

















The Swedish National Archives

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Welcome to the Swedish National Archives

The National Archives (Riksarkivet) constitutes the main source for our knowledge of Sweden's history. Here are preserved the records of the kingdom from its beginnings to the present day. We know very little, however, about the earliest phase of Swedish archives. The power of the State was loosely organised, and it is probable that documents had a fairly roving existence and were kept where they might best be secure. It was not until the regulation of the Chancellery in 1618, carried out by Axel Oxenstierna, that the name Riksarkivet (then known as "rijksens archivum" – the Archive of the Realm) and the embryo of an organisation became firmly established.

In 1786 the writer and Antiquary of the Realm, Gudmund Jöran Adlerbeth, delineated in a speech at Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien (the Swedish Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities) the essential nature of the archive as "an establishment of the utmost importance for the governance of the kingdom, history, and the safety of the individual". His description is of the greatest relevance even to-

day. By curating, cataloguing and making available official administrative documents, the National Archives acts as a guarantee for civilian security and for the public administration to make proper decisions, as well as being a vital source for the retelling of history in the future. The enormous storage repositories of the National Archives contain many relics of Swedish history, revealing individual human destinies and the varied fortunes of many organisations.

The dramatic technological developments of recent years also leave their mark on the archives. Nowadays we invest our energies intensively in this field and an increasing number of authorities use the opportunity to deposit their documents in digital format. This situation places new demands on us, and the archives are in an exciting phase of development, though the end is not yet in sight. Nevertheless, our description for the future will remain the same as in 1786.

Aprila diluis



This is what we do

The main duty of the National Archives is to receive and preserve the archives of the Swedish Parliament and the various ministerial departments and central authorities of State, and to supervise archive management throughout Sweden. State authorities which have ceased operations are obliged to deposit their archives with the National Archives. Private archives – from individuals, societies, political parties and others – are also an important part of the National Archives' holdings. These have been deposited on a voluntary basis and sometimes permission is required for their study. The State archives, on the other hand, supported by the Swedish principle of public access to official records, are open to all users, apart from those records which are in a poor state physically or officially classified as secret for a certain length of time.

The National Archives is responsible, through the State herald, for the official heraldry of the country, i.e. the design of coats of arms, flags and emblems relating to the State. Advice to urban and rural districts on heraldic matters also comes under their remit. Assignments include making drafts for new coats of arms, as well as checking applications for registered trademarks containing State symbols or other official armorial bearings. Many research enquiries, including identification of historic coats of arms and imprints from seals are also handled.

The National Archives is the chief body for the regional archives which are to be found in Härnösand, Östersund, Uppsala, Visby, Vadstena, Lund and Gothenburg, whilst the City Archives of Stockholm and the Värmland Archives in Karlstad act as regional archives for the counties of Stockholm and Värmland respectively. Local and regional archive administration is managed by the regional archives, which in principle work in the same way as the National Archives.



This is what we have

The National Archives is one of the oldest authorities in Sweden, with roots going back to the Middle Ages. It was officially established through a Chancellery order of 1618. Here – on parchment, paper, microfilm and digital media – are kept holdings taking up almost 300 kilometres of shelving, equivalent to the distance from Stockholm to Jönköping. This wealth of information is well protected in the National Archives' buildings at Marieberg in central Stockholm and Arninge, north of Stockholm, as well as at Krigsarkivet (the Military Archives) at Gärdet, also in the capital. The collections of records, in the form of both paper documents and digital formats, grow steadily.

The earliest document from the tenth century

The earliest extant document at the National Archives is a leaf from a missal, written on parchment in England at the turn of the eleventh century. This arrived in Sweden via English missionary activities in Norway. In the sixteenth century Gustavus Vasa confiscated the possessions of churches and monasteries, together with some 20,000 medieval deeds on parchment and paper (many with imprints from seals, a wonderful art collection in miniature). Thousands of leaves from handwritten books, many with Gregorian chants, were used as covers for bailiffs' accounts.

Ratification by czars Ivan and Peter of the Treaty of Kardis, 1661 and that of Pliusa in 1666. Moscow, 6th June, 1683. (From the collection of original tracts in the National Archives.)

With Gustavus Vasa's accession to the throne in 1523 the development of the archives gathered momentum; the Registry of the Realm and account books, provincial records and diplomatic treaties were assembled at the National Archives. The papers of the administrative colleges, together with regional records sent in, were compiled into series which included Finnish, Baltic and German archive material from all corners of the Swedish Empire during the Great Power Period – including rolls in Cyrillic alphabet from Novgorod, remnants of the Swedish Occupation of 1611–1617.

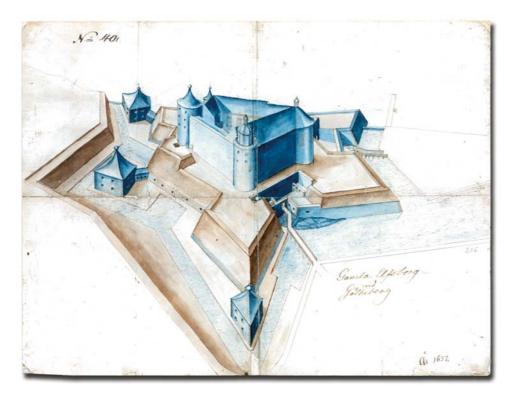


After this the collections at the National Archives exploded into exuberant diversity: records from the Riksdag, various departments of State, central authorities and their predecessors, as well as the remains of the royal name stamp which Gustavus III had destroyed after the State coup of 1772; records from the time of Olof Palme and the Bofors Commissions of Enquiry, the Dala Rebellion of 1743 and the Armfelt treason of 1790, and also the governmental reform of 1809. Among the Cabinet papers of the various ministries all the governmental decisions, plus background documents from 1840 to the 1980s, are available for study. There is even a textile sample collection from manufactures of the eighteenth century.

The National Archives has approximately one hundred thousand maps and drawings, covering all buildings owned by the State from 1697 to 1993. The National Archives' Military Archives Department has a comprehensive, and in many ways unique, collection of maps, which apart from Swedish historical maps, includes hand drawn foreign topographical maps and fortification plans.



Detail of Karl XII's letter to General Magnus Stenbock, 1702. The letter refers to the campaign taking place at the time in Novidze (Poland). On the last page Karl has spilt some ink and comments underneath: "Wassment, I have just knocked the ink onto the paper, but I can't be bothered to rewrite it. You ought, indeed, to be able to read it even so". Wasement (Dutch): evil smelling odour. (Ericsbergsarkivets Autografsamling.)



Älvsborg was one of the most important trading routes for export in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its fortress was constantly vulnerable to Danish attacks and twice occupied, but both times Sweden regained this stronghold after paying large ransoms. (Krigsarkivet, Stads- och fästningsplaner, Älvsborg, no. 144b).

Private archives

Private archives have arrived at the National Archives by many routes: in the past via seizure and confiscation, but nowadays mainly through donations or deposits. They complement the State archives with the kind of information that never found its way into the official records. The National Archives private archives begin with some splendid seventeenth and eighteenth century material from large estates, such as the Skokloster Collection, and the Sjöholm, Stafsund and Ericsberg archives. They include many of the archives of the high aristocracy, statesmen, cultural figures and others, and also manorial archives like those from Tidö, collections from several of the classic folk movements (temperance, non-conformism, missionary activities), and a

significant number of national societies and associations, as well as some large company archives. The Press Archives collection contains the archives of journalists and the press, newspaper posters, registers of signatures, and a large special library.

The National Archives is responsible for allocating all State funding distributed to the management of private archives, including sums contributed to folk movements, society and business archives. The national register of private archives lists private archives throughout the country. The relevant information is available in the National Archive Database (NAD), which can be accessed on www.ra.se.

Haus Majesta

Letter written to King Oscar II in 1876 by Jenny Lind Goldschmidt. She writes and thanks him for the great distinction bestowed on her husband that year, and is sorry "not to have had the great honour of being able to pay my humble respects to Your Majesty". She also tells of a pupil, a Miss Larssen from Norway, for whom she knows the king has particular sympathy but who, in Jenny's opinion, "is not gifted with artistry". (Sjöholmsarkivet I. Autograph Collection.)

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Creating access

Unique documents have their own characteristics as relics of the past and bits of the jigsaw puzzle of history, and their charm lies in their authenticity. The National Archives endeavours to make this wealth of information from the past available to an increasingly wider public. It is not necessary to be an established researcher to enter the world of documents!

The educational activities of the National Archives include lecturing, guidance for researchers, and conducted tours for university students as well as for associations and study circles. Databases of

different types form an important beginning for searches. Data-base updates are also published on our home page, www.ra.se. In Ramsele, in the north of Sweden, the National Archives has a special department (SVAR) dealing with production and distribution of archival information in the form of microfiche and digital media, to facilitate research and teaching.

On the second Saturday in November an annual Archive Day is arranged, when the public has an opportunity to go behind the scenes and attend lec-

The National Archives receives a couple of hundred visiting groups each year. Here an archivist talks about records and their history.





tures by specially invited speakers. In the large entrance hall at the National Archives are mini exhibitions, and the Document of the Month is also displayed via our home page.

As a joint venture with the regional archives, the National Archives publishes a yearbook, which is included in the membership subscription of Pro Memoria, the Association of Friends of the National Archives.

Svenskt Diplomatarium is a publication series which, ever since the start, has been a reference point for researchers on the Middle Ages. Here medieval deeds are published.

Information on all medieval deeds is assembled in a database, easily accessible and searchable via the home page of the National Archives. This register is a great help to researchers working on as yet unpublished deeds.

Apart from a large number of original deeds, smaller collections of medieval records exist in other archives and research libraries, as do a significant number of post medieval transcripts. The National Archives can provide information, in one form or another, on a total of some 40,000 medieval deed texts.

Searching and using

Using archive information from public administration is, in Sweden, the right of everyone since the ratification of the Press Act of 1766. In order to find the answers one seeks, a certain amount of detective work is often needed. Information in, for example, handwritten medieval legal documents is, by its very nature, widely dispersed, and researchers need to combine information from many different sources. Of assistance to researchers are the several thousand manual and digital registers and lists in the search room at the National Archives, and these are linked up with the web based National Archive Database (NAD).

Researchers can also obtain help from the general guide published by the National Archives ("Riksarkivets beståndsöversikt"), research literature, and the folder series, "Hitta i" ("How to find in"), enabling them to follow the path of information between different archives.

By tradition, research at the National Archives has predominantly been connected with academic theses in history, art history, ethnology, history of medicine, Nordic languages and history of law. Many also come, or write to, the National Archives to search for records connected with their own lives.

Experienced archivists are available to assist with searches, and when the document request slip has been filled in and the location found, researchers do not have to wait long for the material they have ordered. Every year tens of thousands of volumes are brought out of the cool archive stores to the re-

search desks, where they come into practical use. The National Archives' library is also available to visiting researchers.

Family history

Genealogical research has always been a subject of great interest. The first Swedish genealogical table, carved into a runestone in the province of Uppland in the Viking period, has been succeeded by thousands of others in the form of fanciful family trees. Nowadays, though, one goes about things in a more scientific way. The National Archives' holdings include all sorts of genealogical investigations, from Rasmus Ludvigsson's sixteenth century tables relating to the Vasa Dynasty to the popular Settergren genealogical book of our own time.

The Arninge branch of the National Archives has sixty places with microfiche readers. Church registers for the whole of Sweden can be examined up to c. 1895. Microfiche information also exists on parish catechismal interrogations, births, marriages and deaths, confirmation, Communion, and migration from the parish. Original documents are kept in the holdings of the respective regional archives.

As a complement to the church registers, researchers can use the archives of Statistiska Centralbyrån (the National Statistics Office of Sweden; SCB). Abstracts from the births, marriages and deaths registers for 1860–1930/1949 exist on microfiche, as well as other information, for instance on emigrants.



The research room at Marieberg has fifty six places and eighteen small work rooms for researchers. In the background is Lennart Rodhe's tapestry, "Signs in an Archive", from 1968.



A researcher using one of the microfiche readers in the search room at Arninge. The staff are available with advice and information. They also arrange evening courses for family history research.



A microfiche containing a number of entries from Riksregistraturet (the Registry of the Realm). The magnified page is addressed from Thorn and dated 4th August, 1703.

Storage

The enormous amounts of archival records have increased, in recent decades, to avalanche like proportions, and deliveries from the State sector arrive, at the moment, at an average speed of approximately 30,000 shelf metres per annum. In 1968 the National Archives moved from its old location on Riddarholmen to the present ones at Marieberg. It was felt that archive accommodation blasted into the rock, with space for 80 kilometres of shelving for paper records, ought to be sufficient for at least the next fifty years. The special, climatically controlled concrete storage complex on six levels, partly below the water level of Lake Mälaren, is linked with prem-



ises above ground by means of lifts, one set of two for carrying staff and another set for records. At Marieberg, too, the stores eventually became full, and small depots on the outskirts of Stockholm had to suffice until 1995, when the Arninge branch of the National Archives was inaugurated in Täby, north of Stockholm.

The National Archives' department, Svensk Museitjänst (SMT), is situated in Tumba, south-west of Stockholm. It supplies storage facilities and various services to the museums of Stockholm as well as to other cultural institutions. The buildings at the depot are specially designed for long term storage and care of objects and are able to offer independent adjustment of temperature and humidity. The staff are specially trained in the relevant fields.

The storage situation has not always been as well organised and secure as it is now. Some three hundred years ago, on 7th May, 1697, when the old castle of "Three Crowns" was destroyed by fire, the National Archives, too, was badly affected. Only a

Underneath the National Archives building above ground is the storage complex on six levels, built into a large cavern in the middle of the primary rock.

third of the archival treasures escaped the flames. Fire damage as well as mildew from excess humidity, have affected the old tax records after conflagrations in 1802 and 1807 on the island of Riddarholmen, when many bailiffs' account books, population registers and land registers went up in flames. It was not until 1891 that the specially built the National Archives on Riddarholmen was inaugurated. This palace, in brick with a supporting structure of cast iron, was one of the buildings shown off during the great Stockholm exhibition of Art and Industry in 1897 as one of the most modern and fire resistant in the capital.



Svensk Museitjänst (SMT) has modern premises for the storage of prehistoric and historical items.





Govert Camphuysen's painting, "The Castle of Three Crowns from Castle Hill" (1661), shows the royal castle as seen from the southwest.



The National Archives on the island of Riddarholmen, designed by architect Gustaf Nyström and inaugurated in 1891.

Taking material out from the stores, where the temperature is approximately 17°C., and the relative humidity approximately 35%.

Preservation and Conservation

One of the main duties in archive work is to ensure that the wealth of information contained in the collections is secure for the future, an objective which imbues all the activities involved. An adequate storage environment and fixed routines for handling the archives have priority, but when even these preventive measures are insufficient to check deterioration, more active steps are needed, i.e. conservation.

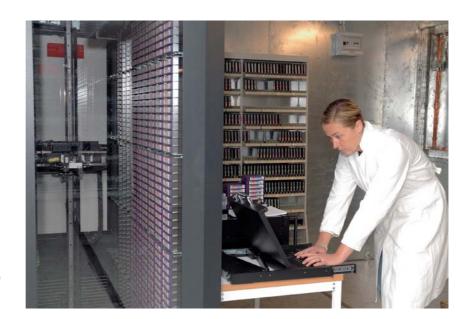
Conservation involves direct intervention with the archive material. The art is to do neither too much nor too little – using the knowledge we have of materials, deterioration, wear and tear, and with respect for the original. Specially made storage containers are an important component in conservation work. Preventive care and conservation go hand in hand.

Micrography (microfilming) is an important means of protecting original material, thereby safeguarding the information and disseminating the content of the archives to users in different localities



The National Archives has almost 20,000 medieval parchment documents and 30,000 seal imprints. These are looked after by the conservator specialising in wax imprints.

Conservation work demands both theoretical knowledge and good manual skills. The map dealt with here is "A General Chart of Stockholm with 'malmar' (outlying districts)," by Peter Tillaeus, from 1733.



The National Archives has a so called HSM (Hierarchy Storage Management) system, with an open reel tape robot for the physical storage of digital files.

and institutions. The greatest contribution in this field is made by the Arninge branch of the National Archives, while scanning is carried out by the National Archives media conversion unit, Mediakonverteringscentrum (MKC).

Archive material which arrives at the National Archives in digital form is also to be kept in this for-

mat. The storage of digital information has been a subject for much innovative thinking and development work and is still a great challenge to the archive world. For future visitors to the National Archives it is of the greatest importance that methods are developed for preserving digital records in a long term perspective.



Microfilming a population register of 1782 from the county of Skaraborg.

Supervision of public authorities

The National Archives is the highest supervisory body in Sweden for the handling of public records and takes measures in all aspects of archive care vis a vis the central State authorities. Through the regional archives it also works at local and regional levels. The conditions governing the responsibilities of authorities and archive authorities respectively



were settled in 1991 by means of special archive legislation. This gave The National Archives the right to issue instructions concerning archives belonging to the State authorities and those relating to certain other public activities. The directions and general recommendations issued by the National Archives are published in the institution's own collection of statutes, RA-FS. Advice, inspections, decisions on destruction, training, etc. ensure that these regulations are observed.

The National Archives also maintains competence on special matters such as archival legislation, writing materials, assessments as to secrecy, archive premises, registration and modern archive theory. The National Archives issues general advice to local authorities at district and county council level in cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the Federation of Swedish County Councils, since 1st January, 2005, known as the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

This photograph shows a typical official visit: an archivist from the National Archives discusses with the archive staff on the spot.

The Swedish National Archive organisation

RIKSARKIVET

(central and civil authorities)

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SVAR

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ÖSTERSUND

KARLSTAD

LUND

GÖTEBORG

MEDIA KONVERTERINGS CENTRUM (MKC)

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Please note that all phone and fax numbers have been changed since end of 2008. You can reach us all on +46-(0)10-476 70 00. For further information, please visit our web site, www.statensarkiv.se.

RAMSELE

HÄRNÖSANE

STOCKHOLM

FRÄNSTA

SVENSK MUSEITJÄNST (SMT)

Depå Munkhättan (storage facilities)

Gustaf de Lavals väg 12 147 41 Tumba Tel. 08-530 658 00 Fax 08-530 658 10

www.ra.se/ra/museitjanst.html

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The illustration on the inside cover shows fifty signatures in original handwriting of known and unknown people in Swedish history, taken from the holdings at the National Archives:

1. F. von Dardel 2. The marks of Anders Olofsson, Jöns Nilsson and Mikael Ersson 3. G. A. Reuterholm 4. Queen Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta 5. C. Polhem 6. E. J. S. Dahlberg 7. Ulla Lindström 8. August Strindberg 9. Edith Liljedahl 10. A. Joh. Amnéus 11. Carl XVI Gustaf 12. Axel Oxenstierna 13. Emanuel Swedenborg 14. Carl Ludvig Söderström 15. Emil Hildebrand 16. Per Månsson 17. Jacob Faggot 18. Carl XIV Johan 19. J. J. Ankarström 20. Baltzar von Platen 21. The mark of Anders Eriksson 22. Queen Kristina 23. Ebba Brahe 24. Gustav II Adolf 25. The mark of Johan Jacobsson 26. J. M. Piper 27. Queen Sophia Magdalena 28. Selma Lagerlöf 29. Gustav III 30. Queen Desideria 31. Karl XII 32. Dag Hammarskjöld 33. G. H. Lothigius 34. Carl von Linné (Linnaeus) 35. Gustav Vasa 36. Hans Järta 37. Carl Michael Bellman 38. Hjalmar Branting 39. G. Stiernhielm 40. Peminacka – Indian chief in New Sweden 41. Sven Hedin 42. Carl G. Tessin 43. The mark of Isaac Herranen 44. Jonas Alström 45. Alfred Nobel 46. A. Ehrensvärd 47. Love Almqvist 48. E. M. Staël von Holstein 49. N. Porath 50. Queen Lovisa Ulrika.

The back cover shows: The National Archives, Marieberg, designed by architects Åke Ahlström and Kjell Åström and inaugurated in 1968; The National Archives, Arninge, designed by architect Jean-François Richard Boetten AB and inaugurated in 1995; Krigsarkivet, designed by Cyrillus Johansson and taken into use in 1947; SVAR, designed by Per Persson MAF arkitektkontor and completed in 1994; MKC, designed by Sten Olssons Ingenjörsbyrå AB and inaugurated in 1970; the two buildings comprising SMT were originally from the 1970s and formed part of the Alfa Laval industrial complex.

Production team: Karin Borgkvist Ljung: project planning and text; Anna Fornäs: text; Maria Balke: graphic design; Kurt Eriksson: photographer; Ann-Sofie Persson: assistant photographer; Bertil Olofsson: photo, page 4; Vladimir A. Sagerlund: illustration, page 10 and map, page 15; Anna Karin Hermodsson, Örjan Romefors, Lars-Olof Welander and Cecilia Nilsson: guidance and text revision; Skans Victoria Airey: translation.

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Cothern Eff Dahlberghan Wala Lindelran A: Joh: Alumeur. al Con If Frenchismy. Luit Kraleband. Peer Manfon. Biv: Blater A A Companie. Sound Linne Hostowns Hostowns All Selmen Lem Jacka som ritte igande Sventte Sin 2. Nalus Marinnak S. Struth. Louire Ulrique

RIKSARKIVET, MARIEBERG



KRIGSARKIVET AT GÄRDE









DEPÅ MUNKHÄTTAN ENIRE



MKC, FRÄNSTA

SVENSK MUSEITJÄNST, TUMBA

SVAR RAMSELE







Svensk Museitjänst

