



Sabelskjöldarn

2010



A word from our president.

Dear relatives!

A new decade has begun – time moves fast. An active lifestyle with a lot going on makes of course you feel that time is flying, whether you are still working or retired - a view that I probably share with many of you.

Now we have spring and summer ahead of us and we can start planning for what to do with our house, summer house, garden, boat or holiday, We can put away the snow shovel and leave the beautiful snow-white winter behind us and hopefully look forward to a nice, green summer!

I have read old documents from 1967 and onwards when the Sabelskjöld Family Society was formally established. Family Meetings have been held 26 times over the years at places like Kristdala, Nyköping, Eksjo, Kalmar, Gränna Hedemora, Växjö, Linköping, Tranås, Vetlanda, Flen, Vadstena, Norrköping, Nyköping, Söderköping, Skeviks Gård in Gustavsberg, Bråbo and Blacksta - some places have thus been visited several times.

We have for the next annual meeting on Saturday, August 28, 2010 booked Kalmar Castle, so please enter this into your calendar! A separate invitation will follow.

Many of you have surely great memories from these meetings.

I want you, who are regular visitors to our meetings, to tell other members who rarely or never visit any family gathering that it is at those occasions you realize the true advantage of our association. At each family gathering you will find new relatives! Start chatting with them, tell them something about yourself and where you come from, that's when you discover how the family ties are interwoven. "Nice to meet – sure we've met before but never did I know that we are related." That's the way many conversations start and new family connections are found!

Our membership list is available to all members – check it out, you may be related with your neighbour without knowing it! In the previous issue of Sabelskjöldarn Birger Bring put the question "How many descendants, are we really?" Sure enough, there is a good reason to start researching a bit more, and perhaps find "new" relatives.

Rolf Svensson, President

In plain language from the Sabelskjöld's days.

What was the spoken language like in Sabelskjöld's days? Our perception of the 1600s language comes almost exclusively from the written language in official documents. There are letters to policymakers, legal documents, religious tracts, etc., where the graceful phrases and pompous language were the norm. Spoken language was only occasionally written down and then always by someone else - literacy was very limited amongst "ordinary people". Of course, also people back in the 1600s could be irritated and use rough language, maybe even rougher than what we use today. Here are some examples of plain language used in Sabelskjöld's days.

Ingrid Hakansson was not a member of the Sabelskjöld family but belonged to the group of people that that often visited the Sabelskjölds at Bråhult. She was Olof Meurling's aunt . Meurling was Vicar at Kristdala. Ingrid married Karl Spaak city court judge in Vimmerby town. On April 24, 1678 the protocol from the city court says that Ingrid had spoken derogatory about the citizens of Vimmerby calling them philistines. Ingrid defended herself and replied that she only had said that "she lives among devils and demons and doesn't care a damn about them".!

Cornet Axel Kessel in Småland's cavalierly regiment was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Jons Sabelskjöld. Axel had apparently a short fuse. In 1686 the vicar in Kristdala writes that Kessel when visiting the vicarage, had an outburst lashed his whip across the table, throwing bread on the floor smashing the plate into the wall, shouting that he gave both the holy spirit, the bishop and all his priests "7000 devils" ¹.

Speaking of Elizabeth Sabelskjöld / Kessel she was widowed early with nine children. A situation that was not all that easy. An officer at Uppland's regiment Johan Hirner courted one of Elisabet's daughters, but was turned down by Elizabeth. As revenge for the defeat he slept with Elizabeth's oldest daughter Greta Kessel!

Sometimes the situation called for the reverse, i.e. to paraphrase a somewhat embarrassing incident in forgiving language. Karl Jönsson Sabelskjöld himself faced such an incident, when he, during a jolly party, happened to sign Brita Rosenstråle's will, something he later regretted. He excused himself saying that he signed the document when "his mind was elsewhere and he was having good times drinking with friends" ¹.

Birger Bring

1 Translator's note:

The old 17th century Swedish text is hard to translate keeping the original touch, which makes the original language amusing by itself.

Sources: : Sture Heiding/Sven Bankeström: "Om ätten Sabel-skjöld och livdragonen Carl Sabelskjölds avkomlingar." Sven Bankeström: "Från flydda tiders Kristdala och Tuna län."



Questions on our family.

Was the well-known charlatan and con artist Fallebogöken¹ a Sabelskjöld descendant?

No, Karl Johan Nilsson / Fallenius / Roback (he used many names) did not belong to family himself but his son Charles William married into the Sabelskjöld family. He married, despite his father's wild protests, seamstress Wilhelmina Josephina Kjörling, granddaughter of cantor Körling in Kristdala.

Karl Johan began as farmer on the family farm in Fallebo village in Kristdala, but soon he became businessman in Döderhultsvik (today town of Oskarshamn). Because of extensive loan transactions, involving forged creditors Fallebogöken, which was Kristdala resident's nickname for merchant Nilsson, had to escape to America. There he soon engaged in quackery on a large scale. Doctor Roback, as he now called himself, sold liquid electricity, resuscitated dead persons, sold love powder and much more.

Author Barbro Lindgren, herself a descendant of the doctor, tells in the book **Fallebogöken den sjunde sonen av en sjunde son** (Fallebogöken - the seventh son of a seventh son) about Fallebogöken's mischief, a highly entertaining reading.

Birger Bring

¹ Fallebogöken is meant to be a derogatory description of someone who couldn't be trusted.



Sabelskjöld descendant wins Olympic gold medal.

At the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, Björn Ferry won the gold medal in biathlon pursuit. Bjorn's ancestors lived in Kristdala and he belongs to the Sabelskjöld family. Bjorn's great-grandfather Adolf Julius Gustafsson was born in 1873 in Mellingerum, Kristdala. Adolf Julius took the name Ferry. His mother, Christina Catherine Persdotter, have a double sabelskjölds-connection. Her ancestry leads to both Elizabeth and Ingeborg Sabelskjöld.

We would like to congratulate our relative.

Marianne Linden

Fliseryd's Forgotten Bell

by Gary Jacobson



In May of 2009 I traveled to Sweden again to visit some dear friends and to make some new ones. I had been to Sweden three times in the past, but I always want to go back for more. My itinerary took me from Copenhagen to Värnamo, then to Nyköping, Norrköping, and Kristdala. Then it was on to Oskarshamn and points south. After a wonderful day in Oskarshamn with Sam Blixt and his wife, I made my way south. My schedule was not strict, so I decided to have a look at Fliseryd Church. My great-great-great grandparents (mormors morfars föräldrar) were baptized there in 1815.

I found the village of Fliseryd without much difficulty, and the church was a wonderful sight to behold. Lucky for me it was not locked. After seeing the main part of the church and snapping a bunch of photos, I decided to continue exploring. I am continually fascinated by the old churches of Scandinavia. They stand as vivid reminders of times that could otherwise be forgotten.

As I was looking around in the narthex, I noticed that the door to the steeple was not locked. For me, that is an invitation, so I headed up the narrow staircase. On the first level I beheld the massive 16th century gravestone of Gotfrid Hindricksson, former sheriff at Kronobäcks kloster near Mönsterås. From there I climbed the ladder to the belfry. I was amazed to encounter the two massive bells that are hanging there. I started snapping pictures again (like a real tourist), when I noticed a familiar name on the older, larger bell. It said "SABELSKIOL". I couldn't believe my eyes! The inscription on the bell read, "MAGNUS STRÅLE : ELISABET SABELSKIOL : PEDER WLF SAX : BRITTA : SABELSKIOLL : MAGNUS PETRI : PASTOR IN FLISARYD : I.H.S. : D. 16 JUNI 1651 : D.P.S. : P.O.S." It was obvious that the Sabelskjöld influence was once great in this area, and I was eager to learn more.

I contacted Birger Bring regarding the bell and he told me that no one he knew of was aware that it even existed. Apparently, this amazing artifact from the Sabelskjöld glory days had been all but forgotten.

The origins of the bell go back to the early days of the Sabelskjöld family. Carl Jönsson Sabelskjöld was first married to Magdalena Strang and they had two daughters, Elisabeth and Brita. The girls married into the Stråle af Ekna and Ulf sax families. These were both powerful and very wealthy families in Småland at the time. They were a perfect match for the up and coming Sabelskjöld dynasty.

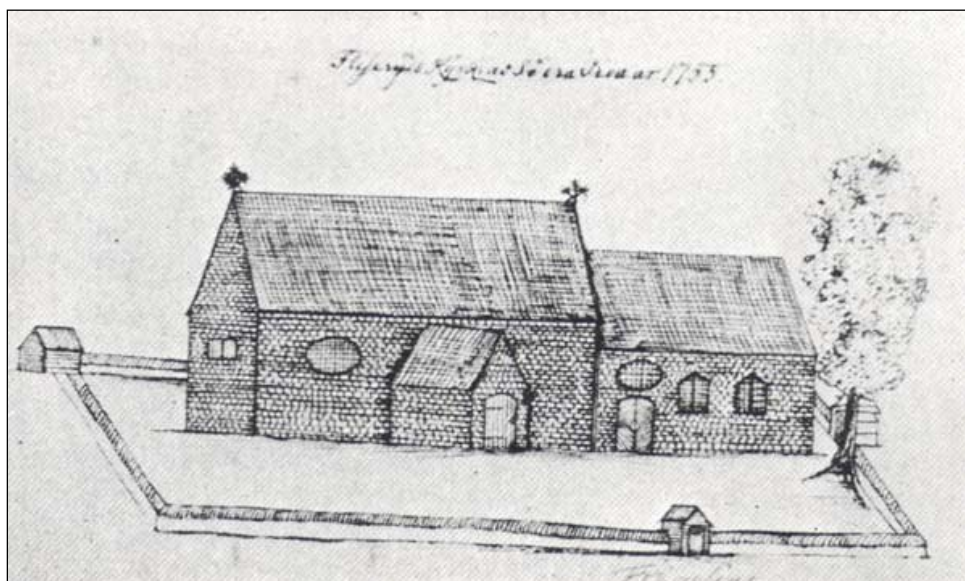
Elisabeth was born about 1616. She married Lieutenant Magnus Stråle of the Småland Cavalry in 1644. Elisabeth died in 1659 and she and Magnus are buried in the church at Högsby. The Stråle family owned land in Fliseryd Parish. Among their many holdings was the estate named Åseboholm ¹ on the western edge of Fliseryd Parish. It is curious to note that in 1662, Elisabeth's half brother Jöns Sabelskjöld married Magnus Stråle's sister Märta.

Brita Sabelskjöld was born about 1619. Sometime before 1642 she was married to Lieutenant Per Nilsson Ulf sax. She died in 1690 and is likely buried with Per at Lemnhult in Jönköping County. The Ulf sax family had vast holdings in the Vetlanda region.

The last name on the bell is that of Magnus Petri, Pastor of Fliseryd from 1613 until his death in 1658.

Contrary to our modern practice, the old bell did not hang in a church steeple when it was new. The tradition was that the bell would hang in a separate tower to keep it safe in the event of a church fire. Since most of the churches were made of wood in those days, church fires were frequent. Something as valuable as a massive bronze bell could not be in such a risky place as a church steeple.

The old Fliseryd church was built between 1290 and 1318. It was wooden and typical for churches in Småland at that time. The only drawing that exists is by Petrus Frigelius from the year 1753. His drawing does not give us any information about size or location of the bell tower.



Another church in the area that still survives from this time is Granhults church. It dates from 1217 and bears an uncanny resemblance to the old Fliseryd church in Frigelius' drawing.



This photo from 1906 shows the Granhult bell tower in relation to the church. It is likely that old Fliseryd was configured similar to like this.

In 1651 Fliseryd needed a new bell. The old one had broken loose from its suspension loops and was no longer usable. Before the bell was recast, it weighed 73 lispounds (620 kg). A collection was taken up from the parish to increase the size of the bell beyond its original mass. The details of this materials fund raiser is well documented in the old Fliseryd church records.

This loose translation is taken from the parish register in 1651:

"In this year in June we in Fliseryd parish had our big bell remolded because the connections were broken. Lars Persson and Arvidh Larsson living in Jönköping repaired her. As salary they received 108 pieces of white coin. Before the bell was repaired her weight was 73 lispounds (1 lispound = 20 pounds = 8.5kg)¹, but after the reformation of the bell it is as follows:

At first the church tithes of copper were more than 21 lispounds, ½ pound. For the bell, was given to the parish firstly by The Honourable Lieutenant Magnus Stråle at Åseboholm with his wife, Mrs. Elisabeth Sabelsköld, 8 pounds of tin, 8 pounds of brass, 9 pounds of copper, and also he gave a pan of ½ lispound of copper.

I (Pastor Petri) together with my wife gave a little kettle with the weight of 10 marks. (1 mark = ½ pound)². After that most people in parish each gave 5 pounds of copper. 3 lispounds were bought by The Honourable M. Stråle at Åseboholm for 12 rix-dollar.

From the bell-foundry was purchased 3 lispounds 12 pounds of bell-metal and copper, and 9 pounds of tin. The farmers of Bötaskog gave 11 lispounds 7 pounds of copper, bell-metal, brass and tin as change for a little old bell, which they got from here to their chapel."

Clearly, Brita Sabelskjöld and Per Ulf sax gave something toward the bell, but this was not mentioned in the register.



Here you can see the name "Britta Sabelskioll" and the date 1651.
(The date is oddly depicted on the bell, but the parish register confirms it.)

Fliseryd had its new bell! Things seemed to go well until 6 June 1811 when a fire broke out at the Fliseryd farm manor near the church. The fire spread and the church was destroyed. The inferno was so great that the bell tower also caught fire and the huge bell was nearly lost. Fortunately, there was a resolute man who defied the fire, smoke and heat. He fetched water from the Emån River next to the church and poured it on the bell again and again to prevent it from being melted by the heat. This man was a local workman, named Carl Krants. His efforts did not go unrewarded. According to the parish register, he was paid the sum of 3 riks-dollar, 16 shilling banco for "the salvation of the church bells".

The congregation still had its lovely bell, but no church. The bishop in Växjö was concerned that Fliseryds church had been located too far in the western edge of the parish. It was decided that when the new church is built it would be relocated to the village of Åby, which is more centrally located. In 1818 the new stone church was dedicated and the little village of Åby became the new town of Fliseryd.

The old bell was initially hung in a freestanding bell tower near the church, but in 1880 a beautiful steeple was added to the church and the bell found its current home there.

I am not sure how interested the vicar at Fliseryd is in having people snooping around in his church tower, but if you get the opportunity to have a peek at the bell, I highly recommend taking advantage of it!

Gary Jacobson
Rochester, Minnesota



¹ A paper on the history of Åseboholm farm can be found on our webpage.

Reunion at Nyköpingshus.



This is certainly the largest and finest assignment I have had in my entire life, to see so many noble people in this room. You are no common people, not Tom, Dick and Harry, but men and women, all descendants of the nobility."

With these words the actor Lasse Lindberg began his show, dressed in a 1600-century costume at our 2009 family gathering in Nyköping. With a lute in his hand, he loudly stated his message to the today's Sabelskjöld members:

"There is not a single drop of red blood in this hall, only blue blood flowing in your veins, " he announced causing the audience to giggle and cheer ¹.

The Sabelskjöld Family reunion was held on a sunny Saturday, August 29 at Nyköpingshus where about one hundred descendants of Major Carl Sabelskjöld and his wives in his two marriages, Magdalena Strang and Ingeborg Rosenstråle.

Lasse told us about Carl who was born in January 1590, and about his mother, Brita Larsdotter, She was employed by Duke Karl, later King Karl IV working at Nyköpingshus and so was his father Jons Martensson. A few years later Brita Larsdotter became nurse to the duke's daughter, princess Christina, and Carl became the playmate of Prince Gustav, who was born 1594.

Young Gustav was later to be crowned King Gustav II Adolf, Thus on October 12, 1617 King Gustav knighted Carl, who took the name Sabelskjöld. Today, however we will not focus on these two noble warriors.

Thus everyone was in the best of spirits when we entered banquet hall where the dark vaults were decorated with tapestries and the long tables were lit by large candles in tin candlesticks



In Brita Larsdotter's cellar.

Here in Brita Larsdotter's wine and food cellar, now the banquet hall was served a 1600-style meal, consisting of marinated pork tenderloin with apple sauce with honey-roasted root



vegetables. In order to better blend in this day, perhaps we should have been dressed up in 1600-century costumes. The feeling was great and a little bit strange to sit in the cellar where Brita Larsdotter just over four hundred years ago ruled over servants, linen-supply, spinning works and dairy. Suitably enough Brita Larsdotter, was standing among us, in the form of an authentic model brought in for this very day from Sörmlands Museum. Brita was daughter of the vicar of Helgona parish in Nyköping, Laurentius Andreae and his wife, Mariet. When she on July 7, 1587 married Jöns Mårtensson the wedding was arranged and paid by Duke Karl. In 1588 she was appointed fatburshustru (responsible for the household) at Nyköping Castle. She then became head of the staff responsible for of the king's castle and servants. Through her father, the pastor, she had learned to read, write and count. Maybe she also mastered Latin.

Duke Karl's father King Gustav Vasa wanted the state's assets to be in good order and had given orders that there should be records of all inventory in the royal palaces. Still today there are records kept at Sörmland's Museum, where Brita Larsdotter has carefully reported what was in the royal stores.

Ballads and anecdotes from Duke Karl's time

Lasse Lindberg, who entertained during the day with anecdotes from Duke Karl's time, sang songs and played the lute in 1600-century melodies. He also played the flute and told stories about what had happened under these vaults. He told how King Birger of Sweden on November 11, 1317 invited his two brothers, Valdemar, duke of Finland, and Erik, duke of Västergötland, to Nyköpingshus for a feast where the brothers were captured, imprisoned and finally starved to death in the prison tower at Nyköping's castle.



No one was starving this day! We had a lot of food followed by coffee and cake. Honouring the event the bakery had decorated the cakes with a replica of the Sabelskjöld Coat of Arms. This was certainly a nice gesture concluding a great dinner.

After a short break, when we stretch your legs in the courtyard and down by the moat. We then gathered on a grass slope for group picture. It took a while before all people got out from the nooks and crannies of the castle. Some had slipped in to the vault where the old Sabelskjöld silver wedding crown was on display. This priceless artefact was made



sometime in the years 1662-1700 by the silversmith, Hans Persson Bergman in Vimmerby.

Then we all gathered again in the banquet hall. Stina Palmblad Eriksson from Sörmlands Museum gave a speech on women at Duke Karl's Nyköpingshus.

"I shudder" she began in her singing Finnish-Swedish accent, "when I see all of you sitting here, because no one has a better right to be here than you, the descendents of Brita Larsdotter.

For it was here in this cellar that Brita Larsdotter, ruled over the castle's food and vine supplies", she said. More on this in a separate article on page 8.

Allhelgonakyrkan – All Saints Church

The day ended with a walk to Allhelgonakyrkan (All Saints Church), the church where Brita Larsdotter's father, Pastor Laurentius Andrae was vicar. A number of silver objects from the 1600s were shown.

As the evening sun began to set behind the walls of Nyköpingshus it was time to return home. Many new contacts were made during the day and everyone went home a little richer in memories. Some returned to places as north as Boden and as south as Trelleborg. Many of us come from Småland where the Sabelskjöld family came to stay in the area around Kristdala and Landsbro. Today, there are descendants all around the world, all descended from Brita Larsdotter.

A thought came to my mind that we, the women descending from Brita Larsdotter, have become strong and wise women, a legacy she left to us to carry on with pride.

Siv Grönwald

Descendant of Brita through thirteen generations.

A full report (in Swedish) of the family reunion can be found on our website www.sabelskjold.se. Anyone who wants to see Lars Lindberg "live" please go to YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com> - keyword: Sabelskjöld

- 1 Translater's note: In the middle ages it was believed that noble people had blue blood in their veins. This is still a phrase in Swedish language.

The next annual meeting!

On Saturday, August 28, 2010 all members are welcome to the annual meeting at Kalmar Castle.

More information will be sent out separately, but please book already now in your calendar.



The monarchs struggle for Bråhult.

Bråhult farm is located in what was formerly Kristdala parish, today the municipality of Oskarshamn. Bråhult farm today constitutes one mantal¹ and contains three holdings. The farm has been known since the Middle Ages and became the manor which governed a large farm complex, including many farms in Kristdala parish and several neighboring parishes. Bråhult's medieval history has been discussed by Maria Andersson in a paper¹ at Linköping University. From this paper we quote the following:

“In Kristdala the Bråhult farm was the centre of the Bråhult cluster (Figure 5). During the latter part of the 1300's a large number of farms were acquired by Claus Ruska, with Bråhult as the main farm. After the death of Claus Ruska the farms were inherited by his son Lydike, and when he died they were sold by Lydike's widow to the queen of Sweden, Margareta, and thus become owned by the state.”

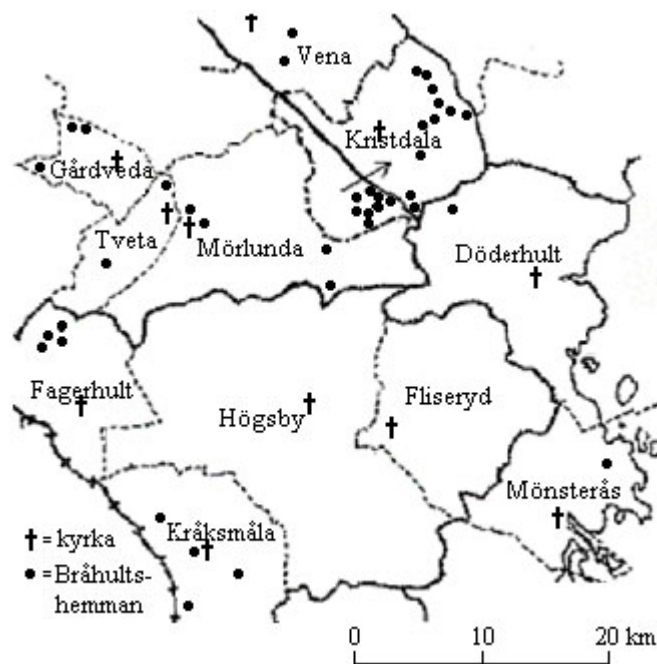


Figure 5: The approximate distribution of Bråhult's cluster of farms with exception of holdings in Kläckeberga parish in north Møre district. (Source DMS 4:4 and 4:2. Map processed by the author.)

The Sabelskjölds acquire Bråhult.

In the late 1500's King John III hired Scotsmen to serve in the Swedish army. One of the Scotsmen, who came to Sweden, was Hans Strang. He lent money to the king and got a number of farms as pledge in Kristdala parish. These were the same farms which Queen Margareta once bought, among them Bråhult.

Strang married Carin Bagge of Berga and had two daughters, Magdalena and Carin. Later, when Karl Jönsson Sabelskjöld married Magdalena Strang, he became owner of the pledge (i.e. a substantial number of farms in Kristdala parish with Bråhult as the main farm). It should be noted that Karl Sabelskjöld did not own the farms, but only held them as collateral for the money that his father in law had lent the king.



We do not know how much the claim was that Mr. Strang had on John III, but obviously it would have been a better deal to keep the farms than having the money refunded, so Karl applied for the ownership of farms. So it was, in 1649 he received the farms as a donation from Queen Kristina, to have for himself and his male heirs. In return he forever waived his claim against the Crown.

A step forward indeed, but the joy was short-lived. In 1654 the political situation dramatically changed. The queen abdicated, left the country and eventually came to Rome, where she converted to Catholicism.

Beginning of the downfall.



King Karl X Gustav became the new regent of Sweden in 1654. Gone was the generous allocation of farms to the nobility. On the contrary, the king now began to recover part of what had been given away by Queen Kristina.

The first step was the so-called quarter-part-recovery. This meant that one out of four farms previously donated to the nobility should revert to the Crown. In the Swedish Land Survey Archive, there is a map from 1654 entitled "Noble Karl Sabbelskiöld's farms belonging to the Bråhult manor".



The map was commissioned by the Governor of Kalmar County and was most likely intended to be used in the coming quarter-part-recovery. The map is interesting in that it gives clear indication that the Sabelskjöld main buildings were located on the slope towards Bråhultsjön (Bråhult Lake). That is where the Sabelskjöld Family Society has placed a sign indicating the location of the former building site.

The quarter-part-recovery did indeed reach Bråhult the following year, and Karl had to return two farms to the state, Applekulla and one farm in Bjälebo. Furthermore the status of the remaining farms was reverted to that of collateral and could thus be redeemed if the crown repaid its debt.

The Sabelskjölds loose all of their farms in Kristdala.

The next king, Karl XI, was even tougher. In 1689 the Crown recovered all of Sabelskjöld's farms in Kristdala. No compensation was given based on the grounds that the yield had been

so high that the loan from 1577 could be considered repaid. The head of the Sabelskjöld family was now Jöns Sabelskjöld. He was allowed to remain on Bråhult but now as a tenant of the crown.

As is well known, the Sabelskjöld name vanished when Jöns' son, Karl, died in 1701 during a campaign in the Baltics under King Karl XII. Karl Sabelskjöld's widow Elizabeth Duræus remained on Bråhult until her death in 1709, but she was not able to pay the tenancy, so other tenants took over Bråhult.

Bråhult after the Sabelskjölds.

The name Sabelskjöld disappeared when Karl Sabelskjöld died somewhere in the Baltics in 1701, but the family continued through female lines. All of Karl's daughters, the six "well-born ladies" at Bråhult, married farmers from the neighborhood. And so it happened that the Sabelskjöld descendants remained on Bråhult much later, and do so even today. In 1727 the crown sold Bråhult and since then the farm has been privately owned.

On the slope down towards Bråhults Lake, we can still see the remains of houses once inhabited by members of the Sabelskjöld family.

Gary Jacobson/Birger Bring

¹ A mantal was once the size of land on which a farmer could support his family. As farming got more efficient over time, more than one farming unit was set up on each mantal.

² Noble-men, peasants and tenants - division in landownership in Kalmar län and Öland in the 16th century. Author: Maria Andersson. University of Linköping. Institution for Geography, 2007.





A pioneer from Småland in Lapland

Our relative, who also was my grandmother's grandfather, was a true pioneer. Samuel Augustus Samuelsson, in the following called SA, was born February 5, 1834 in Systertorp village, Kristdala, Kalmar County. The farm had been in family since 1465 and one wonders why SA did not become a farmer in his home district of Småland. The answer is, most likely, that since he was not the eldest son, he was not to take over the farm, and further that he was gifted so studies were no problem. After studies in Gothenburg

he graduated as teacher and was sent to a missionary school in Bastutrask, nowadays called Gunnarn village in Lapland in northern Sweden. He then changed his name Blomqvist.

SA came to Gunnarn in the summer of 1858 after a long and laborious journey. He came together with his colleague Gärdlund, who later became a teacher in Skarvsjö village. Arriving in Gunnarn SA stopped at a farm, to ask for directions. At the farm there were women baking bread and one of them, Erika Carlsdotter, offered SA to taste. SA whispered to his companion "that girl shall be my wife." In the fall of that year, just months later, the wedding took place between the 24-year-old village teacher and 19-year-old Erika.

What has been said about SA gives the impression of a wise and just teacher. Energy and enterprise was the main thread through his life. In addition to teaching, he also ran a major farm, and the village store. SA undoubtedly contributed to the boom that Gunnarn village experienced during the latter part of the 1800s. SA also acted as overseer and spoke the local language. Hunting was one of SA's most cherished pursuits and wagonloads of leather on the way to the market in Lycksele were not unusual. He was an excellent marksman and there were plenty of stories about his accuracy in firing.

SA was a trustee in different contexts. Among other things, he often was assigned the task of accompanying the governor or the bishop on their journeys to Stensele and Tärnaby. SA experienced the blessing of modern communications, when a new road was built between Gunnarn and Stensele his grandson could offer him a ride in his open Ford to another grandson. When he arrived, his first words were: "In the past I have rowed and carried all children here for baptizing, but today I just sit and hold my hat!"

The year 1923 the Inland railway track was completed but the section Wilhelmina - Storuman was not yet open for passenger traffic. SA wanted to experience the triumph of taking the train so he asked the foreman if he could go with the train to Storuman. "It is not possible, we have only gravel trains, no passenger trains, and on the gravel trains one has to stand up and hold on tightly." was the answer. "Has anyone fallen off, then?", asked SA. "No, certainly not," said the foreman. "Very well then, I wouldn't either," said SA, and so he experienced the sensation of riding a train before he died.

SA could celebrate his ninetieth birthday still well and vital, as he always had been. A few months later he died of pneumonia, but the memory of this pioneer is still with us.

Kurt Nordberg, member of the Sabelskjöld family.

What does the Sabelskjöld Family Society mean to you?

Barbro Lindgren, Linköping

(with the same name as the known author of children's literature, who also belongs to the family):

"I grew up in Tuna and had already then links to the Society, since my mom was and dad Hugo Ek both were members. Dad wrote an article about the Sabelskjöld wedding crown in the book "Om ätten Sabelsköld och livdragonen Carl Sabelskölds avkomlingar" As an adult my interest for genealogy increased, it feels good to know that you belong somewhere. I've been to a few family reunions. I remember that dad and mom were at a wedding where the bride wore the old Sabelskjöld crown "



Berne Andersson, Åstorp:

"I wanted to know where I came from and started setting up a family tree. Since then, I have done much research on the families Sabelskjöld, Rosenstråle, Stålarms, Stråle av Ekna and others. I have also made postings on the Sabelskjöld web site, please check out there! It's been fun to be present at family gatherings! "

Niklas Ammert, Nybro:

"We connect to the Sabelskjölds through my grandfather. We joined the Society when Birger Bring, who now is on the board, phoned my mother and said we had American relatives, coming to visit. Grandpa's ancestors worked on farms as hired labourers, so it was extra nice to have "noble" ancestry, it seemed like an upgrade! Grandpa told us that we were related to Greta Garbo, I am a teacher in history at University of Kalmar and of course our Sabelskjöld connection makes our own history more interesting."



Marianne J Widelund, Hudiksvall:

"When my sister and I were married in a double wedding in Hudiksvall we had the heavy bridal crown on a cushion behind us. Instead of wearing the crown, we had flowers in our hair. It must have been rather complicated to safely bring the crown such a long way. My mother was very interested in genealogy, so when she died my sister and I decided to continue to be members. I work as a teacher and I sometimes use lithography of the Sabelskjöld Coat of Arms in my teaching. "

Sofia Svensson-Kastman, Oskarshamn:

I have always been interested in my roots. My family is active in the Society, so I've had the opportunity to participate in family meetings and family gatherings. My grandmother's family did genealogy work in their spare time and she also looked after of the wedding crown, something that my dad now is doing. As a bonus, I have heard many stories about the Sabelskjöld family. Therefore I have decided to join the Society.

Interviews: Annika Sabelsjö

Brita Larsdotter – the grand lady at Nyköpingshus.

"The room in which we are today was never meant to be used as a dining room, but as food- and wine cellar."

We are in the banquet hall at Nyköpingshus castle at the family reunion in August 2009.

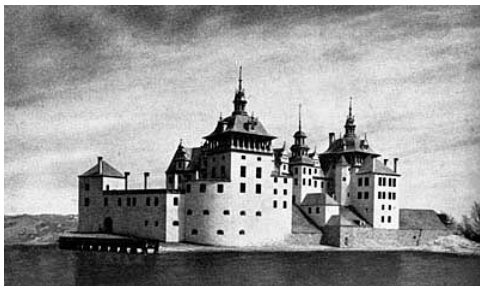
About 100 people with Sabelskjöld links participated.

With an unmistakable Finnish-Swedish kind of singing accent Stina Eriksson Palmgren tells us about our ggggg...mother, Brita Larsdotter, married to Jöns Martensson one of Duke Karl's bailiffs.

In 1560 Duke Karl is 10 years old.

He is then already duke of Närke, Södermanland and Värmland. As an adult, during the late 1500s, Duke Karl rebuilds the castle. This is a part of his strategy – he wants to be seen as trustworthy and successful. As an example of the splendour surrounding the duke it could be mentioned that the gardens stretched all the way from Nyköpingshus to the church.

Although not yet a king Duke Karl had a lavish court at Nyköpingshus. The castle, as it appeared at that time, employed a lot of people, particularly women. There was a female hierarchy at the castle and the highest in rank was Brita Larsdotter.



Brita wore a key ring that signalled its bearer's power in both sight and sound.

Brita's assignment gave her a very respected position, she was the woman in charge of the castle's household, a big operation.

Duke Karl selected his staff among the lower rank nobility rather than from his own fellow noblemen. He simply wanted loyal staff that would not get the idea to challenge him.

The duke was aware of a worker's value, so rather than letting sentenced men sit idle in the dungeon; he used them as workmen in the fields until they worked off their debt.

Food and drink came from the surrounding farms owned by the crown, so-called Kungsladugårdar (royal stables). In 1590 a young man who worked as farmhand received an annual salary of three marks (mark is an old currency unit) and a maid had 16 marks.

When hard times came wages were lowered for everyone. A farmhand had to work for food only but still a maid made eight marks plus fabric and other things which were useful in daily life. It seems, in contrary to the commonly held view, that wages during this period were in favour of women in contrast to what we see today in many cases...



1570 Duke Karl was travelling in Germany. He had sisters who were married and living there and through them he made contact with German merchants. The duke was a businessman and had discovered a good business in selling iron and guns to the Germans.

Karl's second wife was first cousin of his first wife and she was later to become Queen Christina. The Wedding between Duke Karl and Christina was a grand event lasting for ten days. Each invited person brought with him at least ten people: servants, wagon makers ... you name it - people who could be needed for a nobleman at a party!



The actual wedding ceremony was, to say the least, different from today's ceremonies. A large bed was built in the church. The bridal couple were brought to the church and symbolically put to bed. The guests then gathered around the bed and had sweets said prayers for the couple. With this the marriage was contracted. The party continued with tournaments, hunting parties and other activities which could be considered to be suitable entertainment for an occasion like this. The German guests who come just for this wedding, found the Swedish forest

to be scary with all its wildlife. To make hunting less scary for foreigners the duke had captured some elks which he let loose inside the courtyard whereupon also the Germans could shoot an elk without fear for the Swedish wilderness.

Duke Karl said about his wife Kristina that "She is a woman who stands her ground". Christina was probably well educated and skilled. She had a reputation for being stingy, but probably she was simply economically minded.

Duke Karl died in 1611. Christina was then middle aged. An example of the trust Karl had for Christina is that when he was out in a war campaign in the Baltics it was Kristina who was head of state, an honourable and demanding task for any man - sorry woman. Kristina took care of all financial duties so well that she eventually became Sweden's main financier. Even when she in the 1620s came to understand that she was mortally ill, she takes responsibility for the economy in her will. It was only for the survivors to carry out what Kristina so well prepared. Kristina declined a grand funeral, which she regarded as an unnecessary expense. Her son, however, still arranged a funeral worthy of a queen.

Stina summarizes the status of women in Nyköping:
"The image of women in earlier times as victims is not all correct. Many women were in fact both energetic and knowledgeable. We should be proud of our ancestor, Brita Larsdotter, she was the spider in a web at Nyköping castle and had full control".

Maja Svärd / Annica Triborg

