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Har du förslag eller åsikter om innehållet?
Vill du skriva en rad eller två? Hör av dig!

Kom ihåg att meddela oss ev adressändring!

The Sabelskjöld wedding crown

The crown which is administered by the association is commonly called the Sabelskjöld wedding crown. In 1970 Sabelskjöld descendants 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 regarded 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 Sörebö, Mörunda parish. In the inventory after Marta Olofsdotter 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 simple conclusion was that the crown belonged to the Sabelskjöld.

Sven Bankeström has shown that this theory can not be correct. Marta Olofsdotter was married twice and the crown is listed already in the inventory after her first husband, who was not member of Sabelskjöld family. This does not mean that the Crown could not have belonged to the Sabelskjölds. Bankeström finds, on the contrary, good arguments that this may have been the case. Nordiska Museet has, examined the crown and found that it originates from the period 1662 - 1700, made in Vimmerby by goldsmith Hans Persson Bergman. Since 1660s was Sabelskjölds heydays one can well imagine that the crown was bought by Jöns Sabelskjöld for his wedding - he was married twice - or for one of his daughters, he had five. The fact that the crown then came outside the family is perhaps not surprising. The crown, represents of course a considerable value, so it could have been used as payment between siblings and thus come to side branches within the family. Bankeström points out, for example, that Ingeborg Sabelskjöld was Marta Olofsdotter's aunt by marriage.

Birger Bring

The candlesticks in Blacksta

Last fall we visited Julita farm in Sörmland not far from the town of Katrineholm. It was at Julita Jöns Mårtensson and Brita Larsdotter married in 1587 and it was also at Julita farm Jöns was sheriff and later became castellan at Nyköpings hus. We looked around the yard - a place well worth a visit - but unfortunately we were too late for a guided tour so we couldn't get into the main building.

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 Jöns 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 apparently common at that time. Although slightly disappointed with the outcome of the conversation, I concluded that the candlesticks in Blacksta after all is a part of our history and as such unique to us in the Sabelskjöld family.

Rolf Svensson



Sabelskjöldarn

2011



A word from our president

At the annual meeting in Kalmar in August 2010 a suggestion had been put forward regarding shorter terms of office for board members. There have been no changes in this respect since the association was founded in 1967. Karin Larsson and Thina Rydell, who submitted the suggestion, pointed out that a term of six years is too long. Today travelling is easier than what it was in the sixties so cost and time for attending annual meetings or board meetings need no to be an obstacle today. The proposed change should also make it easier to find people willing to accept a position on the board. The proposal is to shorten the term for board members from six to four years. This doesn't necessarily mean that members of the board will be "shorter lived" just that one doesn't have to commit oneself to more than four years on the board. The annual meeting voted in favor of the new proposal with a change of the charter text as a result.

Six noble ladies at Bråhult

When Carl Sabelskjöld and Elizabeth Duraeus were married in the 1680's no one could foresee that it was the last time a male member of the Sabelskjöld family stood groom. Even if the marriage isn't listed in church records, we can almost certainly believe that it was held in Kristdala - the bride was a Kristdala girl and the pastor's daughter. Her father was Bartholdus Duraeus born and raised in Kristdala and since 1658 rector of the Kristdala church.

Carl was Sabelskjöld in the third generation and had at times lived on the farm Bråhult in Kristdala in his childhood. From the mid-1690s moved Carl and Elizabeth to Bråhult for good. Seven children were born in the marriage. Six of them reached adulthood. What happened to the seventh child is unclear. It probably died, infant mortality was high also in noble families. Carl was the last male in the Sabelskjöld family and expectations that he would carry the Sabelskjöld name on through sons must have been great. The six surviving children were however all daughters. In the church records the girls are sometimes called the six noble ladies at Bråhult.

In this issue of Sabelskjöldarn we tell you some legends. Over the years all sorts of stories and legends have been told about the Sabelskjöld family. What is true and what is just an unverified story is not easy to know. The most famous story in the family is about Elisabet Sabelskjöld born Duraeus (wife of Karl Sabelskjöld junior) at the Bråhult manor. She regarded it unthinkable that the Sabelskjölds being so wealthy, should ever become poor. Elizabeth was so sure that she took her wedding ring from her finger and threw it in nearby lake Bråhultsjön declaring "The likelihood for us becoming poor is no more than me getting this ring back". Sure enough, a fisherman caught a pike in the lake. When he opened the fish he found a ring with a name engraved. He returned the ring to Elizabeth. True or not - the fact is that Elizabeth and her daughters after Carl's death got into a very difficult financial situation and needed help in various ways.

As we know, a story like that 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 Sabelskjöld family and their life at Bråhult can be read in the book, "Om ätten Sabelsköld och livdragonen Carl Sabelskölds avkomlingarn".

Rolf Svensson, President

As we know Carl died, during Karl XII's campaign in the Baltics in 1700 or 1701, and left wife Elizabeth alone with six daughters, the oldest only 14 years old. Elizabeth's economic situation became very difficult, and in reality she lost Bråhult even if she was allowed to remain on the farm with her daughters.

The six maidens at Bråhult were: Christina, Ingeborg, Märta, Anna Maria, Margareta, Elisabet. Under normal circumstances, the Sabelskjöld girls would have married noblemen, but as the situation now was, the economy didn't allow such arrangements. Instead, all the ladies married farmer boys from the region. This was probably seen as a dishonour at the time, but for us latter-day Sabelskjölds it was perhaps a fortunate development. The name Sabelskjöld disappeared but the family is still remaining, and many of us can trace our roots back to one of the noble ladies. Five of the sisters still have descendants today, many of whom still live in eastern Småland.

Although most members of our association are descendants of one of the ladies at Bråhult it should be pointed out, that there are also descendants of previous generations. All descendants of Karl Jönsson Sabelskjöld, great-grandfather of the girls at Bråhult, are welcome in our association.

Birger Bring

The village Träthult in the past and today

Träthult is a small village in Kristdala and it is located some three miles from Brähult, where the Sabelskjöld manor once stood. The first farmer at Träthult, known to us was Hakan who lived there in 1547. The name Träthult (träta = quarrel 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 Håkan we will now move forward through the generations. Sven Bankeström, 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 names 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 in 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 served in Kristdala congregation under Pastor Duræus. Olof's mother was daughter of a pastor from Mörlunda and Olaf's uncle was an official in the state administration in Stockholm and had adopted the name Mör-ling after his home village. Olof also adopted this name with the spelling Meurling, and after him followed six generations Meurlings as pastors in Kristdala. This is a world record and has been taken into the Guinness Book of Records.

Olof was married to one of Pastor Duræus daughters, and the other daughter had, as we know, married Carl Sabelskjöld. Olof was elected rector in Kristdala parish in 1707. His father-in-law, who officially held the office until 1708, was old and infirm in his late years, so Olaf had been taking a big responsibility for the congregation. Carl Sabelskjöld's death meant a lot of trouble for his wife Elizabeth. It is known that Olof Meurling helped his sister with various things. Of course, the two families socialized and paid visits both at Träthult and Brähult.

Olof Meurling became the owner of 2 / 3 of the old Träthult farm. One can assume that he had tenants to farm the land. It was common for pastors to own land in order to add some extra income to the poorly paid job as pastor. His son Per Meurling senior and later his grandson

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 grandfather 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.

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 Runa 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 with intact 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 Sjöö The Sabelskjöld book
Own genealogy research



were turned down. “How many ships do not perish at sea, and no one knows what became of them, nor raise any questions” Drake declared. All aboard swore a sacred oath never to reveal to anyone what they were to witness. Finally, the men threw dice on the order in which they would board the Dutchman.

Attack

At dusk the attack was launched. The Skytte's ship was a fast sailing vessel and the Dutchman was heavily loaded so the pirates had no difficulty in catching up with their target. What then happened was a pure massacre. All five crew members on board the Dutch ship were murdered in the most brutal way. All personal belongings - including their clothes – were removed, and finally the bodies were dumped into the sea with stones tied to their feet.

The ship's cargo proved to be a big disappointment. The main cargo consisted of 550 barrels of salt on its way to a merchant in Norrköping. 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, that would have revealed the crime. The salt could of course be sold but to be salt traders 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 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 perpetrator.

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 lot, 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 on duty to Kalmar. His wife, Countess Anna Maria Cruus of Edeby, was amongst the large number of people 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 Cruus in her chamber that night. What happened there could not be clarified. Skytte was drunk and not very communicative, nineteen year-old countess wept profusely and did not want to tell, and her husband, the Count, was so upset that he mostly spoke German. The name-calling that followed was of such a caliber that I refrain from putting it in 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 Skytte, but some of the other participants in the party came in between. Skytte drew his pistol and fired a shot on the Count, but hit instead his butler Samuel Printz 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 directions 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 surprises in the wild Småland.

In the next issue of Sabelskjöldar'n we will finish the story about the pirates on the Baltic Sea

Birger Bring



Photo Weronicha Svaleng

Getting married?

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

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 just 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



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 coronation Uppsala. He participated in the Polish and German wars, but left the military 39 years old in 1629. Through his two marriages - both of which are said to have been initiated by Queen Christina - , he was first married to Magdalena Strang and then Ingeborg Rosenstråle his descendants have their ancestry back to the old Swedish and Finnish nobility. In his first marriage Carl Sabelskjöld acquired significant land holdings in both Södermanland, Östergötland and Småland.

After morning coffee and meeting proceedings we were guided around the castle by a well-informed guide in medieval clothes. We learned a lot about Gustav Vasa and his sons Eric XIV and John III, but also Gustavus Adolphus was portrayed on the castle walls.

A model of how Kalmar Castle had developed starting as early as in the late 1100s. It was Knut Eriksson who then built a citadel, a circular fortress tower on a peninsula at Kalmar. The Kalmar port began to play an important role in the 1100s as a medieval market place and a check point for taxes, and eventually a place of national importance. In the 1280s, Magnus Ladulås, who reigned in Sweden 1275-1290, reinforced the tower in order to protect the country against invaders.

Kalmar Castle, then close to Sweden's southern border, 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.

During the 1540's 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 Sabeskjöld 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..

Siv Grönmald

Descendant of Brita through thirteen generations.





Noblemen, pirates and the Sabelskjöld wedding crown

This story is mainly based on Rudolf Thunander's book *Skytten och Draken – deras död 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 speculations 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 Jöns Sabelskjöld. Sweden is, for once, at peace with Denmark and the Swedish territory now includes the province of Halland, Skåne, Blekinge, Estonia, 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 Helsingör, 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 Helsingör without Drake going ashore. At Vrångö just outside Gothenburg 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 Gothenburg 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



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 Emigrantinstitutet in Vaxjö. We were very overwhelmed by the vast amount of information and were unable 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 Arvidsson. 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 Sabelskjölds. Birger also helped us to use the computer at the library in Oskarshamn and we were able to find more information about our families.

Birger told us that the Sabelskjöld family had a reunion every three years and Chuck was very interested in attending one of these reunions.

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. Peder 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 Sabelskjölds. I had another great grandfather, Olaus Isaksson, from Kristdala, and Birger discovered that he was a descendant of one of the pastors of the Duraeus-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