

## Power into Scandinavian Research

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### Scandinavian Naming Systems and Traditions

#### Denmark (& Faroe Islands)

- 1771 - Fixed surnames for nobility were established by law
- 1828 - First law to establish fixed surnames for everyone
- 1857 - Law to clarify intent of 1828 law
- 1880s-1890s - More women recorded with masculine form of patronymic
- 1904 - Surname changes allowed if it could be proved the surname had been used in the family for several generations. Or, if they had permission from everyone else in the country with the same surname as they wanted to adopt

#### Finland

- Eastern Finland (Kuopio, Lappi, Mikkeli, Oulu, and Viipuri) - fixed surnames
- Western Finland - patronymics to 1901 and may also use a Finnish surname or toponymic
- 1921 - First law requiring everyone to have permanent surname. Prior to
- 1930 - Law requiring all persons to use an inherited surname - some siblings adopted different surnames

#### Iceland

- 1880s-1890s - More women recorded with masculine form of patronymic
- 1900s - Some people adopt surnames used after their patronymic
- 1925 - Adoption of new family surname prohibited by law

#### Norway

- 1771 - Fixed surnames for nobility were established by law
- 1923 - First law requiring everyone to have permanent surname

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1964 - Children born in wedlock received father's name, children born out of wedlock received their mother's surname

## Sweden

1500s - Nobility began using fixed surnames

1880s - More people using father's patronymic surname as their own

1901 - First legislation to fix surnames as masculine form of father's surname

1966 - Use of patronymics ended by law

2017 - New law ending birth surnames and easing the changing of surnames is enacted

Some Danish non-patronymic surnames appear to come out of thin air, but there may be a reason that is unknown after all these generations. Patronymics are still in use in Iceland, with a few exceptions. Until the law in 1923, farm names in Norway were not surnames, but addresses. However, people were sometimes recorded with the name of their last residence when they moved to another parish - it was a convenient way to identify them as the family from somewhere else. This practice of using farm names was the same in the Faroe Islands until 1828 when the law was enacted.

In Western Finland the practice of using farm names was a little more clear cut. When a family moved from one farm to another, they would no longer be associated with that farm. In 1863 Tsar Alexander II issued the *Kieliereskripti* (Language Decree) making Finnish an official administrative language and establishing a twenty-one year time period to transition to full use of Finnish in all official records.

Prior to 1921 fixed surnames were mostly used in eastern Finland (the historical provinces of Savonia and Karelia, corresponding to the counties of Kuopio, Mikkeli, and Viipuri, along with the northern counties of Lappi and Oulu). Eastern Finnish surnames can be grouped into three types: short names, often an animal (*Orava, Tikka*); short names with the ending -nen (*Oravainen, Tikkanen*); or a geographical name (including farm names) with the suffix -lainen or -läinen (*Savolainen, Hämläinen*).

In Sweden the surnames adopted by the nobility fell into four categories: animals, body parts and another attribute (*Uggla, Lejonhufud, Gyllenstierna*); combining terms (*Hammar skjöld, Lagerfelt*); of a place (*von Rosen, af Klinteberg*); foreign names (*Hamilton, Creutz*); or fixing a patronymic.

The Swedish middle class also began to adopt fixed surnames to call out their social status. These names were taken from nature (*Berg, Lind*); combined terms (*Berquist, Nordström*). Academics and clerics used Greek or Latin variations of their surname or birthplace (*Linnaeus, Helsingius*); or add the Greek word for man to another word (*Mellander, Wallander*). When a

man was designated for military service he was given a residence and plot of ground to work (*soldattorp*) and a soldier name (*soldatnam*).

## Church Records as the Backbone of Nordic Research

### Lutheran Church

What is a State Church?

Records include vital records for the government

### Information in the Records

#### *General Format*

Long hand vs. printed forms

#### *Christening*

Names child, parents and godparents/witnesses

Birth date, farm names and occupations

#### *Confirmation*

Shows knowledge of catechism—about age 14

Not available for all parishes

Helpful for children who left home for apprenticeship, etc.

#### *Marriages*

Gives full name of both groom and bride (including maiden name)

Usually includes parents' names and birth date and place

#### *Burials*

Age at death, sometimes a relation

#### *Moving Lists*

Most parishes include lists of those entering and exiting the parish

States where the individual lived previously or next destination

Post 1800

#### *Swedish Clerical Surveys*

Information similar to a full census each year

Notes any major event for the family

Includes full names and ages of all family members

## Scandinavian Research in a Digital World

If you are fortunate to have ancestors from the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, or Finland) then smile with delight because you've arrived at one of the biggest playgrounds for genealogy in the world. Centuries of methodical record keeping, stable governments, state religion, relatively smaller populations, with a high level of genealogical engagement and the use of technology have created incredible resources that you can access from home. For all the Scandinavian countries you have access to "type and search" databases which can save hours of research time, and digitized records to discover new information about your family. In our short time together, I will introduce you to the best online resources in the following order:

### Sweden

Arkiv Digital <https://www.arkivdigital.net/>

FamilySearch <https://www.familysearch.org/>

Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.com/>

MyHeritage <https://www.myheritage.com/>

### Norway

Digital Arkivet <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/>

### Denmark

Statens Arkiver <https://www.sa.dk/en/>

Danish FamilySearch <https://www.danishfamilysearch.com/>

Danish Demographic Database [http://www.ddd.dda.dk/ddd\\_en.htm](http://www.ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm)

### Finland

Finland's Family History Association [http://www.sukuhistoria.fi/sshy/index\\_eng.htm](http://www.sukuhistoria.fi/sshy/index_eng.htm)

Digihakemisto <https://digihakemisto.appspot.com/>

FamilySearch <https://www.familysearch.org/>

Hiski Project <http://hiski.genealogia.fi/historia/indexe.htm>