

3-1-2004

The Swedish Archives: Vadstena

Elisabeth Thorsell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thorsell, Elisabeth (2004) "The Swedish Archives: Vadstena," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 24 : No. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol24/iss1/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

The Swedish Archives

1. The Regional Archives at Vadstena

BY ELISABETH THORSELL



The mainstay of Swedish genealogical research are the church records from the various parishes. This is where you can find the birth record of your grandfather, the marriage of his parents, when he emigrated, and much more.

This was true for centuries, from the early 1600s until 1 July 2001, when church and state were divided, and the record keeping was taken over by the tax authorities (*Skatteverket*).

Church records are considered as local government records, and are thus to be found in the various regional archives (*landsarkiv*), each responsible for its part of the country.

The Vadstena Regional Archives are situated in the old castle, which was first built by King Gustaf I (Vasa) in 1543, in the little town of Vadstena, on the northeastern shore of Lake Vättern.

The Vadstena Regional Archives are the repository for records from the counties (*län*) of Östergötland, Jönköping, Kalmar, and Kronoberg, which means that they have the records for the most emigrant intense areas.

The research room is open to everyone for free. There are 42 researcher's tables, all with microfiche readers. All church records are instantly available in the room in microfiche format. There are also very helpful indexes to the clerical surveys (*husförhörslängder*), and to the probates, (*bouppteckningar*). There is also a small reference library, and a card catalog to the proper archive library, where you can find books on different parishes and many other things. There are also a few computers with some of the more

popular Swedish databases and some that are specific for this archive, for instance the *Linköping Historiska Databas*, where you can search the church records for more than 20 parishes in the Linköping area.

The staff is pleasant and very helpful, and used to overseas visitors, but appreciate if you have good information when you come to the archive.

An archivist told me many years ago that church records make up about 10% of the contents of a regional archive. This means that 90 % are other records, that can be interesting and helpful as well. First we have the records of the legal districts (*häradsrätter*), which is where you may find that absconding father, or the probate for your great-grandmother. Then we have the county government (*länsstyrelse*), where you can find tax records (*mantalslängder*) back to the early 1600s. Then we have the diocesan records (*domkapitel*) where you might find out that the great-great-grandparents were

divorced. And there are many other kinds of records too.

The problem might be that these other records are not as easily available as church records, court records, and probates that have been microfilmed. The other types of records are hand-written in old script in huge books, and you need to read Swedish to get the best from them. But it is certainly worth the effort.

Facts:

Mailing address: Landsarkivet, Box 126, S-592 23 Vadstena, Sweden.

Visiting address: The Castle
Phone: +46 143 753 00

Fax: +46 143 753 37

E-mail:

landsarkivet@landsarkivet-vadstena.ra.se

Web site: www.ra.se/vala

Opening hours: Mon-Fri. 9 am to 4 pm. Tuesday 9 am to 9 pm. Saturday 9 am to 1 pm. Shorter hours in the summer, check the web site for exact info.



The Research room at Vadstena Regional Archives.