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Elisabeth Thorsell

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Some Thoughts on Citing Swedish Records – Why Should I???

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

By now one hopes that it is no longer necessary to explain why it is important to cite one's sources? But, just in case, here are a few reasons.

1. You do it for your own needs, you never know if you need to back-track and see who else was listed on that page in the cl. survey. And that is much easier to do if you have made proper citations.
2. You do it for the sake of the ones that continues your research. How are they to know if you had looked in this or that record, unless you have made notes of the sources?
3. You do it for the people you wish to share your research with. During the years you read the records for Lommaryd, you probably will meet with others who have roots in the same parish, and it is much easier to compare results if you have the proper citations.

We agree about this, don't we?

So, how do you cite sources? You do it in such a way that it is possible for anyone to trace the document where you found that specific piece of evidence that showed that your Johan was indeed the son of Nils in Lillegården.

There are two good books in English that shows the how and why of citing sources; see the end of this article for titles.

Those books are very good but they do not mention some specific things about Swedish church records that are quite important.

Swedish church records

The Swedish archives have organized the church records in the same way since they started to care for them in the late 1800s. Each parish

archive was supposed to keep the same kind of records as every other parish in the country.

The main categories were clerical surveys or household examination records (*husförhörslängder*), removal books (*flyttningslängder*), birth and baptism records (*födelse-och dopböcker*), banns and marriage records (*lysnings- och vigselböcker*), and death and burial records (*död- och begravningsböcker*).

Each category of books were given a code letter (Swedish: *signum*) and then a volume figure.

These letters are:

- AI = clerical surveys
- B = removal records
- C = birth and baptism records
- E = banns and marriage records
- F = death and burial records

Book Lommaryd AI:2 thus is the second volume of the clerical surveys for Lommaryd. When you have found that your ancestors lived at Degla farm, on page 234 in Lommaryd AI:2, you can cite the source for that family as "Lommaryd AI:2, p.234," or just "Lommaryd AI:2:234."

But that is mostly convenient when you are at the Vadstena archives, where they have the original records.

If you are using the microfilms of the Family History Library, you should add FHL Film 135601. So then the citation says "Lommaryd AI:2:234, FHL Film 135601."

Those Swedish code letters, mentioned above, appear on the first page of every microfilmed volume, and on the same page you can see what years the volume covers. It might be a good idea to add those years to your citation. So now it has become a little longer again:

"Lommaryd AI:2:234, FHL Film 135601, 1789-1791."

The good thing about adding the years for the volume is that when the archive that has the original books for some reason changes the volume number, you still know what years you are looking for.

If you are going to work in Swedish archives, you will have no help of the FHL film numbers, as they are virtually unknown in Sweden.

If you receive what looks like a well documented genealogy from cousin Stina in Sweden, you might see that she references to SVAR numbers. Those numbers are found on the microfiche, and can look like this: "Hedemora AI:16d; 12420, 2/5" which means Hedemora clerical survey 16; d is the 4th volume for the same time period, 12420 is the SVAR number which identifies parish and volume in their catalog. 2/5 means that the info was found on the 2nd microfiche of volume 16b.

The main thing is to remember to make a citation so you can easily find your way back to a document you looked at several years ago, and that other people also can find it.

Many of the modern computer programs have good facilities for citations, but if they do not fit your requirements, you can always write a text note.

More reading:

Lackey, Richard S., *Cite Your Sources. A Manual for Documenting Family Histories and Genealogical Records*. University Press of Mississippi. 1980. ISBN 0-87805-286-0.
Mills, Elizabeth Shown, *Evidence! Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian*. Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore. 1997. ISBN 0-8063-1543-1.