Genealogical Societies in Sweden Today

Erik Thorell
During the last ten years a large number of genealogical societies have been organized in Sweden. A few of these are national in scope, in that they contain members from the entire country. The majority are regional or local and have their activities mostly confined to a certain area or even a certain community. Occasionally, however, when someone moves to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, or to another corner of the country, he or she may continue the membership in the society of the home locality.

Totally Sweden today has approximately 75 genealogical societies with an aggregate membership of more than 12,000 members, of which ca. 5,000 belong to the largest, The Genealogical Society of Sweden (Genealogiska Föreningen).

For individuals searching for ancestors and kinfolk in Sweden, it has often proved valuable to have contacts with the society in the area where the family has resided or still resides. Below I have listed the addresses of the majority of these societies in Sweden. I must, however, point out that there are constant changes in the structure of these societies and some addresses may not be current when this article is printed. Letters are usually forwarded, even though a particular society has replaced its secretary with a new incumbent and a different address.

Earlier Articles in SAG

In an article in SAG, Vol. III, No. 3 (Sept. 1983) Håkan Skogsjö has related how Swedish genealogical societies have developed during the last one hundred years. He has also alluded to the situation as it pertains to the current situation. His article constitutes a good introduction to what I am about to say.

The person researching his family in Sweden must be conversant with the source materials, where they may be found and the methodology to be pursued. There are several good books available in Swedish on this subject and a couple of titles in English. An excellent guide in the English language, which also surveys the situation, is Nils Härd af Segerstad's article, which appeared in SAG, Vol. IV, No. 2 (June 1984). The latest guide is John R. Anderson's article on the

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household examination rolls, which appeared in SAG, Vol. V, No. 2 (June 1985). Both of these contributions should be consulted before proceeding with this article.

The Role of the Genealogical Society

Before determining whether the regional and local genealogical societies can be of help in the study of one’s Swedish family, it is important to be aware of certain conditions. These societies vary in size, from a membership of several hundred, down to those containing a dozen or two members.

Some societies have been active for years and are made up of many experienced researchers. Others are recently organized and their memberships may consist mostly of beginners. Many Swedish genealogists are also students of local history. In some areas there is only one society serving the needs of both types of students. Usually this can be determined from the name and the objectives of the society.

The demographic changes within Sweden during the last one hundred years have been monumental. Many individuals have moved. There are Swedish communities where only a few of the residents have their roots in the locality. Usually, though, there are always a few members in a local society, who are conversant with local conditions and who have engaged in family research in these areas.

As can be seen in Nils Hård af Segerstad’s article, the source materials are to be found in the central or regional archives. The parish records of the last 100 years, however, may be found in the local parish. It is also quite usual, that the local public library has a collection of microfilms or microfiche of the older material, particularly that which has a relationship to the local scene.

Quite often local researchers have made copies of parts of the parish’s older material, sometimes even containing indexes, lists of farm owners, etc. These individuals can therefore swiftly and without too much effort pinpoint pertinent material dealing with inhabitants of a certain parish and their family connections.

As Nils Hård af Segerstad has mentioned, there are a number of printed family histories, genealogical collections, lists of professional groups, etc. available in the various libraries, sometimes fully indexed. But there is also a vast amount of literature dealing with local history, published in limited editions, which usually does not appear in the bibliographical lists of national character. Even if included in these bibliographies, they may not, by the title alone, indicate that they contain genealogical material. On the local level, however, these facts are well known, and individuals in the local societies can usually furnish this information.

Genealogical societies are now to be found in every section of Sweden. The national societies (see Håkan Skogsjö’s article, pp. 99-102) may have members, residing in these areas.
Many genealogical societies have their own quarters, containing genealogical collections and may even publish newsletters, research directories, etc. This adds, of course, to the possibility of being able to help researchers by answering their questions. The larger and older societies often have extensive collections of literature, genealogical charts, ancestral tables, family histories, maps, microfilms, etc.

The society which contains the largest amount of these aids is The Genealogical Society (Genealogiska Föreningen), headquartered in Stockholm. This society contains the largest collection of genealogical items in Sweden: an index of vital record notices from Sweden’s largest Swedish daily newspapers, going back fifty years, a prodigious quantity of pedigree charts and a number of finding aids, including a surname index containing more than 20,000 names, with references to literature and manuscript collections. This material is available to the researcher on a daily basis, and is used on the average by ten visitors per day. During the summer months a large number of Americans of Swedish descent visit the headquarters. The society also answers mail queries, averaging one per day, of which half are of foreign origin, mostly from the U.S.

Contacts with a Genealogical Society

One can correspond with all of these Swedish societies in the English language. One ought, however, to enclose an international postage coupon to pay for the return postage. These international coupons can be purchased in any U.S. post office. Swedish genealogists are usually quite helpful in sharing their information with others without compensation. One must assume that the same liberal policy pertains to Americans of Swedish descent. One may, however, have to reimburse the society for xeroxing genealogical materials.

If the query is directed to the society and it becomes necessary for a member of that society to do research in a library or an archives, or perhaps be obliged to borrow a roll of microfilm, the inquirer should be prepared to pay for such assistance. There is no fixed rate of reimbursement, but the charge is usually reasonable. It should be stated that the number of professional genealogists in Sweden is quite limited. Via the larger societies it is, however, possible to engage the services of such individuals.

A Little Genealogical Geography

When doing genealogical research in Sweden it is important to know in which län (county) and parish the person sought was or is domiciled. In the list below the genealogical societies of Sweden are therefore arranged according to the county (län) in which they are located. The counties (län) are then arranged in groups, coinciding with the districts covered by the various regional archives (landsarkiv), where all the older materials are housed (see Nils Hård af Segerstad’s article).
The lään is roughly equivalent to the county and is the administrative arm of the government. The boundaries between the lään have been changed over a period of years, but the organization is in principle the same as it was when it was created 350 years ago. Before that the country was divided into landskap (provinces), which in many cases coincided (seldom exactly) with the lään of today. The idea of the landskap is still used today, and it might be beneficial to know how Sweden is divided into landskap, even though today these units have no official function. By looking at the list of lään one will note, for instance, that the landskap Småland is not included, although this geographical concept is well known to many Americans with Swedish roots. Småland as a landskap is today divided into three lään. Sweden has adopted an official key to its lään based upon the alphabet. In this list the letter of the alphabet denotes the lään, but in parentheses the landskap or part of a landskap has been indicated.

into three basic units—Svealand, Götaland and Norrland. This division has no administrative significance, but is used mostly in the daily speech of the Swedes. Norrland (where a resident is called norrläning) consists of the northern part of Sweden and includes Gävleborg lään (X). Svealand is the central part of Sweden which includes the following lään, Stockholm (AB), Uppsala (C), Södermanland (D), Värmland (S), Örebro (T), Västmanland (U) and Kopparberg (W). Götaland is the southern region of Sweden and contains such lään as Älvsborg (P), Skaraborg (R) and Östergötland (E).

It might be appropriate at this time to mention two additional geographical names, often to be found in the genealogical literature, and which also have been incorporated into the names of some of the genealogical societies. Roslagen (where the inhabitant is called rospigg) is the coastal area of Stockholm lään (AB) and part of Uppsala lään (C), with the city of Norrtälje as the center. Another area is Bergslagen (where the farmer is called bergsman), which consists of the old mining and metal-working areas of the interior of Svealand, i.e., the northwestern part of Västmanland lään (U), the northern part of Örebro lään (T), the eastern part of Värmland lään (S) and the southern part of Kopparberg lään (W). Such cities as Nora, Ludvika and Filipstad are located in Bergslagen.

The lään of Sweden and the (landskap)

Here is the list of Sweden's geographical divisions into lään and roughly how they equate with the old concept of the landskap.

AB Stockholm (including the city of Stockholm and Roslagen)
C Uppsala (the main part of Uppland)
D Södermanland (Södermönland)
E Östergötland (Östergötland)
F Jönköping (northwest Småland)
G Kronoberg (southwest Småland)
H Kalmar (east Småland and the island of Öland)
Genealogical Societies in Sweden

I Gotland (Gotland)
K Blekinge (Blekinge)
L Kristianstad (northeast Skåne)
M Malmöhus (southwest Skåne)
N Halland (Halland)
O Göteborg and Bohus (Bohuslän)
P Ålsborg (Dalsland, also known as “Dal” and southwest Västergötland)
R Skaraborg (northeast Västergötland)
S Värmland (Värmland)
T Örebro (Närke)
U Västmanland (Västmanland)
W Kopparberg (Dalarna)
X Gävleborg (Gästrikland and Hälsingland)
Y Västernorrland (Medelpad and Ångermanland)
Z Jämtland (Härjedalen and Jämtland)
AC Västerbotten (Västerbotten and south Lappland)
BD Norrbotten (Norrbotten* and northern Lappland)

Swedish Genealogical Societies

Härnösand Regional Archives

Comprising the län of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Gävleborg, Landsarkivet, Box 161, S-871 01 Härnösand, SWEDEN.

BD Norrbotten län
Capital - Luleå
Societies:
1. Kalixbygdens Forskarförening
c/o Högdahl, Börjelbyn 3468
S-952 00 Kalix, SWEDEN
2. Pitebygdens Forskarförening
Box 721
S-941 28 Piteå, SWEDEN

AC Västerbotten län
Capital - Umeå
Societies:
3. Föreningen Skelleftebygdens
Släktforskare
Skellefteå Museum, Nordanå
S-931 33 Skellefteå, SWEDEN
4. Södra Västerbottens Genealogiska
Förening (SVGF)
Storgatan 99
S-902 44 Umeå, SWEDEN

*Has really never been a landskap.
Y Västernorrland län
Capital - Härnösand
Societies:
5. Sollefteå Släktforskningssällskap
   c/o Strömberg
   Sportgränd 7
   S-881 00 Sollefteå, SWEDEN

6. Midtälska Genealogiska Förening (MGF)
   (Sundsvall), c/o Lindqvist
   Lejdevägen 13
   S-865 00 Alnö, SWEDEN

X Gävleborg län
Capital - Gävle
Societies:
7. Forskarföreningen ALIR
   (Söderhamn)
   c/o Eriksson, Berga 6971
   S-826 06 Söderala, SWEDEN

8. Forskarföreningen Släkt och Bygd
   Box 277
   S-821 02 Bollnäs, SWEDEN

9. Gästriklands Genealogiska Förening
   c/o Näsström,
   Karlsborgsgatan 28
   S-803 57 Gävle, SWEDEN

X Östersund Regional Archives
Comprising the län of Jämtland, Landsarkivet, Box 664, S-831 27 Östersund, SWEDEN.

Z Jämtland län
Capital - Östersund
Society:
10. Jämtlands läns Släkt- forskareförening (JLS)
    Box 418
    S-831 26 Östersund, SWEDEN

Uppsala Regional Archives
Comprising the län of Kopparberg, Örebro, Västmanland, Uppsala, Stockholm and Södermanland, Landsarkivet, Box 135, S-751 04 Uppsala, SWEDEN. The archival collections of the city of Stockholm are to be found in the Stadsarkivet, Box 22063, S-104 22 Stockholm, SWEDEN.

W Kopparberg län
Capital - Falun
Societies:
11. Åsens Hembygds- och Släktforskningssällskap
    c/o Bergman, Åsen 4457
    S-796 00 Älvdal, SWEDEN

12. Föreningen Ovansjöns Släkt- forskare
    c/o Lindqvist, Ö. Storbyn 2527
    S-790 56 Våmhus, SWEDEN
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<th>Number</th>
<th>Society Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<td>Västerbergslagen Släktforskare (VBS)</td>
<td>c/o Jansson, Rotorvägen 20</td>
<td>Ludvika</td>
<td>S-771 00</td>
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<td>c/o Ståhl, Hammarvägen 89 D</td>
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<td>c/o Rosenberg, Ångslyckevägen 7</td>
<td>Karlskoga</td>
<td>S-691 41</td>
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<td>Norra Släktforskarklubb</td>
<td>c/o Dalhammar, Rådstugatan 13</td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>S-713 00</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Örebro Släktforskare</td>
<td>Box 266</td>
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<td>S-701 04</td>
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<td>Box 2010/Eriksson, S-694 02 Hallberg</td>
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<td>c/o Hammervik, Tikanäs</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Sällskapet Släktforskarna</td>
<td>c/o Håkansson, Forsbackavägen 13</td>
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<td>S-773 00</td>
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<td>Björklingebygdens Släktforskarförening</td>
<td>c/o Norman, Puckvägen 16</td>
<td>Björklinge</td>
<td>S-749 30</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Genealogiska Föreningen</td>
<td>Box 2029</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>S-103 11</td>
<td>SWEDEN</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Personhistoriska Samfundet</td>
<td>SBL, Box 34106</td>
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<td>S-100 26</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>IBM-klubbens Släktforskarförening</td>
<td>Oddegatan 5, Kista</td>
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<td>S-163 92</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>Strandvägen 5 A</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
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<td><strong>Capital - Nyköping</strong></td>
<td>32. Eskilstuas-Strängnäs Släktforskar-klubb&lt;br&gt;c/o Nilsson&lt;br&gt;Kraftvägen 6&lt;br&gt;S-633 69 Eskilstuna, SWEDEN</td>
<td>Comprising the län of Värmland, Göteborg and Bohus, Älvsborg, Skaraborg, Landsarkivet, Box 3009, S-400 10 Göteborg, SWEDEN.</td>
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<td>33. Katrineholm-Flen-Vingåkers Släktforskarklubb&lt;br&gt;Stensgatan 29 A&lt;br&gt;S-641 46 Katrineholm, SWEDEN</td>
<td>36. Släktforskarklubben&lt;br&gt;Probanden&lt;br&gt;c/o Gustavsson&lt;br&gt;Gamla vägen 154&lt;br&gt;S-664 00 Grums, SWEDEN</td>
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<td>34. Nyköping-Oxelösunds Släktforskarklubb&lt;br&gt;c/o Nordström&lt;br&gt;Skrakvägen 2&lt;br&gt;S-613 00 Oxelösund, SWEDEN</td>
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<td><strong>S Värmland län</strong></td>
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<td>S-451 62 Uddevalla, SWEDEN</td>
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<td><strong>Capital - Karlstad</strong></td>
<td>37. Uddevalla Släktforskar&lt;br&gt;c/o Persson&lt;br&gt;Pianovägen 34&lt;br&gt;S-451 62 Uddevalla, SWEDEN</td>
<td>38. Genealogisk Ungdom (GU)&lt;br&gt;(national in scope)&lt;br&gt;Vasagatan 10&lt;br&gt;S-411 24 Göteborg, SWEDEN</td>
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39. Västra Sveriges Genealogiska Förening (VSGF)
Postgatan 4
S-411 13 Göteborg, SWEDEN

P Ålvsborg län
Capital - Vänersborg
Societies:

40. Västgötas Genealogiska Förening
Kopasgatan 9
S-421 48 Västra Frölunda, SWEDEN

41. Vänersborgs Släktforskare
Kopasgatan 9
S-462 00 Vänersborg, SWEDEN

42. Ulricehamnsbygdens forskar-klubb
Kopasgatan 9
S-421 48 Västra Frölunda, SWEDEN

43. Marks Härads Släktforskare
Kopasgatan 9
S-511 02 Skene, SWEDEN

R Skaraborg län
Capital - Mariestad
Societies:

44. Skaraborgs Släktforskarförbund
Kopasgatan 9
S-533 00 Göteborg, SWEDEN

45. Finnerödja Släktforskarklubb
Kopasgatan 9
S-540 70 Hova, SWEDEN

46. Göteborgs Släktforskare
Kopasgatan 9
S-533 00 Göteborg, SWEDEN

47. Lidköpingsbygdens Släktforskare
Kopasgatan 9
S-533 00 Göteborg, SWEDEN

48. Skara Släktforskarförening
Kopasgatan 9
S-532 00 Skara, SWEDEN

49. Skövde Genealogiska Förening
Kopasgatan 9
S-531 98 Skövde, SWEDEN

50. Hjo-Tibro Släktforskarförening
Kopasgatan 9
S-534 00 Hjo, SWEDEN

51. Vara-Grästorps Släktforskarförening
Kopasgatan 9
S-534 00 Vara, SWEDEN

52. Tidaholms Genealogiska Förening
Kopasgatan 9
S-522 00 Tidaholm, SWEDEN

53. Mullsjö Genealogiska Förening
Kopasgatan 9
S-565 00 Mullsjö, SWEDEN

54. Hababygdens Släktforskarförening
Kopasgatan 9
S-556 00 Habo, SWEDEN

55. Mariestadsbygdens Släktforskarförening
Kopasgatan 9
S-542 00 Mariestad, SWEDEN
Vadstenal Regional Archives

Comprising the län of Östergötland, Jönköping, Kalmar and Kronoberg, Landsarkivet, Box 126, S-592 00 Vadstenal, SWEDEN.

E Östergötland län
Capital - Linköping
Societies:
56. Föreningen för Datorhjälp i Släktforskningen
   - DIS (Linköping)
   (national in scope, specializing in computer use)
   c/o Bergman
   Hjortronvägen 89
   S-590 54 Sturefors, SWEDEN

57. Östgöta Genealogiska Förening
   (ÖGF) (Linköping-Norrköping)
   c/o Lindahl,
   Ödegårdsatet 10
   S-582 57 Linköping, SWEDEN

F Jönköping län
Capital - Jönköping
Societies:
58. Mellersta Gotalands Genealogiska Förening
   Box 151
   S-551 13 Jönköping, SWEDEN

59. Nässjöortens Genealogiska Förening
   Trädgårdsgatan 69
   S-571 00 Nässjö, SWEDEN

60. Njudungs Genealogiska Förening
   Östersandsvägen 15
   S-574 00 Vetlanda, SWEDEN

61. Sällskapet ANE, Finnveden
   c/o Hultin, Blomstervägen 38
   S-331 00 Värnamo, SWEDEN

G Kronoberg län
Capital - Växjö
Society:
62. Kronobergs Genealogiska Förening (Växjö)
   c/o Hjertquist
   Storgatan 1
   S-342 00 Alvesta, SWEDEN

H Kalmar län
Capital - Kalmar
Societies:
63. Kalmar Läns Genealogiska Förening (KLG, Kalmar)
   c/o Jonmyren
   J672 Tyvåskog
   S-380 26 Ljungbyholm, SWEDEN

64. Västerviks Släktforskarsällskapet
   c/o Holger Kanth
   Esplanaden 19 A
   S-593 00 Västervik, SWEDEN
Lund Regional Archives

Comprising the län of Halland, Blekinge, Kristianstad and Malmöhus, Landsarkivet, Fack 2016, S-220 02 Lund, SWEDEN. The archival collections of the city of Malmö are to be found in the Stadsarkivet, S:t Petrigången 7 A, S-211 22 Malmö, SWEDEN.

N Halland län
Capital - Halmstad
Society:
65. Hallands Genealogiska Förening (HGF)
c/o Thorén
Köpmansgatan 2 A
S-302 42 Halmstad, SWEDEN

K Blekinge län
Capital - Karlskrona
Society:
66. Blekinge Genealogiska Förening (BGF)
Box 2033, Jämshög
S-293 02 Olofström, SWEDEN

L Kristianstad län
Capital - Kristianstad
Society:
67. Bjäre Släktning

M Malmöhus län
Capital - Malmö
Society:
68. Helsingborgs Släktforskar- och bygdeförening

c/o Vuxenskolan
Drottninggatan 3
S-252 21 Helsingborg, SWEDEN

70. Landabygdens Genealogiska Förening

c/o Levenstam
Thulehem 27
S-223 67 Lund, SWEDEN

72. Staffanstorps Släktforskarförening

Box 7
S-245 00 Staffanstorp, SWEDEN

69. Kävlingebygdens Släkt- och Folklivsforskare

c/o Lundin
Klövervägen 15
S-240 21 Löddeköpinge, SWEDEN

71. Skånes Genealogiska Förening (SGF),
c/o Rosencrantz
Midgårdsrgatan 17
S-216 19 Malmö, SWEDEN

73. Söderslätts Släkt- och Hembygdsforskarförening

Algatan 51
S-231 00 Trelleborg, SWEDEN
Visby Regional Archives

Comprising the län of Gotland, Landsarkivet, Box 2142, S-621 02 Visby, SWEDEN.

I Gotland län
Capital - Visby
Society:
74. (Being organized)
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Maps showing division of Sweden into landskap (provinces), the geographical units and län (districts), the administrative units. (© Generalstabens Litografiska Anstalt, Stockholm 1974.)