

Danish Emigration

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The journey into finding ancestors in the “old world” always begins with the boat ride they took to the “new world” and the documents that record the perilous journey. This class will discuss what is available and basic research strategy for Danish emigration.

Emigration vs. Immigration

The first, most important piece of information you need to remember is the difference between the terms “emigration” and “immigration.” *Immigration* is the act of someone *coming into* a country. *Emigration* is a person *leaving* a country. The best research will include a search in both *immigration* records and *emigration* records where available.

Basic Emigration Facts

Before beginning your research, it is necessary that you know some historical facts about Danish emigration. As the saying goes, “knowledge is power,” so the more you know the easier research will be. The following is a list of facts you need to know:

- Very few Danes emigrated before the 1860s (largest group were the Mormons)
- The first group of Mormons to leave Denmark was in January 1852
- Denmark Emigration records do not begin until 1868
- Greatest emigration between 1881-1890 and 1901-1910
- The majority of Danish emigrants left from Copenhagen. Emigrants from the southern portion of the peninsula left from Hamburg, Germany

Emigration Records

The Copenhagen passenger lists are available in two forms:

1. Microfilm
 - a. Both the direct and indirect lists are available on microfilm at the family history library. Working with the original microfilmed records provides a better understanding of the context of the record, those who were on the ship with your ancestor and other specific information. Unfortunately, these records are tedious to work with. If you do not know the year of emigration, you must go page by page through the records.
2. The Digital Danish Emigration Archives (Emiarch)
 - a. The Danish Emigration Archives have put in a great effort to index all of the Danish emigration records. Although the index is not complete yet, the index includes the years 1869-1908. The search is quick and easy to work with and the website does translate to English. The greatest difficulty with the index is it can be hard to determine who emigrated with your ancestor.
 - b. www.udvandrerarkivet.dk

Research Strategies

- Before 1868
 - As stated before, there are no Danish emigration records before 1868. If your ancestor emigrated before 1868, you will need to find other means to document the emigration. Some ideas include:
 - Parish moving out lists, which document when a person left the parish. It will usually say that they left for North America
 - Immigration records for country of arrival. Passenger incoming lists are a great place to start!

- Family records and US resources, such as censuses
- After 1868
 - If your ancestor emigrated after 1868, begin by looking in Emiarch. This is the quickest and easiest method. If you cannot find your ancestor in the database, or did find them but want record context, you will need to go to the microfilms.

Further Your Learning!

If you wish to learn more about Danish genealogical research, visit the following websites:

- ❖ FamilySearch Wiki, Denmark portal page, <https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Denmark>. This website has research tools, how to helps, learning articles and much more!
 - Every place name gazetteer
 - Danish to English, English to Danish word list
 - Website Links
- ❖ FamilySearch Learning Center, <https://familysearch.org/learningcenter/home.html>. This website has a variety of educational videos you can watch to learn how to do the research. Of most interest for Denmark are:
 - 5 Minute Genealogy, 21 episodes
 - Scandinavian Research, 1 video
 - Reading Scandinavian Gothic Handwritten Records, 3 videos

Join us for our Webinars! Visit

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Online_Webinars_from_the_International_and_Scandinavian_Research_Teams for a list of dates, times, and instructions about how to join.