Scandinavian Research

Scandinavia generally refers to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. However, Finland had the same record-keeping system as Sweden and often used the Swedish language in earlier records. Finnish research is similar to Swedish research. Icelandic research is similar to Danish.

The Language: In order to do research, you need to learn some Scandinavian words, the alphabet, and how spellings have changed over time. This is not too difficult. Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are all Germanic languages, which means they are closely related to English, German, and to each other. As in English, some words have different forms: die, dies, died, death, dead, deceased, passed away.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Norwegian</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>fader, far</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>fader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>moder, mor</td>
<td>mor</td>
<td>moder, mor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
<td>hustru, kone</td>
<td>kone</td>
<td>hustru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son</td>
<td>søn</td>
<td>sønn</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>datter</td>
<td>datter</td>
<td>dotter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death</td>
<td>død, døde</td>
<td>død, døde</td>
<td>död, döde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baptized, christened</td>
<td>daab, døpte</td>
<td>døbt, døpte</td>
<td>dop, döpte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>witness, witnesses</td>
<td>fadder</td>
<td>fadderere</td>
<td>fadder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Alphabet: Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish have three extra letters that English does not have. These come at the end of the alphabet: Danish and Norwegian:Æ Å Ø Swedish:Ä Å Ö

Before 1956, Å in Danish was written as AA and came at the beginning of the alphabet.

To write these letters on your computer, hold down the Alt key and type the following on the 10-key pad. Be sure the Num Lock key is on. (See “diacritics” in the help section of PAF.)

Å 0196 Å 0197 Æ 0198 Ö 0214 Ø 0216
ä 0228 å 0229 æ 0156 ö 0246 ø 0248

To change your keyboard to another language, go to start, settings, control panel, keyboard. Click on language tab and follow instructions. (Use Google to find an example of a keyboard in another language.)

Spelling: This has changed over time. Here are some of the most common changes for all three countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>old</th>
<th>new</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fw</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hw</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more about the alphabet and spelling changes, see the word lists at familysearch.org

Jurisdictions: Countries are divided into both civil and religious jurisdictions. The largest civil jurisdiction is called county or province in English, but would be like a US state, as it is the largest division. (Danish:amt, Norwegian:fylker, amt, Swedish:landskap, län.) Names and boundaries have changed over time.

The next civil jurisdiction (equivalent to our counties) is called a district. Although tax and census records were kept on a district level, it is not as important for genealogical purposes as the parish.

The state church (Lutheran) in all the Scandinavian countries kept the vital records including births, deaths, and marriages in the parish, the most important record-keeping jurisdiction. (Danish:sogn; Norwegian:sohn, församling; Swedish:socken, församling)

Inside the parishes are villages, farms, or other small areas often used for identification.

In recording places on genealogy sheets, the small area should be recorded first, followed by the parish, county, and country. The district is usually not recorded.

To discover where your ancestors lived, you often need to consult an atlas or gazetteer and use your imagination, as the information may have been recorded using old spellings, old jurisdictions, English spellings, or misspellings. Parish names may include prefixes such as north, south, east, west, large, or small.
Scandinavian Names

A. Types of naming systems:
1. Patronymic names: This naming system was common in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and most of Finland from the 1400s through the end of the 1800s, and still exists in Iceland today. It was used by about 90% of the people before the mid-1800s. Under this system the "son" affix is attached to the father's given name. For example, if a man called Anders Johansson had a son named Karl and a daughter named Karin, the children’s names would be Karl Andersson (Andersen) and Karin Andersdotter (Andersdatter). Karl Andersson’s children would be Karlsson (Karlsen) or Karlsdotter (Karlsson.

2. Surnames: The nobility and higher class individuals often used a surname such as “Lindberg” that became the child’s surname: Anders Lindberg’s son Karl would be Karl Lindberg and his daughter would be Karin Lindberg.

3. Military names: When Swedes entered the military, they were given a military name in addition to their patronymic name. Their children usually did not take this military name. If Anders Johansson became a soldier, he might be given the soldier name of Lindberg and would be known as Anders Johansson Lindberg or Anders Lindberg. His son would be known as Karl Andersson and his daughter as Karin Andersdotter. (Note that “Lindberg” could be either a “higher class” surname or a military name.)

4. Occupational names: People in cities and in occupations other than farming also sometimes took surnames that may or may not have been used by their children.

5. Norwegian farm names: In Norway the farm name was often attached to the person’s patronymic name. If Jon Andersen settled on a farm called Bakken, he would be called Jon Andersen Bakken, that is: Jon Andersen, who lives at Bakken. If he moved to a farm called Vik, his name would be Jon Andersen Vik. Sweden and Denmark also used farm or village names to identify people, but a preposition such as “from” or “in” separated the person’s name from the farm name.

B. Female names: Until the mid-1800s, married women did not take their husband’s name as a surname. Thus prior to that time, all women were known by their maiden names.

C. Changes to the naming system in the late 1800s and early 1900s: Around the 1860s it became popular for most people to adopt a family surname carried from one generation to the next. A lot of families adopted a name connected to their home village or a name connected to nature. However, the majority just "froze" their patronymic name as their family name with daughters changing “dotter” to “son.” Married women also began using their husband’s name.

Remember: Scandinavian names before 1850 are mostly patronymic. Names such as Nils, Olof, Per are very common. People could and often did change their names in the mid-1800s and when emigrating to the United States. Be sure to check place names, dates, and names of other family members to ensure that you have found the right ancestor.

Scandinavian countries kept excellent records. Once you have learned some basic Scandinavian research technics, you will generally have success in researching your Scandinavian ancestors.
Finding your Scandinavian Ancestors in New FamilySearch

New FamilySearch (new.familysearch.org) is a compilation of records from many sources. The computer is programmed to find duplicates among these records, and uses names, relationships, dates, and places to do this. However, the computer may not recognize that two entries are duplicates. Scandinavian names such as Per and Olof are common and can be spelled in different ways. The computer may not recognize that Chattarina Pädersdotter and Katrina Persdr are the same person. Also the person may have been entered with a patronymic name, a farm, military, or “higher class” surname or with no last name at all. People who did not understand the patronymic naming system may have used the father’s patronymic name as the child’s name.

Many Scandinavian names have been entered into new FamilySearch from extracted records in which children of the same parents were entered separately. If you find that your ancestor was entered from the extraction program, you will need to make sure that all the siblings are gathered together and that duplicate parents are merged. To find out whether a name was entered through the extraction program, go to “details” and click on “contributors.”

Many times a duplicate individual will be in the system, but will not appear when you click on “Possible Duplicates”. Follow these steps to find these duplicate individuals:

1. After clicking on “Possible Duplicates”, click on “Advanced possible duplicate search”, and click the bullet for “Multiple name field”.
2. In the boxes, enter only the name of the person and the birth and christening date and place. When entering the place, use the parish name and not the farm or village name. If there are diacritics (ä, å, etc.) in the place name, click on the place with those diacritics in the place-name drop-down choices. Leave the other boxes blank.
3. Click on the link “Show advanced.” Check the “Exact” box under the event place. Click the search button. This will enable you to view only those people in your parish, rather than those all over the country.
4. If you do not find your person, do the same search leaving out the child’s last name and putting in the father’s name. You can also do a parent search for all the children in a family by leaving blank the boxes for the ancestor’s first and last names, putting in the father’s first and last names and a range of dates. Add the mother’s first name if you have too many hits.

Finding Extracted Names in FamilySearch

The new version of the old FamilySearch site (familysearch.org) has many excellent features. One of these is the ability to find which names have been indexed or extracted. The steps below show one of many search possibilities.

1. On the home page, find “Browse by Location” and click on “Europe.” Scroll down to find your country. Click on the link for “Baptisms”.
2. Click on “Advanced Search”, and on the arrow under “Relationship”. Then click “Parents”.
3. Write the name of the parish in the “Place” space and check the little box so that you search only in that parish. Diacritics for place names are automatically entered. Put in a range of years. Fill in the father’s names, and click search. If you get too many hits, add a mother’s name, a child’s name, or a smaller range of years.
4. If you do not get any hits, try searching for the child’s first name without a father’s name and make the range of years larger. If you search several ways for some common names and do not get any hits, it probably means that the parish has not been extracted for the time for which you are searching.
5. When you have found the name you are searching for, click on the arrow next to the name to see more information about that person.
6. Use the information you have found, including the exact spelling of the names, to search for the person in new FamilySearch.

Not all extracted records have been entered into new FamilySearch. Sometimes only the female names have been entered, and sometimes only those for a particular range of dates.
How to Decide if a Name is a Duplicate

Usually you can tell whether two names are duplicates by using the “Compare in more details” tab. But sometimes not enough information is given. For example, if couples were sealed through the extraction program, all that will show on the “Compare in more details” screen is the name of the bride and groom. You can find more information about this couple by clicking on the name of the spouse. A new window will open showing the summary of that person’s information. Click on the “Spouses and children” tab to see the marriage date and place.

If you are not absolutely certain that the name you have found is a duplicate, do not combine the names. Remember that Scandinavian names are very common. There may be two couples in the same parish with the same names having children at the same time. The farm or village name is a good identifier, but this name is often not found in new FamilySearch. If you are unsure whether a name is a duplicate, the best way to find out is to go to the original parish records, which can be found on the Internet.