

# Parish Records

Digitalised material from the Demographic Data Base



*Husförhöret. Frans Lindberg 1932. Simrishamns museum.*

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## About Parish Registers

There has been a system of parish registration in Sweden for four centuries, and over this long period the information recorded underwent considerable changes – not merely from one age to another, but also from parish to parish and even within the same parish, with the arrival of a new pastor, for instance.

The canon law of 1686 laid down the first generally applicable regulations for the keeping of parish records, and there were no further general directives until 1860. The clergy therefore had a fairly free hand in deciding what form the records should take.

This presentation attempts to give an account of the information we have found within the Demographic Data Base. The number of parish records in our national archives is enormous, and we have been able to work with only a very small proportion, so this presentation can in no way be exhaustive. Some of the information is common to most registers, but a good deal of it is specific to both period and parish.

## History

Parish registration in Sweden was regulated by canon law in 1686, by which time most dioceses were already keeping parish records - though for how long they had been doing so is not known. We can only know with certainty that parish registration has been practiced since the time from which documents have been preserved. It is probable that even the medieval priest made notes to help him carry out his duties, but very few records from the Middle Ages have survived.

In mediaeval synod ordinances there is no mention of parish registers as we understand them; it is merely laid down that the parish priest should record in the missal the incomes of the church and the parsonage. Such financial records have survived from a few parishes in the Middle Ages, but they are extremely brief.

All sizeable churches probably kept records of bequests made to them. Such lists, so-called *anniversarium*, have been preserved from a number of cathedrals and one parish church - Svinnegarn in the county of Uppland. An *anniversarium* was celebrated on the anniversary of a person's death, and on such occasions people of wealth and distinction could bequeath land to the church where they would be buried. This was a considerable source of income for many churches.

From the period of the Reformation there are records listing the church properties confiscated by the king. The ecclesiastical statutes of 1571 lay down that inventories must be made for cathedrals, and that when a new parish priest is appointed he must make one for the parish church. At the same time as lists of this kind began to be made at the end of the 16th century, people also began to record the proceedings at parish meetings and official visits.

When Archbishop Abraham Angermannus visited the diocese of Linköping in 1596 he instructed the clergy to make records for their parishes. The actual directives have not survived, but it is possible to form an impression of what they were like from the parish registers preserved from the time.

In 1608 Archbishop Olaus Martini instructed the clergy to keep records of all baptisms, marriages and betrothals.

Johannes Rudbeckius, Bishop of Västerås, laid down in his episcopal ordinance of 1622 that records should be kept of all parishioners; this so-called population register would later serve as a model for the catechetical registers. Within a short time similar regulations had been made in other dioceses.

Notification of change of address became compulsory in the middle of the 17th century. Detailed instructions for making the various lists are found in the 1666 diocesan ordinances of Johannes Gegelius the Elder, Bishop of Åbo. The canon law of 1686 regulated parish registration. It was dealt with in various contexts in the legislation, but most thoroughly in connection with episcopal visits. The clergy were directed to keep a register (catechetical list), which was to be a topographical record of everyone living in the parish. "Catechism lists" were already in use in many dioceses, and they served as models for the written registers now required by canon law. The lists were drawn up on the occasion of the annual house-to-house catechetical meetings, and were intended to help the clergy to report on parishioners' knowledge of the catechism when the bishop made his yearly visit.

The canon law directives were relatively detailed for their time, but variations did occur in the way the records were made, especially where the catechetical lists were concerned. They were seen as the parson's private papers, made for the purpose of helping him to carry out his duties and often thrown away on his death. When a new list was drawn up the old one was considered to be worthless, and was often thrown away immediately. Many old lists also disappeared when the church or the parsonage was cleaned up. Newly-appointed clergy often complained about not being able to inherit a catechetical list from a predecessor. Many places did not start making complete catechetical registers until after the mid-18th century. With



divided into 16 wards or districts, each with its own district registrar whose duties were to keep population records and taxable resident lists. At the start of each year he would report on the population situation in his ward. The information was recorded in ledgers arranged according to premises and containing details of everyone living in them.

## Origins of ecclesiastical division

The activities of the Swedish church are organised territorially, and this territorial or parochial division is of early origin. The form we know today began in the 12th or 13th century, when Sweden moved from the missionary period into the form of the established church. Since then the only major changes have taken place in the northern part of the country where church organisation did not develop until fairly recently, and in the major cities where population increases brought with them a need for change.

The origin of Swedish parochial division is not clear. The word for parish (*socken*) may have originated in Old Swedish *sokn* with a double meaning of "a group of people seeking something in the same direction" and "seeking justice within the law". This has led to the development of two theories concerning the origin of parochial division. According to one, *socken* means the area to which a group of people came, seeking the same church - thus the land divisions came with Christianity. The other theory claims that *socken* designates the territorial unit forming the basis of judicial, fiscal and military activities in early heathen times - with the implication that the land divisions go back to a pre-Christian era.

### *Parish, deanery, diocese*

There are three Swedish terms for which "parish" is the only English equivalent: *socken*, *pastorat*, *församling*. In this text, *socken* and *pastorat* will be used when necessary for purposes of distinction, and "parish" will be used for *församling*.

*Socken* always refers to a territorial unit while "parish" can be used of both territorial and pastoral units.

Several parishes may, as units of administration and employment, be combined to form a *pastorat*, and several of the latter may together comprise a rural deanery, which is in turn a subdivision of a diocese.

The largest parish where the priest lived was called "the mother parish" (*moderförsamling*), and the remainder were known as "subsidiary parishes" (*annexförsamling*).

A "chapel parish" (*kapellförsamling*) was a distant area that had broken away from the mother parish and had its own chapel. If a chapel or subsidiary parish so wished, the cathedral chapter might allow a curate or chaplain to be in charge of parish registration in their respective areas, under the supervision of the parish priest.

During the 19th century there were 2570 parishes and 1144 *pastorat*.

A *pastorat* is the area in which the priest or parson carries out his official duties, and the majority are territorial, i.e. comprise a certain district. Only a few are nonterritorial - e.g. the German and Finnish church in Stockholm.

There were *pastorat* with subsidiary parishes in Sweden as early as the Catholic period, but they were not common until after the onset of the Reformation. To provide poorly paid parsons with sufficient income the Västerås ordinances of 1527 laid down that where the livings (i.e. the pastor's duty area) were weak, two should be combined to make one.

Subsidiary churches were often called riding churches at that time, because there was not always a road between churches, and the parson would have to ride to the church where he was going to hold a service.

One *pastorat* might consist of only one parish, but could often contain several. In both size and population there could be great variation, and for this reason there was a division into first, second and third class *pastorat*. Firstclass was in a city or a large provincial town, secondclass implied moderately good, while the weaker ones were classified as thirdclass. It was impossible to apply for one of the really privileged *pastorat*: instead, the congregation drew up a list of an unspecified number of nominations from among the clergy. After 1883 there was no longer any point in classifying the various *pastorat*, as in that year merit and skill replaced scholarly qualifications as the criteria for appointment.

On the subject of clerical appointments, *Nordisk Familjebok* (the Nordic Encyclopaedia) of 1883 says the following:

*Concerning the appointment of parsons, pastorat may be royal (granted by the king), consistorial or donative. In addition 39 are benefices, one is hereditary, while twelve are specially privileged. In order to be considered for appointment to a regal or consistorial pastorat, clergy must belong to the diocese in question. This restriction does not apply to Stockholm's various territorial pastorat, for which clergy from anywhere in the country may apply. Applications should be made to the relevant consistory, which will nominate the three most highly qualified applicants for a trial sermon. The final appointment to a royal pastorat will be made by the Government, and to a consistorial pastorat by the consistory. In the case of a donative pastorat, the patron (e.g. squire, estate owner) may appoint whom he will as parson, without the demand of formal application, so long as that person is qualified. There are additionally a small number of royalconsistorial and consistorialdonative pastorat, where clerical appointment alternates between Government, consistory and patron. A living is a pastorat where the duties of the parson are part of another particular ecclesiastical office, and special application and appointment is therefore unnecessary."*

A varying number of *pastorat* are combined to form a deanery, which is in turn a subdivision of a diocese, the whole deanery being under the supervision of the rural dean. He made annual visits and sent reports to his consistory. He was appointed by the bishop after the ordinary parish clergy had sent in their suggestions.

A diocese is a bishop's administrative region, and seven of the thirteen existing dioceses go back to the divisions that were known at the start of the thirteenth century. Apart from the bishop, the cathedral chapter is also responsible for management of the diocese.

The cathedral chapter goes a long way back in history. The name originated in the practice of the diocesan priests' reading a chapter from the bible at their daily assemblies in the cathedral.

The bishop of Uppsala is archbishop, and even if the office in principle ceased to exist at the time of the Reformation, the bishop of Uppsala is still the spiritual leader of the Swedish Church. He speaks for the whole Church, and he performs the ceremony of consecration for new bishops. It is said of the archbishop that he is "*Primus inter peres*" (First among equals).

## Key Variables

### *Year of birth, date of birth, age*

Details of year and date of birth can be found with greatest certainty in the birth and baptismal registers. In other sources the provision of this information varies according to parish and period. Instead of the date of birth, some of the earliest catechetical registers state the age of a person at the time when the list was made; other early catechetical registers provide only the year of birth, though in the 19th century the day and the month also begin to appear, and are lacking for only a few people after mid-century.

Date-of-birth details appear on change-of-address certificates, but are usually missing from the migration registers. From about 1880 onwards many migration lists contain birth data for men of military service age, and from the 1890s these details begin to be included for other people in the registers. In some parishes, e.g. Skellefteå rural parish, this information appears in the first migration registers from the 1830s.

Birth data do not appear in the earliest registers of banns and marriages. Around the 1830s the age of the bridal couple begins to occur, and after this time most parishes adopted fairly rapidly the practice of recording both year and date of birth.

Only in exceptional cases do date-of-birth details appear in the registers of deaths and burials; those from the 19th century provide only the age at the time of death. In the earliest registers the age may be missing or incorrect, and in that case can be established by checking in the birth and baptismal register. The population registers include either age or year of birth, frequently providing only the first two digits of the relevant year.

### *Place of birth*

A child's place of birth is the parish where his/her name is entered in the birth and baptismal register - as a rule the place of the mother's parish registration at the time of the birth. If a child was born in a different parish from the one of its registration there may be a note of this in the records, though such information is not often found in the early registers. Not until the 19th century did it become common practice to record the place of birth.

Sometimes the child's place of birth can be found in the catechetical register, but if the information is missing from here as well it is often virtually impossible to discover the correct place of birth. According to regulations the pastor was obliged to send to the mother's home parish a baptismal certificate if a child was baptised in another parish. The baptism was the chief concern when this rule was formulated, so there is no mention of the birth. It is impossible to know whether a baptismal certificate also applies to a child's birth without checking the entries in the catechetical register. Baptism was expected to take place eight days after the birth, and thus it is probable that the child was baptised in the nearest church - which was not always necessarily in the home parish.

As well as in the birth and baptismal register, the place of birth would be recorded in the catechetical lists and on change-of-address certificates. Only in exceptional cases is it found recorded in the other ministerial registers. Place of birth was recorded in the catechetical registers from about the mid-19th century. Sometimes, in addition to the name of the parish, there is a note of the county. For children born within the parish there may also be a record of which village they were born in.

### *Baptism*

In early Christian times the baptism of a child might be performed only by a bishop and take place only in a cathedral, but in time every priest, in every parish church, might baptise a child.

During the 17th century baptism began to be removed from the church to the home, as it was an occasion for family rejoicing with consequent entertainment. A further reason for baptising at home was the strict regulation concerning the time for the ritual; parents were

reluctant to take an infant outside so soon after its birth. Baptism had to take place at the latest eight days after the birth, though in 1864 the period was extended to six weeks. If the child was not baptised by the end of that time it could be fetched by the bailiff. This ruling was however abolished in 1887.

A child born in a certain parish should be baptised by the clergy of that parish. In 1859 the parish connection ceased to be obligatory, and the right was also granted to parents to make use of other clergy. According to medieval tradition, in an emergency if the child's life was in danger and there was no priest available, a (preferably male) layman could perform the baptism. This emergency baptism was later confirmed in the church, and one might say that the child had been baptised but not made Christian; the latter took place at the church confirmation, which was sometimes called christening.

1851	
Feb. 11	<p>Christina Andrietta          f. Lars Pehrson &amp; Sigrid          Stina Nilsdotter</p>
Feb. 16	<p>D. Anders Nilsson, f. Sigrid &amp; Andrietta          Pehrson &amp; Nilsdotter, f. Sigrid &amp; Andrietta          f. Lars Pehrson &amp; Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter          f. Anders Nilsson &amp; Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter          f. Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter &amp; Anders Nilsson</p>

*Figure: On February 11 in 1851, Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter, 34 year old wife of farmer Lars Pehrson in the village Máhlsta, gave birth to daughter Christina Andrietta. The child was baptised five days later, on February 16. In the right column the minister entered the names of those that were present as witnesses and would later act as Godparents.*

In some remote parishes, for example in the county of Västerbotten, it became common practice to administer an emergency baptism at birth, even if the child's life was not endangered. Many pastors complained about this, as it meant that they lost their rightful fee for performing an ecclesiastical service.

The date of baptism can be found in birth and baptismal registers, and occasionally in catechetical registers. In some migration registers there may be a special column for baptism dates, not only for children but for everyone the pastor had information about.

As Baptists refused to have their children baptised, there is no baptism date for many children in areas with large numbers of Baptists, particularly in the latter part of the 19th century.

The baptismal parish is the parish where the child's name is entered in the birth and baptismal register, unless there is a note to the contrary.

The directions for compiling a birth and baptismal register state that "if the baptism is performed by another pastor or in another parish than that where the mother is registered, a certificate to that effect shall be sent to the parish where the mother is registered so that the baptism may be entered in the birth and baptismal register". There may be uncertainty about the baptismal parish if the certificate was despatched by a pastor without any note of parochial origin.

#### *Legitimacy*

In the canon law of 1686 there were regulations concerning penance and special churching for women who gave birth to children out of wedlock, and in the 1734 law extra-marital relationships were forbidden. In 1855 compulsory penance was abolished and replaced by voluntary private confession - which nevertheless had to be noted on any parish registration certificate. Not until 1917 was the 1855 ordinance revoked, thereby canceling completely the earlier obligation for mothers who gave birth out of wedlock to do penance.

Legitimacy is noted in the birth and baptismal registers, catechetical registers, or change-of-address certificates, and occasionally in the registers of deaths and burials. Records begin to appear in the birth and baptismal registers from the mid-19th century. The note is then "oä", "oäkta" or "nothus" (Latin for illegitimate). In books from the end of the 19th century there are special columns for noting legitimacy. In the catechetical registers the notation "oä" or "oäkta" is found in the name column or in the left-hand margin.

Records of betrothed couples' children can also be found in the name column or the space for comments, in such forms as "trollovningsbarn, född före äktenskapet, f.f.ä, ante nupteas" (betrothal child, born before marriage)

#### *Assistance at birth*

To provide assistance at the delivery of a child was forbidden by a regulation of 1856 for anyone except a qualified midwife, and any infringement of this rule was punishable by the imposition of a fine. The only permitted exception was when it was impossible to obtain the help of either a midwife or a doctor.

Midwives were trained at special state funded colleges in Stockholm, Lund and Gothenburg. The course lasted for at least nine months and was divided into two terms of study. Apart from midwifery they learned about child care, blood-letting, cupping, the use of leeches, and inoculation with cow-pox. There was a final oral examination, and certificates of midwifery were awarded. A midwife could take an extra course in surgically-assisted delivery, which would be noted on the certificate and gave her the right to perform surgical deliveries.

Records of assistance at birth can be found in the birth and baptismal registers from around 1869. The notes were made in the margins or in a space under another heading until a special printed column began to be provided. The note is "Ex" for "examinerat biträde" (a qualified examined midwife), and occasionally "Oex" for "oexaminerat" (unqualified). The terms "barnmorska" (midwife) or "utan barnmorska" (without midwife) sometimes occur, and occasionally even the midwife's name.

#### *Churching, absolution*

Churching was the name given to the ecclesiastical ceremony through which a woman who had recently given birth returned to the community of the church and reassumed her rights as a member of the congregation.

Notice of a churching was always given by the woman's husband, either beforehand at the parish registration office or on the same day it was to be carried out. Throughout the country churching took place 4-6 weeks after the birth of a child, to correspond to the purification of the Virgin Mary 40 days after the birth of Jesus. Candlemas Day in February, when the Church celebrated this biblical occasion, was a popular day for the churching of mothers. The six-week interval has its origins in the Old Testament prescription concerning the 40 days that a new mother was "unclean".

Mothers were not allowed to work out-doors until they had been churched, and as many poor women could not afford to be away from work for so long the 1846 canon law proposal recommended that the ceremony be permitted after four weeks, but Parliament did not legislate for this until 1866.

Usually churching took place before the Sunday morning service. After it became possible to postpone baptism for up to six weeks after birth (1864), the practice developed of performing churching and baptism on the same occasion; first the mother would be churched in a separate room, and then she was allowed to join the others who were attending the baptism.

There was an old tradition that churching should take place at the church door, and in some cases in the central aisle. In both cases the ceremony was later moved up to the altar. Wives of the clergy were usually received first at the altar, as were women from the upper classes. One of the reasons for moving the ceremony from the door to the altar was a concern for the

women's health - it was cold and draughty by the door. Mothers also felt ashamed of being churching at the door, where it was the practice to punish and absolve criminals. During the ceremony the woman knelt on a special churching stool, while the pastor read the churching prayer then took her hand and pronounced a benediction. The payment of an obligatory churching fee was abolished during the 1860s-1870s.

Unmarried mothers were not churching but shriven, often on a weekday or after a church service. The pastor did not take the woman's hand, nor was she allowed to kneel on a covered stool as married women did, but had to kneel on the floor or at best an uncovered stool.

During the later 19th century the custom of churching was relaxed in central and northern Sweden. This must be seen in the context of other social changes such as Free Churchism, industrialisation and population moves.

Records of churching and absolution are found in the birth and baptismal registers, and sometimes on change-of-address certificates and in the catechetical registers. The last two usually state only if a woman was not churching or absolved, though the catechetical register does record the churching of women who were officially betrothed. The birth and baptismal registers contain notes of churching and absolution in the 19th century. In most cases there are records from before 1850, though there are variations between parishes regarding the first entries. Towards the end of the 19th century many parishes stopped recording the absolution of unmarried mothers, who were noted as having been churching instead. At the same time the records of married women's churching decreased in number, and had stopped completely by the turn of the century.

#### *Banns*

There were decrees concerning the publication of banns included in the provincial laws for most parts of Sweden. The most detailed regulations can be found in the Uppland law, which says:

*"...on three Sundays the pastor shall announce in the church doorway that the said persons are betrothed in accordance with the law of the land, and wish to be joined in matrimony according to canon law. If any person during this time should make known any hindrance to this marriage, either carnal or spiritual, or know that either of the persons concerned has been betrothed to another or that there is any other impediment to this union, the couple may not be married until the case is examined. If no hindrance is made known during the said time, the pastor may join them in holy wedlock."*

The banns were published according to time-honored custom only in the parish where the woman was registered, and so a certificate testifying to the absence of any impediment to marriage was introduced to confirm the man's eligibility, if he came from another parish. This was later replaced by a "marriage certificate". Calling the banns gave a couple the right to be married up to four months after the third Sunday, but no later than that. The oldest surviving registers of banns and marriages in the Sundsvall region are from the end of the 17th century. The earliest books record only marriages, but in general the banns began to be recorded during the later part of the 18th century. For most parishes there are notes of both banns and marriages in 19th century registers.

Banns are recorded in the parish where they were called. If publication of banns and marriage took place in different parishes, a certificate was sent from each parish to the other one for the event in question.

In the lists of banns there is often only a record of the first Sunday of the three, but sometimes all three may have been entered, or the first and the last.

#### *Marriage*

As regards the legal consequences for common people, marriage had no significance right up until 1734, when marriage by church ceremony was fully recognised by secular law as the

only valid form. Before this, according to common law, the man became guardian of his wife as soon as they had slept together for one night. In 1863 it became legally possible for someone of the Jewish faith to marry a member of the Swedish Church or some other religious community, by means of a civil ceremony, and in 1873 civil marriage ceremonies began to increase somewhat. The ceremony was performed by the magistrate in towns, and the district bailiff in country areas.

How marriages took place in Sweden in the time of common law is something we know little about, as old rituals have not been preserved. By tracing the rituals of other countries, for example France, one can follow the process of transformation from civil to ecclesiastical ceremony. One part of the ceremony took place at the church door, where the bride and groom would stand and declare that they wished of their own free will to enter into marriage with one another. This was known as the declaration of consensus. After the declaration of consensus the priest blessed the ring and it was placed upon the finger.

When the priest had blessed the bridal couple the ceremony at the church door was completed, and he then conducted the bridal couple and bridal train into the church, where followed the nuptial mass and the blessing of the bride. The Reformation caused no great change in the marriage rites. The ceremony was still divided into two, with one part at the door and one inside the church, but now the wording of the the nuptials was in Swedish. According to the prayer-book of 1614 the whole ceremony was for the first time conducted inside the church, and the marriage service has to this day largely retained the form it was given in that prayer-book.

1841			
Sept	16	Erik Petrus Hallén i Valljörn	27
		oh Sig. Lucia Lingqvist i Månsåsa	—
	24	Amund Bränngren Jonas Persson i Månsåsa	—
		oh Sig. Miksa Eriksd. i Järf	—
	23	Torp. Erik Olssonqvist i Torsåsa	63
		oh Bränd. Gustaf Nilsen i Rude	68
10	Nov.	7	
		Bränd. Lars Petrus Persson i Runsvik	25
		oh Bränd. Greta Cajsa Eriksd. i Wärfle	—
	10	Oct.	
		29	
		Måstaden Jon Andersson i Måstaden	21
		oh Sig. Magdalena Wikström i Gröth i ibid	—
			27
	10	7	
		Bränd. Lars Persson i Måstaden	25
		oh Bränd. Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter i Runsvik	—
			24

Handwritten notes on the right side of the page: } Döpt } inga i Skövde.

Figure: On October 10 in 1841 Lars Persson published his banns with Sigrid Stina Nilsdotter, a farmers' daughter from the village Runsvik. They married on November 7. Lars was 25 and Sigrid Stina 24 years old.

Marriages are recorded in the register of banns and marriages, the catechetical register, and on change-of-address certificates. Occasionally they may also appear in the migration register, and in the birth and baptismal register the date of the parents' marriage may be recorded. There is a special column in the catechetical register for the date of marriage, and sometimes this may even contain a note about which marriage of several it is. Around 1860

there is usually also a column for the dissolution of marriage, where there will be found a date for when the person in question became widowed. If the marriage ended in divorce this is also noted.

### *Guardian*

In very early Swedish society marriage was a financial arrangement between two families, and within this system the guardian had an important role. The man and the woman were unable to act as they thought best; the man spoke in his own cause, but was dependent on the advice of his kinsmen. The woman was spoken for by her guardian, usually her father or some other close relative. If the father was dead and there were no male kinsmen, the mother could act as guardian. An unmarried woman was considered incapable of managing her own affairs as late as in 1863. Originally her consent to a marriage was not required, and she could even be given away against her will. It was her guardian who decided her future.

Guardianship was the very backbone of the system built up by the old marriage laws, and the church did not wish to force the old Germanic form of marriage with a guardian to change into an ecclesiastical rite where the priest took over the guardian's role. The church adopted this heathen custom because it did not conflict with its teachings. In the laws of Östgötaland there are the remains of an old idea that the right to give away the bride is not the priest's but the guardian's. As confirmation that he had given this right to the priest, the guardian himself should be present at the marriage ceremony. As women began to acquire some degree of equality with men, betrothal was no longer an agreement about the woman, but a mutual agreement between man and woman. Under these circumstances the guardian was in fact superfluous, but the tradition was retained until the end of the 19th century.

Records of guardianship can be found in the registers of banns and marriages up to the end of the 19th century, after which the note in the column is often of the type "*kvinnan myndig*" (i.e. she has now come of age). A guardian's consent could be either verbal or written. In the case of written consent, the date when it was given is sometimes recorded.

### *Burial*

Burial of the dead has been a Christian custom since the earliest times. The 1571 ecclesiastical statutes excluded certain categories from a Christian burial - namely suicides, unabsolved murderers, those guilty of sacrilege, and those dying a sudden death from flagrant iniquities.

During the 17th century the system was extended and altered. The 18th-century theologian Baetler describes the system of dishonourable burials. He distinguishes between honourable or respectable burials and those that were without honour. The latter he categorises as most, less and least dishonourable - the last of these being private burials. The most dishonourable burials were carried out by the executioner in the forest or on the gallows. Selfdestroyers who had in cold blood done away with themselves were by no means to be laid to rest in a churchyard to be an abomination to others, but should be taken to the forest by the executioner and unceremoniously buried there. If the suicide had been the result of weakness of mind, rage or some other torment, the dead person could be handled by other people and buried. The less dishonourable burials took place in the churchyard, though in a secluded area and without the assistance of a clergyman. The north side of the churchyard was considered less honourable.

The least dishonourable burials were carried out by a clergyman in the church or the churchyard, without bell-ringing and with as little ceremony as possible. This system of dishonourable burials came wholly under secular law, and was thus an element of contemporary penal legislation. The regulations in the misdeeds and penalties codes concerning the burial of criminals were repealed through the 1864 Criminal Code. In the same year a paragraph was written into the canon law according to which criminals who were sentenced to death, or who died while serving sentences of hard labour for life, should be buried privately in the nearest burial ground.

The 1908 synod did away with the regulation concerning private burial for suicides, though it was retained for those who had been executed or killed while committing a serious crime. Newborn infants who died unbaptised were sprinkled with earth; the service-book of 1811 mentions the burial of stillborn and unbaptised infants, whereby the usual ceremonial words were spoken, followed by the Lord's Prayer and a blessing.

Date and place of burial are recorded in the registers of deaths and burials, and occasionally in the catechetical registers. In some of the registers of deaths and burials from the 18th century the date is missing, but it is usually present in all 19th-century books.

The directions for compiling registers of deaths and burials say that the correct place for recording decease and burial is the parish where someone was most recently registered. The same details are usually also recorded in the register of deaths and burials of the parish/es where a person died and was buried. It was also a pastor's duty when there was a death in his parish to send notice of this to the dead person's home parish.

Begravnings- nummer	Döds-		Begravnings-		Kön.		De afdödes namn, stånd, embete, yrke, hem- vist, nationalitet och trosbekännelse (om främ- mande), samt, för minderårige, föräldrars namn, yrke och hemvist.	Tillhör Adel.	Ålder vid dödsfallet.			Ogift, gift, enkling, enka.
	årsd.	dag.	årsd.	dag.	m.	g.			år.	mån.	dag.	
26	1	4	17	1			Förre Bonden Lars Persson i Måhlsta		72	9	2	Enkling

Dödsorsak.	Enligt betyg N:o.		Döde i vålgörenhetens-, sjukvårds-, starff- anstalt, annorstädes (ullt utom församling- gen) utomlands.	Föllo uti Hus- förhållanden.	Särskilda anteckningar.
	af läkare.	af barn- morskor.			
Ukänd					
Obekant					

Figure: On May 4 in 1855 the widower and former farmer Lars Persson in Måhlsta died at an age of 72 years 9 months and 2 days. The cause of death was unknown to the minister, but we can assume that the high age of Lars was of importance.

In some registers there are two dates - one for the burial and one for the day the body was removed to the mortuary, or the date of interment if the funeral ceremony did not take place the same day.

#### Cause of death

From the year 1749 it became the duty of the clergy to compile statistics for the cause of all deaths in their parishes. To be able to record the deaths of all their parishioners under the more than thirty headings for cause of death, they needed some help in remembering. It therefore became natural for many pastors to make a note of the cause of death in the register of deaths, even though this was not required by either the cathedral chapter or any lay authority. The primary source, the register of deaths, has a much greater variety of causes of death than Tabellverket's records have. In the primary sources it is easy to recognise the diseases named and described in contemporary medical books. In 1831 the clergy were relieved of this aspect of their responsibilities. According to a circular from 1860 concerning

the compilation of registers of deaths, cause of death should be recorded in the towns but from now on this was not the case for rural parishes. The causes of urban death were now to be given by qualified doctors, and special columns for doctors' and midwives' opinions were added to the forms, which by now were printed and uniform.

The earliest registers of burials have no record of cause of death, but from the 1790s it becomes increasingly common. There are often such causes as "unknown disease" or "infirmity"; only infrequently is the cause written in Latin, and then often for people who died in hospital.

The catechetical registers rarely contain information on cause of death, and most other registers have no such records. Some registers have a figure written above the cause of death - this is the figure it has on the printed form for the mortality tables. Here the pastor ticked off the causes of his parishioners' deaths during the past year, and by noting the figure in the register he was preparing the work of filling in the tables which he would send to Tabellverket at the end of the year. *Migration To and From a Parish*  
When someone intended to move from one parish to another, a change-of-address certificate had to be obtained from the pastor in the home parish and handed over to the pastor in the new parish within fourteen days. These certificates were handwritten from the beginning and varied greatly in appearance, but after a time a standard printed form was developed.

When the pastor wrote out or received a certificate he noted the move in the catechetical list and the migration register.

Moves are recorded in both the migration and the catechetical registers, but are found only sporadically in other ministerial books.

#### Migration

registers

The migration registers state from which or to which parish a move was made, and the name of the county is sometimes added. In the oldest registers the only information available is the number of people who moved into or out of the parish, and there are no details of the places concerned.

Most migration registers also give the date of the move. In some books there are two dates - one for the writing of the certificate and one for the move itself.

Årsnummer		Åttioens datum	Folk ut Förlofsboken	De utflyttades namn, stånd, embete, yrke.	Ställe hvarifrån ut- flyttad.	Ort hvarthän utflyttad (socken i lön, stad)	Åttioens Åttioens	Ordnings- nummer
1882							86	
43	4	1882		Kristina Andrietta Larssén, hustru	Mälby	Attmar		1

Figure: On November 4 in 1882 Lars Perssons daughter Kristina Andrietta migrated to the nearby parish Attmar.

Registers of moves into a parish also contain details of people who died in the parish but whose parochial origin was not known. According to a royal formula these persons should be entered in the parish register of deaths and burials, but also in the record of moves into the parish with a reference to the former. If a certificate of removal had been made out but the move never took place, it was returned to the pastor who either entered it in the list of moves to the parish with a note that it was a returned certificate of removal, or he crossed out the move in the register of removals.

### *Catechetical Registers*

The very earliest catechetical registers do not usually contain routine records of moves. Often the removals were first noted in the Communion columns: the name of the parish or village connected with a move in the parish was entered in the Communion column for the year in which the move took place. Around 1820 the catechetical registers acquired a new form with columns for moves both into and out of the parish.

For parish-to-parish moves, the entry consists of the parish name with perhaps the county name added, and for moves within a parish the entry is a village name, or a reference to the page in the catechetical register where the person was registered after moving in or before moving away. For parish-to-parish moves there is usually also the year and the date of the move, and the number of the change-of-address certificate. For moves within a parish the date may be missing or may consist of only the year. There is however considerable variation between parishes, and within the same parish during different periods, in the way the details of moves were recorded.

When a person moved the name was crossed out. If s/he moved back to the same residence and had to be re-registered on the same page, instead of rewriting the name on a new line the pastor would underline the "old" name with a dotted line or a wavy line. For a further move away, a line would be drawn through the dotted line, and for the next return a new dotted line under the old one would be used. In this way the same person can have been registered several times on the same page and line.

In Attmar, as well as dotted lines a system with brackets was used. When someone moved away from the parish, brackets were put around her/his name; if s/he moved back, reversed brackets were put around the previous ones, and if there was a further move then larger brackets were put outside the others. Combined with dotted lines, this system allowed for a person to be registered many times on the same page and line.

Marriage, taking over a homestead etc., meant a change in social status which - entailed moving a name to another part of the same page. Most often no real move took place but the alteration was a way of registering the change in a person's status. These moves are often marked with the words *infra* ("see below") and *supra* ("see above") in the migration columns.

A catechetical register was rewritten after about 5-10 years. In the old volume there will often be a note on which page in the new volume contains a certain entry, and vice versa in the new register. These notes can be found in the columns for moves to and from the parish.



### *Village, property, inhabitants*

The name of the village is noted in the catechetical registers, in most ministerial books, in migration registers and in the population registers. It may be missing from some pages in the catechetical registers, and then in most cases it is a matter of the pastor being rational. He did not write the name of the village on every page, merely at the beginning and perhaps at the end. In the event of doubt over which village is intended, its name may be checked against the population register or the later catechetical register. Name of village may also be missing for people included under such headings as "*hantverkare, enkor, finnar, pigor, drängar*" (craftsmen, widows, Finlanders, maids, farmhands). Usually these people have a note in the margin or above their name, saying which village they live in.

In the catechetical registers from the Sundsvall region, property names are usually missing, while the lists from Nedertorneå contain both village and property name. Catechetical registers also sometimes contain homestead assessment numbers and the number of land units for the farmer in question. These details are most likely to be found in the population registers: migration registers and ministerial books do not contain records of property and inhabitants. In urban parishes, instead of village or farmstead name, there is the name or number of the block and the house number.

### *Household membership*

On the whole it is only the population registers that indicate which household a person belonged to; everyone who ate at the same table would be noted down together. In the catechetical registers one household was usually allotted one page. At the top were the names of the head of the household and his family, then came other relatives such as grandparents, and at the end came the servants.

In rapidly-expanding parishes it often happened that with time a catechetical register proved too small, so that more than one family had to be entered on the same page. In these cases it may be difficult to know which household a person belongs to, but cross-checking with the population register can often solve the problem of household membership. Occasionally a whole household was entered on the same change-of-address certificate, or on the same line of a migration register, but usually servants had their own certificates.

### *Family Status*

Details of position within the family are found in all registers. Members of a family are related to its head, and if someone else acquires this position, relationships are changed for the family members. In registers of deaths and burials, family status is recorded for the wife and children, but sometimes also for other relatives, e.g. mother or mother-in-law. In this case the name of the person to whom she is mother-in-law or mother will be written before her own name.

### *Civil Status*

In the catechetical registers, records of marriage or its dissolution will reveal a person's civil status. If this information is missing, details of family status will often help to establish civil status. Difficulties may arise in connection with servants or other people temporarily visiting the parish if there is no record of their civil status. In many cases the comment "*till äkt. ledig*" (eligible for marriage) or "*ej ledig*" (ineligible for marriage) may appear by a name, but for some people there is no record at all of civil status.

Change-of-address certificates state whether someone is unattached; sometimes there is a note that the marriage ability is not confirmed for a particular period in the person's life. Migration registers, on the other hand, seldom provide details of civil status. The later registers of deaths and burials have a special column for the civil status of the deceased, while in earlier books it may be noted after the dead person's name. Registers of banns and marriages usually say whether the bridal couple are single or widowed.

### *Occupation*

A person's trade or occupation is found in all the registers except the birth and baptismal register. In the catechetical lists it is most often written in front of the name. Occasionally however a page may have an occupation as its heading - e.g. boatswains, craftsmen - and then everyone on that page follows that particular trade. If someone changed trades during the period covered by a catechetical register, the previous occupation is crossed out and the new one written above. Sometimes even the year of the change may be given. A cross-check of the trades noted in the catechetical lists with those in the annual population registers will fairly quickly reveal that changes of trade were not entered as conscientiously in the former as in the latter; the most up-to-date details concerning occupation will thus be found in the population registers (*mantalslängder*). If one of the children took over the homestead, this was often noted in the catechetical register. The father's occupation was crossed out or supplemented with the letter "f" meaning "formerly" (e.g. "f. farmer"), and the son took over the title of farmer. The year for such an event is sometimes stated, but most often the only thing that is certain is that it took place some time during the period covered by the register. Sometimes, instead of these notes, the term "*tillträtt*" (taken over) is written in front of the child's name, indicating that s/he took over the homestead. The letters "f s s", standing for "by him/herself", are also sometimes found in front of a child's name, meaning that the child is entered in the population register in his/her own right; in practice this means that the son or daughter has in some way become self-supporting.

Occupation was noted in the ministerial books in connection with whatever service had been performed. Birth and baptismal registers give the father's or mother's occupation at the time of a child's birth. In parishes with aristocratic families, honorary titles are usual for both men and women. The titles appear in all the registers and are of the type The Right Honourable, The Venerable, etc. They are not usually written out in full but abbreviated in some way.

### *Vaccination*

In the 1790s, the Englishman Edward Jenner discovered a smallpox vaccine. Inoculation of healthy people had already been tried - the first Swedish inoculation was back in 1757 - but smallpox continued unabated. In 1798 Jenner published his findings, and the smallpox vaccine began to be used around the whole world.

In Sweden the first vaccination was performed in 1801. After 1810 the practice became widespread, and was effected not only by doctors but by parish clerks and pastors. It became compulsory in 1815. The protection provided by the vaccine was not unlimited, but was effective for some ten years only, so revaccinations would be performed particularly during smallpox epidemics. A renewed regulation from 1853 laid down that all parents and guardians should have their children vaccinated within two years at the most. In rural areas vaccination was the responsibility of the municipal boards, who appointed one or two vaccination superintendents. In the towns vaccinations were supervised by the municipal medical officers. At the beginning of each year, the parish registration office compiled a list of all the children who had been born during the previous year but one, and vaccinations were organized on the basis of this information. The records kept by the vaccinator were passed on to the registration office to be entered in the catechetical register.

Parents who refused to have their children vaccinated were fined. For a child to be admitted to elementary school or reformatory a vaccination certificate had to be produced, or proof that the child had already had smallpox.

Apart from the catechetical registers, vaccination records are also found on change-of-address certificates, and sometimes in migration registers and birth and baptismal registers. Notes on vaccinations appear in catechetical registers from the beginning of the 19th century. The earlier books have no special column for these notes, so they are found in the margins or under other headings. The first records are extremely varied; "v", "vac", "vacc", "y", "ymp" for vaccination and "s", "sm", "smk", "smitt", "k", "kopp", "haft koppor", "nat" if the person has had smallpox. Sometimes there are even double notes, e.g. "vs, s/v". The abbreviation "Rev" also occurs, and stands for revaccination. At a later date came directions on which

abbreviations to use: "v" for vaccination and "s" for smallpox. In some cases the year of the infection may also be noted.

#### *Remarks*

Remarks are found in all registers and on change-of-address certificates. Not all the registers, on the other hand, have special columns for remarks but they may be entered in spaces intended for other information, and in the margins.

#### *Catechetical registers*

Remarks in the catechetical registers are usually brief and of the type "blind", "destitute", "sickly" etc. There are sometimes also longer comments, which are often in very small writing and difficult to read.

#### *Migration registers*

There are few remarks in the migration registers, and only in the later books is there a special column for remarks. The most usual note is the date of birth for men of military service age, and a number for conscripts. Between the lines will be a note of the date when the person was registered as resident. Some migration registers have a special column for noting all children who have moved.

#### *Birth and baptismal registers*

Only the most recent registers have a special column for remarks; in other books remarks have been noted in the same column as the child's name or those of the parents. The remarks are such as "illegitimate", "not baptised", "emergency baptism" or a record of baptism in another parish, the name of the officiating clergyman, a note of a child who died, certificates received and despatched, parents refusing baptism for their child, etc. Between the lines there are notes on registration as resident, and the date when the information was passed on to the National Central Bureau of Statistics.

#### *Registers of banns and marriages*

The oldest books have no column for remarks, which have therefore been made in other spaces or in the margins. Remarks often concern the name of the officiating clergyman/layman, certificates received or despatched, notice of inventories and distribution of estates, and notes on marriage certificates. Some registers have a column headed "*Besöksdatum*" (Date of visit), which may mean the date, some days before the publication of the banns, when the bridal couple visited the pastor to request that the banns be published.

#### *Register of deaths and burials*

As in the other ministerial books, a remarks column appears only in the later registers. The remarks concern certificates received and despatched, private burials, deaths or burials in another parish. Occasionally there is a longer comment on the cause of death, e g if it was the result of an accident. Between the lines there is a record of the date for informing the autumn or spring district assizes, and for resident registration.

#### *Penance*

Penance was the process by which a member of the state church who had committed a crime, and therefore lost his (or her) right to belong to a congregation, was received back into the community of the church. The guilty person confessed his guilt, begged forgiveness of God and the congregation, and promised to mend his ways - whereupon the pastor declared him forgiven. Penance was either public or private (secret). Public penance took place before the whole congregation at a general service. Private penance took place in the sacristy or in the church before or after a service, in the presence of a few people selected by the pastor or sometimes by the elders of the congregation.

In 1855 it was laid down by ordinance that penance, either public or private, should no longer be imposed on people. Another ordinance, formulated the same day, directed that

such lawbreakers who previously would have undergone penance must, before they might partake of Holy Communion, be privately shriven and absolved by their pastor in the presence of some members of the congregation. Not until 1917 was penance completely abolished.

A note about penance may be found on change-of-address certificates and in the catechetical register, where it will most likely be in the remarks column, often followed by a wavy line in the space for character.

#### *Confirmation and First Communion*

The act of confirmation is linked with the young person's first Communion and the preceding examination.

Confirmation was carried out on the occasion of the episcopal visit - a custom pre-served from the Middle Ages. It is said that evangelical confirmation only has its name in common with the medieval tradition. In the ordinance of 1575, confirmation is named without any connection with the first Communion. Public examinations did not become common until the 18th century, when organized preparatory instruction also began to be required. In 1762 an ecclesiastical circular urged the clergy to introduce public examinations in church, in those parishes where they were not already in practice.

There were only general directions about organized Communion study. Canon law laid down that young people should be given religious instruction, but said nothing about organized Communion instruction. After an announcement from the pulpit it was the duty of parents and heads of households to report to their pastor the names of children who were old enough to be prepared for their first Communion. The practice developed of registering children in the company of their parents and guardians, and this was adopted in the regulations of 1920. The authorized catechetical handbook was to be used for instruction, which should continue until the children had learned the required amount of religious knowledge. This meant that they should be able to recite the catechism by heart, answer questions and understand what they had learned. When there had been enough instruction the pastor decided on a day for the examination. This was announced from the pulpit, and the children's next-of-kin were instructed to be present at the examination.

Communion took place the following holy-day in connection with the morning service - a rule to which there was no exception in earlier times. The first Communion is most often noted with one of the following: "1:a ggn", "Adm.", "F.g." or "1 g", and the abbreviation is followed by the date of the occasion. Confirmation is indicated by "konf (conf)" and the date. These details are found in the column for Communion or the one for remarks. As well as appearing in the Communion lists, confirmation and first Communion are also recorded in the catechetical register, on change-of-address certificates and occasionally in migration registers.

The catechetical registers contain details of first Communion for the whole of the 19th century, but confirmation records were not kept so conscientiously. Registers of banns and marriages sometimes contain notes on people who were not confirmed.

In the birth and baptismal register, the pastor may have made a note of which children were later confirmed. On the other hand, the very common abbreviation "conf" in these registers means that an emergency baptism has been confirmed.

#### *Communion*

The Communion rite of the Swedish church was drawn up by Olaus Petri in his Swedish Divine Service of 1531. The taking of Communion should be preceded by confession, during which the communicant should also be examined with questions. If possible, this should take place at the same time as permission to take Communion was requested - either the day before, or on the morning of the same day. The pastor could however grant permission without a previous request if he knew that there was no impediment. From 1735, the communion examination acquired a degree of independence from the taking of Communion.

In the service-book of 1811, Communion became an act of public worship, and after 1916 attendance at confession was not obligatory for the taking of Communion, though it remained the duty of the pastor to arrange for confession before each communion service. The significance of the communion examination diminished as the examining of young people at their confirmation became more and more widespread. In addition, after the taking of Communion once a year had been ordained by law, examination and confession were no longer necessary - part of their *raison d'être* had been to protect the sanctity of the Communion table.

Up until 1861 Communion could only be celebrated in conjunction with a complete morning service, but after this separate services with Communion were introduced. After 1910 people were no longer legally bound to take Communion only in their own parish. The taking of Communion was an obligatory part of the ceremonies for marriage, taking up office, acquiring citizenship, being awarded a university degree, and testifying in court. In 1863, canon law removed this obligation, but Communion continued to be a requirement in certain civil contexts for quite some time after that.

Details of attendance at Communion are found in the Communion registers but also in the catechetical registers and on change-of-address certificates, and sometimes in the migration registers. Change-of-address certificates give the last time a person took Communion in the parish s/he moved from, and this information may also be found in some migration registers. The certificates also say whether someone was not allowed to attend Communion for some reason. The catechetical registers indicate how many times Communion was taken during the year, in the form of a letter or a date, or a figure that stands for a date. There is usually a key to these codes in the registers. The column for Communion will also show when private Communion was taken. Once attendance at Communion was no longer compulsory, the records became less frequent, and by the end of the 19th century most parishes were recording only the first Communion.

#### *Catechetical Meetings*

The canon law of 1686 lays down regulations concerning ministerial visits. At first these visits were of a pastoral nature, but it did not take long for the catechetical elements to become predominant. In 1726 the conventicle edict laid down statutory regulations for catechetical meetings. In the beginning the pastor's meetings were poorly attended, and to counteract this a Royal Ordinance in 1765 decreed that a person failing to attend a meeting would be fined according to a special scale of rates. This ruling was in force right up until 1888, but had not been observed for a long time by then.

Members of a catechetical district gathered once a year in someone's home to be tested on the catechism and on reading ability. There might also be confidential talks and pastoral activities; for the villagers it was an opportunity to spend some time together, and the occasion was often rounded off with a party.

In the 19th century, land redistribution and village partition meant the break-up of the old village community and the end of communal village life. Later, as Swedish social structure continued to change through, among other things, the introduction of free trade, the abolition of domestic correction and the repeal of the conventicle edict, the Lutheran view began to be questioned. In particular, recitation of the catechism came in for severe criticism. All this affected the catechetical meetings, and attendances dropped especially after the meetings were moved from homes to school or parish church.

In many places the meetings were no longer held by the 1870s, but in some parishes they were retained until well into the 20th century. Catechetical meetings survived longest in Norrland and western Sweden - in Norrland because parish churches were so far from many people, and in western Sweden because of Schartau, who had created a spiritual atmosphere conducive to the strict following of rules.

Records concerning catechetical meetings are in the catechetical registers, but may also appear on change-of-address certificates - usually in the form of a note that someone failed to attend a meeting. The catechetical registers have a column for each year, to indicate presence

at or absence from meetings. If a register covers more years than there are columns for meetings, the relevant notes may have been made in other columns, e.g. the one for remarks. Attendance at a meeting is most often indicated by "N"; absence is not usually noted, but may sometimes be recorded in one of the following forms: "*sjuk, aegr*", "*abs*", "*scholan*", "*militärtjänst*" (sick, absence, school, military service).

*Assessment of reading aloud, knowledge of the Catechism, comprehension and understanding*

In the canon law of 1686 there are no clear directives concerning general ability to read; it is mentioned merely as a pious hope. In 1723 a statute was formulated that required parents and guardians to teach their children to read, and at the yearly catechetical meetings the reading ability of both children and adults was tested and recorded in the catechetical register. Parishioners were also required to memorise certain passages of Christian teachings, and during the 18th century there could be a score of columns in the catechetical registers for lessons learnt by heart. Later the number was reduced to six: one for Luther's shorter catechism and one for each of the five explanations. In registers from the end of the 19th century there is only one column for memorised lessons. But parishioners were not merely expected to reel off what they had learnt by heart, but also had to comprehend and explain it in their own words. All this was checked at the yearly catechetical meeting, and recorded in the catechetical register.

Assessments are recorded in the catechetical registers and on change-of-address certificates. Occasionally they also appear in the migration registers. Late 19th-century registers usually have only one assessment for religious knowledge, but earlier ones may have anything up to ten.

Läskunnighet

—	Har begynt läsa
┌	Läser svagt
┌┌	Läser någorlunda
┌┌┌	Läser försvarligt
┌┌┌┌	Läser med färdighet

Begrepp och förstånd

┌	Har svagt begrepp
┌┌	Har någorlunda begrepp
┌┌┌	Har försvarligt begrepp
┌┌┌┌	Har godt begrepp

Utantillkunskaper

•—	Lilla katekesen
••—	Lilla katekesen samt första hufvudstycket af Svebilii förklaring
•••••	Lilla katekesen samt alla hufvudstycken af Svebilii förklaring

Apart from coded assessments there may also be straightforward ones such as "*bra*", "*god*", "*svag*", "*hjelpig*", "*försvarlig*" ("Good, Satisfactory, Weak, Tolerable, Just Passable"). These last assessments are often abbreviated, and then there is usually one grade in each of the columns for reading ability, but if the assessment is written out in full there is often only one to cover all the columns. In earlier registers "*läser*" ("reading") is given three columns, but in later books there are often only two - one for learning by heart and one for religious knowledge. In some parishes, for instance Njurunda, in the catechetical and Communion columns there are religious knowledge assessments for children under confirmation age.



## 19th Century Ecclesiastical Registers

*Birth and baptismal registers* The earliest registers contained only records of baptisms, but from the mid-18th century births also began to be recorded. From now on the registers had to contain the following details concerning all births, both in and out of wedlock: name, date of birth, baptism date, place of birth and parents' place of residence.

The oldest baptismal registers usually contain only the baptism date, which according to the law must take place within a week after birth, but by the 18th century it had already become common practice to enter the date of birth as well. Many older baptismal registers provide only the father's name, as there would have been no time for the mother's "churching" (post-natal purification), and therefore she would have been unable to attend the baptismal service. When a child was born out of wedlock, only the mother's name was recorded. Details of godparents and other witnesses to the baptism were also noted. Later on the records also came to include the mother's age at the birth, and still later the father's age and a number of other details.

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*Register of banns and marriages* A register of banns and marriages contains information, recorded in the - bride's home parish, on the names and ages of the couple, and the date of the marriage. If the bridegroom was from another parish, that was also noted. In addition the name of the bride's guardian was recorded - usually her father or brother. The guardian was a figure of some significance, as right up until 1863 an unmarried woman was considered unfit to manage her own affairs.

Originally there were only marriage registers, but later additional information concerning the publication of the banns was also recorded. These details were frequently entered in the marriage register, which came to be known as the register of banns and marriages.

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*Register of deaths and burials* A register of deaths and burials contains the name of the deceased, his/her - place of residence, date of burial, and later on also the date of death. Information about the dead person's age and occupation was also noted. The age stated is not always correct according to the information in the register of births, and it is likely that the entries in the two registers were not compared for accuracy.

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*Migration lists* As early as 1686 it was decreed that records should be kept of when people moved to another place, but it was not until after the start of the 19th century that general records were begun. For many parishes it is difficult to obtain information for an earlier period on this topic. In the migration lists can be found the names of people who moved into or out of a parish, their destination or previous address, and which residence in the parish was concerned. There are sometimes also notes concerning marks, character, and marriage ability. Details of moves to and from the parish had to be made separately, even if, as often happened, they were entered in the same volume.

In many parishes, changes of address were noted in the catechetical register at the same time as the more official record of moves was introduced. In some places the pastor would record the move in the catechetical list at the same time as he wrote out or was given the change-of-address certificate.

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*Change-of-address certificates* The change-of-address certificate helped the clergy to keep a check on everyone who moved, but it was also a means of combating tax evasion and vagrancy; additionally, it enabled the authorities to ascertain that everyone had an occupation and thereby "the protection of the law". The certificate provided the following information concerning a person who moved: name, age, place of birth, occupation, conduct,

vaccination and religious knowledge. People often took their certificates with them the next time they moved. Details from the previous place of residence would be added to the current information, and thus a whole life-history could be written on these official papers.

The change-of-address certificates were a means of controlling the lowest social classes. Not until the start of the 19th century did they become compulsory for people higher up the social scale, and it is from this point onwards that they have been fairly extensively preserved. Their use was discontinued in 1947.

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*Catechetical lists* It was the duty of the parson to record in the catechetical lists details of parishioners' church attendance and knowledge of the scriptures. The term used for the lists originated in the fact that they were made in connection with catechetical meetings. Once a year all adults had to take part in such a meeting where the parson tested their knowledge of Christian teachings and their reading ability; in addition they were required to attend Communion at least once a year. Records of their performance in all these fields were made in the catechetical lists, and the same occasion was used for checking the parish population figures.

Children were not always included in the records; children under fifteen were not required to attend Communion, and they did not have to be tested on the Catechism if they could not read. The gentry were also excused, as they were considered to be above the need for testing. They were often personal friends of the parson, who considered himself able to report on their religious knowledge and reading ability without questioning them.

The lists are arranged according to district, village and farmstead, and in the towns by district, block and building. People were recorded in family groups in the villages and farms where they belonged. The father's name headed the list, followed by those of the mother and children. A space was often left between the two parents' names, so that if one of them died there would be room to write a new name in the event of remarriage. People living on the farmstead were also included in the list - relatives and servants, for instance. Soldiers, lodgers, crofters and cotters were often listed on special pages under their own heading, but occasionally they might be included as occupants of the farm where they lived and worked.

As well as name and dwelling-place, there are also details of when and where each person was born, and the earliest books often give people's ages at the time when the list was made. The oldest books also provide information about Communion attendance, and grades for the various elements tested. These grades usually consisted of widely-diverging personal codes used by individual parsons, but they could also be uniform over a whole area - a diocese, for example. Sometimes a key to the code would be included in the records, but often such keys are missing.

Gradually more and more information was included in the lists, and it was the records of knowledge and ability that had to make way for the new details. Increasingly, columns were introduced that had nothing to do with Communion and testing, so that in 1894 the books were redesignated parish registers. The fresher details concerned marriages, the break-up of marriages, changes of address, deaths, and vaccinations; there was also a special column for the parson to write in his highly personal comments on parishioners. Catechetical registers are usually provided with a place-list and sometimes also a name-list to facilitate their use.

In fast-growing parishes it was sometimes extremely difficult to record the required information. The catechetical list intended for a particular place was not big enough, and the parson would have to put someone on to a different page or squeeze several families on to one page. Sometimes it can be hard for a researcher to attribute people to the right families. The problems were especially severe in the city of Stockholm, where the so-called district registrar system had to be introduced at an early date.

A catechetical list was usually drawn up after 5-10 years. In northern Sweden (Norrland) the list frequently covered ten years or more, while in central Sweden a new one would often be made after only five years. In the most southern part of Sweden (Skåne), there seem to have

been new lists every year, and when a fresh one was started the old one was often thrown away, so there are very few catechetical lists for parishes in southern Sweden before the start of the 19th century. For the rest of the country, records have on the whole been fairly well preserved right from the time when the registers began to be made.

There are gaps of course, especially in the earliest material, depending on accidents and treatment suffered by the books.

## List of key variables

Variables in our parish registers described in the following

Variable	Catechetical register	Migration register	Birth and baptismal register	Register of banns and marriages	Register of deaths and burials
<a href="#">Date of birth</a>	x	z	x	z	z
<a href="#">Place of birth</a>	x	z	x	z	z
<a href="#">Baptism</a>	x		x		
<a href="#">Legitimacy</a>	x		x		
<a href="#">Assistance at birth</a>			x		
<a href="#">Churching</a>	z		x		
<a href="#">Publication of banns</a>				x	
<a href="#">Marriage</a>	x			x	
<a href="#">Guardian</a>				x	
<a href="#">Burial</a>					x
<a href="#">Cause of death</a>					x
<a href="#">Migration</a>	x	x			
<a href="#">Village, property, inhabitants</a>	x	x	x	x	x
<a href="#">Household membership</a>	?				
<a href="#">Family status</a>	x	x			
<a href="#">Civil status</a>	x	x		x	x
<a href="#">Occupation/trade</a>	x	x		x	x
<a href="#">Vaccination</a>	x	z	z		
<a href="#">Remarks</a>	x	x	x	x	x
<a href="#">Penance</a>	x				
<a href="#">Confirmation</a>	x	z			
<a href="#">Communion</a>	x	z			
<a href="#">Catechetical meetings</a>	x	z			
<a href="#">Catechetical assessments: Reading, Catechism, Understanding</a>	x	z			

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x = common occurrence    z = sporadic occurrence    ?= Sporadic and unreliable

## Selection of parishes

- [Sundsvall region](#)
- [Skellefteå region](#)
- [Linköping region](#)
- [Single parishes](#)

There are several reasons for making the 19th century the central period for DDB's filing work. The information from the various sources is more detailed and standardized than for earlier periods, which simplifies computerization. The 19th century is also an epoch of great importance historically: it was for Sweden the period of transition from a traditional rural society to an industrialized, urbanized nation; a rapid decrease in mortality and a high birth-rate led to a great rise in population, with a consequent dramatic increase in social differentiation.

In the matter of selection, the choice fell initially on seven [individual parishes](#), representing a variety of industrial and social environments. However, the 19th century's extensive population mobility meant that there was a significant loss of complete life-histories; people moved away, and their names were deleted from the parish records. The next stage for the Demographic Data Base was therefore filing information for whole regions. The Skellefteå and Sundsvall regions are now completed and work has begun on a third area - the town of Linköping with 35 surrounding parishes.

The [Sundsvall region](#) consists of the town of Sundsvall with 16 surrounding parishes. Here was the cradle of industrial Sweden, with an extensive timber industry; during the late 19th century the area experienced a population explosion coupled with an unusual degree of social and geographical mobility. Sundsvall was at the centre of all this activity, and increased its population tenfold during the period.

The [Skellefteå region](#) is made up of a number of small parishes around the town of Skellefteå - a stable area of smallholdings with freehold farmers, though near the coast there were a number of small industries like glassworks and brickworks. In comparison with the other DDB areas, this region covers a considerably longer period, namely 1721-1899.

The [Linköping region](#), in contrast to the others, is an area of old Swedish cultural traditions, only slightly affected by industrialization. The region comprises some thirty parishes around the town of Linköping.

### Single parishes

*Nedertorneå*, in the county of Norrbotten, lies just where the Torne River flows into the Gulf of Bothnia, on the border between Finland and Sweden. The main source of livelihood was farming and forestry, with fishing as a secondary occupation. Haparanda, which became a town in 1842, was founded to replace Torneå which was ceded to Russia in 1809.

*Svinnegarn* is in southern Uppland, in a bay of Lake Mälaren called Svinnegarn Bay. Conditions in this flatland area were ideal for farming, which was the primary source of livelihood during the 19th century. Large landed estates were most common, and it was here the so-called cottager system was developed - a regulated system with annually employed, married agricultural workers with their own homes.

*Trosa* rural parish lies in Södermanland, extending north and west of the town Trosa; it consists of an extensive archipelago and the mainland around Trosa Creek. Most of the land during the 19th century belonged to large estates such as Tureholm, and the farms were

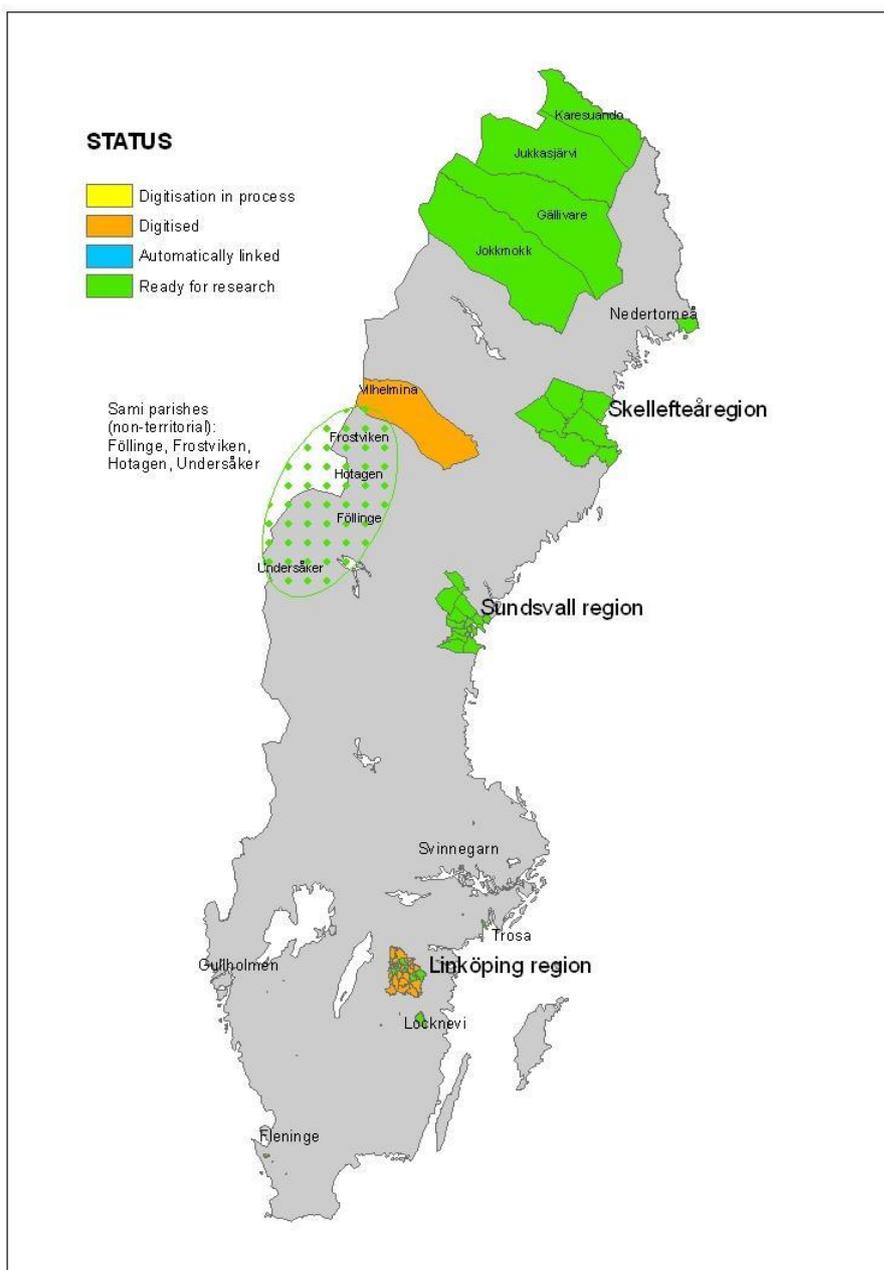
scattered around them. A crofter had regular day-labour on the estate. Fishing and shipping were secondary occupations.

*Gullholmen* is a densely populated fishing community situated on the islands of Gullholmen and Hermanön west of Orust in central Bohuslän. Fishing and the freight trade were the most important industries in the 19th century.

Locknevi is situated in Tjust in Småland. It lies in a region of forest land, and during the 19th century there were some large estates there, but the land was farmed largely by freeholders. Forestry and ironworks were secondary industries.

Fleninge is in Skåne, north-east of Hälsingborg, in a primarily agricultural region. During the 19th century there were no other significant sources of livelihood, and the land was farmed mainly by freeholders with small or medium-sized farms.

Parish	Time span for catechetical lists	Population		
		1805	1865	1900
Nedertorneå	1819-1899	1093	2115	3056
Svinnegarn	1818-1894	555	523	633
Trosa (1799)	1792-1895	877	933	889
Gullholmen	1837-1922	428	489	796
Locknevi	1821-1899	1538	2498	2237
Fleninge	1819-1890	627	1239	1325



### The Sundsvall region

The Sundsvall area is a part of Medelpad, which together with Ångermanland makes up the county of Västernorrland. The rivers Ljungan and Indal flow through Medelpad, and at the mouth of each a large number of sawmills and factories were built. The two decades 1871-1890 were the golden period of Västernorrland's development, with a great increase in the timber business and a population increase during the same period that exceeded the national average - as did the rates of births, marriages and deaths.

*Skön*, together with Alnö and Timrå parishes, forms the district-court area of Skön which was Sweden's most markedly industrial region with more than 70% of the population employed in industry and a population density in 1900 of over 100 persons per square kilometre. The parishes gradually became "suburbs" of Sundsvall, which by the turn of the century was a

single urban complex with about 30,000 inhabitants, described by the Emigration Commission as "a little America in Sweden". Skön had several sawmills and a glassworks. *Skönsmon* was founded in 1883 but did not have its own parish registration until 1905.

*Alnö* is made up of the island of Alnö and its neighbouring islets and skerries. On its western shore, as on the mainland it faces (Skön), there were large numbers of sawmills with timberyards and wharves. The major industries were the Gustavsberg, Gista, Johannesvik, Eriksdal, Nyvik, Rödestrand and Alvik sawmills.



*Alnö. Photo: Sundsvall Turism*

*Timrå* lies at the lower reaches of the Indal river, and includes most of its delta in the Kringel bay. Building was most dense in the industrial area on the shores of the Kringel bay and the Alnö channel. The timber trade had its headquarters in Timrå. The most important industry was Vifsta Shipbuilding, established in 1793 with shipping, shipping office and timber trade, and a steam sawmill added in 1851. Export products were despatched from the Vifsta dock and wharf.

*Ljustorp* was a sparsely-populated parish with a great deal of forest, and only the valleys had land that could be cultivated.

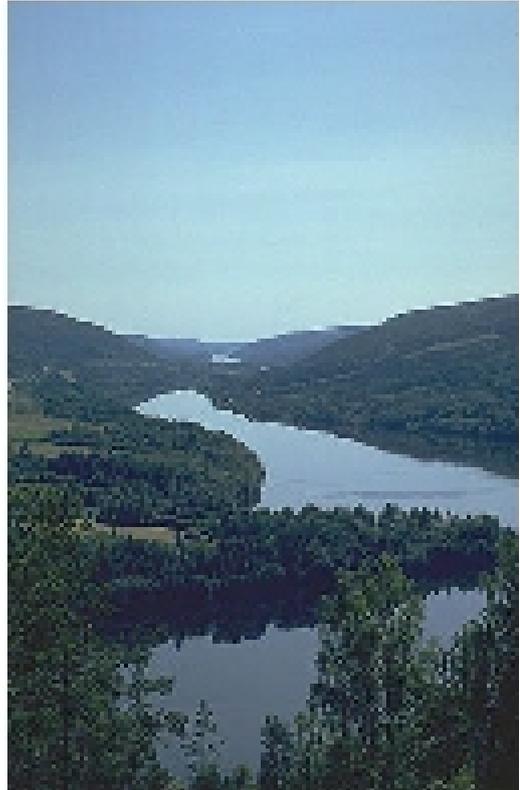
*Lagfors mill* was founded in 1742. Three hammers produced a fairly large amount of iron up until the 1860's. Then, production decreased gradually until the mill was closed down in 1877.

*Hässjö* is in a hilly coastal area. During the 19th century there were steam sawmills and wharves here, and several concerns including the Åvike works.

*Tynderö* forms a promontory in the Gulf of Bothnia, and the parish had neither sizeable properties nor industries. The fishing village of Skeppshamn was here.

*Indal* lies around the Indal river and the Sulå creek, whose valleys comprise the populated area where the Sulå mill was also built. Forests and mountains occupy the rest of the region.

Indalsleden, view from Vättaberget



*Sundsvall* lies where Selånger Creek flows into Sundsvall Bay, and is an old trading centre which was granted its town charter in 1684. At that time plumbing smiths formed the core of the population. Sundsvall developed into a commercial town, and when the surrounding area expanded around the turn of the 18th/19th century, the population increased. The harbour proved to be of decisive importance, and Sundsvall became the centre of one of Sweden's largest timber production areas. With the growth of the timber industry in the 1850's-1860's it became a real boom town, with a further rapid increase in population.



Karlsviks  
ångsåg på  
Alnön i  
Sundsvalls  
sågdistrikt,  
1890-talet.  
Photo:  
Sundsvalls  
museum

Sundsvall has suffered three extensive fires, in 1721, 1803 and 1888, and the last two caused serious damage to parish records. Among other losses were the ministerial lists from before

1860, so that studies of infant and child mortality, migration etc will be unreliable for the period before that date.

*Njurunda* was industrialized early in the 19th century; a large number of sawmills were built at the mouth of the Ljungan river, among them Svartvik. In 1874 a steam sawmill was set up and later extended, and after a time a pulp factory was also built. In Njurunda district-court area there was also the Galtström mill which was built in the 17th century, extended in the 18th century, and was still quite important in 1880. Both Svartvik and Galtström were chapel parishes with their own parish registration. Njurunda, Svartvik and Galtström all showed a heavy increase in population partly brought about by a great deal of immigration from Finland. Emigration was also the highest in the county.

*Selånger* consists of part of the Selånger Creek valley, with fairly large farms. There were no industries in the parish, except for a number of brickworks.

*Sättna* was a sparsely-populated, scattered region. Norafors mill was built here in the 1790's and extended later at the beginning of the 19th century.

*Tuna* lies in Medelpad, in a forest region with farming and forestry as the main occupation, and it was greatly affected by the development of the timber industry at the end of the 19th century. The major industry of the district was here - Matfors Foundry, started in 1833 as an iron bar foundry by James Dickson & Co. The iron trade decreased from the mid-19th century, and after a time the foundry was closed down. From the 1870's the timber industry acquired considerable importance, but after the founding of Svartvik in Njurunda this industry also suffered a decline. The railway passes through Tuna, with Matfors as station.

*Attmar* lies in a very hilly area, with buildings in the valleys and around the lakes. The parish has no railway, and only small-scale industries. During the 18th and 19th centuries there were a number of small mills and only one of any size - Sörfors mill, which was built and extended several times during the late 1790's.

Parish	Time span for catechetical lists	Population			
		1750	1800	1850	1900
Sundsvall	1803-1892	1000	1468	2859	14831
Timrå	1803-1895	550	660	1218	5698
Skön	1803-1893	554	769	1132	11744
Alnö	1804-1894	549	704	1004	6817
Njurunda	1816-1891	968	1558	2296	6449
Galtströms bruk	1807-1891	170	175	200	444
Svartvik	1860-1900	-	-	-	1428
Ljustorp	1808-1894	615	929	1638	2451
Hässjö	1814-1900	600	870	1441	3602
Lagfors bruk	1860-1890	-	132	187	144
Lögdö bruk	1819-1892	201	275	317	189
Tynderö	1811-1900	282	516	856	1395
Indal	1814-1900	675	1087	1855	2607
Selånger	1813-1894	653	972	1318	2642
Sättna	1806-1899	493	906	1608	2066
Tuna	1804-1896	719	1094	1712	3577
Attmar	1814-1895	711	1205	2082	3083

## The Skellefteå region

Skellefteå is mentioned for the first time in a document from 1327, when the parish was made the boundary-point for the area granted to settlers by the government. As the formation of societies in the north has gone hand in hand with the introduction of ecclesiastical organization, it is not unlikely that as early as the 1320's Skellefteå was given the role of the the most northerly parish in the archdiocese.

The adjacent Löfvånger became a separate parish in the 15th century, and the next break came in 1606 when Burträsk separated from Skellefteå. The 19th century saw further changes, when *Norsjö* and *Jörn* became separate in 1834, and later on Byske. But the parish was still both well-populated and extensive. The town of Skellefteå formed its own parish in 1913, and Bureå in 1918. The parish includes most of the coastal land of the Bure, Skellefteå and Kåge rivers.

The land is fertile, so that farming has been the primary source of livelihood. Around the coast and waterways there were large numbers of sawmills and other small industries, such as mills, glassworks, shipyards, flourmills, stamping-mills and tanneries. The parish also boasted several salmon fisheries.

Data filing for the Skellefteå region varies according to period. From 1721 to 1834 the region includes the present parishes of Norsjö, Jörn, Skellefteå, Bureå and Byske. At the points where Norsjö broke away (1811) and Jörn formed a separate parish (1834) filing ceases for them, and after that only Skellefteå rural parish is included in the material. In 1874 Byske parish became separate, but it has continued to be a part of the region, as has Ytterstfors glassworks and sawmill which existed as an "independent parish" in the parochial records between 1838 and 1874.

Parish	Time span for catechetical lists	Population				
		1720	1750	1800	1850	1900
Skellefteå	1720-1900	2494	3642	6210	13851	19754
Byske	1871-1897	-	-	-	-	8814
Ytterstfors	1846-1870	-	-	-	512	