lists, remarks concerning no-shows, extra charges, comments on passengers not accepted on the grounds of a disease etc. The passenger lists are of third class passengers, that is, emigrants. First and second class passengers can be found on the lists if a third class passenger paid an extra charge to be able to travel more comfortably.

Passenger lists mainly contain the following types of information: name of the passenger,





S/S Polaris

gender and age of the passenger, date of departure from Finland, name of the ship leaving Finland, ticket price, Ocean Liner Company, destination in North America and companions. From 1904 also the departure date from England and name of the ship is listed. The lists also inform whether the ticket was bought in Finland or pre-paid, that is, sent by a relative or friend in America. The port of call in England and port of arrival in America is also listed.

Most of F.Å.A.'s passenger lists have survived and are kept in the manuscript collection of the Library of Åbo Akademi University in Turku. The Institute of Migration has computerized most of F.Å.A.'s passenger lists. The database is accessible on the Internet at <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi>

Birth dates and domicile were not recorded, so it might not be an easy task to identify the sought passenger among those with the same name. The spelling mistakes are numerous and the age might also be false. If the domicile of the emigrant in Finland is unknown, the passenger lists do not suffice, the passport information is necessary.

## The Passport Lists

According to a regulation from 1862 all Finns needed a passport to travel abroad. Passports

were issued by county government boards (in Finnish lääninhallitus, in Swedish länsstyrelse), borough administrators in towns (in Finnish maistraatti, in Swedish magistrat), sheriff of the Åland Islands, sheriff of Lapland and the Finnish passport bureau in St. Petersburg. The oldest passport list is from 1810 and the lists are complete since 1893. In 1900 they were standardized and the same format was used in the entire country. The most accurate lists include the name of the person who received the passport, occupation, civil status, religion, date of birth, home district, date of passport issue, period of validity, destination and price of the passport and also dependent family members left behind.

In the passport lists usually only the country of destination is mentioned, not the exact place: America, North America, the United States, Canada or only abroad. Also passports issued for Sweden could be used for emigration to America. The emigrant was free to choose the time of validity for the passport, but it could not exceed five years. In the beginning a passport was issued only for one journey, but since 1888 the same passport could be used for unlimited travel. Usually the passport was issued a few days or weeks before the journey. Sometimes illness or lack of money delayed or inhibited the journey, so finding a person in a passport list does not guarantee that the person actually emigrated.



I dessa kolumner införas uppgifter för samliga passagerare. — Näihin sarakkeisiin merkitään tiedot kaikkien passin ottaneista.										I dessa kolumner införas uppgifter till Näihin sarakkeisiin merkitään tiedot Euroopan		
Passets — Passin		Anteckning om passaförf. Passin utgåva.		Till och förömn. — Ristimä- ja liikanimi.	Kön. Sukupuoli.	Stånd eller yrke. Sääty eli ammatti.	Hemort vid afresan. — Kotiseutu lähtöessä.		Pär huru lång tid passet utfärdas. Kuinka pitkäksi ajaksi passi on voottu.	Födelseår. Syntymävuosi.	Landet, dit passet utfärdas. Maa, johon passi annetaan.	Märkning.
Månad. Kuukausi.	Dag. Päivä.	Numerum. Numero.	År. Vuosi.				Län. — Lääni.	Kommun. — Kunta.				
1877	4	1075	436	Laublen, Amanda Sofia	1	Stadskö	Åbo	Åbo	5 år			
"	"	1075	436	Erinm, Aina Johanna	1	Severenska	"	"	"			
"	"	1076	436	Mannan, Maria Mathilda	1	Holländsk	Jyväskylä	Jyväskylä	7 år	1874	Jyväskylä	
"	7	1071	436	Laman, Elna Viktori	1	ent. Rensk	"	"	"	1881	"	
"	"	1071	436	Hjälki, Kaarlo Rudolf	1	Pöytäkirja	"	"	9 år	1884	"	
"	"	1077	436	Lindroos, Viktori Alfred	1	Stadskö	"	"	5 år	1882	"	
"	"	1078	436	Jokela, Anders Arvid	1	Jyväskylä	"	"	6 år	1886	"	
"	"	1079	436	Taipale, Eupha Paulfrid	1	Pöytäkirja	"	"	5 år	1882	"	
"	"	1082	436	Aliniant, Eira Simo	1	Touppanen	"	"	2 år	1859	"	
"	"	1082	436	Lommi, Alvar	1	Jyväskylä	"	"	"	1889	"	
"	"	1083	436	Frängid, Frans Efraimink	1	Touppanen	"	"	"	1858	"	
"	"	1084	436	Stenokanen, Väinö	1	Stadskö	"	"	5 år	1879	"	
"	"	1085	436	Thal, Irene Elida	1	Kalustajan	"	"	"	1883	"	
"	"	1086	436	Thal, John Paulfrid	1	Pöytäkirja	"	"	4 år	1889	"	
"	"	1087	436	Hammar, Jakob Kai	1	Pöytäkirja	"	"	5 år	1888	"	

In principle the passport was necessary for travelling abroad, but all emigrants are not found in the passport lists. It was easy to cross the border to a neighbor country without a passport and it was no problem to continue the journey without any official documents. Additionally, those who left the country illegally, particularly men of age for Russian military service, travelled illegally without any passport at all.

The application for a passport was in general submitted either personally or by a trusted person. If the journey to the capital of the province was long and tedious, the passport could be acquired at some other county government office on the way or at the port of departure at the borough administrator in Hanko. Between 20 and 30 per cent of the emigrants got their passport outside their own province.

The most important passport information for the genealogist is the home parish. It is not necessary the same as place of birth, but it helps to find the home parish of the family in Finland and it gives the name the emigrant used at home. The original passport records are kept by the Provincial Archives in Finland, and the oldest passport records up to 1920 are microfilmed. In the United States the films are available at the LDS Family History Centers (FHC) and in Finland at the National Archives and the Institute of Migration.



The passport records are being transferred to computer by the Institute of Migration and are available at <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi>





At the turn of the century also those who had no family name, e.g. many farmhands and landless, adopted names by themselves or were given names by the authorities. These new names often refer to nature or topography but not to animals. They typically end in -nen, but are much younger than the old -nen names originating in Savo. Thus Virtanen,

Lahtinen, Nieminen, Mäkinen etc. are among the most common names in Finland.

## Emigrants Changing their Names

Most of the emigrants from Finland already had a family name, and those who didn't took one, at the latest when arriving in the new country. Often the Finnish name was difficult to pronounce and was changed to better fit the language of the new country. Name changes were nothing new for the emigrants. It is most important for the genealogist to trace the original name. There are some clear principles in these name changes:

### ► The Finnish name could be shortened:

Peltomäki > Mäki > Maki  
Lahdenperä > Lahti  
Hautaniemi > Niemi  
Antinaho > Aho

### ► The name was translated:

Mäki > Hill  
Jokela > Rivers  
Viheriäinen > Green  
Örn > Eagle

### ► It might be changed to sound similar:

Valtonen > Walton  
Eriksson > Rixon  
Haarala > Harris  
Pärni > Parney

### ► Some emigrants chose a completely new name among those common in the new country:

Karhunen > Hill  
Hietala > Wilson  
Saarela > Johnson  
Ryynänen > Anderson

### ► Usually the first name was changed to the English equivalents:

Maria > Mary  
Wilhelmina > Minnie  
Antti/Anders > Andrew  
Kustaa/August > Gust  
Jaakko/Jakob > Jack  
Kalle/Karl > Carl, Charles.





# Records in Finland

## Church Records

Church records are in Finland the most important source for genealogical information. Until the year 1917 practically all Finns were members of the evangelic-lutheran or orthodox church. The parishes kept official population records until 1999, when the Population register centre and the local register offices took over. The nationwide computerized population register was established in 1972 and the non-clerical population register in 1923.

The oldest records of the Finnish church books are the records of births, marriages and deaths, the so-called history books. The oldest survived record is from Teisko parish 1648. At the end of the 17th century history books were kept in the whole country, and especially in the western part of Finland there are complete series of parish records that go back to that century. In the eastern parts of Finland parish records have survived from the 1720's.

Apart from history books, the parishes also started to keep communion books. The first stipulation was given in 1666; the church law from 1686 stipulated every parish in the country to keep communion books and gave exact rules about the content. All parishes did not follow the rules and a similar form for the whole country was not applied until the middle of the 18th century.

In the communion books the whole parish was catalogued according to villages and farms. In addition to basic information (name, profession or relation to the master of the farm, birth date and place, death date and place) remarks were made about the ability to read and write, knowledge of religion and taking part in the Holy Communion. Remarks on offences and punishments can also be found and e.g. illnesses affecting the ability to pay tax. At the end of the 18th century also moving from one place to another was recorded. Separate lists of those moving from one parish to another were kept from the 19th century. A communion book was used for 5-10 years

and when it was full, a new book was started and the current population situation was copied to it.

Emigrants do not appear in the records of movers because they usually continued to be members of the parish even after the emigration. Thus the only information on emigration that can be found in the church books might be in the communion book as a remark on certificate for America and emigration year. In many parishes in Ostrobothnia, where emigration was very common, a book on absent population was kept. Here all the parish members abroad were noted.

## The Genealogy Method and available Church Records

At its easiest and simplest genealogy is zigzagging between the communion books and history books. An individual and his family are traced using the communion book, where the domicile is stated as well as family relations between those living in the household and moves to another farm or parish. The birth, marriage and death dates are then to be compared with the history books. Generally a person's name, birth date and birth parish are needed as basis for genealogical research. When these are known, the birth records take the genealogist to the correct village and house, i.e. to the correct page in the communion book. Thus knowledge of the emigrant's home parish in Finland is of utmost importance. Without that information, it is impossible to find him/her and the family in Finland from Finnish sources.

Most church records from today up to the middle of the 19th century are generally located in the archives of the parishes. The church registry offices of the parishes do genealogical research on these for a fee, but extensive research often takes a long time. You can ask for information from the church registry office by letter, email or on the spot. In the inquiry it is necessary to define the person you want information about and also limit the scope of the research, e.g. how many generations back you want information on.

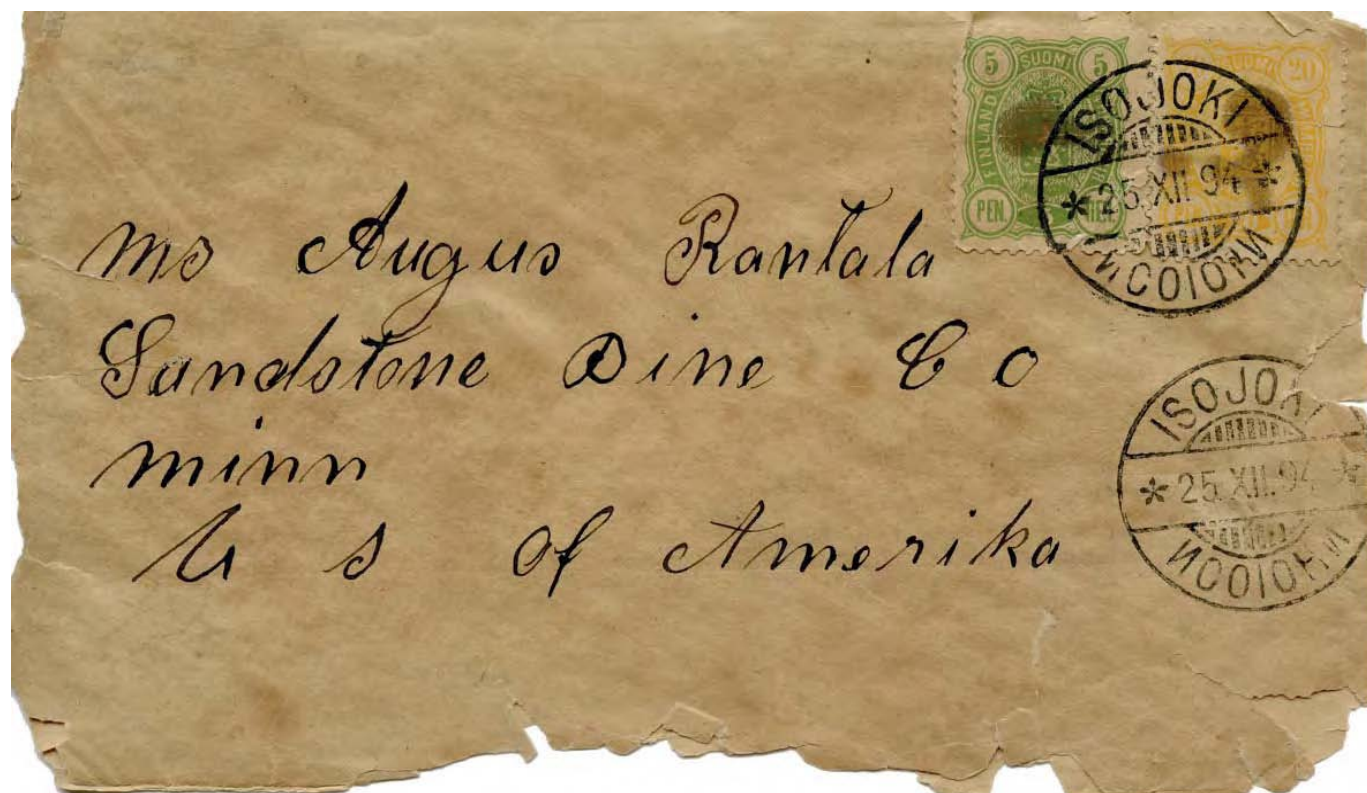




For the time before church books poll registers can be used. They list by parish and hamlet all the residents in each household 15-63 years old who were liable to poll tax, both masters and servants. Land registers, which were kept since the year 1540 recorded for each estate the amount of tax due, but of the persons only the master is mentioned. The master could also be some landholder years back deceased, because the tax authorities were not interested in the identity of the person paying, only of the correct tax amount. The state's inventiveness in thinking up new forms of tax is illustrated by the luxury taxes in the 18th century. In 1734 a new Act made probate inventories obligatory for the estates of all deceased persons. The probate inventories listed the whole property of the deceased and thus provide a concrete description of the

material milieu in which our ancestors lived. In order to be recognized as valid, the probate inventory must be deposited and registered with the rural or municipal magistrates' court. The court records and other judicial documents provide the genealogist with an endless supply of sources: Criminal and civil disputes, quarrels between neighbors, trading of estates, inheritance, pension agreements, petitions by craftsmen and shopkeepers, military drafts etc.

In Finland everybody is entitled to get information from public sources. There is a law on publicity of documents, which lists the non-public and secret documents. The work of the genealogist never ends. The abundant material in the provincial archives and in the archives of municipalities and local associations guarantees basis for your hobby.



# Literature

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# Addresses

## ▶ Parishes

Addresses for all Evangelic-Lutheran parishes in Finland parishes are available at <http://evl.fi>

## ▶ Institute of Migration

Eerikinkatu 34  
FIN-20100 Turku, Finland  
Phone: +358-02-2840 440  
E-mail: [info@siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi](mailto:info@siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi)  
<http://www.migrationinstitute.fi>

## ▶ The Genealogical Society of Finland

Liisankatu 16 A  
FIN-00170 Helsinki  
Phone: +358-010 387 7901  
E-mail: [seura@genealogia.fi](mailto:seura@genealogia.fi)  
<http://www.genealogia.fi>

## ▶ Finland's Family History Association

E-mail: [info@sukuhistoria.fi](mailto:info@sukuhistoria.fi)  
<http://www.sukuhistoria.fi/sshy/index.htm>

## ▶ The National Archives of Finland

P.O.Box 258  
FIN-00171 Helsinki  
Phone: +358-9-228 521  
Fax: +358-9-176 302  
E-mail: [arkisto@narc.fi](mailto:arkisto@narc.fi)  
<http://www.arkisto.fi>

## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Hämeenlinna

Aittatie 2  
FIN-13200 Hämeenlinna  
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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Joensuu

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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Jyväskylä

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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Oulu

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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Turku

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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Vaasa

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## ▶ The Provincial Archives of Åland Islands

P.O.Box 1060  
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<http://www.arkivet.aland.fi>



# Web Sites

- Ancestry: <http://www.ancestry.com>
- National Archives of Canada: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/genealogy/index-e.html>
- Family Search: <https://familysearch.org>
- Ellis Island Records: <http://www.ellisland.org>
- MyHeritage.com: <http://www.myheritage.com>
- Finnish Immigration Records: <http://www.finnishimmigrants.org/index.php>
- Digitalized church records in Finland: <http://digi.narc.fi/digi>
- Finland Genealogy Forum: <http://genforum.genealogy.com/finland>
- Finlandia University: <http://www.finlandia.edu/genealogy.html>
- Finland's Family History Association: [http://www.sukuhistoria.fi/sshy/index\\_eng.htm](http://www.sukuhistoria.fi/sshy/index_eng.htm)
- The Genealogical Society of Finland: <http://www.genealogia.fi/indexgb.html>
- HisKi – History books (The Genealogical Society of Finland):  
<http://www.genealogia.fi/hiskigb.html>
- CastleGarden.org: <http://www.castlegarden.org>
- Britain: Outbound passenger lists:  
<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/passengerListPersonSearchStart.action?redef=0>
- Indexes to Documents and Publications with Finnish-Americans:  
<http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/emi3de.htm>
- Finnish Genealogy: The Finnish Naming System:  
<http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article216e.htm>
- Articles and Books about the United States, Canada, New Sweden, Finland etc.:  
<http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/index1e.htm>
- List of historical societies: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_historical\\_societies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_societies)
- Cyndi's List: <http://www.cyndislist.com>



**Siirtolaisuusinstituutti  
Migrationsinstitutet  
Institute of Migration**

The Institute of Migration was founded in 1974. The principal tasks of the Institute of Migration are to promote the collection, storage and documentation of material relating to international and internal migration in Finland, to carry out and to promote migration research, to publish research reports, books and articles on migration, and to develop co-operation between the universities and other organizations related to migration.



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