3-1-1998

Christina Tornberg's Bible

Eva M.K. Pihl
Rogers B. Finch

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag

Part of the Genealogy Commons, and the Scandinavian Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol18/iss1/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.
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. “Göteborg, 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
fått 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 Hovjunkerskan Skytte
Vittnen till dess dop - Fröken Magdalena Skytte
Fru Pastorskan Rasch
Demoselle Holm
Ryttmästaren Skytte
Över Auditören Cronquist

Christina Tornberg, the owner of this Bible, was born in Landskrona 5 January 1763; moved to Björnekulla in 1780, where she received this Bible from her maternal uncle, Ernst Johan Edberg, in 1795. She was married in Björnekulla 23 May 1806 to Pehr Ekberg, a secretary. Their daughter, Johanna Charlotta, was born 4 August 1808. [She] was married to G. Pihl, a master sergeant, 11 December 1840, [who] was born 29 April 1818. Their son, Pehr Henrik Samuel, was born 31 July 1843. [Their] daughters - Ulrika Christina was born 1 December 1845; Ernestin Julia Walborg was born 23 January 1848. [Their son] Carl Johan Fredrik was born 5 April 1850. Johanna Charlotta’s godmother was Madame Skytte, the wife of the Court Equerry. Witnesses at the baptism were Miss Magdalena Skytte, Madame Rasch, the clergyman’s wife, Mademoiselle Holm, Cavalry Captain Skytte, Cronquist, Military Advocate General.

The nineteen lines inscribed on page three of the Bible appear to have been written by the same person at several different times. The last six lines, which list the witnesses at Johanna Charlotta’s baptism, are clearly out of chronological order and were most likely inscribed prior to the birth entries for her children, found on lines 10-13. These lines are crowded together (line 13 actually overlaps line 14), which suggests that they were inscribed last and interpolated into a space that had existed between lines 1-9 and 14-19.

The entry made in the Björnekulla Parish register in 1808 by the Rev. Rasch, the local parson (kyrkoherde), which documents Johanna Charlotta’s birth and baptism, is reproduced below in a normalized version (in Swedish, with an English translation).¹


¹ Birth and Christening Record (Födelse- och Döplings), Björnekulla Parish (Krist.), C2, 1808.
Björnekulla No. 8. Secretary Ekberg’s and his wife Christina Tomberg’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 Vallård; 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 Tomberg 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 Västby Parish (Malm.). Before his marriage to Johanna Ekberg, he had resided on his own sergeant’s residence of Turabyget in Örkelljunga Parish (Krist.), not far from Björnekulla Parish (Krist.). After his marriage he took over as holder of the tenured cavalry farm (rusthällhemman) 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 (överauditor), who is listed as a witness at Johanna’s baptism. Members of the Skytte af Sjöra noble family who were baptismal witnesses included the following: Helena Christina Skytte (née Horn af Rantzien) of Vallåröd estate in Björnekulla, whose deceased husband, Rutger Henrik Skytte af Sjöra (1737-1788), had been a court equerry; the daughter, Magdalena Eleonora; and the son, Cavalry Captain Rutger Georg.2 The latter was

---
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 Rondorf in Lowell, Middlesex County, MA 30 July 1870. Wilhelmina was born in Göteborg 3 August 1851, the daughter of Johann Caspar Engelbert Rondorf 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 Rondorf Bible, when her mother pre-deceased her husband 13 July 1924. Ricky (Ulrika) Pihl had married Halvar Lofgren in Lowell 8 October 1890, who in turn was born in Falköping, Sweden 10 February 1864, the son of Alfred Wilhelm Lofgren 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 his husband Halvar, who had died 26 November 1938. The Tornberg and Rondorf 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.