# Ownership and geography of books in mid-nineteenth century Iceland

## Abstract

In October 1865, the national librarian, then the only employee of the National Library of Iceland (est. 1818) got permission from the bishop in Iceland to send a written request to all provosts around the country to do a detailed survey in the parishes of ownership of old Icelandic books printed before 1816. The title page of every book in all farms should be written down in full detail, the number of printed pages recorded, and the place of publication *etc*. The aim of this project was to compile data for a detailed national bibliography with a list of Icelandic authors, and to build a good collection of books in the library. Some of the written reports have survived and are now in the library archive. In this paper, I will talk about these unused sources of books ownership and book history. Most importantly, how we are using them with other data to display how ownership of books in the mid-nineteenth century for example varied indifferent parts of the country. By using several authority files that are in TEI P5 XML a detailed map of ownership can be drawn. The authority files are firstly, a detailed historical bibliography of Icelandic books from 1534 to 1844 and secondly a list of all farms in Iceland with GPS coordinates. In my talk, I will also elaborate on how this project about ownership of books and the geography of books can be developed further and how the data can be used by others. One aspect of my short talk is the cooperation between librarians and IT professionals and how unrelated sources can be linked together to bring out new knowledge and interpret history.

Projects website: <https://bokaskra.landsbokasafn.is/geography>