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Get started with Swedish genealogy in ArkivDigital



An extract from the genealogy book,
“Explore Your Swedish Heritage”,
published 2021 by ArkivDigital

Are you ready? Let's begin your family research!

Your family history is only a few keystrokes away. ArkivDigital has photographed millions of documents and indexed many of these since the company's beginning in 2005. Here we show you how to search these records to explore your ancestry.

< Who doesn't remember the childhood visits to the amusement park? And most genealogists remember the first time they found something interesting in a church book. My father and I at Liseberg in Göteborg 1966. Soon you will find your family in a church book.

> Go to app.arkivdigital.se to enter your e-mail address and password to log in to ArkivDigital. Once you have done that you are ready to start.

No subscription?

You can buy one at www.arkivdigital.net.

We assume that you have an ArkivDigital subscription and that you are using a computer with access to the Internet and a web browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari. Start the web browser and go to **app.arkivdigital.se**. Log in with your e-mail address and password.

You have now launched ArkivDigital and can start searching indexes and browsing church books and other documents.

We will show you how you do this in ten steps on the following pages.

Turn the page.

A screenshot of the ArkivDigital login interface. It features a dark blue background with white text and input fields. At the top, there are two white input fields labeled 'Email address' and 'Password'. Below these is a prominent blue button with the word 'Login' in white. At the bottom of the form, there are three links: 'Create account', 'Forgot password', and 'Customer service', all in a light blue color.

1. Example—Mary Nystrom

ArkivDigital's largest name register, *BiS (Population of Sweden)*, contains all of Sweden's population for years 1800–1947 (approximately). This includes the many persons who emigrated from Sweden to America and other countries during the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s.

We begin our research with the couple, Mary and Charles Nystrom, who lived their life as many other Swedish emigrants. They were born in the 1860s and left in their early adult years for America, met in the new coun-



In the above image, Mary Nystrom, a.k.a. Apollonia Maria Brissman, together with her husband Charles and their many children in a photograph from the 1920s.

try and married. The couple settled down in Cranston, Rhode Island, and Charles worked among other things as a car mechanic and a carpenter. Together they had many children. Some of them could be your grandmother or great-grandfather.

To find your ancestors in the Swedish sources, it is important that the information you use is correct and complete, otherwise, there is a risk in finding the wrong family. Three facts are important to know about the person you search:

- Complete name (all given names and maiden name of females)
- Exact birth date and
- Birth place (as close as possible).

Now, we continue to the BiS 1800–1947.

2. Begin searching in BiS

Mary Nystrom died on January 6, 1944, in Cranston, Rhode Island. We have luck. Her death certificate gives us information that is needed to find her in the BiS 1800–1947. Complete name: *Maria Apolonia (Brissman) Nystrom*. Birth date: *25 December 1862*. Birth place: *Vastergotland, Sweden*. It is also mentioned that she had lived in the USA for 55 years. This information should be enough to identify her in BiS.

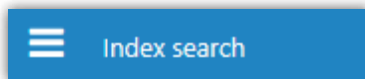
► Click on the blue button, *Index Search*. Under *Index Source*, select *BiS (Population of Sweden) 1800–1947*. You can search by typing in information in the Simple search box.

We try to write *Maria Apolonia Brissman 1862-12-25* (information can be written in any order) and click on Search. We get the undesired result: “0 records match your search.”

Something is clearly wrong. But what? We reduce the amount of information in the search field and only search for *Maria Apolonia Brissman* without the birth date. Still no matches. Next try is to search only for last name and birth date *Brissman 18621225*.

Bingo!

Six matches are shown for *Brissman, Maria Apollonia, born 1862-12-25 in Tvärred, Älvsborg county*. We did not find her the first time due to the name, Apollonia, which in the American source was spelled Apolonia. Do not give up after the first try without searching in other ways. A good



Blue button *Index search*.

Date

The date in Sweden is often written in the format yyyy-mm-dd (1884-02-19). In BiS, you can also simplify and write 18840219.

Search in index

Reset form Search

Index source
BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947

Simple search Search tips
brissman 18621225

Approximative search

Advanced Search

Name Birth Location Household

6 records match your search:

Search results

Brissman, Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tvärred. Found 1887 - 1892 in Borås, Älvsborgs län.

Brissman, Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tvärred. Found 1887 - 1892 in Borås, Älvsborgs län.

Brissman, Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tvärred. Found 1887 - 1892 in Borås, Älvsborgs län.

Brissman, Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tvärred. Found 1876 - 1890 in Tvärred, Älvsborgs län.

Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tw.. Found 1876 - 1890 in Tvärred, Älvsborgs län.

Apollonia Maria - BiS (Population of Sweden) 1840-1947
Born 1862-12-25 in Tred.. Found 1861 - 1870 in Tvärred, Älvsborgs län.

ground rule is to begin your search with limited information about the person. If there are a large number of matches, you can limit the search by complementing the search with additional information.

Can we be certain that we have found the right person? In this case, it is highly likely, since the name Apollonia as well as Brissman are very unusual. But there still needs further checking to be absolutely certain.

We will continue checking.

4. Read the church book

We have clicked on the link which opens the original source and find Maria Apollonia Brissman. The source has the notation *Borås AI:41 (1887-1892) Image 36 / Page 1465*. “Borås” is a city next to the little place, Tvärred, where Maria Apollonia was born and “AI:14” is the notation for a household record which includes the years 1887-1892. Both Borås and Tvärred are in the province of Västergötland, the place which is mentioned as her birth place on the death certificate.

1465		Lidaholm N:2.		Födelse-			Äktenskap	Koppar-	Hittflyttad		Knythugastates-teins nummer.	
Personernas namn, stånd, embete, yrke och näringsfång, (backstuga-, inhyses- och fattighjon), nationalitet (om främmande), lyten (svagsinta, blinda, döfstumma).				År.	Mån. och dag.	Ort, (Socken i Län, stad).	Gift.		Enkl. eller Enka.	från (Socken i Län, Stad eller pagina i Husförhårsboken).		År, månad och dag.
1.	Höjst Högst C.G. Ruggquist & Emma Charlotta Pettersson			40	26/7	f		86	v	N:103	86	
5.	Pige Anna Ottobria Olofsson			67	10/8	Wing			v	N:202	86	
6.	Höjst Högst A. Apollonia Maria Andersson			62	25/2	Förred			v	f 32	88	
	Höjst Högst J. Andersson & Gustaf J. Andersson			55	25/4	Skarvåsa	5/10	90	v	f 656	90	
7.	H. Selma Fredrika Högst			63	2/8	Förred			v	Broddhåkan	90	139

On the left side of the double page spread where Maria Apollonia is noted in row number 6.

A little way down on the page (row 6), we find Apollonia Maria Brissman, born (18)62 25/12 in “Tverred,” among persons living at a place which is called “Lidaholm N:o 2” which is stated at the top of the page. She is noted as moving here (18)88 from “f(olio) 32” or from the place on page 32 in the same book. In front of her name is “Hyr. Arb.” which states that she was a lodger (*hyresgäst*) at the place and supported herself as a female worker (*arbeterska*).

[illegible]

Right side of the same double-page spread.

If we follow row 6 on the page to the right, we find the most interesting information. In the moving out (*bortflyttad*) column is noted “N. Amerika (18)89”. This agrees exactly with the death certificate which stated that Maria Apollonia at her death in 1944 had lived in the USA for 55 years. 1944 minus 55 is 1889.

We were lucky in finding the information in the first book we looked at. The number “84” refers to the moving out record (*utflyttningslängden*) (see page 67). She received the moving out certificate (*flyttningsattest*) on May 17, 1889. She probably left shortly after within a few months.

Now we are certain that we have found the right person.

5. To the emigrant register

Now we know that the church books state that Maria Apollonia Brissman emigrated in 1889 to “N. Amerika” (North America). An appropriate next step is to try to find her in the emigration documents. In ArkivDigital, there is an index of more than 1.5 million Swedes who emigrated in the years 1869–1964.

► Click on the blue button, *Index search*. Under *Index source*, select *Emigrants*. You can search by entering information in the Simple search box. Also, here we must try alternative searches before we find the right one. A search for Maria Apollonia Brissman gives us no matches, but Maria Brissman gives three matches of persons who emigrated in 1889, 1897 and 1906.

We select Maria Brissman who emigrated in 1889 and click further to the original source under Links: *Source: Göteborgs poliskammare (–1900) EIX:39 (1889) Image 1730 / Page 343*. This leads us to the register of per-

31	Erik L. Oberg	Swedish	25	/	/	St. Paul, Minn.
32	Henry A. Peterson	Swedish	18	/	/	Monmouth, Ill.
33	Betty Maria Peterson	Swedish	10	/	/	
34	Maria Brissman	Borås	24	/	/	New York, N.Y.
35	Knut Torberg	Stockholm	19	/	/	Rockford, Ill.
36	Carl Emil Peterson	Tröskede	17	/	/	Rockford, Ill.

In the passenger register, we learn Maria Brissman's exact departure date (June 18, 1889) and final destination (New York).

sons who were onboard when the ship, Malmo, on June 18, 1889, departed from Göteborg, Sweden, with a destination of Hull, England.

A bit down we find Maria Brissman from Borås, 24 years old, with the destination place, “New York, N.Y.” The age doesn't agree but the name, residence, and year do. No doubt that we have found the correct person. Now we know that she actually left Sweden in 1889.

She certainly continued her journey like most others, with a train from Hull to Liverpool, where a large ship departed for the trip over the Atlantic. One possibility for getting more information about this trip is to search for her among persons who arrived in the Port of New York, where the immigration documents 1820–1957 are digitized and accessible on the Internet (www.Libertyellisfoundation.org). But despite multiple diligent searches, Maria Apollonia was not found in these documents.

The ship which Maria Brissman traveled to England. After some searching on the Internet we found this slightly blurred image of the ship Malmo of Hull (ex Pacific), which was owned by the Wilson Line. It was built in 1860 and mostly traveled between Norway and Hull. Source: Sjöhistoriska museet (Fo68927A), Digitalt museum.



6. To the birth book

We feel certain now that the Maria Apollonia Brissman whom we found in the Swedish sources is identical with Mary Nystrom who lived in Cranston, Rhode Island. The next step in our research is to track her parents and siblings and see where she lived when she was young.

We begin by a search for Maria Apollonia Brissman's birth record. She is mentioned as being born on December 25, 1862, in Tvärred, a parish near Borås. Now we leave the index and begin searching directly in the archive documents.

► Click on the blue button, *Archive search*. In the box under Archive holder, enter *Tvärred*, the parish where she was born. A list of the church books appears.

The screenshot shows the 'Search archive documents' interface. On the left, a blue button labeled 'Archive search' is highlighted. Below it, a text box labeled 'Archive holder' contains the text 'Tvärred', with a red dashed box and the text 'Write here' overlaid. To the right, a table lists search results for 'Tvärred'. A red dashed box and the text 'Click here' are overlaid on the first row of this table. A red arrow points from this row to a second screenshot below. The second screenshot shows the 'Tvärred' archive page. A red dashed box and the text 'Archive info' are overlaid on the 'Archive info' link. Below this, a list of church books is shown, with the row for 'C:4' (Birth and Christening records, 1861-1892) highlighted.

Archive holder	Archive type	Country	Swedish county
Tvärred	Parish / Congregation	Sweden (SE)	Älvsborgs län (P)

Archive holder	Archive type	Country	Swedish county
Tvärred	Parish / Congregation	Sweden (SE)	Älvsborgs län (P)

Volume	Records	Start Year	End Year
C:1	Birth and Christening records	1724	1773
C:2	Birth and Christening records	1774	1836
C:3	Birth and Christening records	1837	1860
C:4	Birth and Christening records	1861	1892
C:5	Birth and Christening records	1893	1894
C:6	Birth and Christening records	1895	1938
Tvärred C:1	Marriage records	1726	1773
Tvärred C:2	Marriage records	1774	1836
Tvärred C:3	Marriage records	1837	1860
Gällstad E:1	Banns and Marriage records	1842	1876

Archive search:
 Above: I have done a search for "Tvärred" which is the parish where Maria Apollonia Brissman was born.
 Below: When you click the parish Tvärred you can see the available church books.

First in the list are the household records, then the moving records, thereafter birth, marriage, and death books. We can scroll down the list with the computer mouse's scroll wheel (or scroll list or arrow keys) or alternatively use the Filter function. A bit down we find the *Birth and Christening records 1861-1892*, an archive volume with the notation C:4 in Tvärred's church archive.

Now we have found the archive volume where Maria Apollonia Brissman's birth record should be found and we open the book by double clicking on the row.

7. Read the birth book

We have opened the Tvärred birth book 1861–1892 and see the book's cover on the screen. Now we will look for Apollonia Maria who was born on December 25, 1862.



The church book is now open. Now we need to find the right page.

The book is organized chronologically, year by year. We can navigate forwards and backwards with the buttons “5 pages” and “1 page” and hop around the book using the page/image selector (which now shows “Image 1”). Since 1862 is precisely in the beginning of the time period which this volume covers (1861–1892), we can click forward with the button “>> 5 pages.” With just a few clicks we are at 1862. A couple of clicks “>>1 page” and we have found December 1862 (Image: 13).

Image	Page	Year	Month	Day	Name	Parents	Residence
51	21	27	1		Clas Tikkelen	Carl Gustaf Brissman & Augusta Eriksdotter	Aspås Pag 337
52	25	27	1		Apollonia Maria	Carl Gustaf Brissman & Augusta Eriksdotter	Aspås Pag 337
53	30	27	1		Johan Edvard	Carl Gustaf Brissman & Augusta Eriksdotter	Aspås Pag 337

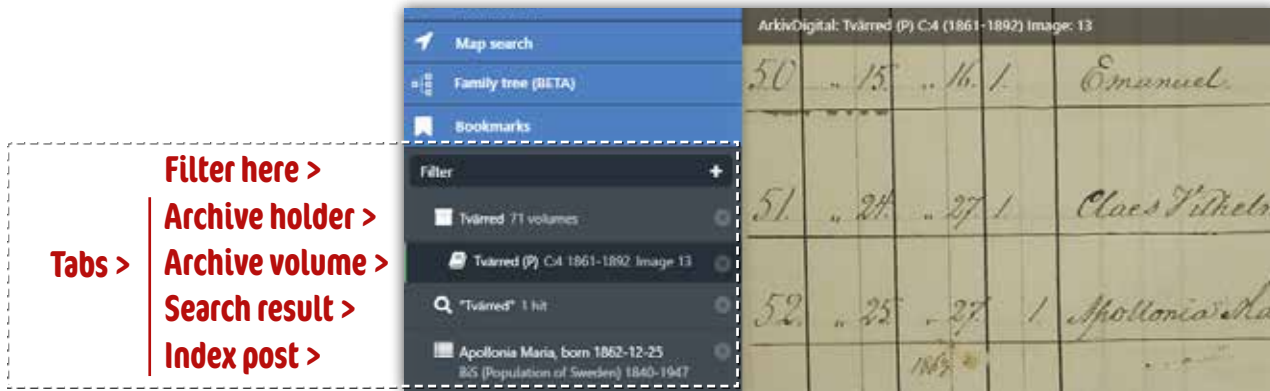
After a little searching, we find Apollonia Maria in image nr. 13 as being born on December 25, 1862, with information about her parents.

On December 25th Apollonia Maria was born. The parents were Pehr Gust(af) Brissman, crofter (*torpare*), and Augusta Eriksdotter, wife (*hustru*). The minister has noted the family's residence as “Aspås Pag 337.”

Aspås is the place where they lived in Tvärred. “Pag. 137” (pag. = pagina = page) is a reference to the page in the household record where the family is noted. This information is important and saves time searching.

8. To the household records

Now we want to know more about Apollonia Maria's parents. What other children did they have? Where did they live? Here the household records (congregations records) are the best source. In the birth book, we found a reference to page 137 in the record for Tvärred which includes the year



Smart tabs

Your search results, as well as your opened archive holders, archive volumes, and index posts are saved as tabs on the left side of ArkivDigital. You can use the filter functionality to select certain tabs.

Too many open tabs can be difficult to navigate. We recommend that you regularly close the tabs you no longer need. You do that by clicking the cross on the right side of the tab. You use the menu at the bottom of the left column if you want to close many tabs at once. You can have 100 archive holders open at the same time and 100 volumes in each archive holder. When you get close to this limit you will see a message on the screen.

Closed tabs are moved to History (above the image) so you can find them again if needed.

1862 (the year when Apollonia Maria was born). Now we want to find her in that volume.

The tabs in the left column help us to go quickly back to the list with the archive volumes or my search result. Above the open volumes (dark colored in the image) is a tab for the archive holder (Tvärred parish) and by the magnifying glass I find the search result.

I click on the tab to the archive holder ("Tvärred 71 volumes") and look for the household volume which includes the year 1862. That is the volume 1861-1870 with the code AI:7. A double click on this row opens the volume. Often there is a place register in the beginning or end of the volume (in this volume at the end), but we have a page reference from the birth record ("Pag. 137"). We use the image/page selector (see page 23) to quickly find the page.

The family is found under the heading "Aspås Torp." *M(annen)* Pär Gust. Svensson Brissman and *h(ustrun)* (the wife), Augusta Eriksdotter with nine children. In the column "Död" (Death) we see that death dates are noted for two of the children. In older times, child mortality was high.

In the columns "Flyttat från..." (Moved from) and "Flyttat till..." (Moved to), there are no notations. That means that the family should be found in the subsequent household record, 1871-1876, at the torp Aspås. We look in that book and look for the place name register which is at the end. Aspås has two references: pages 93 and 133. The family is not found on page 93, but they are on page 133. Remember that a village or farm ordinarily includes more than one page. If the family had not been found on page 133, we should turn the page and read further on the following pages.

We continue to follow the family forward in time, record by record, move by move. If we lose the family, we use the BiS index to help us find the family. At the end, we have found all the children, in total thirteen, and also that the parents moved to Gullered, a parish in the area where the mother died on October 16, 1905.

9. Check other church books

Recently, we followed Apollonia Maria Brissman's parents forward in time in the household records and congregation records right up to the mother's death in 1905. A good research methodology is to go further in the birth, marriage, and death books to see what they say about the family members. At this time, the second half of the nineteenth century, the birth and marriage books seldom give much new information, but it is a good rule to still check them, even if it is only to verify that there is no additional information.

The death books are however more interesting, since the cause of death is noted. So, let's continue with the death book for Gullered parish 1905. We select the blue button, *Archive search*, and write *Gullered* in the box for Archive holder, click on the match Gullered and the list of church books appears. We scroll down the volume list looking for the death book (or click on *Filter* at the top of the list, select *Filter on type of source* and mark *Death and Burial records*.)

Apollonia Maria's mother, Augusta, died on October 16, 1905, and should be in the death book which includes the years 1895–1938 and has the notation Gullered C:4. The book also includes births and marriages for this period. After paging a little in the book, we find the death records for 1905 (Image: 141 / Page: 11). We understand that the parish was very small. Only four persons died during the year. Last is Augusta Brissman, *hu(stru till)* = wife to P(er) G(ustaf) Brissman, Gästared. The cause of death is stated as "*långsam magsjukdom*" or cancer.

Four persons died in 1905 in the little parish Gullered in Västergötland. Augusta Brissman's death is noted on October 16.



From the death book, we go further to the estate inventory (*bouppteckningen*), which is an important source for the researcher. This is where all the heirs are usually noted. The estate inventory for Augusta is found in the archive holder Redvägs *häradsrätt*, volume FII:55 and page 189. Among her children, we find the daughter "Apollonia Maria married to Karl Nystrom Amerika."

Now we are definitely certain that Mary Nystrom in Cranston and Apollonia Maria Brissman in Sweden are the same person!

10. Don't just search the archives

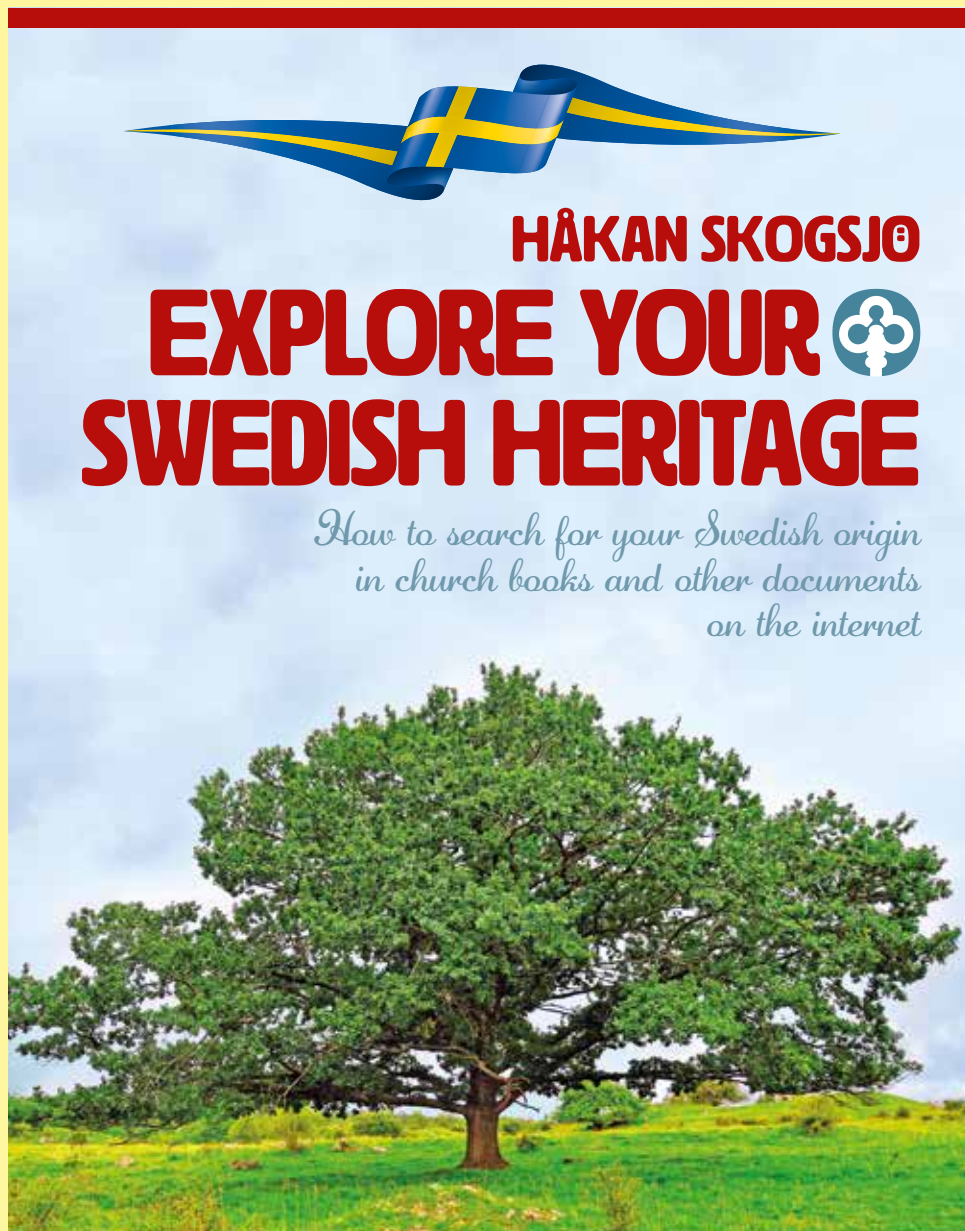


My aunt Ulla Hellström, born 1926, with her mother in Vanadislund in Stockholm on May 24, 1928. The photographic plates were found in a basement storage.

Genealogy is more than searching for names and dates in old church books. It is just as exciting to try to understand how your ancestors lived and put them in a historical context. Some of your ancestors decided to emigrate from Sweden to the US. Why did they emigrate and how did they travel?

Many discoveries are made in hidden places such as in drawers and attics. If you ask, I'm sure your old aunt would love to show you the photo album she inherited from her grandparents (your grandmother's parents). In a box you will find some old letters. And look! Here are some letters from the relatives in Sweden.

Your great-grandfather's brother worked as a typographer in Stockholm in the beginning of the 1900s. What was it like to work back then? He lived at Kungsholmen. What was the exact address? Is the house still there? You can almost always find the answer to these types of questions.



This PDF file is an extract from ArkivDigital's genealogy book *Explore Your Swedish Heritage* (2021) by Håkan Skogsjö, one of Sweden's most experienced genealogists. The book describes how to search for your ancestry and family in the archival documents on the Internet: church books, estate inventories, military rolls, and other documents. You learn how to use primary sources properly. To help you, ArkivDigital's many name indexes make it easy for you to find the records.

You can purchase this rich-in-content genealogy book in hardback from ArkivDigital's website.