

Swedish Research: Be an Optimistic Detective

Immigration:

There was a wave of Swedish immigration to America during the 1800-1900's as a result of the lessening of available farmland. Between 1860 and 1925, over one million Swedes immigrated. Most of the immigrants who landed in New York or Boston went on to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota while some immigrated to Canada. During the Great Depression some families went back to Sweden.

Patronymics:

The patronymic naming system in Sweden began in ancient times where the children would take on the first name of the father as their surname.

Father: Nils

Son: Knut Nilsson

Daughter: Anna Nilsson (in the late 1900's female names were changed to "son")

In the 1700's this changed when the clergy and well-educated class took Latinized family names. Those in the military were often assigned different surnames. Farmers often had the farm name added to the beginning of their names. Before the 1901 naming law was passed, a person could use any chosen name without going through a formal registration. Immigrants to America would usually keep their Swedish surnames although the spelling would often be anglicized- e. g. Larsson to Larson.

The Records: There is a wealth of Swedish records found in FamilySearch, Ancestry.com/.ca, My Heritage, ArkivDigital, and SVAR (national archives).

Church Books: ArkivDigital online archive contains church books dating from the 1600's to 1984 for all of Sweden. These books are a goldmine of information and contain household examinations, Swedish estate inventories, moving, birth, marriage, and death records. Swedish law limits the availability of some records younger than 70 years online.

Household Examination Records: These records originally recorded the yearly results of religious understanding examinations. The Lutheran church was the state church of Sweden and one had to be a member in order to be legally baptized or married. The records contain a person's name, position, occupation, birthdate, birthplace, death date, death place, Lutheran catechism, smallpox immunization record, and moving information.

Swedish Passenger Ship Manifests:

These can be found on ArchivDigital online, Familysearch.org, Ancestry.com/.ca, and Ellis Island online. Most immigrants left Sweden from the ports of Goteborg and Malmo, some landing in England and then

on to America. Included is the ship name, departure date, name and age of immigrant, birthplace, and final destination.

History/Genealogical Books:

If you know the village, city, parish, or county where your ancestor resided, you may be fortunate enough to uncover local history books (written in Swedish) which contain a wealth of genealogical information about your ancestors. These books are not always found on the web and you may have to write to the parish or municipality to find them.

Research Tips:

Gather all of the known information about the ancestor you are researching. Letters, photographs, bibles, stories from family members. Keep a research log on each individual, listing your objectives and record what you have found including the type of record searched. Record the film number, book number, CD number or web address where information was obtained.

1. Use the message boards offered by websites to inquire about your ancestors.
2. Use the FamilySearch Wiki to find records and record collections from the counties and cities where your ancestors lived. There are links to documents such as census, marriage, birth, and death records. It is helpful to know a possible location where your ancestor may have lived and the general time line between their births and deaths. Work backward instead of forward.
3. Look for a death or marriage record before searching for a birth record. When adding names to your family tree, use the first, middle, and last name. Note that in most European records, dates are listed in the order of day/month/year

Some helpful Swedish words: a detailed list found in FamilySearch

fodd- born	utflyttad- move out
dod- died	inflyttad- moved in
prastvigd- married by priest	ankling- widower
dotter- daughter	hemman- houseman
son- son	omkommit- accidental death
hustru-wife	agare- owner
soldat- soldier	socken- district
tvilling- twin	jordeboken- land book
gift- married	skattat- taxed
omgift- remarried	komminister- priest