

# A Beginners Guide to Swedish Research

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## A Brief Historical Overview

*Sverige* (pronounced *svear ee ya*) is the Swedish word for Sweden and means “land of the Svear.” The Svear settled early in the south central part of the country. The earliest written references to the Swedish people come from the authors Tacitus, Mela, Pliny, and Ptolmey. Their Roman contemporaries traded bronze, glass and silver coins with the Svear in exchange for furs and amber. The Goetar, another Nordic people on the west coast of Sweden, struggled with the Svear for control of the southern area of Sweden, but sometime between 400 and 800 CE the Svear gained ascendancy.

Christianity made its appearance in Sweden toward the end of the first millennium. The missionary bishop Ansgar (Anskar) preached in Sweden in 829. This began a two hundred year struggle between believers in the Scandinavian pantheon and the new faith. Olaf Eriksson “Skotkonung” (i.e. the “Scottish king”) was the first king of Sweden to become a Christian. He was baptized in 1008 and led a coalition of forces (the Norwegian Jarl of Hlade, Erik, and the Danish King Sweyn) against the Norwegian King Olaf Tryggvesson. His efforts added part of Trondheim and the district of Bohuslan to the Swedish crown. Olaf Skotkonung later gave this area to Erik Hladejarl’s brother, Jarl Sweyn. In 1015, a returning claimant to the Norwegian throne, Olaf Haraldsson the Fat (later Saint Olaf) ended Danish and Swedish supremacy in Norway and exiled Jarl Sweyn. Because Fat Olaf had married a Swedish princess an attempt was made to reconcile the Norwegian and Swedish kings; this, however, was unsuccessful. In the winter of 1021-1022, Olaf Skotkonung died.

Anund, Skotkonung’s son and successor, allied himself with Fat Olaf and invaded Denmark. After some inconclusive fighting, Anund returned to Sweden. The Danes then drove Fat Olaf out of Norway and reclaimed their previous rights gained with Skotkonung. Fat Olaf gathered a small army in Sweden, returned to Norway, and died in the battle of Stiklestad in 1030.

Emund succeeded his brother Anund as king of Sweden. Although a Christian, he struggled with the archbishop of Bremen to establish the independence of the Swedish church. Emund’s death in 1060 ended the old line of Swedish royalty. The period following his death to the rise of King Sverker in 1134 was filled with internecine feuding. This latter leader permanently amalgamated the Swedes and the Goths, so that over the next two centuries the kingship of the joint tribes alternated between the two groups.

Eric IX, king between 1150-1160, was successful in organizing the Swedish church along lines similar to other countries. He also led a crusade against the Finlanders, beginning the period of Swedish expansions. In 1164,

under Charles VII, the archbishopric of Uppsala was founded.

The greatest statesman of medieval Sweden was Birger of the Folkungar family, more commonly known as Birger Jarl. He effectively ruled Sweden from 1248 to 1266, founded Stockholm, and as a legislator prepared the way for the abolition of serfdom.

Sweden and Norway were united in 1319 when Magnus, the three-year-old son of Swedish duke Eric and the Norwegian princess Ingeborg was elected king of Sweden. He had inherited the Norwegian throne from his grandfather in the same year. His long minority weakened both kingdoms, and Magnus lost them both before his death. His nephew, Albert of Mecklenburg, succeeded him in Sweden. The Swedish nobility were dissatisfied with Albert as well, and called in Margaret of Denmark.

Margaret’s plan was to bring all three kingdoms into one union under Denmark. An act, known as the Union of Kalmar, was drawn up in 1397. Eric of Pomerania, Margaret’s relative, was elected future king of the united kingdoms. When Eric became king in 1412, he treated Sweden as a vassal state. Eric’s actions were viewed as oppressive, and the population revolted in 1434 under the leadership of Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson, a nobleman from Bergslagen. Engelbrektsson was murdered in 1436, and decades of strife followed. During this period of unrest, the king of Denmark was twice named king of Sweden. A Swedish noble, Karl Knutsson, was recognized as king three times: 1448-1457, 1464-1465, and 1467-1470.

During the following period, no Swedish nobles competed with the Danish kings; however, the nobles who led the national party were regents for the government. Several members of the Sture family were chosen as regent. In 1512, the nobles led by Erik Trolle sought reconciliation with Denmark. The situation came to a head when Christian II conquered Sweden and Archbishop Gustaf Trolle (Erik’s son) executed the leaders of the national party.

In 1519, Gustavus Eriksson Vasa, a young nobleman held hostage in Denmark, escaped to Lubeck. In May 1520, he returned to Sweden, landing near Kalmar. Learning of the massacre that killed his father and brother-in-law, he raised his peasant troops at Dalecarlia. Although he had neither arms nor money, the provinces came to his support. Archbishop Trolle fled the country, and in June 1523, Gustavus was elected King of Sweden. Stockholm surrendered to him.

The church was essentially in a state of dissolution. Gustavus appealed to the pope for new bishops of Swedish birth, a new archbishop, and general church reformation. Rome did not respond favorably, and the king turned to the Lutherans. The New Testament was translated into Swedish. In 1527, the *riksdag* decreed that the bishops give

their castles to the king, and that other branches of the church their superfluous incomes. Further, Peter's pence was not to be paid to the pope, nor could the pope's authority be invoked in election of bishops. The king was crowned in the cathedral at Uppsala the following year.

Gustavus Vasa's eldest son succeeded him as Eric XIV. He ruled well, but went insane. Eric was imprisoned by his brothers Duke John, Duke Charles and the nobles in 1568. During this period the town of Tallinn and the neighboring region asked to be part of Sweden.

Duke John became King John III. He attempted to mediate the religious struggles in Europe and became an opponent of Rome. His son, Sigismund, became a staunch Catholic and was elected king of Poland in 1587. John created a liturgy for worship which caused great unrest in Sweden. His administration was always at a loss for funds although taxes were very high. When he died in 1592, his son Sigismund became king of Sweden as well as Poland. However, the church in Sweden had grown increasingly Protestant and in 1593 decided to abide by the unmodified Augsburg Confession. Sigismund returned to Poland in 1594. He made one more attempt to seize the Swedish throne in 1595, but was driven out. The *riksdag* dethroned Sigismund in 1599. His uncle Charles was not crowned until 1607. King Charles IX engaged in several wars but died before they could be concluded.

His son, Gustavus (II) Adolphus, born in 1594 was declared of age at the death of his father in 1611. Known as one of the "great captains" of history, Gustavus altered warfare forever. In all of his activities, the king was assisted by his very able and gifted chancellor, Count Axel Oxenstjerna. Ministerial offices were modeled after the French and Burgundian governments. Judicial procedure and courts of appeal were established. The nobility was incorporated into the social system as officials of the government, and the king promised not to begin war or conclude peace without the sanction of the *riksdag*. Gustavus ransomed Alvsborg so that it was returned to Sweden. Gustavus dealt with Poland and Sigismund by armistices until 1617 when negotiations failed. Open warfare followed, and Gustavus took command of the Swedish forces. He conquered Livonia and Riga and carried the fight into the Polish part of Prussia. In 1629, a six-year truce was mediated with the assistance of Brandenburg, France, and England. Several Prussian seaports, however, remained in Swedish hands.

The Thirty Years' War had begun in 1618, and many German princes related to the royal houses of Sweden and Denmark, asked Swedish aid. In 1630, after discussion with the council of state and the *riksdag* he personally commanded an army of 13,000 and invaded Pomerania. In 1631, Gustavus won a brilliant and decisive victory at Breitenfeld. His glorious career was ended the next year at the battle of Lutzen, where he was killed.

Gustavus's daughter, Christina, became queen as a minor. Axel Oxenstjerna acted as her regent, and Swedish generals continued to be victorious during the Thirty Years'

War. Christina came of age in 1644 and later in 1654 relinquished her crown in 1654 to so she could convert to Roman Catholicism.

Christina's successor was Charles X, the son of Charles IX's daughter, Catherine. His brief reign (from 1654 to 1660) was filled with warfare. At one point Russia, the Holy Roman Empire, Denmark, Holland, and Brandenburg were allied against Sweden. Charles turned against Denmark, captured Jutland, led his troops first over the ice to Fyen and then across the islands to Sjælland. Denmark made peace at Roskilde in 1658, and Sweden received what today are the southern provinces. Charles was succeeded by his four-year-old son, Charles XI, at a time when Sweden was surrounded by enemies.

The widowed queen and five officials of the government acted as regent, and immediately concluded peace with Sweden's enemies. Although the armed forces were allowed to decline, Sweden's foreign policy was adventurous. First Brandenburg declared war on Sweden (1674) and then Denmark (1675). Sweden lost the war with Brandenburg and with it most of her German possessions. While the Danes were victorious at sea, Charles won important land victories that retained the southern provinces. Charles then turned his attention to internal affairs, making significant changes in Swedish life, among them reclaiming estates for the crown from the nobles (*reduktions*) and enacting the Church Ordinance of 1686. Charles died in 1697, and his fifteen-year-old son became Charles XII.

Although a regency was called to act for Charles, the *riksdag* declared him to be of age. At the coronation ceremony, Charles placed the crown on his own head and did not give the traditional "king's guarantee." Charles was trained in book learning and military science. Within three years Denmark, Poland, and Russia had united against Sweden in what became known as the Great Northern War (1700-1721). At the outset of the war Charles showed great ability and forced a peace on Denmark and made Poland essentially a client state. The Russians under Peter the Great, however, continued to advance into the Baltic states and eastern Europe. Charles through treaty forced on the Holy Roman emperor was allowed to keep his army in Saxony. He was at the height of his power and received embassies from at least thirty different courts and princes, including the duke of Marlborough. The Russians invaded Poland but were driven out. Charles invaded Russia, but the entire campaign went awry. An army that was supposed to come to his assistance was badly mauled by the Russians and arrived with no supplies. The Cossack leader offered to help Charles, but the Cossack people would not follow their leader. The Russian resistance made it difficult for the Swedes to supply themselves. Charles invaded the Ukraine, but thousands of Swedes perished in the unusually harsh winter. Finally Charles began to lay siege to Poltava, but Sweden was defeated in the battle that ensued.

The European powers watching the Russian campaign saw an opportunity to seize parts of Sweden and its client states. Charles who had been in Turkey enlisting support,

was held prisoner there but escaped to Sweden in 1714. The Swedish people were exhausted from the war with its high taxes, services required by the state, and conscription. When Charles was killed in 1718, the *riksdag* met to put an end to the absolute monarchy.

Ulrica Leonora, Charles's sister, was not allowed to be sovereign, but was allowed to be queen. The government was dramatically altered: when the *riksdag* was not in session, the state council would govern, with the king having two votes in the council. While the *riksdag* was in session, a secret committee composed of members of the three higher estates, nobles, clergy, and burghers, addressed questions of state. Questions of taxes had to include the fourth estate, the peasants. Frederick the consort of the queen was selected as sovereign.

In 1719, the government began to make peace with Sweden's enemies. Russian fleets continued to harass the Baltic coasts and attacked Stockholm, where disaster was narrowly averted. Peace with Russia was not concluded until 1721 at Nystad, where Sweden gave up Livonia, Estonia, Ingria, and parts of Finland. Russia later restored northern and western Finland to Sweden.

The bankrupt nature of the country led foreign governments to subsidize the two major parties that were dividing the government: the "caps" and the "hats." Since the royal couple had no children, the *riksdag* took up the question of succession. Russian influence was great. Czarina Elizabeth sought the election of duke Adolphus Frederick of Holstein as the next king of Sweden. The peasants wanted the Danish crown prince, and great conflict erupted with the foreign powers bribing both sides.

When King Frederick died, Adolphus Frederick became king. After some tension between the king and council, an attempt was made to dethrone the king. It was decided to use a signature stamp to dispense with the king's personal involvement in government. Sweden joined France and Austria against Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia and was defeated. Sweden was quite weak and most of the other western powers determined to keep her that way by supporting Sweden's then-current constitution, even by force if necessary.

Gustavus (III), Adolphus Frederick's son, was in Paris when his father died in 1771. Upon his return home, he found the caps and hats about equally strong. Deciding to change the constitution, he gathered the officers of the guard and arrested the council in the royal castle. Stockholm troops declared in favor of Gustavus, and the people acclaimed him in the streets. The king was again the head of government. He declared a state monopoly on distilleries, which displeased the peasants and led to increased drunkenness. In 1787, while Turkey was at war with Russia, Sweden decided to attack Russia as well, the king himself commanding. Certain officers formed a conspiracy known as the Anjala league and entered into peace negotiations with Russia. Denmark entered the war as Russia's ally, and Gustavus returned to Sweden. England and Prussia pressured Denmark to leave Sweden alone and a truce was

concluded. The following year Gustavus was strong enough to have the leaders of the Anjala league imprisoned. At the meeting of the *riksdag* Gustavus, supported by the unprivileged classes, drove through the so-called Act of Union and Security. The Act dissolved the council, made the king administrative head of government with sole power of appointing officials of state, and precluded the *riksdag* from initiating legislation. The war with Russia continued until 1790 when peace was concluded with no modifications to Sweden's borders; however, Sweden's finances were destroyed.

A conspiracy against the king's life was formed, and on March 16, 1792, a Captain J. J. Anckarstrom attacked the king so severely at the opera that the king died thirteen days later.

Gustavus (IV) became king at the age of 13 with his uncle Duke Charles as regent. Sweden sided against Napoleon, and lost territory because of it. As time went on Gustavus became harder and harder to deal with, until he was dethroned in 1809. The *riksdag* met on 1 May 1809 and drew up a new constitution dividing the powers of government between the ministry, the representatives of the people, and the judiciary. They elected Duke Charles as King Charles XIII.

Since the king was childless, the *riksdag* chose Prince Christian Augustus of Augustenburg, commander in chief in Norway, to be the heir. The prince said he would accept when there was a declaration of peace, since Norway was under Danish control, and Sweden was at war with Russia and Denmark. Shortly after there was a peace in which Sweden lost Finland and Aland; however, Pomerania was returned to Sweden.

In 1810, the heir died suddenly, and the *riksdag* chose Jean Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals, to succeed King Charles XIII. Charles was weak in character and unimaginative, and crown prince Bernadotte exercised considerable influence on government even before becoming king.

Napoleon prepared to go war against Russia and England and expected the crown prince to assist him. Bernadotte, however, saw that Sweden could not fight against Russia and England, even when allied with France. By allying with Russia, Bernadotte acquired Norway for Sweden and gave Pomerania to Denmark. Bernadotte became king as Charles XIV John in 1818.

Charles XIV John was cautious and fearful of new ideas and changes. Sweden's foreign debts were paid and the internal debt significantly diminished. He was succeeded by his son, Oscar I in 1844. Two years before he died, Oscar became very sick, and the government devolved upon his son, who would become king as Charles XV. All four estates accepted the new constitution in the *riksdag* of 1865-1866. In January 1867 the new bicameral *riksdag* convened and within two years the peasant party ruled the second chamber.

Charles died in 1872 and was succeeded by his brother Oscar II. It was during his reign that Norway became an independent again. The Swedes were astonished when the

Norwegian *storting* (parliament) dissolved the union in June 1905. After Norway agreed to certain military considerations, the Swedes agreed to the dissolution, and King Oscar gave up the Norwegian crown.

Gustav V became king on the death of his father, Oscar II in 1907. The peasants were alarmed at Russia's arms build up in Finland. Sweden chose to be neutral in the First World War. With the Russian revolution Finland became independent. Sweden could not give military aid to the Finns without starting a war with soviet Russia or causing other problems at home, since the bourgeois opinion demanded aid for the czarists. Sweden was also neutral for WWII.

## **Considerations in Conducting Swedish Genealogical Research**

### **Language**

While it is not necessary to speak and read Swedish, an understanding of some aspects of the language and some vocabulary makes genealogical research easier. Swedish is a Germanic language, but word pronunciations are often altered. For example, Goteborg is pronounced "yot a bor ee" not the German "goat ah bork." The alphabet has three letters more than the English alphabet: å, æ, ö; and words that begin with these letters come after the letter z in alphabetical listings. Because there were few spelling rules until the middle of the 19th century, if something sounds like the word the researcher is looking for, it probably is that word. The letters f and v are often interchangeable, and the letter t often has a d or h connected with it.

### **Handwriting**

Even modern Swedes struggle to read the names and words used in Swedish records, because the handwriting is not Roman: it is Gothic. Helps are available to show how the letters are formed, but it takes some practice to become proficient in deciphering them. Additionally, each record's scribe has a personal idiosyncrasies in penmanship, and, of course, there are those few recordkeepers who simply did not care what their penmanship looked like.

### **Naming patterns, frequency, and conventions**

In records used for genealogical research Swedes used a patronymic naming system. A person has a given name, but that person is also called the son or daughter of his or her father, using the father's given name. Thus Olof, who is Erik's son, is called Olof Eriksson; Christina who is Erik's daughter is Christina Eriksdotter. This brings us to a naming convention: in recording Swedish patronymics use an -sson ending (as opposed to an -sen ending for Norwegians and Danes) for sons and a -dotter ending (as opposed to a -datter ending for Norwegians or a -dottir ending for Icelanders) for the daughters. A woman does not change her name when she weds; she will always be Christina Eriksdotter even though she marries Oscar Danielsson.

Generally there is more variance in the number of given names in Sweden than, say, in Denmark; however,

individual parishes may have a preponderance of one given name while another parish may have only one or two instances of the same given name. In one area of Sweden the name begins with a farm name followed by the given name and patronymic and appears very unusual: Qvist Oscar Danielsson or Skatelov Olof Eriksson.

Another interesting characteristic of Swedish names is the tendency to abbreviate the patronymic. Creating a patronymic from Olof yields Olofsson (or Olofsdotter) or even, more simply, Olsson (or Olsdotter). Erik yields Ersson (or Ersdotter); Lars may yield Larsson or Lason. Johan usually gives Johansson, but in a few cases Johnsson. John or Jon yields either Johnsson or Jonsson (Remember: they sound the same). Matthias can give Matthiasson or Mattsson.

Given names often honor grandparents and other ancestors and can also be abbreviations. Stina may be Christina or it may actually be Stina. Per may be Peder or it may be Per. The parish register may list her as Christina; however, she may be listed in every other record throughout her life as Stina. This requires a decision on the part of the researcher as to what she will be called in the researcher's records, and a note that explains that decision is certainly in order.

With the advent of the modern Swedish army, many men with the same names, given and patronymic, found themselves in the same unit. In order to distinguish between one Olof Jonsson and another Olof Jonsson, these men were given surnames which were often descriptive of them (Hog = tall; Fager = fair), their military nature (Modig = courageous, Stark = strong), were pleasant names from nature (Quist = branch, Strom = stream), or were place names related to where they came from. These are called "soldier names," and the descendants of these soldiers sometimes continued to use these as surnames.

### **Dates**

Moving backward in time in the records, the researcher will find dates expressed in terms of "feast days." Two of the most common feast days are Christmas and Easter. Christmas is a "fixed" feast day, always the 25th of December. Easter is a "moveable" feast day, between the vernal equinox and up to a month thereafter. The church calendar has a feast day for nearly every day of the year, and there are numerous helps to determine dates based on these feast days.

### **Genealogical Records and How to Find Them**

The Family History Library and its system of Family History Centers has most of the available records for Swedish genealogical research. There is little need to write to or to travel to Sweden to find information. The tool for finding the appropriate record in the collections of the Family History Library is the Family History Library Catalog ( FHLC). In the paragraphs that follow, we will describe the basic record as well as the listing in the catalog that will deliver the appropriate record.

### **Clerical survey**

The Swedish Church Ordinance of 1686 is what makes genealogical research in Swedish church records so unique. The ordinance required the local clergy to keep a record of christenings, marriages, and burials, as well as to make an annual “inspection” visit to each home in the parish to record who lived there and whether they could read, whether they knew their Lutheran catechism, and whether they understood their Lutheran catechism by reading Bishop Svebelius’s commentary of Luther’s catechism, and move in’s and move out’s. The record created at this inspection was called *husförhörslängd* or clerical survey as genealogists term it. It is a boon to genealogists, providing whole families with their relationships (sometimes grandparents are present as well), dates of birth, and other clues (where did they come from; where did they go). It is found in the FHLC under

COUNTRY, COUNTY, PARISH - Church records

(Sweden, Kronoberg, Vastra Torsås - Church records)

And of course once you have found the church records, the clerical survey is called *husförhörslängd*.

### **Parish registers**

As was mentioned previously the minister was also required to keep a record of life events. This record was called *kyrkobok* or church book (parish register, metrical book, etc.). The archives in Sweden call the individual parts of the parish register *födelselängd* (birth record), *doplängd* (christening record), *konfirmationslängd* (confirmation record), *lysningslängd* (marriage bann record), *vigsellängd* (marriage record), *dodslängd* (death record), *begravningslängd* (burial record), *inflyttningslängd* (move in record), and *utflyttningslängd* (move out record). As Carl-Erik Johansson noted in his book *Cradled in Sweden*, these may also be called *bok* or *rulla* (meaning essentially the same as *längd*). These are found the same way as the clerical survey:

COUNTRY, COUNTY, PARISH - Church records

(Sweden, Kronoberg, Vislanda - Church records)

### **Civil registration**

In 1861 the ministers were required to send an extract of their parish registers to a central location. The Family History Library has cataloged these records at the county level; consequently, records of the parishes of a given county are found in one place for a given year. There is an index at the beginning of the record as to which parish comes in which order; however, no page numbers are given, so the researcher must note where the parish of interest is located and move through the records until the appropriate parish is found. In the FHLC we find them as:

COUNTRY, COUNTY - Civil registration

(Sweden, Halland - Civil registration)

### **Property records**

The *mantalslängd* is really a tax record, although the Family History Library catalogs it under “census.” It usually

includes some indication of all the people living at a farm. Everyone between the ages of 15 and 63 were required to pay the tax; however, soldiers were exempt, and while the farm owner would be listed by name, other members of the family and people working on the farm might only be indicated by a number in columns under appropriate headings similar to US censuses prior to 1850. These records may be found in the FHLC as:

COUNTRY, COUNTY - Census

(Sweden, Kalmar - Census)

### **Court records (probate records)**

The most important of all the court records for beginners are the probate records called *bouppteckningar*. Some of them are indexed. Probate records have two parts: the preamble and the property valuation. The preamble often lists the living children, spouse, and if the children are under 25 years’ of age, their guardian and sometimes the guardian’s relationship to the children. This type of record is found in the FHLC as:

COUNTRY, COUNTY, DISTRICT - Probate records

(Sweden, Kronoberg, Allbo - Probate records) (This is the district Vastra Torsås Parish is in; see clerical survey above)

### **Military records**

A company is approximately 100 men and a regiment 1000 men. The crown required the provinces to provide men for the army and navy. Usually the coastal provinces would provide company sized units of men for the navy while the inland provinces would provide regiments for the army. Usually the parish was divided into rote or wards with each ward providing one soldier and his equipment. The rote usually provided a very modest cottage and small piece of land for the soldier as well. There is an index to the muster rolls called “Grill” after the author [ FHLC number INTL 948.5 M27g 1988.]

It is based on the small place within the parish where the soldier lives. It is possible, however, to find a soldier without the index. One must search through the entire muster roll of the regiment, but the soldier may be found and in that find his age, the place he lives, and his patronymic. The researcher should remember that he or she may have found the soldier late in his life using his “soldier name,” and the patronymic becomes important in finding his birth record. The muster rolls of the regiments may be found in the FHLC:

COUNTRY, COUNTY - Military records

(Sweden, Kronoberg - Military records)

### **Samples of Some of the Records**

#### **Clerical survey**

Often clerical surveys have indexes, but they are at the end of each book, and several books may be in one physical format. The later clerical surveys are in folio pages, that is, two leaves side-by-side with the same page number. The left hand page is the one critical here. Note in figure 1 that this

333	Födelse.			Flyttningar.		
	År.	Ort.	År.	Ort.	År.	Till.
1168. 34c						
Br. M. Bengt Olsson	1834					
H. Botild Persdr	1835					
<del>D. Elin</del>	1836					
<del>S. Jon</del>	1837					
S. Lars	1838					
S. Torpid	1839					
S. Olaf	1840					
S. Lilla	1841					
S. Kista	1842					
S. S. S.	1843					
S. S. S.	1844					

Fig. 1 - Sweden, Kronoberg, Vastra Torsås: clerical survey of 1832-1839

page appears to be divided into two major parts: one containing the names and the other several columns. Also note the page number in the upper left hand corner: 333.

In the column with the names we find above the names a number and a name. The number is the number of the farm or house (largely for tax purposes) and the name of the farm. "Nr. 68 Ibm" means number 68 *ibidem*, that is the farm name is the same as the one on the previous page.

Under the names are listed "Br. M. Bengt Olsson (notice the two forms of the letter "s" in Olsson)"; "H. Botild Persdr"; "D. Elin (lined through)"; "S. Jon (lined through)"; "S. Lars"; etc.

"Br. M. Bengt Olsson" means *brukare* man Bengt Olsson. *Brukare* is a tenant farmer, one who rents his land from another, and *man* is the man, the head of the household and husband. The name of the head of the household usually begins with a designation of his status or occupation. Here it is a type of farmer, and there are several types of farmer at various social levels. Such a designation could be a military rank, a title of nobility, an occupation (tailor or shoemaker are common), or even mister, which designates a higher social class.

"H. Botild Persdr" means *hustru* Botild Persdotter (notice the patronymic is abbreviated). *Hustru* means wife, or in other words, the wife of the man listed above. Sometimes the head of the household will have married sons or daughters living with him, and the wives of those sons or his married daughter will also be listed as "h." meaning they are wives not of the head of the household but of the man listed just above them.

"D. Elin (lined through)" means *dotter* Elin, and she is no longer with the family, thus the line through her name. *Dotter*, of course, is the cognate for daughter and means she is the daughter of the head of the household. If she were the stepdaughter, the recordkeeper might then use the term

*styvdotter* or might abbreviate it in several different ways, or, worst of all, might not even note she is the stepdaughter. And there is no guarantee that the mother listed is actually Elin's mother.

"S. Jon (lined through)" means *son* Jon, and he is no longer with the family. *Son* is the cognate for son, meaning Jon is the son of the head of the household. The researcher should note that Jon comes back (his name and date of birth are listed near the end of the children) and then leaves again: his name is lined through a second time.

By now the researcher should recognize that the other names are Elin's and Jon's brothers and sisters.

The first three columns have as an overall heading "Födelse." which means birth. The columns are individually headed "Dag., År., and Ort." which mean day, year, and place. The researcher should note that the day includes the month in a form like a fraction with the day over the month. The year may be abbreviated using only the last two digits of year. The place is usually the parish in which the person was born and christened. "Usually" is the operative word, because a recordkeeper might use a farm name from the same parish or the name of a country if the person were born in a foreign country, or what about the person born in one parish but christened in another.

It should be noted that son Jon was born in Wirstad (notice it is also spelled with a "V" in the same record), which it turns out is another parish in Kronoberg county. Daughter Elin goes to Virestad in '38 (abbreviated year).

The next four columns have as an overall heading "Flyttningar." which means movement. "År. and Ifran." means year and from (in from); "År. and Till." means year and to (toward). So the overall meaning is movement from and to and in what year. Movement within the parish, that is, from farm to farm is also often listed, usually with page numbers. Page numbers might also refer to the current clerical survey book, the previous clerical survey book, the subsequent clerical survey book, or even the parish move-in/move-out record.

The last column, nearly unreadable, begins "Kopp[ ]" is the record of whether the person were vaccinated for smallpox or whether they had "cowpox," a naturally occurring form of the vaccination.

Figure 2 illustrates an earlier clerical survey. The researcher will note that the format is not significantly different, but the script is more difficult to read. This example is more "Gothic," but a very nice hand. Again we are looking at only the left leaf of the folio page: 106. The most significant difference in this clerical survey being that the middle section of columns is related to the person's ability to read and know his or her catechism, and there is no column for move-out or birthplace.

This is the 5th Ward, and the farm name (no number this time) is Lonshult Norrege.

It appears that the names are divided into four families. The head of each of the first three families has a Gothic "b:" in front of his name. The colon after the letter is an older form of abbreviation; we use a period, they used a colon.



1783.  
af 5 Decemb. Lördag Nils Jons Jons af Gården Mor  
Lehrs dottars barn i Gården Mor.  
Eldsvårigh af 7 ejusdem nomine Sista  
Lehtes: Mans Olof Jons i Gården Mor.  
Nils Jons i Brohult. Vårnär. Johan  
Svensson i Morhult. Hustru Elin Lehrs  
dottars i Kallerator. Gården Gården  
jons dottars i Gården Mor.  
af 14 Decemb. Lördag Mans Olof Jons af Gården Mor  
Gården Olof dottars barn i Sista  
Gård norrlig. Eldsvårigh af 14 ejusdem  
nomine Catharina. Lehtes. Sergeanten  
got. Sengelini Loub Gård. Jons Lehrs Jons  
ibidem var. Lehrs Jons Jons i Brohult.  
Gården Elin Gården Mor dottars i  
Brohult. Gården Margareta i Sista Gård.  
af 25 Dec. Lördag Dan Jons Jons af Gården Mor  
Sista barn i Gården Mor. Jons Jons  
1784 Nov. Kongl. Tjefas Olof Jons  
Nils Jons Jons i Gården Mor

Fig. 4 - Sweden, Kronoberg, Vislanda: births 1783

**Death records**

The researcher will note in figure 5 that there are four entries on for 1789. The second entry is the one that concerns us here. It begins in the left hand margin: “[ ] 12. Novbr Afled Olof Lonquist af alder och bagrofs [ ] 15. dito

Fig. 5 - Sweden, Kronoberg, Vislanda: deaths 1789

1789.  
af 12. Novbr. lifvad Jacob Ludvig  
Lindqvist af alder och bagrofs af 15  
dito 60 år 7/8  
af 12. Novbr. lifvad Olof Lonquist  
af alder och bagrofs af 15. dito 76 år 7/8  
af 12. Novbr. lifvad Jon Nils Jons  
i Mårnäs af alder och bagrofs af 15.  
dito 7 år 7/8  
af 25 Dec. lifvad Samuel Daniel  
Jons. Mårnäs af alder och bagrofs af 27. dito. Dod  
af alder och bagrofs af 2 1/2 år  
und 7/8

76 ar gl”. The brackets may stand for the definite article, “the,” or the prepositional phrase, “on the,” and the number of abbreviations should be noted. This author reads the entry as “the 12th of November died Olof Lonquist of [advanced] age and was buried the 15th of ditto [the same month, November] 76 years [abbreviation for gammal] old.”

One item usually included in the entry is the place where the deceased lived. Consider the last item on the page. [This author has never paid attention to it before, because the second entry is the author’s ancestor, so the reader/researcher is reading it with the author for the first time. The Swedish words may not be exactly right, but the author believes the meaning to be correct.] “[ ] 23 Dec: Afled Samuel Swensson i Morhult och begrofs [ ] 27 dito. Dod af ukend sukdom 1/2 monad gl”. This author reads this entry as “the 23rd of December died Samuel Swensson [in] at Morhult [the farm name] and was buried the 27th of ditto [the same month, December]. Died of unknown sickness 1/2 months [abbreviation for gammal] old.”

**Military records**

The record is columnar. The first column is the levy number of the soldier, and it will remain his number in that particular company throughout his service. In the second column we find the place the soldier represents (Brohult) and his name (Oluf Lonqvist). Obviously Lonqvist is his “soldier name,” and we do not have his patronymic yet. The

Fig. 6 - Sweden, Kronoberg, Vislanda: muster roll 1744

Rölis m. Landbesids...  
133. Brohult. Oluf Lonqvist 27. 1/2  
134. Gården. Jon Nils Jons  
af alder och bagrofs af 15.  
Sigmund Ahlman 71. 1/2  
135. Gården. Anders Jönman d. 2.  
af 26. May 1744. 24. 1/2  
Gården. Gården. 1744. 22. 1.  
136. Gården. Gården. 1744.

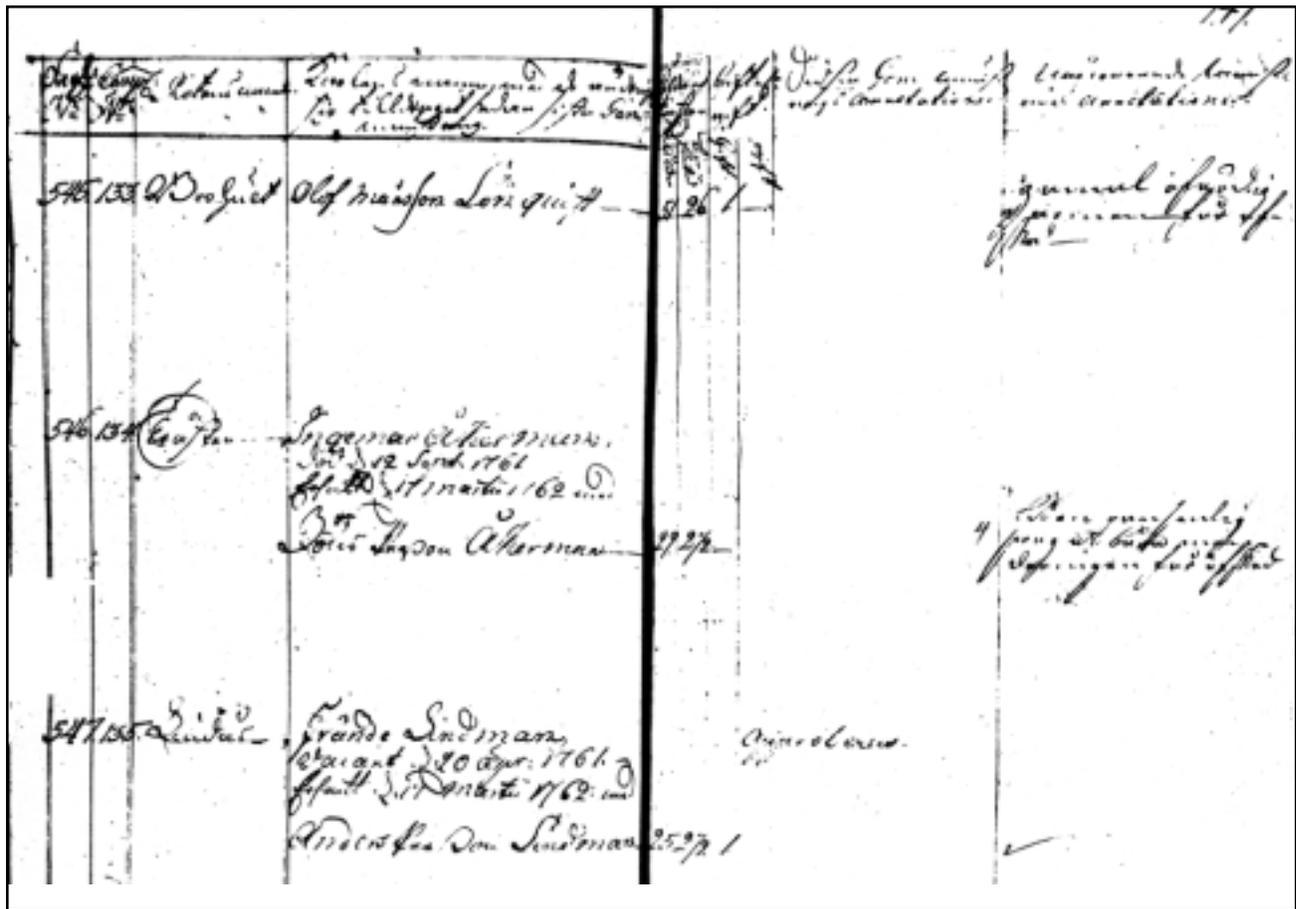


Fig. 7 - Sweden, Kronoberg: Kronoberg Regemente, muster roll for 1764

next column is his age (29). The last column is his years of service (1/4). Unfortunately, this is a very limited source of information about the soldier. What it does give us is clues, however. First, his year of birth is about 1715. Second, since we know that he was in the regiment 4.25 years, we can search for an entry record between the years of 1739 and 1740.

In figure 7 the first column is a regimental number. Second is the soldier's company levy number (133). The third column is the place the soldier represents (Brohult). The fourth column is the soldier's name (Olof Mansson Lonquist). The researcher will rejoice to see that we have the soldier's patronymic. The fifth column is the soldier's age (51). The sixth column is the numbers of years of service (26). The next two columns ask "married" or "unmarried"; our soldier is married. Finally there is a column on the right-hand edge for comments. This one says our soldier is old and no longer fit for service.

### Methodology

All genealogical research should begin the same way: finding what information is already available at home and among family members, even distant cousins. These are called "home sources," and there is probably someone who has done some looking for the family's ancestors. Even if all of the information is not correct, there may be kernels of truth in it that will provide clues later.

The next step is to use "compiled sources." The LDS Church recently published a very large database of Swedish births and marriages. This database is available for purchase. Additionally, a large percentage of the membership of the church has Swedish ancestry and has submitted these ancestors to the church's Ancestral File or International Genealogical Index. These computer databases should be searched before searching original records on microform. There is another significant database of Swedish immigrants. This is available from the Swedish government and the FHL; however, there has been some difficulty using it on computers here in the United States. Hopefully, that problem will be resolved soon.

The most critical element of Swedish research is finding the smallest place associated with one's ancestors. This is usually the name of the farm on which they lived. This will take some effort. This can be done by finding the birth record (assuming of course that the birth date of the person is known) of one ancestor. As has been noted, the farm is usually mentioned in the birth record. Sometimes a much wider search will be required, such as an entire county's births in the civil registration.

Having found the farm name we move to the clerical survey or *husforhorstangd*. The clerical surveys often have an index to the farms; it is usually at the end of the clerical survey, not where we might expect it. In this index we find the page number where the farm begins. We must realize

that the farm may be large, and the names of the inhabitants may cover several pages. Search through the entire farm looking for those ancestors whose names and birthdates we know. Once we have found them we move backward in time to the next earlier clerical survey, knowing the farm and our ancestors will be in the same relative location in next survey. Of course it is fastest to use the index.

Let us suppose that it happens that the family moved into the parish we are working with as recorded in the clerical survey. This is a frequent occurrence, and can be solved using the parish register. It is probable that someone in the family was born in the parish they moved from, and we know the date of birth. We move to the church records (parish register) to the birth records and find the member of the family we are looking for. The birth record should give us the farm name we need. We then move to the clerical survey for the new parish for the time frame of the birth. We must move forward in time in the clerical surveys in order to ensure that this is indeed the family that moved into our original parish.

Working between clerical survey and parish register we move backward in time until our clerical surveys end. At that point we use the parish register almost exclusively, with probates and the census (*mantalsland*) assisting us.

### Conclusion

The Swedish Church Ordinance of 1686 required local ministers to keep records that are a marvel of genealogical researchers today. The records are standardized either by language or physical format, and 95% of all church records are available through the Family History Library and the Family History Centers.

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Map of modern Sweden