

**The Story of
Sven Pedersen Skåland
“Hothead Sven”**

**Part of the
Sherpe/Østrem/Hanson
Family History**

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The Story of Sven "Hothead" Pedersen Skåland

The following accounts come from the Lund History Book of Norway. They concern several incidents that happened during the 1600's in Norway. They all involve our Great Grandparents on the Sherpe/Østrem side. They have been translated from the Norwegian language by Bjarne Breilid of the Vesterheim Geneological Society in Madison, Wisconsin.

Too often the only thing we know or can find out about our ancestors are birth or death dates and perhaps who their parents or children were. It is interesting to read accounts of their lives and try to imagine what they were like, how they lived and events that took place in their lives. The information found in these accounts certainly do that. However, it uncovers events that perhaps some people would feel better left uncovered. Specifically it tells of one of our Great Grandparents, Sven Pederson Skåland, being executed for the murder of another of our Great Grandparents, Brynild Nilsen Omdal (Moi). The sheriff of Lund at that time was Asbjørn Brynildsen Haukland/Hove, also one of our Great Grandfathers. His daughter, Randi Asbjørnsdatter, was married to Sven Pedersen Skåland. Asbjørn had to sentence and order the execution, most likely by beheading, of his own son-in-law. We can only try to imagine the drama and agony involved in this entire story. This was a small community where everyone knew each other and most were related in one way or another. Almost all of the people named in these accounts are our relatives. Many are our Great Grandparents. I think it is an important and fascinating piece of our family history.

I will begin the story of Sven with an account of his ancestry. Very little is known about the earliest people known to be at Steinberg. We have been able to determine that his great grandfather was **Ståle Steinberg**, named in 1519 records. He had one son that is known. **Atlak Steinberg**. It is believed that a daughter was married to **Tarald Steinberg**. Both are named in 1563 records. Atlak was Sven's grandfather. From studying all the sources, I believe Atlak had two sons that we know of. One is **Peder Atlaksen Skåland**, named in 1591 records. On his seal are the initials P.A. He had property in Steinberg. Peder is the father of **Sven "Hothead" Pedersen Skåland**. Atlak's second son is **Gunnar Steinberg**. On page 566 of the Lund History it says he is the son of Atlak. This would make Gunnar, Sven's uncle. As the first account will mention, Sven killed a relative, Gunnar, in his youth. There is also a **Reier Steinberg** named in 1591 records. He was dead before 1617. Reier was most likely a son of Tarald Steinberg. **Tarald Steinberg**, a son of Reier, then took over his father's farm in 1624. Tarald then had a son also named **Gunnar Steinberg**, mentioned in 1645 Steinberg records. Now back to Peder Atlaksen Steinberg, listed above. In addition to his son, Sven, he had three other sons that are known. **Jon Pedersen Skåland**, **Ståle Pedersen Navrestad/Jendal** and **Atlak Pedersen Steinberg**. Atlak had a son, **Peder Atlaksen Steinberg**, who bought Tarald Reiersen's farm in 1624. This all sounds confusing, and it is. You can see from the above names that there are duplicates from one generation to the next, and this was very confusing until all the information came together.

This should give you a little background to some of the people involved in this story and their relationship to each other. They will all play a part in explaining why there was friction between the families, and led to Sven killing Gunnar Atlaksen and attacking Peder Atlaksen. Not knowing the details, we can only speculate that the fighting was over land.

On the following pages you will find the translated text from the Lund History book, as it relates to the families and farms involved in this story. I also include a Steinberg/Skåland family chart to better explain what I believe happened, after piecing together all the accounts.

We will begin with the translated account of the Skaland farm history and on the following page you will find more information on Peder Atlaksen Skåland, father of "Hothead Sven":

STEINBERG

We know of a number of names from Steinberg around 1500-1600, but the trick is placing them in the right order. I am trying. The basis for the arrangement is the property circumstances on the farm and the names that are used. Tarald is probably Ståle's son-in-law because he owned the smaller section in comparison to the other one. The family relationship between Steinberg and Skåland is an interesting one. Jon P. Skåland was a juror in 1610, and he was to seal and sign (documents), but he didn't have a seal, and so he used his brother's with the initials A.P. (This was most likely Atlak Pedersen).

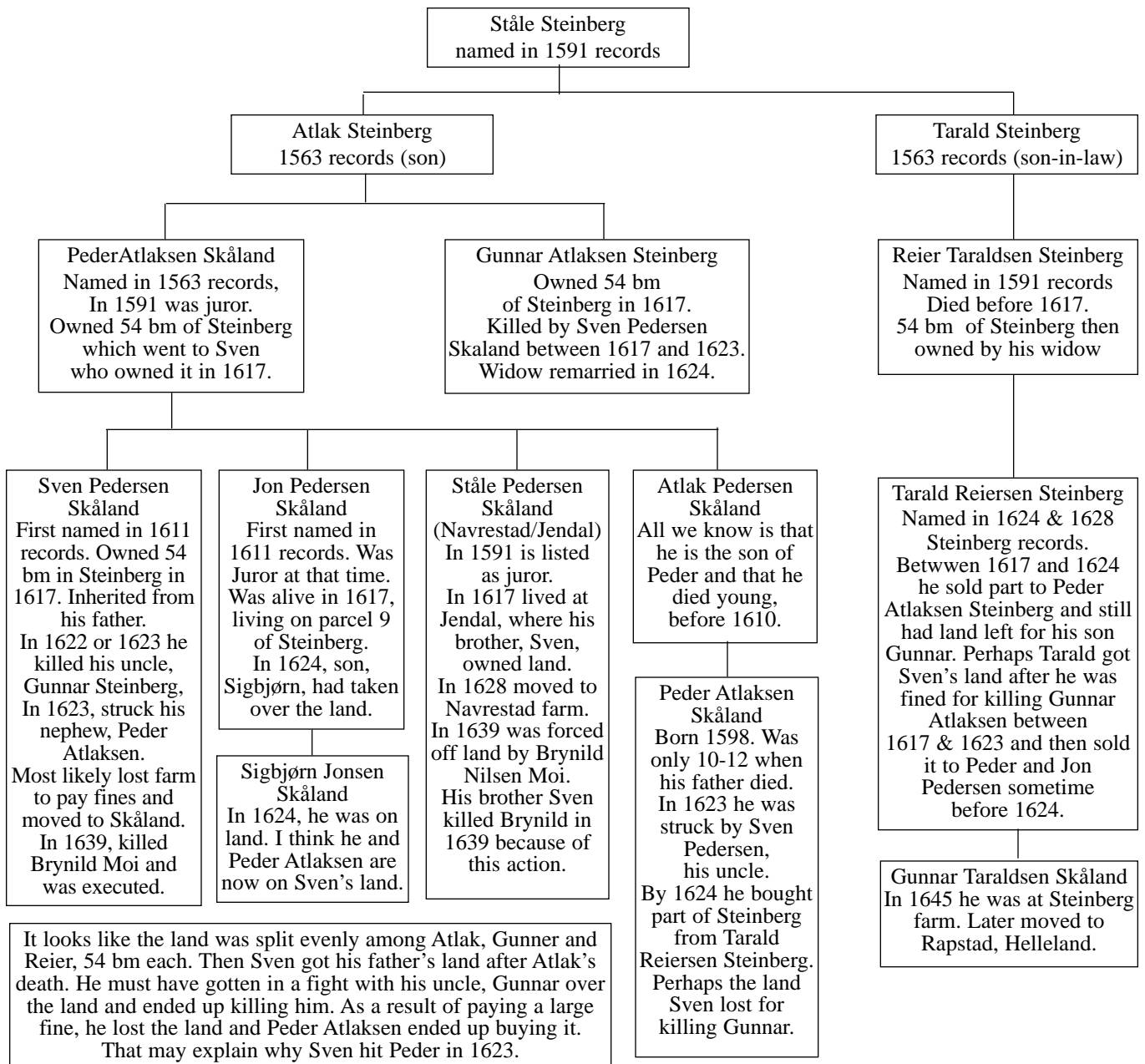
Atlak's son, Gunnar, was killed by Sven Pedersen Skåland, and the latter paid a whopping fine and was set free. He would not have gotten away that easily if the court had not been made to believe that it was self-defense. What could these close relatives have to fight about?

Questions about inheritance. Greed for land. These are at all times apt to provoke passionate feelings. (I believe the author of the Lund History book was right about the cause of the fight. -H.S.).

Reier called (named) his oldest son Tarald, and Tarald follows with Gunnar.

In 1617 Sven Skåland owned 54 bm, Gunnar Steinberg 54 bm and Reier's widow 54 bm.

Steinberg/Skåland Family Tree



II. PEDER ATLAKSEN

Named in 1563 and 1602 records, juror in 1591. On his seal are the initials P.A. (Same as the above account in Steinberg). However he has no connection to Skaland people that we know, but there was a close solidarity with people at Steinberg, and it assumed that he is the son of Atlak Pedersen Steinberg, parcel #1, and married a daughter in the Skåland family, who would have had some allodial rights. As a result, Peder would have moved to the Skaland farm and been known by the Skåland name.

Their children were:

1. Sven Pedersen Skåland, "Hothead Sven", see III below.
2. Jon Pedersen Skåland, parcel #9. Juror in 1611. His seal had I.P., was son of Peder Atlaksen. He lived until 1617. His son, Sigbjørn Jonsen took over the farm in 1624.
3. Ståle Pedersen Skaland (Navrestad/Jendal), assumed to be Peder's son. He was a juror in 1591. Stale is an old Steinberg name. (See Ståle, his great grandfather). He lived at Jendal and later at Navrestad. See Navrestad for more on his connection to Sven killing Brynild Moi.
4. Atlak Pedersen Steinberg. (He is not listed as a brother, but due to his age and other references in the accounts, I believe he was also a brother. I believe his son was Peder Atlaksen Steinberg (V), born in 1598. This relationship will become more clear in the chart.

Translated account of Sven Pedersen Skåland, from the Skåland Section, Br. nr. 1, III, page 184.

III. SVEN PEDERSEN SKÅLAND

Mentioned first time in 1611. There was prosperity on the farm. In 1617 he owned 54 bismærker in Steinberg, 12 bismærker in Jendal, 9 in Liland and 3 in Hommansdal. The 3 last ones in Bakke. Altogether 78 Bismærker.

People used to call him "Hothead" Sven. He may have been hot-tempered, but personally I do not believe he was as bad as the rumor has it, because anyone who turns out to be a loser in life, is always maligned. The fact that the name Sven has survived at Skåland until now, is an indication that he was respected by those closest to him. Normally, a name that had disgraced the family, disappeared immediately.

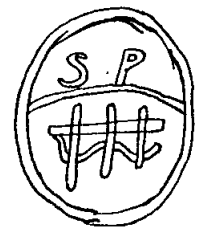
In his youth he killed a relative, (Gunner Steinberg), but he went free by paying a fine. This would not have happened unless the court had decided that he acted in self-defense. The relationship with the Steinberg side of the family was not good. In 1623 Sven was fined 1/2 daler for giving Peder Steinberg a minor blow (slap) on the cheek. (I explained more about this Steinberg/Skåland relationship at the beginning of the translated accounts, and believe this Peder Steinberg is Atlak Pedersen's son. – H.S.)

The worst part, however, came when at a funeral in 1639, by the church, (Lund Church at Moi), he killed Brynild Moi. (Brynild Nilsen Omdal/Moi). The court found no extenuating circumstances, but it is possible that the family regarded it as retaliation for injustice. Sven was executed in 1639 after having been sentenced the 29th of August of that year. He was married to Randi Asbjørnsdatter, daughter of sheriff Asbjørn Karlsen Haukland/Hove.

The children known born to Sven and Randi:

1. Torkel Svensen Hamre, parcel #4 Ålgård.
2. Peder Svensen Skåland, farm parcel #4 in Skåland
(This line continues down to Hans Hansen Haukland Skjerpe).
3. Torger Svensen Tronvik
4. Ståle Svensen.
5. Son (Name not known), was blind, mentioned in tradition.
6. Daughter (Name not known), married to Hoskuld Salvesen Hamre
7. Daughter (Name not known)

In 1645 the farm was divided. Son Peder lived on farm parcel #4, and Sven's widow operated the other half with her two unmarried daughters.



Sven Pedersen Skåland
The seal he used
in 1610.

This translated account about Joren Leielsdatter Haukland/Moi is found in the Moi Section, Br. nr. 1, I, page 370.

JOREN LEIELSDATTER

Daughter of Leiel Haukland, farm parcel # 1, married Brynild Nilsen Omdal from Bakke parish. She and her sister Birgitte (also spelled Bergitte) inherited Åtland in Gyland, but they traded with their brother Omund, and instead they got a chance to share half of Moi. Joren 30 bm. (bismærker) and Birgitte 24 bm. of inner Moi. The farm yard was located about where it is today. Joren's house was on the foundation where Peder's house is today. Birgitte's farm yard was outside (of this area, presumably), about where Tønnesen lives, and Tarald's house directly across the lane on the *regje** (Fence?) by Johan's house. The road to the wading place (ford), across the river to Haukland, went between the houses. The river had to be waded - there was no bridge. Wading could be extremely perilous, and we are told that at times there were accidents.

*(I am not sure about this word in the text. It is possible that it is an unusual dialect word, unknown to me, but it is also possible that it is a misprint, since they are not completely uncommon. I chose "fence" since "regje" might possibly be a misspelling of "gjerde" - fence. – *Translator*)

Direct descendants of these two sisters are still on the farm.

It is quite remarkable that these three farm parcels were operated in common until April of 1634. At that time 6 court officials placed rocks between the parcels, i.e. in the fields and on the little hills above, whereas unfertilized hayfields were left for common use as before.

It can be said that Joren had bad luck with her husband (Brynild). At a Christmas party he stabbed Anders Nasset with a knife. For this he was fined 8 ørtuger and 13 mark silver (evidently a hefty sum in those days, but it would be difficult or impossible to make any comparisons. – *Translator*). That took care of his wealth, but he had to consider himself lucky to be able to pay a fine and remain free. The property had to be mortgaged to Peder Nilsen Abeln, Nes.

At a funeral in 1639, Brynild was killed by Sven Pedersen Skåland. The conflict that came to a head in this deed will be discussed under br. 7, I (parcel #7, I).

The family lost the farm and a couple of decades later I do not know any of the occupants.

Brynild and Joren's only daughter married Tron Handeland. (Daughter's name not known.).

Their children were:

1. Peder Tronsen
2. Daughter married Tore Torkelsen Handeland, born 1624, 40 years old 1664.
3. Magnhild Tronsdatter
4. Berete Tronsdatter (Her biography is listed next in the book): II. Berette Tronsdatter, first marriage to Jøel Handeland. Second marriage to Ole Endresen Elgjestraum. Berete died 12 July 1685. She had five children with her first husband and two with her second husband.

It seems that Brynild's daughter was married a 2nd time to one Børild, because Ole Endresen talks about a brother-in-law, Tron Børildsen who lived in Bergen. (He would have been named after her first husband, Tron, as was the naming custom.)

(This line continues down to Anne Bertina Mageland, wife of Jonas Tønnesen Østrem. - *H.S.*)

This translated account about Bergitte Leielsdatter Haukland/Moi is found in the Moi Section, Br. nr. 7, I, page 382.

BERGITTE LEIELSDATTER

Daughter of Leiel Haukland, parcel #1 and sister of Joren Moi, parcel #1. Married to Ole – that's all we know. We also know of a daughter, married to Torjus Linland, parcel #1. In 1634 there was an estate settlement at Moi, including plowed and unplowed field and dissolution of the joint ownership.

However, they had forgotten one of the heirs, Gullick Olsen (Moi), born around 1605. He had probably been gone for years in the service of the King. In those days it was not uncommon to play war, a type of enjoyment that could last for a long time. There was no mail service to let people know you were alive. Those left at home could easily imagine the worst.

At the court session November 9, 1637, Gullick Olsen subpoenaed his uncles, Tarald Leielsen (Haukland) and Brynild Nilsen (Omdal/Moi), claiming a "sister part" of Moi, which is separated from the main farm, but which Gullick had not been able to take possession of, after his mother, although he was homeless. This related to the use of 18 bismar merker with the right to occupy the premises.

The court agreed with Gullick. He was allowed to occupy his allodial estate and live there until the others could provide him with a farm equal in size and equally good someplace else in the parish.

Tarald and Brynild took care of giving Gullick a place at Moi, and they had to look around for a farm for him. They had inherited 15 bismar merker in Narvestad*, i.e. 1/3 of the entire farm. Lund Church owned the other 2/3, and the clerk of the diocese, who was in charge of finding tenants, could decide who could live there.

Ståle Pedersen Skåland had no allodial rights (right of the first-born male to a farm, including the right to buy it back at a reasonable price if it had been sold – within a certain time limit – *Translator.*), and he had to move from the place. He had lived at Jendal in Bakke, and since 1628 he had settled down peacefully at Navrestad* (note the difference in spelling from the Narvestad earlier.). The Moi men succeeded in getting rid of him. Ståle's brother, Sven Pedersen Skåland, got so boiling mad because of this, which he thought was an outrageous injustice, that he stabbed and killed Brynild Moi at a funeral by the church.

This happened in 1639.

We know of two sons of Gullick Olsen* (Son of Ole and Joren Leielsdatter):

1. Ole Gullicksen
2. Anders Gullicksen, lived at Navrestad, farm parcel #4.

* Gullick Olsen Moi is also one of our Great Grandfathers. This continues down through the Jonas Østrem line.

The following translated accounts will give you a history of the Navrestad property.

NAVRESTAD - Parcel #1

The first people we know about from Navrestad were tenants. Lund Church owned 2/3, 30 bm and private people 1/3, 15 bm. In the first part of the 1600's Leiel Haukland owned the 1/3.

I. Rasmus Navrestad

He is mentioned 1600-1628. Married to Anna Børildsdatter, daughter of Børild and Ågot Tjellesvik, parcel #1. This is the reason their son Tron could claim allodial rights to Tjellesvik.

He occupied the entire farm as a tenant, but when a new generation took over in 1628, a new man took over half the farm. He was Ståle (Svensen) Skåland/Jendal.

(I'm sure that Svensen was meant to be Pedersen in this account. On page 184, II. Peder, it tells about Peder's youngest son, Stale, who is a brother of "Hothead" Sven. It states that he lived at Jendal and later at Navrestad. This would explain why Sven got so angry at Brynild, because he had kicked his younger brother, Stale off the farm to make room for Gullik Olsen Moi. - HS)

Tarald and Brynild Moi now owned the 1/3 of the farm (That was inherited from Leiel Haukland, Brynild's father-in-law.) They wanted to make room for their brother-in-law, Gullik Olsen Moi, and in 1639 they succeeded in getting Ståle Pedersen Skåland off the land. This fight over real estate had deplorable consequences. See Moi, parcel #7. (This is the story of Sven killing Brynild.)

(As I stated above, I believe the author has the wrong Ståle. It should be Ståle Pedersen and not Ståle Svensen. All other sources point to Ståle Pedersen Steinberg (Navrestad/Jendal) as being the man kicked off the Navrestad farm. As such, I've changed the following accounts to reflect the proper name. -H.S.)

II. Ståle Pedersen

Son of Peder Atlaksen Skåland, parcel #1. His stay at Navrestad turned out to be short, see Moi, parcel #7.

He first lived at Outer Jendal, came to Navrestad and from there back to Jendal where he was living in 1645 and 1664, with his son, Sven Stålesen.

We know nothing more about the latter, but in 1701 we find Sven Stålesen's children listed as:

1. Vermund Svensen, born 1675, married and living at Jendal.
2. Ståle Svensen, see III below.
3. Lars Svensen, born 1683, 18 years old in 1701, married to Anna Hansdatter and living in Tjellesvik, parcel #5.

III. Ståle Svensen

Grandson of #II, Ståle Pedersen.

Born 1681, 20 years old in 1701. Tenant farmer on 1/2 of Navrestad for life, dated 8 Nov. 1708. Married to Berete Hansdatter, daughter of Hans Olsen Årsvoll/Tjellesvik. – Ståle and his brother Lars married sisters.

Settlement after Ståle, 27 July, 1729. The widow remarried– husband, Anders Gulliksen Navrestad, parcel #4, the son of Gullick Olsen Moi, whose moving onto the Navrestad farm and replacing Ståles grandfather, led to Sven killing Brynild.

As you can see from the above account, Ståle Pedersen Skåland, who was living on the Navrestad farm, was forced to leave by Brynild and Tarald in order that Gullick Olsen Moi could have the farm as his inheritance from his mother, Bergitte's, estate. This is what angered Sven, who was Ståle's brother, and he blamed Brynild for forcing his brother, Ståle, off the farm. This led to the altercation in which Brynild was killed by Sven at a funeral. I can only guess that they were all attending the funeral of a friend or relative and they got into an argument about this incident and it escalated to the point where Sven drew his knife and killed Brynild.

Other information can be found in the Steinberg section on page 566, regarding Sven killing a man in his younger years. It states that Atlak Steinberg's son, Gunner, was killed by Sven Pedersen Skåland, and then paid with a sizeable amount of money (fine) to be set free. It was determined that he was without his rights and it was ruled self-defense. Gunner was killed sometime between 1617 and 1624.

In 1617 Sven Steinberg/Skåland owned 54 bm., Gunner Steinberg owned 54 bm. and Reier Steinberg owned 54 bm. of land at Steinberg. Gunner and Reier were cousins. They were Sven's uncles. Perhaps there was some dispute over the land that led to this fight and the killing of Gunner.

Perhaps now the relationships mentioned earlier make more sense. The earliest known person on the Steinberg farm was Ståle Steinberg, named in 1519 records. His son was Atlak Steinberg, named in 1563 records. It is thought that Tarald Steinberg was a son-in-law. Atlak had a son, Peder Atlaksen, named in 1593 records. He was a lagrettsmann (judge). Peder has three sons named in the records; Sven Pedersen Skåland, Jon Skåland and Ståle Jendal Navrestad. Ståle was the the third son, mentioned earlier, who had no allodial rights, because he wasn't the first born. He was the one thrown off the Navrestad farm. I also think that Atlak Pedersen is a son as I show in the chart. A second son of Atlak was Gunner Atlaksen Steinberg. Gunner owned land in 1617, but it mentions his widow married Omund, named in 1624 records. So Gunner probably was killed between 1617 and 1623. We know that Tarald had at least one son, Reier Taraldsen Steinberg, named in 1591 records.

Two of the persons involved in this story are daughters of Leiel Haukland. As you can see from the

maps on the following pages, and as is mentioned in the history, Haukland was right across the river from Moi. Leiel owned considerable property.

Leiel Haukland was a lagrettsmann (Judge), as stated in 1591 records, and often a Senior Judge. In 1610 he was selected and dispatched from Lund to the High Court in Oslo. It appears that he was a very respected juror and prominent person during that time. He was also a large landowner during this time in Norway history when the church owned 40% of the land, the king owned 10%, the aristocracy about 15%, and only 35% was in private hands. This may also help us understand why there could be such fights over the available land, which seems to have played a large part in this whole saga. In addition to owning farms at Moi, Leiel also had farms at Osen, Navrestad (the disputed land that eventually led to Sven killing Brynild), Eglandsdal, Åtland in Gyland and Gaudland, Sokndal. Leiel Haukland also had a sawmill by the river at Moi. The land at Åtland was inherited by Joren and Bergitte, who traded it with brother, Omund, for the Moi farms. Their husbands moved to Moi when they married the Haukland/Moi daughters and went by the Moi farm name also.

It is also interesting that another of our Great Grandparents was most likely involved in all these stories. Lauritz Lauritzen Bjerkreim, sogneprest (minister at the Lund Church during this period). He would have conducted the funerals and been involved with all these families.

One further thing I found in the records. Anders Gullicksen Moi/Navrestad, son of Gullick Olsen Moi, married Berete Hansdatter Årsvoll/Tjellesvik, the widow of Ståle Svensen, great grandson of Sven Pedersen Skaland. Anders father was the reason Sven killed Brynild. Sven must have rolled over in his grave when this took place.

We must remember that this all took place 150 years before the Revolutionary War and the U.S. gaining its independence. Those were rough times and disputes were often settled with fists and knives. It appears our ancestors did not always get along with their relatives and much of the fighting and disputes were over land or the lack of land.

So what happened to the land that so much of this fighting was over. The following translated account from the Lund History gives us the answer.

STEINBERG - Åsen – Parcel #15

I. LAURS OLSEN

Born 1603, 61 years old in 1664. In 1638 his tax classification was listed as “impoverished”. In 1645 he was married to a (former) widow and had a stepdaughter. Presumably he married to the farm (i.e. got the farm through marriage.) (I think he married the widow of Jon Pedersen Steinberg. Jon was dead by 1624 when his son, Sigbjørn Jonsen, took over the farm. Sigbjørn must have had a much younger sister still living with her mother, who it appears must have married Laurs’ son, Ole, from his first marriage. Even though they were step brother and sister, they were not related.–H.S.).

II. OLE LARSEN

Born 1624, 40 years old in 1664. Must be the son of I above from an earlier (his first) marriage. He was married to Gunhild Jonsdatter. In 1664 he owned 24 bm in Steinberg. Settlement after him on 28 May 1678.

His father (Laurs Olsen), lived in humble circumstances, whereas the son owned a big farm. He must have owed this to his wife, whose name was Jonsdatter. Her father must have been Jon Pedersen Skåland. His brother, Sven Pedersen, had inherited the Steinberg estate, but he was executed in 1639 and his property became crown land (property belonging to the King). The heirs must have used their allodial rights to redeem the farm, and the estate at Steinberg follows Gunhild Jonsdatter and her children. Neither the crown nor the Skålands later make any claims to the allodial rights to Steinberg.

(The Skåland heirs of Sven have no further claim to the property and it now follows Jon Pedersen’s descendants. That line comes down to Anne Bertine Mageland who married Jonas Tønnesen Ostrem.

This whole story lets us see our ancestors as real people with real lives and problems, and not just names and dates on a family tree chart. It's just that you don't expect to find a hangman's noose hanging from one of the branches of your family tree.

But remember, also among the family tree members listed below, there are many prominent people. We have a minister, sheriffs, a highly regarded judge, several jurors, land owners, farmers, a saw mill owner, and many hard working wives, who at that time in history, were seldom mentioned or even listed in the records. We are fortunate to know some of them.

We can't erase what went on in the past, and some people may not like to admit to an ancestor like "Hothead Sven", but it does add a colorful chapter to what can often be boring family histories.

The following People involved in this story are all Great Grandparents of the Sherpe/Ostrem family: Ståle Steinberg, Atlak Steinberg, Peder Atlaksen Steinberg, Sven Pedersen Skåland, Randi Asbjørnsdatter Haukland/Hove, Peder Svensen Skaland, Jon Pedersen Skåland, Sigbjørn Jonsen Skåland, Brynild Nilsen Omdal/Moi, Joren Leielsdatter Haukland/Moi, Asbjørn Karlsen Haukland/Hove, Leiel Haukland, Ole Moi, Bergitte Leielsdatter Haukland/Moi, Tron Handeland, Brynild & Joren's Daughter, Joel Handeland, Berete Tronsdatter, Torjus Linland, Gullick Olsen Moi, Anders Gullicksen Moi and Lauritz Lauritzen Bjerkreim.

Map showing the Steinberg/Skåland Farms Relationship

