

Finnish Resources

I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH about the Genealogy Society of Finland's HisKi Church Records, www.genealogia.fi/indexe.htm and Institute of Migration — Emigrant Register, www.migrationinstitute.fi/index_e.php.

Before the HisKi Church record entries were put online, one had to look at handwritten microfilm records in Swedish and Finnish. Before the Emigrant Register was available, one was limited to researching emigrants only about their arrival in the US; now you can research their departure from Finland.

Both of these websites have wonderful English-language interfaces and the majority of what you research will be presented in English, though the HisKi database does contain some Finnish and Swedish terms. I will suggest some handy resources to help you translate those.

Having researched family extensively in the Finnish records, a search in the HisKi Church record database not only confirmed what had been found previously (after painstaking researching and translating), it also revealed some overlooked ancestors and some information that I had not fully appreciated in the original record. Though I had less success with the Emigrant Register, the Migration Institute is also available to assist with research and a Swedish passenger record was eventually found for a hard-to-find family (Kujanpää) by using that service.

HisKi Church Records

www.genealogia.fi/indexe.htm

Though I will focus on the HisKi Church records available from the Genealogy Society of Finland, do not overlook these other resources available on the website: The Parishes of Finland (nice overview information of the parishes, location and the available records), Emigration Articles and Books (many in Finnish and Swedish and some available in English), Biographical Indexes, Personal Names, Finnish Cemeteries (many records of cemeteries in Finland with photographs), Churches (Finnish Churches in America) and a Picture Gallery (worldwide)!

For most parishes, the church



records available cover from the parish formation to about the mid to late 1800s. Note: For more modern records, you will need to contact the church or a local researcher. To search the church records, click on "HisKi — Church Records" in the left-hand column. Next, click on "search program for history books". This brings you to a page that has an alphabetical list of parishes on the left and on the right has a country map showing provinces and other regional elements.

First, let's explore the list. I had many generations of the Kujanpää family, previously named Lammi, and many allied families who were from Ylistaro, Vaasa, Finland. To search on these records, scroll down the list until you see Ylistaro and then you highlight it. Next, click "selected" and you are taken to a page that lists the Ylistaro records available, states during what time period they are available and gives you a list of the neighboring parishes (as in the US and Canada, it was not unusual for individuals to marry in adjacent parishes, so, if you do not find a baptism, marriage or burial entry where you expect to, check out the neighboring communities, especially for marriages and burials).

Each search screen is somewhat different so let's focus on the one for baptism. You can put as much or as little in the search screen. You can put one piece of information, you can put a partial piece of information (say the first three letters of a name), or you can fill in every box. This is a very powerful



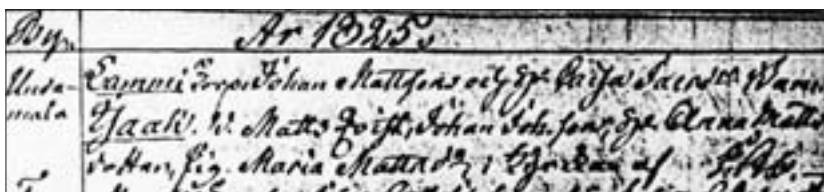
The available Ylistaro records.

search tool! I have used the first initials of first names, last names and patronymics and been able to find information.

A search on village = Undamala and surname = Lammi, gives the following result:

Ylistaro - christened						
• Birth place - village: UNDAMALA => Undamala, Undamala by, Undamala Lehen by, Undamala Lehen by • Birth place - farm: UNDAMALA => Undamala gd, Undamala, Undamala et Rautso gd • Father's last name: LAMMI => Lammi, Larunni						
Born	Christened	Village	Farm	Father	Mother	Child
16.12.1728	18.12.1728	Undamala		And. Lammi	Walb. Ehre dr.	Susanna
14.8.1734	18.8.1734	Undamala		And. Lammi	Walb. Erichs dr.	Matheus
30.10.1747	1.11.1747	Undamala		Jacob Lammi	Walb. Ers dr	Mårten
1.6.1791	5.6.1791	Undamala		Matts Matts. Lammi	Mar. Jac. dr.	Johannes

The Lammi family was one of the first in Ylistaro, arriving c.1690. These search results show the first generation of the family born in Ylistaro. We find: Birth date, baptism date, village, farm, father's full name, mother's full name and child's name. A sample of an 1825 baptism entry for this family is shown here:



An 1825 baptism entry.

When you search on marriage, the entries will include: Marriage date, village of man, farm of man, man, wife, village of wife and farm of wife. For a burial entry, the information provided is: Death date, village, farm, person, cause (see translation resources below for help with these terms) and age (given in years, months, weeks and days).

Interestingly, after this period, my

family used patronymics for several generations with no surname and subsequently they used the surname Kujanpää. How we could always link these families was through the farm (Lammi) and the village (Undamala, sometimes spelled



The Kujanpää farmstead.

Untamala). That farm still exists today!

Now let's go back and explore the map on the HisKi main page. This feature is handy if you only happen to know that your family came from some place like Vaasa, Finland, since Vaasa is both a parish and a county located in the Province of Ostrobothnia (or you only know what province). We happen to know that the city of Vaasa/Vasa (Finnish/Swedish) is in Region #15 on the map. When you click on a region, the left hand menu then lists out the communities in the region. You can now either click "all" to search in all of these communities or you can highlight one or more (use control, left-click for a PC mouse) and then click "selected".

Now you see a table that summarizes what records are available for each community. You can then select a community or do a global search across the records of the identified communities.

Note that this database is still a work in progress and so you may find that the records of a certain parish are not yet available. Also, these are transcriptions and are not without errors. Since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has microfilmed most of these records, you can access copies of the original records locally to verify what you find.

TRANSLATING HISKI CHURCH RECORDS

Don't let those Finnish and Swedish terms frustrate you. For years, we have relied on these resources to help us with Finnish and Swedish genealogy records. These will not give you a full translation and enough that you will know the person's name (and with patronymics the first name of the father), occupation, social status, marital status, age at death, what someone died of, etc. Note that all these resources list the Finnish, Swedish and English terms. It was not unusual for records to have a blend of Swedish and Finnish terms used and then history played a part in deciding which language was used for records, when.

For common terms and abbreviations, go to <http://members.aol.com/DSSaari/guideab.htm>. For a Swedish-Finnish Word List (plus English), visit <http://members.aol.com/dssaari/wordlis2.htm>. Information on occupation abbreviations used in HisKi can be found at www.engr.uvic.ca/~syli/geneo/abbreviations/occupation.html. Finally, FamilySearch.org has an exten-

HISKI CHURCH RECORDS SEARCH ENGINE

WHY IS THIS POWERFUL search feature important? Since you are dealing with two different languages, spelling variations across each language (Finnish and Swedish) and the ever evolving use of patronymics and surnames (it was not unusual for a family to change its name when they moved to a new farm), you need a powerful way to search on records and not have to perform many searches.

For example, when names are written in Finnish and Swedish, often (though not always) the first part of a name remains constant and the last section is what changes. Poika and tytär are Finnish naming conventions meaning “son of” and “daughter of” and the equivalent Swedish conventions (records were in both languages) are son (though that is an abbreviation of *sonen* *söner*) and *dotter*. So you might see

Matinpoika or Mattsson — these are the same person. Or, you might see Lisa Matintytär or Lisa Mattsdotter (often abbreviated to Mattsdr or any number of variants). So, if you search on Mat or Lisa Mat... you will find this individual regardless of whether the record was in Swedish or Finnish and regardless of what abbreviation or convention was used in the original record or the transcription.

sive Finnish and Swedish word list, go to www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rhelps.asp (this takes you to the Research Helps area, under Research Guidance, under Research). Then, click on “F” and you’ll see the Finnish Genealogical Word List, and click on “S” and scroll till you see the Swedish Genealogical Word List. For \$1.25 us you can purchase a print version of each of these and that can be easier than having to search letter by letter for the terms you want translated.

Each of the Word Lists has an upfront piece that talks about the language and its rules — very helpful, especially to know the order of the alphabet since after “z” you then have ä for Finnish and å, ä and ö for Swedish.

EMIGRANT REGISTER

www.migrationinstitute.fi/index_e.php

My next favorite Finnish resource is the Emigrant Register available through the Institute of Migration. This Register currently contains almost one million entries! This is a resource that has really

grown in the last few years in terms of the data available. When I first explored this website, you could check passenger records (Finnish Steamship Company, 1892-1910, 318,000 records) and passport records (1890-1950, 189,000 records). This list has been expanded to include: References to books and newspapers (19,000 records), Register of Australian Finns (3,800 records), Register of New Zealand Finns (1,100 records), Finnish North Americans (146,000), Finnish emigrants (“Sheriff’s records”, Vaasa province, 39,000) and Finnish farm names, including family names (Vaasa and Oulu provinces, 155,000).

In addition to the Emigrant Register, which we will explore further, the website also contains: A database of its library (more than 9,000 publications), a sample of photos (several hundred of the more than 12,000 in the collection) and the Migration and Ethnicity Research Network. You can access all these by looking under the heading “Online Databases” in the left-hand navigation.

The Arctic Circle may run through Finland, but that doesn't mean that the country is always covered in ice and snow.



Finnish Resources

With the addition of more records, the searchable Emigrant Register now has three access options:

- Limited search (free)
- Search basic databases — “Basic Package”, 10 Euro (about \$13 US)
- Search all databases — “Full Package”, 30 Euro (about \$40 US)

For the Limited search, you can search in any of the databases and learn if a name is included. If you want to get

Last name	Rajala
First names	Ida
Age or age group	21
Port of departure	Hanko
Place of destination	Salem
State of destination	MA
Country of destination	USA
Price of ticket	FIM 208
Ship from Finland	Urania
Date of departure from Finland	01.05.1907
Ship from England	Cymric
Date of departure from England	10.05.1907
Ocean Line	White Star Line
Port of departure in England	*
List and page	57/67
Remarks	*

the full details, then you need to have either the basic or full package. The basic package includes the passenger, passport, books and newspapers, Australian Finns and New Zealand Finns. The full package includes the remaining databases, any new databases added, extended services and a genealogy guide. Given all the family I have in Vaasa

province, the full package made sense for my research and the great thing is that you can first do a “free” search and see what value these databases may have to your research.

To get started, you click on one of the three access options and if you have a paid subscription, you will enter your username/password combination. Otherwise, you choose which database you would like to search. They can only be searched one at a time. Let’s start with “Passenger Lists” since this is one of the largest databases and so one is more likely to have success.

Your search options are basic — Name search (Last name, First name) or Sounds like search (Last name, First name). Like the HisKi database, you only have to enter as much data as you want to. So, if you have a surname that can be misspelled (or you don’t want to deal with the special character letters), you can just enter the first few letters of a last name or first name (no special characters are needed). For example, if I put in Raj for the last name, the surnames that come up are Raj, Raja, Raja-Aho, Rajahalme, until you come to Rajala (the last entry). My father’s

great-grandmother, Ida Rajala, emigrated in 1907. We have found her in the Ellis Island database, so let’s see if she is listed in this database and what we can learn.

Pictured to the left is the entry we find for her. And, we find out some information we did not know from the New York Passenger Manifest. We learn how much she paid for her ticket, we also learn what ship she took from Finland to her port of departure (England) and we learn what date she departed from Finland and then from England. And, if we had not already had her Ellis Island information, this would have given us the information to pinpoint which ship and on what date she sailed to facilitate getting the associated Castle Garden, Ellis Island or other passenger record.

Let’s take a moment to explore one of the newer databases, the Finnish Farm names (Vaasa and Oulu). For Finnish research, the ability to identify the village and then farm greatly enhances your ability to search for and obtain records. These records seem to cover the mid 1800s. I looked at the Parish of Ylistaro, Untamala Village (if you remember the example from the HisKi database search). Voila, it shows the farm of my ancestors! I also learn that there were about eight other families living on this same farm. That was new information to me.

Let me reiterate that these are wonderful resources for Finnish research. You can now sit at a computer and delve into Finnish records dating from the early 20th century back to the early 1700s, if not earlier. You can do this using an easy-to-use English-language interface. You do not have to understand a word of Finnish or Swedish to learn about when your ancestors were born, baptized, married, died/buried, emigrated, etc. Though, if you want to learn about their status (e.g. farm owner or laborer), occupation or cause of death, the suggested word lists will tell you the meaning of about 95 percent of the terms that you will come across.

Happy hunting for those Finnish ancestors!



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