**The Sabelskjöld wedding crown**

The crown which is administered by the association is commonly called the Sabelskjöld wedding crown. In 1970 Sabelskjöld descen
dants made the crown available with the intention that it should be
used for weddings within the family. The association manages the
crown but does not own it.

Where the crown originally came from is a mystery. Despite the
name Sabelskjöld crown it can not be proven that the crown ever
belonged to the Sabelskjöld family. It is true that the crown has
been owned in the family for many generations, and hence been re

garded as a family treasure, but written evidence about the Crown's
earliest history is missing. For a long time the first known document
about the crown is a inventory from 1782 issued at Sörebo, Mör
landa parish. In the inventory Marta Olufsdotter a wedding
crown worth 13 daler and 16 shillings is listed. Marta's mother in
law was Martha Sabelskjöld - one of  the six ladies at Bråhult - so the
crown was used during the marriage of  Martha Sabelskjöld to Carl Sabelskjöld in the third generation and had at times
lived on the farm Bråhult in Kristdala. As we know, a story like that almost certainly gets distorted
in various ways.

It can well imagine that the crown was bought by Jöns Sabelskjöld
Hans Persson Bergman. Since 1660s was Sabelskjöld's heydays one

As we know, the story of  almost certainly gets distorted
after being told a couple of  times. How much truth there is
we will never know, but what we do know is that Elizabeth died at
Bråhult in poverty. A more detailed description of  the Sabel
skjöld family and their life at Bråhult can be read in the book, **"Om ätten Sabelsköld och livdragern Carl Sabelskölds avkom
lingarn"**.

Instead we visited the small church called Skansenkyrkan. There
at the altar were two beautiful candlesticks which, at first
glance, looked very much like Carl and Ingeborg's candlesticks
Blacksta church. Because we visited the church alone, there was
no one who could answer our questions. After returning home
I contacted the one of  the guides at Julita farm. I told him
about the marriage between Jöns and Brita at Julita and about the
candlesticks, in Blacksta church that we always believed to
be unique in their design. Now I Learned that Jons and Brita's
wedding did not take place in Skansenkyrkan at Julita because
that church was built in 1936. However, the altar is a copy of
the altar in the old Julita church. Most likely the wedding took
place in Julita old church, the oldest parts of  which goes back
to the 1200s. Candlesticks similar to those in Blacksta was ap

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to the 1200s. Candlesticks similar to those in Blacksta was ap
The village Träthult in the past and today

Träthult is a small village in Kristdala and it is located some three miles from Bråhult, where the Sabelskjöld manor once stood. The first farmer at Träthult, known to us was Hakan who lived there from 1647. The name Träthult (trä = quarrat translator’s note) is believed to originate from a dispute about land between two surrounding villages. It is unlikely that whoever first settled the place should have named it that way. Anyway, the known history goes back nearly 500 years and yet quarrels have been rare.

Starting with Hakan we will now move forward through the generations. Nils Bäckestrom, well known genealogist and author, writes in his books about what he calls the old Träthult family. When Hakan had lived out his life, it was probably his eldest son Olof who took over the farm. For generations to come the name Hakan and Olof kept coming back every second generation on this comparatively large farm. There were of course also daughters in the families and the girls were a good match for the farmer boys at the neighboring villages. Some of the boys in the Träthult village got the opportunity to pursue higher studies, which was not common for farmer’s children at the time. In the mid-1600s, Hakan Olofsson’s son Olof, born around 1658, studied theology and was ordained a priest. As a young man he was served in Kristdala congregation under Pastor Duraeus. Olof’s mother was daughter of a pastor from Mörflunda and Olof’s uncle was an official in the state administration in Stockholm and had adopted the name. Mörflund here comes from Träthult – the Elizabeth branch. So families have been woven together in both past and present.

Träthult is currently a very active village. 13 people live here, four of them are under 20 years old. Presently the village consists of three farms, two of which belong to my family, pretty much like it was in the old Meurling time. There are cattle and sheep to keep the landscape open. Me and my wife Rana live in a twin cabin house (a building which has a dividing wall in the middle and two mirrored compartments one on each side translator’s note), built by the Meurlings in the late 1700s for their tenants. In both kitchens stone pillars hold up the cup over the stove. It is said that these pillars come from Kristdala old church. It is a great privilege to live in such a house. Today it is not common to knit inside twin cabin houses. Most of them have been altered. In our village there have been two more twin cabin houses. One has been torn down. The other, built in the beginning of the 1800s, was the main building for the Meurling family. It was later rebuilt to house one large family with more than one generation, but now just a family lives there.

One of my brothers is renovating old buildings on his farm. It may eventually become an adventure center built around old farming traditions. There are many interesting things about Träthult village so visitors are welcome – just ask us and we will tell you more about our village.

Sture Karlsson New on the Sabelskjöld Family Association board. Sources: Bankestöm Spjö The Sabelskjöld book Own genealogy research

Per Meurling junior continued in the same way. Next pastor however, his great-grandson Karl Meurling sold the farm in the 1830s, whereby the farm was divided into four units with four separate owners. This meant that the last descendant of the old Träthult family left the village. But the story doesn’t end there. In 1907 my grandfather, Karl-Oskar Olsson bought one of the four farms, which previously belonged to the Meurlings. Through genealogical research I have found that my grandfathe- ther actually descended from the old Meurling family. It feels good to live in this village where I am so firmly rooted. My mother Elin came as a maid to a neighboring farm and eventually married my father Karl. Yet another surprise came out of my genealogy research. Elin descended from the Sabelskjöld family – the Elizabeth branch. So families have been woven together in both past and present.

The ship’s cargo proved to be a big disappointment. The main cargo consisted of 500 barrels of salt on its way to the Alsens in Nortköping. There was also some wine, tobacco, 8000 needles, a couple of hundred thimbles and similar stuff. This was not what the pirates had expected. “Little to kill people for” Skytte concluded, disappointed. The ship could not be sold, it was not more valuable and then be sunk. The island of Blå Jungfrun was plundered of everything valuable and then be sunk. The island of Blå Jungfrun was taken by the pirates who had revealed the crime. The salt could of course be sold but to be salt trad- ers in Rostock or Riga didn’t appeal to the two noblemen and was most likely beneath their dignity.

The decision was that the hijacked ship should be sailed to the island of Bia Jungfrun, plundered of everything valuable and then be sunk. The island of Bia Jungfrun was the only island they could go to the island of Blå Jungfrun, plundered of everything valuable and then be sunk. The island of Blå Jungfrun was chosen because it was uninhabited and thought of as the devil’s nest, so seafarers avoided the going ashore on the island. Six pirates carried out this mission and were back on Strömserum after a week.

We know what happened on the Baltic Sea that week in August 1661 because all involved told basically the same story in a trial a year later. It was not until the pirates were to answer for their crime that everyone blamed everyone else. The crew members blamed their masters - Skytte and Drake, whom they dared not to disobey. The noblemen blamed each other, and portrayed the other as mean per- petrator.

The piracy had so far been kept a secret. The crew got small parts of the plunder, but Skytte and Drake kept most of it. 1300 liters of wine had been taken from the hijacked ship. The two noblemen shared the loot, it was not more than what was needed for personal use at a good party. And party time was around the corner.

Party at Strömserum

In September, a month after the hijacking in the Baltic Sea, the Secretary of State Count Carl Mauritz Leijonhufvud traveled to Stockholm with his wife, Countess Anna Maria Craus of Edleby, was amongst the large number of peo- ple who were invited to Strömserum on their way home from Kalmar. The first evening a grand party was given and Skytte and the Count went to bed early. On the next morning the party continued. Soon, however, the good party mood turned into turmoil. It turned out that Skytte had visited the Countess Anna Maria Craus in her chamber that night. What happened there could not be clarified. Skytte was drunk and not very communicative, nineteen year-old countess kept proppingly and did not want to tell, and her husband, the Count, was so upset that he mostly spoke German. The name-calling that fol- lowed was of such a caliber that Skytte spent an entire afternoon from posting in its writing. Skytte felt deeply offended, and staggered up to his room, loaded two pistols, drew his sword and returned to the banquet hall to restore his aristocratic honor.

In the banquet hall he was again assailed with more German words. A hands-on confrontation between the two men was now inevitable. Leijonhufvud seized a candelabrum trying to club Sky- tte, but some of the other participants in the party came in be- tween. Skytte drew his pistol and fired a shot on the Count, but hit instead his butler Samuel Prinza so badly that he died soon afterwards. Skytte fled. The Count brought forward all arms in his possession, barricaded himself at window and shot in all direc- tions he believed Skytte hid. The bullets bounced back and forth in the courtyard – an absolute scandal. After having calmed down somewhat Leijonhufvud decided on immediate departure. The Countess was traveling in a carriage while the Count himself walked beside armed to the teeth to be prepared for new sur- prises in the wild Småland.

In the next issue of Sabelskjöldin’ we will finish the story about the pirates on the Baltic Sea.

Member count passes 600

We are happy to report an increasing member count lately. From 2008 to the end of 2010, we have added some 200 members to the society. This means that the current number last passed 600. The increased interest for the Sabelskjöld Society comes in all ages also younger people! This is a very positive development, which we of course hope will continue.

Rolf Svensson

Getting married?

Are you planning a wedding in the family? The crown is available for members of the Society. Please contact Staf- fan Svensson for more information. Address see last page.

Photo Wenche Skodåg

Beige Bring

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Family reunion at Kalmar Castle

On Saturday September 28 the Sabelskjöld Family Association held its annual meeting in the banquet hall of the Kalmar Castle. Just over hundred participants came. Our most remote visitors flew in from Colorado, US.

As mentioned previously, Carl Jönsson was born in 1590 at Nyköping Castle, where his father Jöns Mårtensson was castellan and his mother Brita Larsdotter was royal housekeeper for King Carl IX and Queen Christina. Jöns grew up together with the Prince Gustav Adolf. Later king Gustavus Adolphus II. Carl started his military career as early as 15-20 years old. He became a second lieutenant in Småland cavalry regiment in 1616, Captain 1622 and Major 1627. He served more than 20 years in the Småland cavalry, under both King Charles IX and king Gustavus Adolphus II. It is likely that he during those years visited Kalmar several times.

The name Sabelskjöld was given to him when he was knighted on October 12, 1617 in connection with Gustavus Adolphus II. The name was in part based on the castle Kalmar, first mentioned in 1275. Kalmar Castle is one of Sweden's four main castles and was considered at that time as one of Sweden's four main castles. The three others were the castle Tre Kronor in Stockholm, Vyborg Castle in Finland and Älvsborg's castle on the west coast. For centuries Kalmar castle withstood countless battles in particular against the Danes and invaders from other Baltic countries. During 1200s the city of Kalmar emerged on the mainland. 1397 Eric av Pommern was crowned King of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. A union treaty was signed which later came to be known as the Kalmar union. This treaty stated that the three participating countries had common regent and foreign policy. But each country was allowed to have their own domestic policy.

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During the 1400s a rebuilding period began which was to turn the castle from a medieval building to the renaissance palace it is today. During the 1500s the castle was periodically used by the Vasa dynasty. Thus, large portrait paintings of Eric XIV, John III and Prince Sigismund, are hanging on the walls of the castle. In the banquet hall we learned how a banquet in John III’s days could have been like. In the middle of the table there was a large swan with feathers and all, and around it other birds, eggs filled with live leeches and food served on large plates. In John III's days both food and drink were lavish and the parties were numerous and lengthy. John III himself is said to have had a daily consumption of about seven liters of wine. In 1620 when our ancestor Carl Sabelskjöld may have been on Kalmar Castle, Gustav II Adolf received his future wife Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg with pomp and circumstances, when she arrived in Kalmar.

After the tour of the palace it was time for dinner in the banquet hall where steamed salmon with roasted root vegetables and potatoes with a superb wine sauce was served. With the coffee a marzipan cake a la Kalmar were on the table decorated with the Sabelskjöld coat of arms.

Thus, fully educated on culture, genealogy and history of the castle and after an excellent dinner, we were entertained by the castle’s own entertainers dressed in costumes from the 1800th century performing songs by Carl Mikael Bellman.

It was a memorable day where Sabelskjöld traditions and chat about family connections were mixed in an unforgettable way.

Sir Grönwall

Descendant of Brita through thirteen generations.

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Noblemen, pirates and the Sabelskjöld wedding crown

This story is mainly based on Rudolf Thunander’s book Skytten och Draken – deras diä och dom.

The crown held by the Sabelskjöld Family Society is called the Sabelskjöld wedding crown. In fact, the possible link to the Sabelskjöld family cannot be proven, please see a separate article in this newspaper.

The high age and high value of the crown has led to speculation about its origin. Could it be a spoil of war or even pirate’s plunder? Perhaps these theories are too imaginative, but there were actually Swedish pirates in Sabelskjöld’s days. The piracy took place just off the shore of eastern Småland, the province where our ancestors had one of their major farms. The year is 1661. Sweden is a major military power in northern Europe and the Swedish nobility more powerful than ever. The future King Charles XI is only five years old and the country is ruled by a trust dominated by the aristocracy. Major Karl Sabelskjöld is old and has only a few years left in life. The head of the Sabelskjöld Family is his son Jonas Sabelskjöld. Sweden is, for once, at peace with Denmark and the Swedish territory now includes the province of Halland, Skåne, Blekinge, Estomia, Latvia and Finland.

At sea

Let’s follow two young noblemen on their adventures on the Baltic Sea. Baron Gustav Adolf Skytte owned the farm Strömserum at the river Alsterån just north of Kalmar. He was young, rich and a real adventurer. At Hagelsrum another nobleman ruled. His name was Gustav Drake and he was also rich and ready for adventure. The two nobles were both around 25 years old and socialized frequently. In addition, they were becoming in-laws. Drake was to marry one of Skytte’s sisters.

In August 1661 Drake and Skytte sailed on board Skytte’s ship from Strömserum northwards through the strait of Öresund. Skytte was to visit his father-in-law in England and Drake was to step ashore in Helsingør, and from there continue to Germany to make purchases for his upcoming wedding. This was at least the official version for the voyage. The two men were not alone on the boat. Besides the two noblemen the crew consisted of 13 men, mostly soldiers and boatmen.

The voyage went well and they passed Helsingør without Drake going ashore. At Vrängö just outside Goteborg the ship anchored. The weather was good and the winds favorable so the crew wondered why they were not continuing but the noblemen decided not to. The waiting dragged on. The crew ran out of beer so a patrol was sent to Goteborg for refill. Waiting continued and again the beer supply was empty so a new expedition started heading into town but was withdrawn at the last minute.

Target in sight

Now, something happened. A Dutch convoy with a total of 14 merchant ships approached from north. The Skytte’s ship now set sails and followed the Dutchmen southwards. By now the crew had guessed that something special was to take place but the two nobles had now started talking in French, which the rest of the crew did not understand. Once in the Baltic Sea the Dutch convoy split up. Some ships sailed toward the German coast, others headed for the Baltic States and some sailed north towards Swedish ports.

Skytte and Drake now gathered the crew and revealed what was to take place. One of the ships that were sailing north had fallen behind and was now to be captured. The crew would be killed and the ship and its cargo plundered. All objections fell behind and was now to be captured. The crew would be killed and the ship and its cargo plundered. All objections

Discovering our roots.

Dear relatives, my name is Michele Johnson and my husband is Chuck Johnson. We are living in Colorado, US.

Chuck was born in Albert City, Iowa. I was born in Stanton, Iowa, which is located about 120 miles south of Albert City. Both of these towns were settled by Swedish immigrants. Both of us grew up with Swedish traditions and celebrations, especially Christmas traditions. We did not meet until we were in college. We met in Minnesota, at the training session for a college ministry sponsored by the Lutheran church. We were married two years later, in 1973.

Both Chuck and I had relatives who had started some genealogical research. We were both interested in finding out more information and hoped to travel to Sweden someday to visit the home places of our ancestors.

We were able to visit Sweden for the first time in September of 2004. We started our search for genealogy information at the Svenska Emigrantinstutet in Visby. We were very overwhelmed by the vast amount of information and were unable to find much information with our limited knowledge of the Swedish language!

Chuck and I had realized years ago, that we both had ancestors from Kristdala, so we set out to find the church in Kristdala. We were hoping to search church records and look for grave stones in the cemetery. We attended an evening service and met Ingrid Arвидsson. She introduced us to Birger Bring. We met with Birger, and when Chuck gave him the name of one of his ancestors, Birger told him that he was a Sabelskjöld! That was the first time we had ever heard of this family name! None of Chuck’s relatives in America had ever known about the Sabelskjolds. Birger also helped us to use the computer at the library in Oskarshamn and we were able to find more information about our families.

Last August, we were able to attend the reunion at Kalmar Castle. We really enjoyed getting to know some of Chuck’s cousins. We felt very welcomed and honored. It was a very special event!

In the days following, Birger acted as our guide and took us to many locations that were the former sites of the Sabelskjöld ancestor’s homes. The most exciting, though, was Nyby, the former site of the home of Chuck’s great great grandfather, Nils Flyckt. Peter Nilsson helped us find this property in Lilla Brabo. We also got to see the old house that had once been at Nyby.

My great grandfather, Sven Peter Jonasson, was also from Lilla Brabo. Chuck and I were amazed to find that we had ancestors that had lived so close to each other almost 200 years ago! Birger did research for us to see if I might also be a Sabelskjöld. Sven Peter was not related to the Sabelskjöld. I had another great grandfather, Olaus Isaksson, from Kristdala, and Birger discovered that he was a descendant of one of the pastors of the Durance-Meurling family. Therefore, I am related to Chuck, but I am not a Sabelskjöld.

We are very grateful to Birger for all his help, and for introducing us to Sabelskjöld cousins. It was such an enjoyable trip for us.

Michele Johnson Colorado, USA