



Barksätter Manor

**The Royal Swedish Academy
of Agriculture and Forestry
Manor in Sörmland**

Ulrich Lange



THE ROYAL SWEDISH ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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Barksätter Manor

The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry has owned Barksätter Manor since 1983, when it was bequeathed by Mary Francke Gustafson. The estate covers 640 hectares, of which 524 hectares consist of forest. The property features buildings of Sörmland county character, including a manor house and farm buildings, surrounded by arable land, pasture and various former crofts. The donor wished the Academy not only to continue to run the manor, but also to make it available for research and the public.

This book deals with the estate and its history. The study describes the people who have owned the manor and, by focusing on various periods, it presents in detail the forms the manor has taken. The Academy hopes that this book, along with information signs at various points, will encourage visitors to explore the manor and its surrounding landscape on their own.

Peter Normark

Academy Secretary General and Managing Director



*The Barksätter landscape is characterised by the Sörmland lake plateau. Here is Bjälken lake, pictured in April.
Photo: Birgitta Naumburg.*

Natural landscape

The landscape around Barksätter is characterised by the Sörmland lake plateau. Rivers and straits link the lakes with one another, and together they comprise Sörmland's largest water system, which eventually flows via the Nyköpingsån river into the Baltic Sea. Barksätter lies at the centre of this system of lakes.



The Sörmland lake system and Nyköpingsån river. The location of Barksätter is marked by a ring. After Wikipedia.

The varied natural environment consists of somewhat hilly forests and joint-valley landscapes. Higher areas are dominated by dense coniferous forests on moraine soil, in contrast to the clay soils of the open landscapes around Bjälken lake. Here, there is much deciduous woodland, mainly birch, with hardwood deciduous trees in agricultural areas. Yet to see the latter type as a natural feature would be misleading, given that the manorial landscape has been altered aesthetically by humankind over the past four centuries. This is obvious from the composition of the avenues and that of the tree rows beside roads and farms.

Human landscape

The area around Bjälken lake has a relatively short human history, for which part of the explanation lies in postglacial land rise. During prehistory, only the highest rocky outcrops protruded 50 metres above the sea, forming an archipelago landscape. Although people at this time visited the area seasonally to fish and hunt, they appear to have lived elsewhere. No traces of settlement have been found.

During the Neolithic period, 6000 years ago, the land had risen to such an extent that the area and its lakes had adopted their present-day form. However, even in this period there are no traces of permanent settlement. The same is true for the otherwise populous Late Iron Age and Viking Age, AD 400–1100 (see map on next page).

Sörmland is generally one of the richest ancient landscapes in the country, yet around Bjälken lake only a few, uncertain burial cairns have been recorded, such as that at Skalltorp. Of course, this situation may reflect the inability of ancient monument surveys to record remains, or that later ploughing has destroyed archaeology. Yet a more plausible explanation is that the area was not actually settled until the Middle Ages (1100–1530). A

similar pattern is known elsewhere, in otherwise densely settled landscapes in eastern Sweden. Put simply, the area was settled only after farmers had populated other, more favourable regions. Yet the area was never entirely devoid of people, as it was used by the inhabitants of surrounding, more populous areas. Necessities such as hay and timber were collected here, and the area was used for hunting and perhaps pasture, too.



Map showing Iron Age cemeteries and associated settlements in Oppunda hundred. Populous central areas are obvious to the east and in Julita parish to the northwest. In the larger parishes of Vingåker (marked in red), Floda and Malm, the population was sparser. The location of Barksätter in Vingåker is marked with a red circle. After Janzon 2016.

Oppunda Manor landscape

Barksätter is located in Östra Vingåker parish in Oppunda hundred. This district, created in the 14th century, was the largest in Sörmland, comprising 17 parishes from Lake Hjälmaren in the north to Yngaren lake in the south, bordering both Närke and Östergötland. Until the early 20th century, a hundred remained an administrative district for legal and tax purposes, among other things. Östra Vingåker parish was created in the mid-18th century when Vingåker was divided into two parishes due to population growth.

Two features make Oppunda particularly interesting. First, its large geographic size was needed for administration, given its small population, particularly in the west, when the hundred was created. Second, in terms of manors, the hundred gradually became the most densely populated in Sörmland. The 19 manors that had emerged by the end of the Middle Ages increased to 40 by the 18th century, covering over half the land in the hundred. In addition, the manors were large, especially compared to other areas, being on average twice the size of manors in Uppland, for example.

In Vingåker, the manors of Barksätter, Sjöholm and Skalltorp emerged from the economic growth of the 16th century. Later, a further ten were created in the period of the Sweden's period as a great power.

Table I shows how in the 19th century, Sävstaholm and Klastorp were the largest manors, whereas Barksätter and Skalltorp were among the smallest. Yet this had not always been the case, because Beckershov, Skalltorp and various others were originally part of Barksätter.

Table I. Manors in Vingåker parish in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their size is given in *mantal*, a unit measuring the taxable capacity of a piece of land.

| Manor | Mantal |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Sävstaholm | 24 |
| Klastorp | 20 |
| Kjesäter | 15 |
| Högsjö | 14 |
| Skenäs | 12 |
| Sjöholm | 6 |
| Billsbro | 4 |
| Beckershov | 3 |
| Fostorp and Bodaholm | 2 |
| Barksätter | 2 |
| Skalltorp | 2 |
| Göteboda | 1 |

Feudal farming system

Manors emerged via Crown taxation and noble privilege. Specifically, the monarch would grant noblemen almost unlimited powers and rights over lands and farmsteads, which included the people who lived there. One might assume that these individuals were little more than a nobleman's private possessions, but this was not the case. Rather, the relationship was a compact between a nobleman and his subjects, which formed the basis of feudalism. In order for this system to work

economically, agreements were guaranteed to ensure an acceptable relationship between two reasonably satisfied parties.

A *säteri*, or manor such as Barksätter was thus, in legal terms, a major farm with specific rights and obligations, the reserve of a nobleman, and virtually tax-exempt. This applied to both the main manor and its subsidiary farmsteads within the estate. Historically, a manor formed part of an economic system, in Sweden usually within a *Grundherrschaft*, where a relatively small manor farm was run by a handful of workers, such as an inspector, a gardener, some labourers and a *deja*, a woman who managed the milk production. However, since agriculture needed many more labourers, these would be requisitioned from subordinate farmsteads and crofts. In addition, a manor farm consumed much of its subsidiaries' produce. For example, goods and livestock would be delivered to the manor farm for processing and sale.

Manor privileges declined over time, and the property market was finally deregulated in the early 19th century, when the manor farm lost its legal significance and the term became obsolete. Yet it still survives in everyday speech, where the word 'manor' denotes glamorous, bygone exclusivity, and remains a byword for high social status.

Tenant farmers

A *frälsebonde* was a tenant farmer on a nobleman's land. He was in principle tax-exempt but paid rent to the nobleman who retained the farmstead. Payment was in money, in kind or in labour. The daily life of a ten-

ant farmer was otherwise much like that of an ordinary *skattebonde*, a farmer who paid tax directly to the Crown. Both types of farmer would take their place in the parish assembly.

From the 18th century onwards, payment in kind and labour evolved to payment in money. The notion of the small leasehold farm was at odds with more modern concepts of large-scale farming. In many areas, tenants lost their farms with the introduction of the capitalistic, large-scale farming system known as *Gutherrschaft*. When this was established, small farms were closed down, the farmers were evicted, and the land was incorporated within the main farm. This occurred at Barksätter, where neighbouring Sluckstorp ceased to be a farmstead in its own right. The buildings were demolished and its land was subsumed by the main farm. Another method was to merge several small entities to create a new, large farm or *plattgård*. This also happened at Barksätter when Erikstorp, a new farmstead, was created.

Crofters and cottagers

Besides the tenant farmer there were other types of peasant. These had no land of their own and lived at a croft (*torp*) or cottage (*backstuga*). A crofter usually worked three or four days of labour service a week on the manor farm, in addition to tending their smallholding. The boundaries of the term 'crofter' are fluid, depending on whether one regards them as labourers or smallholders. Neither answer is best. They were simply crofters.

Dagsverk, or labour-service crofts began to appear on outlying estate land in the 16th century. Their numbers

increased over time, especially in the 18th century when the Crown levied no tax on newly created farms, in order to stimulate Swedish grain production. At Barksätter there were six crofts of this kind in 17th century, increasing to as many as 15 in the 19th century.

This type of croft was the most common, yet there were other kinds, too. Some were associated with a manor farm's skilled workers. Examples from Barksätter include Fisketorp, Snickartorp and Skräddartorp, alluding to fishers, carpenters and tailors. Another type, associated with the Army, was the home of a soldier. More expensive cavalry crofts were often funded by the manor house. Barksätter featured one such croft for a brief time: Ryttersberg, which was used by the Life Guards. However, Beckershov Manor eventually became responsible for this croft and its cavalryman.

The croft system endured for quite some time. Only in 1943 was labour service formally abolished in favour of a leasehold fee or rent. Similarly, the military croft system survived unaltered into the 20th century.

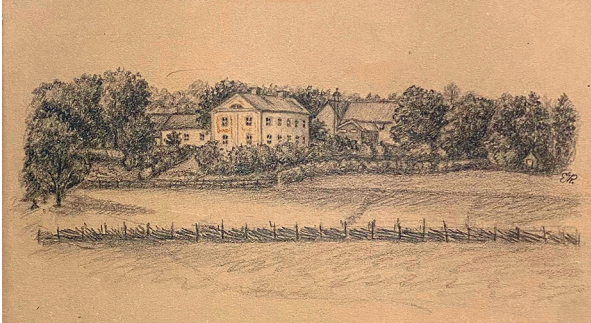
Cottagers were often labourers or the elderly, but they could also be self-employed workers such as shoemakers or seamstresses. A cottage consisted of a dwelling house and an outbuilding but lacked any real agricultural land. Throughout history, cottagers were seen to lead an unhappy existence, but their situation was really no worse than that of the crofters. Nor would there have been any real difference between the appearance of a cottage and a croft.

When no longer needed, a croft or cottage was sold or simply demolished. Any usable land was transferred to a neighbouring farmstead, otherwise the area was planted with trees. The latter was carried out consistent-

ly at Barksätter, which has resulted in the survival of little open croft land. Today, just three former crofts remain on the current estate, and because their barns have been demolished, each consists of a single dwelling and a simple outbuilding or two.



Barksätter Manor house today. Photo: Ulrich Lange.



Barksätter Manor house at various times (Nordiska museet).

History of Barksätter

In the Middle Ages (AD 1100–1530), we have a rough idea of the settlement pattern around Bjälken lake, and plausible chronologies for how this process evolved. Originally, the area may have been Crown common land that was gradually populated, cultivated and built upon. In the 14th century, the king began to donate land to the nobility, which probably occurred in one of two ways. He would have given an area of land either to various deserving favourites or else to a single recipient. If the former were true then the narrative is comprehensible, given that the area's farmsteads in the early 16th century were owned by various noble families. However, we do not fully understand the process.

Donations also resulted in farmsteads being owned by the Church. We know that in the 15th century, Julita Abbey owned Ramninge and Sluckstorp along with Munketorp some kilometres to the west, while various nobles owned the rest of the land, which was farmed by tenants. Nobles would use their farmsteads as pawns in an economic game, perhaps owning numerous properties in various areas, sometimes in different parts of the country. These might be inherited, exchanged or sold.

Medieval nobility

Barksätter is first mentioned in the 1330s. At this time it probably consisted of a small village surrounded by various farmsteads and crofts, a pattern that continued throughout the Middle Ages. It is unlikely that any

of the noble families mentioned in the written sources actually lived here. The earliest owner was the knight Sigge Magnusson. Barksätter was just one of his many Sörmland estates, yet he was the ancestor of several owners in later generations. Barksätter was inherited by one of Magnusson's daughters, who had married into the Get family, a surname that crops up among the owning families for two centuries.

Two key individuals for local developments were Måns Pávelsson and Lars Larsson. Pávelsson acquired his share of land by marrying into the Bölja family; Larsson did the same when he married a member of the Ollongren family. They managed their respective properties differently. In 1520, Pávelsson sold his wife's land to the bishop of Linköping, Hans Brask. Larsson, on the other hand, began to accumulate large amounts of land in the village, acquiring one of its three farmsteads for his personal use.

Founding the manor

Bishop Brask owned his land for only a short time. The Reformation soon came, when Church assets were seized by the Crown. Brask quarrelled with King Gustav Vasa and fled the country, after which the king confiscated Barksätter.

Lars Larsson's property was acquired by his son Peder, who in the 1530s turned his farmstead into a manor farm, his primary residence, with subordinate tenant farms and labour-service crofts. Although the arrangement made Barksätter exempt from taxation, the move proved costly. Larsson was soon forced to mortgage parts of

the estate, some to Councillor of the Realm Bölja and others to his father-in-law, County Governor Jöns Rosenstråle.

A further problem for Peder Larsson and his wife, Ingrid Jönsdotter was that they could not afford to settle the mortgage with Bölja, who in 1558 sold the debt to the Crown. Larsson soon sold his property to the Crown, too, and moved out of the area. Barksätter later became a personal possession of the king, and was managed by a royal bailiff. Its era as a noble manor appeared to be over.

A new era under the Rosenstråle family

On the death of King Gustav Vasa, Barksätter was inherited by his son, Karl along with the Duchy of Sörmland. However, the manor was soon privatised again. In 1571, the duke gave Bishop Brask's former land to Gisle Nilsson, the duke's governor of Nyköpingshus, who was soon given Peder Larsson's former land, too. Barksätter

thus regained its medieval extent and manorial privileges. Nilsson also expanded the estate by acquiring Bokvarn and Skalltorp. In addition, he entered a favourable marriage with Gunilla Jönsdotter Rosenstråle, one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting. Rosenstråle had once been the heir to Barksätter, a position she regained when Nils-



The Rosenstråle coat of arms.

son gifted her the property as a dower in 1581. From now on, she played a leading role as lady of the manor.

Manor environment

Under Gunilla Rosenstråle, the village farms were demolished and replaced with a manor-house complex. We know little of its form because all the buildings burned down in 1669. After the fire, a new manor house and farm buildings were erected, arranged in a geometric pattern. To start agricultural production, the farm buildings were erected first. These consisted of a cowshed for 60 cattle; two stables for a total of 20 horses; space for goats, pigs and sheep; and three threshing barns.

The manor house was built later. All that remained of the earlier, gutted building was its foundation and vaulted cellars. These formed the basis for the new single-storey timber building and attic. The house's geometric floor plan was typically Baroque. The building work lasted decades, and probably only in around 1740 could the family move in.

A Baroque manor house was usually flanked by one, but preferably two, wings. The situation at Barksätter is unclear, but written sources describe a large, seven-room residence. This suggests a wing, perhaps even the present-day wing. Other buildings included a labourer's cottage and a combined bakery and brewhouse. The wing may have served as the family home while the manor house was being built.

The manor house was bordered by the usual two gardens: an orchard and a kitchen garden. The orchard was located in front of the manor house, where the main road followed the line of the perimeter terrace

wall, which survives today. The modern-day road cuts across the former orchard. The kitchen garden lay to the west of the manor house, and there was a large hop garden, too. Along the road to the northwest was a pond that supplied fish for the table. To gain an impression of Barksätter's appearance at this time, see Skalltorp Manor, which still retains its Baroque form and red buildings.

A century of female rule

Gunilla Rosenstråle was born in the early 1560s and lived until she was almost 80 years old. She resided at Barksätter from 1581 until her death in 1638, running the manor for nearly 60 years. Widowed in 1594, she then married the man who had succeeded her late husband as the governor of Nyköpingshus. She survived not only him, but also her third husband. Written sources show how the manor was the family's focal point. It served as the venue for the wedding of her niece Margareta in 1621, and that of her nephew Svante in 1628. Even after Gunilla's death, the manor remained the heart of family life, being the setting for the wedding of Svante's brother Jöns in 1648, and that of Svante's son Libert in 1660.

A manor divided

Gunilla Rosenstråle, despite three marriages, remained childless, and her nephews Jöns and Svante became her heirs. Svante inherited Barksätter while Jöns inherited Skalltorp, where he already lived in the newly built manor house. Initially the brothers ran their manors as

one, but after a few years Skalltorp became a separate entity with its own manorial privileges.

Svante Rosenstråle had been a cavalry officer in a Finnish regiment, living in the early 1630s near Hämeenlinna. At the time of his aunt's death, he and his wife Margareta Qyaase, a Livonian noble, were living at Barksätter. Svante died in 1663, just over a year after his wife. In the succession, his land was divided between his children. The manor farm passed to his son Libert, while his daughter Gunilla inherited Ramninge farmstead and its crofts. Here, she and her husband Karl Becker built a proper mansion, Beckershov. However, Barksätter's forests were not shared out, and continued to be managed jointly by the siblings. Only well into the 18th century were they divided between the two estates.

Libert Rosenstråle, a soldier like his father, was usually away on campaign. His wife Gunilla Gyllenstierna managed Barksätter, where she lived with their children. In 1677, Libert was killed at the Battle of Landskrona. Barksätter then passed to his son Svante, who was just 13 years old. Gunilla continued to run the manor until her son reached adulthood.

Skalltorp was also managed by women for many years. Jöns Rosenstråle's wife, Ingrid Mannerhielm was in charge from her husband's death in 1655 until her own demise in 1673. The manor then passed to her daughter Märta Gyllenpistol. Family contact with Barksätter continued during the period of female rule. In 1684, during the Great Reduction (when the Crown retook lands granted to the nobility), Märta Gyllenpistol helped Gunilla Gyllenstierna financially, enabling her to keep Barksätter.

Last generations of the Rosenstråle family

Svante Rosenstråle chose a military career, as tradition dictated. In 1699, he married Sigrid Rosenholm of Katrineholm Manor in Stora Malm. The couple had a son and a daughter, but after only three years Svante was killed in battle in Poland. Barksätter passed to his seven-month-old son, also named Svante. Sigrid, now widowed, moved back home to her parents, leasing Barksätter to her brother-in-law Clas Rosenstråle.

Young Svante's military career had barely begun when he died, aged 19, in 1720. The manor passed to his sister Catharina. She and her husband Gustav Falkenberg, whom she married in 1739, completed Barksätter Manor house and settled there. The couple were childless and, burdened with her grandmother's old debts, soon went bankrupt. Therefore, in 1744, Catharina sold Barksätter to the Lewenhaupt family of neighbouring Klastorp Manor, on condition that she could live at Barksätter for the rest of her life. However, Klastorp waited quite some time for its new acquisition. Catharina Rosenstråle lived until 1778, and only then did the Rosenstråle era at Barksätter come to an end, after more than two centuries. Her husband lived even longer, residing at Barksätter until 1785.

17th-century agriculture

The transition to intensive production on the manor farm took place during Gunilla Rosenstråle's time. This included bringing new land under the plough, and creating the farmsteads of Baggetorp, Erikstorp, Ladäng and

Munketorp, which had previously been crofts. In addition, Lilla Forsa was purchased. The tenant farmers' previous rents were converted to labour service, and new crofts were established to secure extra workers.

Manor farm management

Barksätter Manor farm comprised 28 acres of arable land spread over three enclosed fields: small Sjögärdet beside Bjälken lake; Västra gärdet behind the manor farm complex; and Storgärdet to the north of the manor house. Despite these three fields, the farmers practised two-field crop rotation, whereby each year a field was either planted with grain or else lay fallow. Storgärdet was conceivably one half of this system, with the other two fields forming the other half.

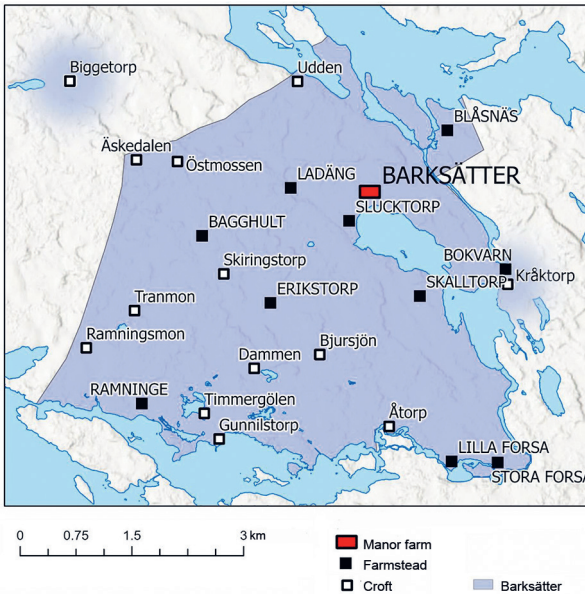
Animal fodder was supplied by two meadows: Lillängen, a water-meadow beside Bjälken lake; and Storängen, with both wet and dry ground, to the east of the farm. The annual hay harvest totalled 128 *lass*.

Woodland to the north was used for pasture and sometimes slash-and-burn farming. This rocky area supplied plenty of birch, spruce and pine for firewood. However, there was no real timber forest, a resource that had been felled for building, among other things. When timber was needed for construction after the fire of 1669, the manor had none available. Supplies were bought from nearby Sävstaholm Manor.

Subsidiary farmsteads and crofts

Before being subdivided, Barksätter consisted of 14 farmsteads with 17 tenants. Eight of these settlements

were *rå-* and *rörshemman* farmsteads that were included in the manorial demesne. The manor enjoyed special privileges for these farms, which formed part of the manor farm's production capacity. Farmsteads outside the demesne were akin to tenant farms, whose peasants were not as burdened by labour service as those of the *rå-* and *rörshemman* farmsteads.



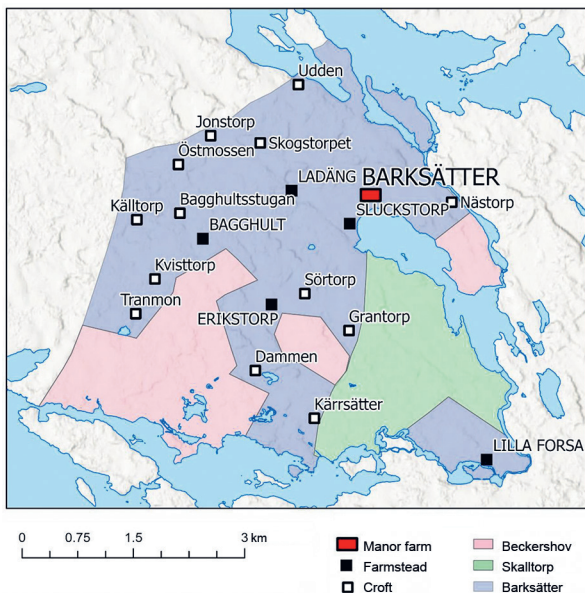
Barksätter Manor c. 1635, showing its subsidiary rå- and rörshemman farmsteads and crofts. Outside the shaded area were other farmsteads that belonged to the manor: Munke-torp to the west; Getskav and Holmen to the east; Mörkhulta and Toltop to the south; and Gillerhult and Ramningsnäs crofts to the south.

Adjacent to Södra gärdet lay Sluckstorp, a large farmstead of 14 acres divided between two arable enclosures, and a long, narrow dry meadow that extended along the lake towards Skalltorp. Next to Sluckstorp lay Ladäng, a recent farmstead with just five acres of arable land in small parcels, but with a relatively large meadow. Both settlements had two hundred hop poles each, a number commonly recorded on all farmsteads.

Table II. Economic size of some of Barksätter's subsidiary rå- and rörshemman farmsteads.

| Farmstead | Land (acres) | Hay (lass) | | Farmstead | Land (acres) | Hay (lass) |
|-------------|--------------|------------|--|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Skalltorp | 22 | 93 | | Dammen | 3 | 16 |
| Sluckstorp | 14 | 20 | | Kvastorp | 2 | 13 |
| Stora Forsa | 12 | ? | | Näset | 2 | 3 |
| Ramninge | 8 | 16 | | Kärrsäter | 1 | 6 |
| Erikstorp | 5 | 39 | | Grantorp | 1 | 6 |
| Ladäng | 5 | 12 | | Sörtorp | 1/4 | 4 |
| Lilla Forsa | 5 | 15 | | | | |
| Bagghult | 4 | 10 | | | | |

A croft usually had only one or two acres of arable land. The manor farm's sources of income also included Bokvarn flour mill, Forsa saw mill, and the eel traps in Forsaån river.



Barksätter after the successions of 1638 and 1663. The map shows how Bagghult, Erikstorp, Ladäng and Sluckstorp continued as tenant farms under Barksätter, whereas Blåsnäs, Bokvarn and Stora Forsa no longer belonged to the manor. The Forsa farmsteads, the location of Svante Rosenstråle's wrought iron smithy, were run jointly with Skalltorp. After Rosenstråle's death, Forsa was divided between his heirs, leaving only Lilla Forsa under Barksätter. The smithy grew to become the successful Forsa works, boasting both a nail forge and a paper mill. The map also shows seven new crofts: Bagghultstugan, Jonstorp, Kvisttorp, Källtorp, Näset, Skogstorpet and Sörtorp. These were probably created to increase the estate's income.

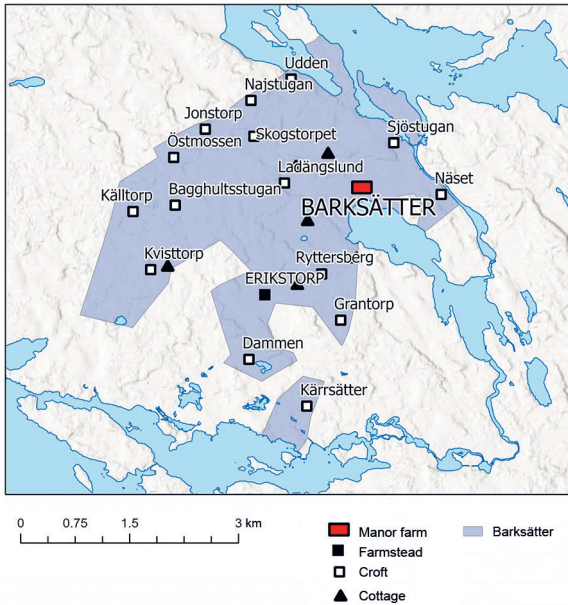
Barksätter, a subsidiary of Klastorp

After 1785, Barksätter became a tenant farm, a subsidiary to the Klastorp Manor fee tail, which in 1808 passed to Clas Lewenhaupt, who was heavily in debt. To improve his finances, in 1820 he gained permission to release a number of farms, including Barksätter, from the fee tail. The buyer was his father-in-law, which allowed Lewenhaupt to retain control.

On the death of his father-in-law in 1834, Barksätter reverted to Lewenhaupt via his wife's inheritance. A few years later, though, he finally went bankrupt and Barksätter was put up for sale. At this time, manors were increasingly bought by successful industrialists, wealthy farmers and members of the urban bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, this time the sale of Barksätter remained a family matter, too.

Bourgeoisie succeed the nobility

In 1840, Barksätter's new owner was Anton Thure von Eckermann, an immigrant who had moved to Sweden the year before, marrying Lewenhaupt's daughter Eleonora. He quickly became a success in social circles, not least through his marriage. At the time of purchase, the enterprising Eckermann applied to conduct a *laga skifte* land reform. This was carried out in 1842, and some small farms and crofts were sold, too. However, rather than moving to Barksätter, the Eckermanns settled north of Nyköping at Edeby Manor, which they had bought, too. Barksätter, regarded as an investment, was first leased before being sold in 1846.



Barksätter in the late 19th century, showing the manor farm and its subsidiary Erikstorp. Both were farmed by paid labourers. Many labour-service crofts and cottages (backstugor) remain. Source: Häradsekonomiska map.

The buyer was Carl Ludvig Sundberg, a wholesaler from Stockholm, who moved to Barksätter with his family. He modernised the agriculture, assigned more land to the main farm, erected new buildings, and abandoned the tenant-farming system in favour of paid labourers.

Von Eckermann, using *laga skifte*, had paved the way for Barksätter's transformation, but it was Sundberg who carried it out in practice. However, it wasn't all plain

sailing. Sundberg was apparently seen as an outsider and upstart by the local gentry, and his labourers and crofters are said to have disliked him, too. Yet Sundberg's farming practice was completely at odds with Sörmland's manor-house culture, with its old-fashioned patriarchal structures, and the ideal of the benevolent lord of the manor. Sundberg was an enterprising farmer, capitalist and modernist.

Sundberg died in 1868, leaving a wife and six teenage children. Barksätter was taken over by his youngest son Axel, who was interested in forestry and initially became a successful farmer.

19th-century agriculture

From the late 18th century onwards, but mainly in the first half of the 19th century, an agrarian revolution took place that was at least as comprehensive as the Industrial Revolution. It focused on bringing great swathes of new land under the plough, using more efficient tools and new forms of crop rotation, and producing crops such as potatoes and clover. New and old fields alike were provided with better drainage, and meadows suitable for arable farming were ploughed. Meadow farming was abandoned in favour of grass crops on arable land, and dairy productivity increased with better fodder and breeding.

At Barksätter, large new areas were farmed, partly by annexing land at Ladäng and Sluckstorp, and by creating Erikstorp farm. Outfields changed from having various uses (mainly mule grazing, cultivation, slash-and-burn, and timber production), to producing timber

alone. A new landscape thus emerged. Forests had once been sparse and open, their birches and conifers grazed by livestock. Now woodland teemed with conifers, forming dense green walls alongside arable fields, in a manner previously unseen.

In the midst of this transformation, the manor house was enlarged and new farm buildings replaced the old ones. This provided space for 60 cows, 30 calves, ten workhorses and some foals – a large number of animals at that time. At Erikstorp, with its 55 hectares of arable land, a large estate manager's house was built in the 1860s, along with a barn for 25 cows, 12 calves and five workhorses.

In total, Barksätter and its four subsidiary farms comprised 843 hectares, of which 230 hectares were arable land. The estate also ran a small sawmill and a wood-wool factory. By the late 19th century, the average remaining croft had around five hectares of arable land. Here, new buildings were often added too, such as a modern dwelling house and a cowshed for five or so animals. Thus, all the remaining crofts in the area today are of typical late 19th-century type.

Barksätter, a subsidiary of Klastorp once more

During Axel Sundberg's time, tenant crofters were allowed to start buying their smallholdings, which had become increasingly unprofitable for the main farm. However, some sales were forced by necessity. In the 1910s, Källtorp, with a sizable area of forest, was among the properties sold, and to save Barksätter in the wake

of the 1929 Stock Market Crash, other crofts were disposed of, including Kvastorp and Näset. In total, some 150 hectares of arable land and pasture were jettisoned before Sundberg reached the end of the road with the Kreuger Crash in 1932, when he was forced to sell Barksätter. He left the manor and died the following year.

The buyer, once again, was the Klastorp Manor fee tail, and Barksätter reverted to being a leasehold farm. At the time, Klastorp also owned Beckershov, which from 1917 had been the home of Ebba Lewenhaupt and her husband Gösta Francke. In 1934 they bought Erikstorp too.

Barksätter was also used by Lewenhaupt family members, being bought in 1957 by Ulla de Richelieu, who was also a Lewenhaupt. She moved to the manor, and lived there for ten years before selling to her relative, Mary Francke-Gustafson.

Mary Francke-Gustafson and her bequest to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry



Mary Francke-Gustafson. Portrait by Bertram Schmiterlöv, 1958. Photo: Ylva Nordin.

Mary Francke was born at Beckershov in 1920, the eldest daughter of Ebba Lewenhaupt and Gösta Francke. Her great interest in farming led to studies at Önnestad agricultural school in Scania. In 1941, she married Göran Ribers of Lindenäs Manor near Motala, where the couple settled and raised a family.

After her divorce in the late 1950s, Mary Francke bought a small farm near Borensberg, which she ran on her own, focusing on sheep farming. She remarried, to Lieutenant Colonel Bertil Gustafson. Gaining the opportunity to acquire Barksätter in 1967, she moved back home to the area of her childhood.

At Barksätter, she took an active role in running the farm, which at the time included a large dairy herd. Yet she focused on sheep farming, building up a herd of wool sheep comprising two hundred ewes. She also improved the estate's forest management, which by this time was vital for the manor economy. However, Mary Francke fell ill, and was forced to lease out the agriculture in 1979. Thinking ahead, she wanted Barksätter to continue as a single estate, and began to plan for the future.

Bequest and legal consequences

Mary Francke initially developed an idea to bequeath Barksätter for the benefit of sheep farming and breeding, but eventually settled on a more general focus, to promote agricultural research. As a result, the estate was bequeathed to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry in 1983. The aim was to preserve the estate in its entirety and to promote research into agri-

culture and related businesses. To achieve this, the farm was to be 'adapted to natural conditions, while maintaining its focus as an economically viable, well-run family business'. The bequest also stipulated that Mary and her husband should be allowed to live in the manor house for the rest of their lives; that she would continue to enjoy hunting and fishing rights; and that her tenant farmer could keep his contract.

To enable the bequest, the Academy created a specific foundation: 'Mary Francke-Gustafsons donation Barksätters egendom', with a dedicated board of trustees. Mary Francke was pleased with the arrangement. This was reflected in 1988 by another large donation to the Academy: Miljonfonden – one million kronor for the benefit of Barksätter.

Following her death in 1993, a lengthy legal process began over the bequest, which some of her children disputed. A district court found in their favour, but the Academy appealed. A period of uncertainty ensued, and only in 1998 did the Supreme Court deliver its verdict, awarding ownership of Barksätter to the Academy.





Barksätter today

The Barksätter area typifies the Sörmland manor landscape, which visitors will notice in the form of the avenues of deciduous trees that line the roads, for example. This character is enhanced by the manor's picturesque location by Bjälken lake and the area's lightly rolling landscape.

Yet Barksätter is more representative of large farms in general, rather than traditional, aristocratic, historic manor environments. For example, there is no architecturally designed complex of the kind found at the neighbouring manors of Beckershov, Klastorp and Skalltorp. Neither does Barksätter possess the grand gardens that usually surround manor houses. Nevertheless, much of what we normally associate with a manor landscape does survive, both in terms of details and as a whole.

The estate is rich in game, mainly fallow deer and wild boar. Hunting, which is leased out, provides not only income. It is also an agricultural necessity to prevent wildlife from overfeeding. Barksätter shares this animal issue with neighbouring estates, working closely with them on hunting matters.

Agriculture – forestry – hunting – fishing

Barksätter covers 640 hectares, including just over 80 hectares of arable land and pasture, and 524 hectares of productive forest. The estate also includes 106 hectares of fishing waters. The Academy uses guidelines for sustainable agriculture and forestry, in order to safeguard the

area's natural and cultural significance. The agriculture, which is leased to tenant farmers, produces grasses and organic grain. Land is also used for pasture. The cattle live elsewhere, and are moved here for the grazing season. The estate's financial surplus is used to benefit the foundation. The Academy is also keen to promote the development of agriculture and forestry on the estate.

The arable land, long since rationalised, comprises large fields that are devoid of traditional landscape features such as agricultural cairns, open ditches, stone walls and so on. Marginal areas around the old crofts offered less open land, with little opportunity for large-scale farming. Thus, the land here retains much of the character that the heart of the estate lacks. In addition, open grassland at the crofts is maintained by the many fallow deer that graze here.

The manor farm is located at the centre of the estate. The fields that formed the main farm's three enclosures in the Middle Ages are still cultivated today. Since the 18th century, the estate's field area has grown manyfold with the cultivation of former meadows, increasing from a total of 16 hectares in c. 1700 to 80 hectares today.

The former meadows have gone. Storängen has been ploughed for more than 150 years, and Lillängen water meadow was long since abandoned, its waterline now populated with bushes. The Academy has restored other grasslands, such as on Risön island. Here, the land was once mowed, and later grazed, but after this was abandoned in the 20th century, the area became overgrown. Today, Risön is used to pasture sheep.

Although the coniferous forests can claim only modest natural-heritage significance, cultural-heritage remains do survive at the crofts. The Academy outsources its for-

estry. Large areas of previously dense spruce forest, such as at Kohagen, have been damaged by insect pests, and are now replanted with more diverse tree populations. In the postwar period, the woodland was subject primarily to even-aged timber management, which visitors can see in the way woodland consists of either new, clear-felled areas, or tree populations of the same age. In the future, selection cutting will be carried out too, a preferred method to increase the value of individual trees for uses other than pulpwood and saw timber. Selection cutting can produce quality deciduous and coniferous timber for heritage restoration work, for example. Additionally, ten per cent of the woodland is reserved for nature protection and heritage conservation.



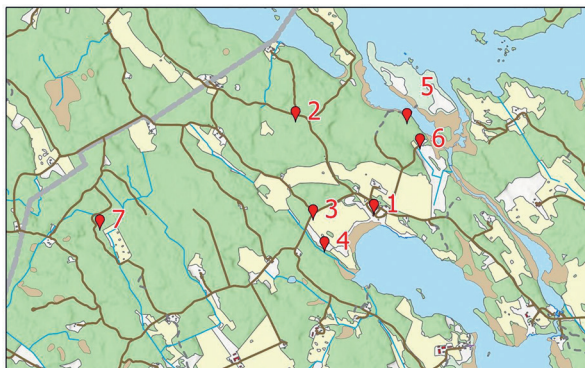
Photo: Lena Gustafsson.

Places of cultural and natural interest

This section highlights seven natural and cultural environments. At these locations, information signs encourage visitors to explore the landscape. Each text is reproduced here.

When consulting information signs in the landscape, while out walking or cycling, for example, remember that every cottage and farm in the area is inhabited. Please respect the tenants' privacy.

Also, please do not walk on fields where crops are growing. You are otherwise free to roam the landscape.



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 km



Places of interest

- 1 Barksätter Manor
- 2 Milestone and road-maintenance stone
- 3 Trees for the future
- 4 Site of Sluckstorp farmstead
- 5 Risön and its pasture landscape
- 6 Sjöstugan croft
- 7 Site of Bagghultstugan croft

Settlement

Road

Minor road

Parish boundary

Watercourse

Deciduous forest

Coniferous forest

Wetland

Water

Arable land

Open area

1. Barksätter Manor

Welcome to Barksätter Manor on the shore of Bjälken lake. The manor was bequeathed to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry by Mary Francke-Gustafson in 1983. The Academy manages the forestry itself, whereas the agriculture, hunting and fishing are carried out by tenant farmers. Residential buildings are leased to tenants. In addition, the Academy uses the estate for various forms of research into the management of forests, nature and heritage.

History of the manor

In the Middle Ages, Barksätter was a small village. In the 1530s it became an aristocratic manor, and from the 1580s to the mid-18th century it was the main manor of the Rosenstråle family. The first owner was Gunilla Rosenstråle, who in the early 17th century established the manor complex that largely survives today, despite later renovations and alterations.

By the early 17th century, Barksätter estate was three times its current size. Through inheritance, land was parcelled off: first Skalltorp to the south of the lake; later Beckershov by Tislången lake. Both became manors in their own right. Skalltorp still retains its manor buildings dating back to at least the 18th century, which provide an idea of what Barksätter Manor looked like at this time.

In the 18th century, Count Lewenhaupt of neighbouring Klastorp Manor bought Barksätter, turning it into a leasehold farm. In around 1840 it was sold to the then count's daughter and son-in-law, who after some years sold the estate to a Stockholm wholesaler named Sundberg. He modernised the manor with new agricultural buildings, among other things. In the 1930s the estate was sold back to Klastorp. Barksätter was eventually owned by Mary Francke-Gustafson, who in 1983 bequeathed the manor to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry

Manor house

The manor house is built of timber with roughcast walls. It rests on the 17th-century vaulted cellars of the earliest building. The ground floor dates from the 1670s whereas the upper floor was added in 1856, when the

facades were rendered. This modest building is typical of 19th-century late Empire style. Characteristics include the rendered walls with vertical pilaster strips, which conceal the heads of the timbers and break up the facade. Other typical period features include the crescent-shaped lunette windows of the gables. Today, classical ornament is confined to the porch, since the building's window mouldings were removed during a relatively recent modernisation.

The free-standing wing probably dates from the 1670s. Built of timber, it is finished in the same shade of roughcast as the manor house. The wing originally faced onto the courtyard, but its entrance was moved to the opposite side of the structure in the 19th century when the building was turned into homes for estate workers.

Garden

The manor house is surrounded by a garden with mature deciduous trees. Typical 17th-century gardens comprised an orchard, a kitchen garden and a hop garden. At Bark-sätter, the orchard was situated in front of the house. Here some fruit trees still remain, along with a perimeter terrace wall, beside which the main road used to wind its way. The kitchen garden was located on the rise to the left of the manor house, where today an overgrown, four-sided arbour is situated. To the right, beyond the hedge, lay the hop garden.

Farm buildings

The three red farm buildings by the road stand on the site of earlier, 17th-century structures. There were originally four buildings in all, with room for cows, oxen,

horses, pigs and storage. In the 18th century, one of the buildings, by the roadside, was demolished, but since then the area has retained its form of three buildings.

The present-day structures are of 19th-century date. They include a stable and a tool store, and are still used in agriculture today. As with the other farm buildings, they are traditional in design, built mainly of timber, and painted red. Window surrounds and other details, which in c. 1900 would have been white, have long been painted black, a colour that typifies agricultural buildings in Sörmland. The change occurred when black became popular among manor building contractors.

Cow house – combination barn

Down towards the lake is a large, late 19th-century cow house. It was later modernised with new windows and an enormous hayloft beneath a high gambrel roof. Today the barn stands empty and unused.

Granary

The two-storey timber granary is of late 19th-century date. It has long been supported on iron plinths, a feature largely unknown on farms elsewhere. Today, the building is used as a meeting hall in the warm months of the year.

Worker accommodation

In around 1900, labour service was replaced by employment. These workers, known as *statare*, lived in flats comprising one room and a kitchen. Two such former workers' homes are situated in the fields to the east. A third home, Beda's house is located on the main road

south of the manor. It originally consisted of two flats. Today the Academy uses the building for overnight accommodation and meetings.



Beda's house today. Photos: Birgitta Naumburg.

2. Roadside stones

As early as the 17th century, rules dictated that public roads had to be provided with milestones. Each county governor was ultimately responsible for erecting these stones.

Milestone

Milestones consisted of a plinth with a main stone on top. They were usually carved with a royal emblem, a date, and '1 *mil*', '1/2 *mil*' or '1/4 *mil*'. (One Swedish mile or *mil* is equivalent to 10 km.) In the 19th century, milestones were often replaced with cast-iron signs bearing the county governor's name.

The Barksätter milestone, standing by the road to Vingåker, is probably of 18th-century date. It consists of an unmortared granite plinth that supports the milestone itself, which is made of limestone. The plinth is in reasonable condition, despite missing some stones. The milestone itself is somewhat worse for wear. It is now broken into several pieces, leaving no trace of the text. The stone once stood just under a metre tall, narrowing towards the top, with a rounded peak. The text read '1 *mil*'.

Road-maintenance stone

Well into the 20th century, farmers and other land-owners were responsible for repairing the roads. The county governor would check the work had been carried out, and roadside maintenance stones identified those responsible for each stretch of highway.

A little further along this road, by Najstugan farm, stands one such road-maintenance stone. It marks the boundary of Barksätter's obligation. The stone is carved 'BARKSÄTTER'.



*Many milestones today are unfortunately damaged.
Photo: Ulrich Lange.*

3. Trees for the future

Here in the 2010s, two tree plantations were established, one deciduous and the other coniferous. The conifer plantation is located a short way along the small road.

Hardwood deciduous park

The park is fenced off to prevent damage to the young trees by browsing deer and elk. Every variety of hardwood deciduous tree in Sweden is represented here. See the separate information sign for further details.

Barrext park

Here are coniferous trees, primarily varieties of spruce, that are produced by Swedish forestry or used in parks. As with the deciduous trees, these conifers are still young, and will continue to grow for quite some time.

Trees for building conservation

Today, it is hard to find the right timber to maintain and renovate medieval churches, for example. Shingles and birch bark are also difficult to obtain.

The Academy aims to contribute to the sustainable supply of timber for the built heritage. To lead by example, the Academy's forestry management plan at Barksätter includes the provision to select trees for building conservation, for instance when woodland is being felled.



Barrexot park, September 2019. Photo: Birgitta Naumburg.

4. Sluckstorp

The rocky rise beside the lake was once the location of Sluckstorp, one of the largest farms in the area. Only Barksätter and Skalltorp were larger.

In the Middle Ages, the farmstead was owned by Julita Abbey, whose lands were administered within districts called *rättardömen*. Sluckstorp and all the other monastery farms in Vingåker were part of the Vintergatan *rättardöme*.

In the 16th century, when King Gustav Vasa seized the properties of religious houses, Sluckstorp became part of Barksätter Manor. The land was worked by tenant farmers, who also carried out labour service at Barksätter.

The farm included roughly seven hectares of arable fields. Moreover, slash-and-burn cultivation was carried out on forest land. The meadows yielded 20–30 *lass* of hay each year. In addition, fish were available in Bjälken and Tislången lakes.

The 19th century saw major changes in agriculture. One result, clearly visible here, is that Sluckstorp ceased to be a separate entity. Its land was taken over by the main farm in 1824. The buildings were then demolished, although a cottage remained for a time, housing workers and the elderly.

Today, no trace of the settlement survives. However, on the high ground lie the remains of the access road, in the form of a stone and earth embankment.

5. Risön

The island's place name suggests Risön was once used for coppicing. Deciduous trees would have been cut back periodically to produce withies and poles, and to provide winter fodder for Barksätter's livestock.

Risön shows how humans have used grassland in various ways at different times. In the 17th century, the island was used as meadowland. Its low-lying areas consisted of cleared marshes, while dry meadows were located on the higher ground, where deciduous trees also grew. Hay production yielded roughly five lass each year. Risön has never been inhabited, but two hay barns were once located on the island.

Meadow cultivation continued here until agriculture changed radically in the 19th century, when, as elsewhere, Risön's meadows were abandoned in favour of hay production on fertilised arable land. For this purpose, two fields were established on the island, at the same time as the cleared marshes were allowed to return to nature.

The problem of transporting draught horses and tools to the island, coupled with rising wages, led to the fields being abandoned in the 1920s. Instead, Risön was used for pasture. Over time this was abandoned, too, and the fields gradually became overgrown.

At the turn of the millennium, the Academy and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences restored and recreated the grasslands. In preparation, a bridge was built from the mainland, which also allowed visitors to come to the island. Today, Risön is used for pasture, just as it was in the past. This benefits the biodiversity of its many plants, which rely on grazing and mowing.

Several dead trees, mainly oaks, remain standing and others have been left where they fell. This dead wood benefits insects and birds. In the past, of course, no such tree would have been left in a meadow. Everything of value was exploited, and dead trees usually became firewood. Risön today thus reflects both the island's history and modern conservation ideals.



Photo: Ulrich Lange.

6. Sjöstugan

Sjöstugan croft is situated on high ground between a hollow and the strait beside Risön. The large field to the south was once a meadow belonging to Barksätter, before it was turned into arable land in the late 19th century.

The croft, built c. 1700 as a dwelling for Barksätter's fishers, was originally called Fisketorp but soon acquired the name Sjöstugan. Many estate crofts were sold in the early 20th century. Sjöstugan was sold in 1929 but was recently reacquired by the Academy.

An 1840s map shows the croft's dwelling house, an outbuilding and a small plot of arable land. Today's building, which dates from 1893, is a well-preserved, corner-jointed structure with roughcast walls. There is also a wooden pig shed and some later outbuildings. The barn burned down in the 1950s. Sjöstugan is surrounded by open land that is still used for mowing.



Photo: Ulrich Lange.

7. Bagghultstugan

Bagghultstugan croft dates from the 17th century. The name suggests it was originally a cottage (*backstuga*), but it soon became a labour-service croft. A map of 1842 shows the dwelling house, two outbuildings, a cattle shed and a threshing barn. Among the ten or so small fields was a larger field with open ditches, a typical new form of cultivation at this time. The remains of the dwelling house consist of a rectangular stone and concrete foundation. A heap of bricks was once the chimney. Old fruit trees grow alongside.

Despite the lack of surviving buildings, this area is perhaps Barksätter's best-preserved historical landscape. It comprises the cottage remains, fruit trees, and the abandoned fields in the surrounding dense woodland. There is also the large arable field, with its open ditches and agricultural cairns, that was newly established in the 19th century.

Crofters lived at Bagghultstugan until 1939, the final occupants being four unmarried siblings. When they moved out, the buildings were abandoned, then demolished in 1944. The timbers were sold for firewood, as was common during the hardships of the Second World War.



Photo: Ulrich Lange.



Unfarmed field at Bagghult. Photo: Ulrich Lange.

Barksätter

Map processing: Ulf Jansson, University of Stockholm.

Further reading

This study is based on three books in particular, which provide more information on Barksätter. Two of these are by the landscape architect Daniel Nilsson: *Landskapets historiska utveckling vid den sörmländska gården Barksätter*, and *Landskapsplan Barksätter: Inventering och gestaltungsförslag*. Both are available from the Academy's website. For more information on Mary Francke-Gustafson and her bequest, see *De areella näringarnas välgörare* by Nils Edling.

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