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# Christina Tornberg's Bible

Eva M. K. Pihl and Rogers B. Finch\*

The family record of Christina Tornberg (b. 1763) and the next two generations of her descendants is inscribed on the third page inside the front cover of this Swedish family Bible. On the next two pages permission to print the Bible was given by Johan Winbom, Dean of the Theological Faculty at the University of Uppsala. The following two pages, which were probably the title pages, have been removed. Christina Tornberg's name, in the same handwriting as her name on the family record page, is inscribed on the first page of Genesis. "Götheborg, 1794, Samuel Norberg" can be found on the title page of the New Testament. A loose sheet, inserted in the front of the Bible, contains a transcription in Swedish, which, though in the same hand, differs from any of the handwriting on the family record page. At the top of this loose sheet is the following English heading, in the same hand: "The pedigree in the old Bible." The transcription on the loose sheet has been compared to the entries in the Bible and is reproduced below (in Swedish, with an English translation) in a normalized version together with several corrections. Eva Pihl is responsible for the English translation.

*Christina Tornberg, som ägare av denna Bibel,  
är barnfödd uti Landskrona den 5 Januari 1763  
flyttade till Björnekulla 1780, där hon  
av sin Moderbroder Ernst Johan Edberg  
fött denna Bibel 1795  
Gift med Sekreterare Pehr Ekberg i Björnekulla den 23 Maj 1806  
Dess Dotter Johanna Charlotta är barnfödd den 4 Augusti 1808  
Gift med Fanjunkaren G. Pihl  
den 11 December 1840 - född den 29 April 1818  
Dess son Pehr Henrik Samuel - född den 31 Juli 1843  
Döttrar - Ulrika Christina - född den 1 December 1845  
Ernestin Julia Walborg - född den 23 Januari 1848  
Dito - Carl Johan Fredrik - född den 5 April 1850  
Johanna Charlottas Gudmor - Fru Hovjunktenskan Skytte  
Vännen till dess dop - Fröken Magdalena Skytte  
Fru Pastorskan Rasch  
Demoiselle Holm  
Ryttmästaren Skytte  
Över Auditören Cronquist*

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Björnekulla No. 8. Secretary Ekberg's and his wife Christina Tornberg's daughter was born 4 August and was baptized on the 8th of the same month, being given the name JOHANNA CHARLOTTA. The mother was 46 years old. Baptismal witnesses were: Inspector Ekberg; Cavalry Captain Skytte, Military Advocate General Cronquist; Mrs. Skytte, wife of the Court Equerry Skytte, residing at Vallaröd; Mrs. Rasch, the wife of the clergyman; Miss Magdalena Skytte and Mademoiselle Holm.

The Bible entry states that Mrs. Skytte was Johanna's godmother, although she is not so listed in the birth record. The latter also includes Inspector Ekberg (Johanna's grandfather) as a witness. There are differences in the spelling of Tornberg and Cronquist in the Bible entry and the baptismal record. Also Christina's age differs by one year between the Bible and the birth record entries. Despite these minor differences, both entries tend to corroborate each other.

The Bible and the birth record entries provide a starting point for the development of the history of this family and an understanding of the era in which they lived. For several hundred years the military establishment, with its forces spread throughout Sweden, had dominated the lives of many Swedish families, including many generations of the Pihl (Piel, Piehl) family. Official residences of various sizes and standards were maintained throughout the country. Gustaf Pihl was born in the official military residence (*militieboställe*) of Vätamåsa in Väsby Parish (Malm.). Before his marriage to Johanna Ekberg, he had resided on his own sergeant's residence of Turabygget in Örkelljunga Parish (Krist.), not far from Björnekulla Parish (Krist.). After his marriage he took over as holder of the tenured cavalry farm (*rusthållshemman*) with registration number eight in Björnekulla, which had been owned by his father-in-law, Pehr Ekberg. This was a large farm, capable of providing a cavalryman his livelihood as well as the horse and equipment he needed to serve in his cavalry unit. Gustaf held the rank of master sergeant (*fanjunkare*) and was responsible for the storage and maintenance of cavalry equipment.

Pehr Ekberg held the title of secretary (*sekreterare*) and probably served in this capacity with his cavalry regiment. He was probably a colleague and a neighbor of Cronquist, the chief army legal advisor (*överauditör*), who is listed as a witness at Johanna's baptism. Members of the Skytte af Sättra noble family who were baptismal witnesses included the following: Helena Christina Skytte (née Horn af Rantzien) of Vallaröd estate in Björnekulla, whose deceased husband, Rutger Henrik Skytte af Sättra (1737-1788), had been a court equerry; the daughter, Magdalena Eleonora; and the son, Cavalry Captain Rutger Georg.<sup>2</sup> The latter was

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<sup>2</sup> Gustaf Elgenstierna, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, Vol. VI (Stockholm 1932), p. 325.

probably a military colleague of Pehr Ekberg. The clergyman's wife was Gustava Maria Rasch (née Weidenhjelm), married to Anders Rasch (1760-1830), the dean at Björnekulla. They must all have been close neighbors to have been able to gather at Johanna's home for her baptism on the fourth day after her birth.

The ownership of the Tornberg Bible passed to Christina's only child Johanna, who married Gustaf Pihl 11 December 1840. Gustaf was born in Väsby Parish (Malm.) 29 April 1818, the son of Martin Samuel Pihl and Johanna Catharina Stoltz. Their oldest child, Pehr Henrik Samuel Pihl, was born 31 July 1843 and became the owner of the Bible when Johanna died in Copenhagen, Denmark 9 April 1870. Henrik (Henry) married Wilhelmina Albertina Ronsdorf in Lowell, Middlesex County, MA 30 July 1870. Wilhelmina was born in Göteborg 3 August 1851, the daughter of Johann Caspar Engelbert Ronsdorf and Sofia Albertina Westergren. The oldest child of Henry and Wilhelmina, Ulrika Albertina Pihl, was born in Frankford (Philadelphia), PA 4 July 1871. She was the next to come in possession of the Tornberg Bible, when her father died in Lowell 7 October 1924, and of the Ronsdorf Bible, when her mother pre-deceased her husband 13 July 1924. Ricky (Ulrika) Pihl had married Halvar Löfgren in Lowell 8 October 1890, who in turn was born in Falköping, Sweden 10 February 1864, the son of Alfred Wilhelm Löfgren and Lydia Elma Olivia Leontine Werner.

Soon after the death of Ricky's parents, she and Halvar moved to Broadalbin in Fulton County, NY in order to live with their younger daughter, Olga Ulrika, born in Lowell 3 May 1895. Olga had married Cecil Clement Finch 3 July 1916 and had returned with him to his home in Broadalbin. Cecil was born 8 August 1893, the son of Dr. Henry Clement Finch and Charlotte Alice Barker and died in Lake Park, Palm Beach County, FL. Ricky died in Broadalbin in December 1952 and is buried in the Broadalbin and Mayfield Rural Cemetery beside her husband Halvar, who had died 26 November 1938. The Tornberg and Ronsdorf Bibles were then passed to Olga, who died in Bensalem, Bucks County, PA 8 November 1994 (at age 99), and is buried next to her husband Cecil in the Broadalbin and Mayfield Rural Cemetery. Both Bibles are now in the possession of Rogers Burton Finch, who was born in Broadalbin 16 April 1916, the elder son of Olga and Cecil.

The authors of this article are third cousins once removed, being descended from Martin Samuel Pihl (1776-1855) of Väsby, a color sergeant and quartermaster in the Swedish Army, who was the father of Johanna Ekberg's husband, Gustaf Pihl (1818-1891), and from whom Rogers Finch is descended. Gustaf's brother Martin (1807-1862) had with his wife Ingrid Lindh (1821-1864) a son, Fredrik (1843-1908), who married Catharina Cronberg (1846-1914). Their son, Ernst Hugo Pihl (1880-1977), came to Lowell in 1897 but returned to Sweden in 1906, where he married in 1910 Wilhelmina Johansson (1879-1962). They had nine children, including daughter and co-author Eva Pihl, who was born in 1922.