



## THE SAAREMAA NOBLE'S ASSOCIATION.

By H. Treial.

The archives of the Saaremaa Noble's Association may be divided into two great parts: (A) the archives of the Saaremaa Noble's Association, and (B) the records of the establishments connected with the said Association.

A. The first contain the records of the Noble's Association Office, the Commission for registering noble families and the cash books of the Noble's Association. In addition there are also the archives of the institutions supported by the Association such as the county hospital, the Noble's Association schools, the post-horse station, etc., and the archives of the sixteen commissions of the Noble's Association. The existence of the lastnamed was fully dependent on the Noble's Association, but they were able to act independently within the limits prescribed, and, therefore, they also, as part of the Association, formed their own collections of records which they registered independently, besides registering them in the Noble's Association archives.

B. The records of the establishments and commissions working under the Noble's Association. To these belong: —

1. The Peasant's Department of the Livonian Court of Appeal under the County Councillor's Assembly, of which all the four county councillors and the county judge were members <sup>1)</sup>.

2. The Peasant's Bank. Two representatives of the nobles, nominated by a commission — the landmarshal and a county councillor, the latter as head of the commission — took part in its management <sup>2)</sup>. Besides the above, there were other commissions, 15 in number, but for the most part short-lived, formed chiefly for the purpose of deciding questions about social welfare, health, and economic matters. Although these were fully independent collections of records, they were very closely connected with the Noble's Association, for which reason they were registered together with the archives of the latter.

The Saaremaa Noble's Association also took part in the activities of the following clerical establishments: — 1. The

<sup>1)</sup> SRÜA (Archives of the Saaremaa Noble's Association), B, 1, 1, p. 2. All the original documents referred to in this archive are in C. S. A.

<sup>2)</sup> SRÜA, B, 2, 53. Verordnung für die Oeselsche Bauer-Bank. Allerhöchst bestätigt zu St. Petersburg am 24 Januar 1823, Riga, p. 4, II, § 7.

Saaremaa Provincial Consistory, the president of which was a county councillor chosen by the Diet. 2. The Higher Churchwarden's Office, as head of which a county councillor was chosen by the Diet. The following judicial officials were also chosen by the Diet from the number of registered nobles: — the county judge and his two assessors, the president of the circuit court and his two assistants, the county magistrate and his two assistants, and the parish judge and his substitutes. But the above-named clerical and judicial institutions worked quite independently and were not so very closely connected with the Noble's Association as the establishments entered on the list of the Saaremaa Noble's Association as subordinate to it. Each of these establishments formed a completely independent set of records which unquestionably did not come under the control of the Noble's Association archives.

The present article is limited, owing to lack of space, chiefly to a discussion of the Saaremaa Noble's Association archives in the narrow sense of the word, while less attention has been paid to the records of the establishments and commissions formed by and working under the abovenamed Association.

Saaremaa was conquered in the winter of 1227 by the Danish King Valdemar II and his allies, Albert, the Bishop of Riga, and Volquin, Master of the Knights of the Sword. This entailed, among other things, the dependence of the Saaremaa church on the Saare-Lääne bishop, whose residence at first was Lihula, then Haapsalu, and, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, Kuressaare, when the Kuressaare castle was built.

In the first half of the fourteenth century the number of vassals was still small<sup>3)</sup>. In the same century, the lands, especially the bishop's, were distributed to the vassals of the Order for the purpose of providing a revenue and of organising local defence. In what manner the Saaremaa vassal's assembly formed organs invested with full powers and at what date the vassals formed themselves into a corporation, that is, from what date the Saaremaa Noble's Association came into existence, is not quite certain.

In any case, in 1524 the Saaremaa Vassal's Association was already so firmly established that Bishop Kyvel was forced in the same year to acknowledge in black and white the dependence of the bishopric on the vassals<sup>4)</sup>.

The Noble's Association had a great deal of land to administer. It did this through the Diet and its executive organ, the County Councillor's Assembly. The archives are documentary proof of this.

Owing to its geographical position, Saaremaa is quite sepa-

---

<sup>3)</sup> Axel von Gernet, *Die Anfänge der Livländischen Ritterschaften*, Reval 1895, p. 55.

<sup>4)</sup> E. Blumfeldt, *Ajalugu, Saaremaa, Tartu 1934*, p. 282.

rated from the mainland for more than three-quarters of the year. This fact partly explains the comparatively low cultural level of the local gentry, a level which is clearly revealed in their singular indifference to the archives. The first attempts to put the archives in order were made only in the second half of the 18th century, when we find the following note in the Noble's Association protocols: — 4th June 1762. "There have come to town (Kuressaare) County Councillor Vietinghof, Landmarshal von Weymarn, Cornet von Stackelberg, Assessor von Sackén, Assistant County Magistrate von Berg and Ensign Jole to put the Noble's Association protocols: — 4th June 1762. 'There have come to same. The abovementioned work was begun and continued till the evening. On the 5th June the same gentlemen assembled for the same purpose <sup>5)</sup>.'

Whatever the honourable gentlemen abovenamed might have done, it is quite clear that they did not succeed in putting the records in order, for we find Landmarshal von Weymarn on the 1st October of the same year explaining to the Diet how necessary the work of arranging the Association's documents was and requesting that two delegates from the assembly be appointed his assistants. His wishes were acceded to and the Assessors of the County Court, von Aderkas and von Buhrmeister, were chosen <sup>6)</sup>. It is to be regretted that we have no data about the work of these two people, but about 40 years later, i. e., in 1801, the document registering the delivery of the Noble's Association archives was found. This document shows that at the beginning of the 19th century the Saaremaa Noble's Association had a pretty queer idea of the archivist's work.

The act reads as follows: — "Delivered to County Councillor von Ekesparre (the Secretary of the Noble's Association) the archives consisting of the following items: —

1. The landmarshal's staff of office.
2. Two Noble's Association seals.
3. One box with two keys.
4. The Register of Noble Families (das Adels Buch).
5. The Diet laws.
6. Seven volumes of protocols together with two bound volumes of outgoing letters.
7. One volume of decrees (ukazes) concerning elections.
8. Three volumes of copies of old charters, of old privileges and many other different matters.
9. Six volumes of decrees (ukazes).
10. Deductions from the nobles' incomes for the current year (1801).
11. Regulations concerning deductions from the incomes of the nobles introduced in the current year (1801).

<sup>5)</sup> SRüA, A, 4, p. 77.

<sup>6)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

12. Orders concerning the taxation of peasants.
13. Orders and rescripts of the Vice-Governor of Riga.
14. The sealed accounts of the Noble's Association.
15. Two envelopes of papers on current affairs.
16. The contract of the Noble's Association with the wife of Circuit Marshall von Helwig and her contract with her brother, Baron von Dellingshausen.
17. The postal register.
18. One sealed packet with nobles' deductions, which according to the noble's laws was handed to the noble's commission.
19. One cupboard which formerly used to be in the Court of Equity (Gewissensgericht).

Received the abovementioned things County Councillor von Berg" 7).

No documents are mentioned in the act. They were found, as is clear later on, in the box with the two keys. Nevertheless, in spite of the inexactness of the act of delivery, the first evident steps for the arrangement of the archives of the Noble's Association were taken in 1799—1801, viz., the protocols of the Association for the years 1761—1801 were bound. The two first volumes of letters sent during the period 1796—1801 were also bound and the letters received, for the most part decrees (ukazes), from 1661 to 1801 were all bound together. It is a pity that the letters received in the first half of the years mentioned as well as those from earlier times were not bound at all; a good many loose ones, beginning from 1574, are to be found. This may be explained in one of two ways; either letters were purposely selected and then bound together, or the whole of the correspondence was in such a state of disorder that part of it only came to light after the rest had been bound. The latter supposition is the more probable one. That the volumes just mentioned were all prepared simultaneously is shown by their similar appearance and method of binding.

So far as the documents are concerned, they remained for a long time in the box mentioned in the 1801 act. It was only in 1848 that the Noble's Convent, on the proposal of the land-marshal decided to purchase an oak-wood cupboard capable of holding the old documents from the old box as well as the Association library 8).

Further, it may be seen that the Association records were again put into some kind of order approximately between the years 1852—1858. An alphabetical index of the Noble's Association protocols (1761—1852) and the letters received (1661—1858) was made. The work was done accurately enough. This alphabetical list of protocols and letters received was registered in turn in another special book, thus forming two archive alpha-

7) SRüA, A, 10, pp. 334—336.

8) SRüA, A, 33, p. 135.

betical indexes. To our regret these indexes were loosely placed in the volumes from which many of them have been lost. We do not know on whose initiative or by whom these were prepared. The work was done by one person; it is clear that it was not the work of the Secretary of the Association.

These two alphabetical lists greatly facilitate the handling of a part at least of these old papers. It is a matter for regret that a table of contents of the outgoing letters was not made as its absence renders the tracing of letters despatched by the Association difficult.

During the Crimean war, the Noble's Convent decided on the 9th March, 1854, that, among other things, the most important objects of the archives should be removed to the Pärnu Town Court for safekeeping. There they remained under the care of the local extraordinary official of the Noble's Association, Candidate of Law, Albert von Buxhoevden<sup>9)</sup>. Pärnu, however, did not seem to be quite safe and the documents were sent to Viljandi (Fellin) from which place they were again taken back to Kuressaare in accordance with a resolution of the Convent dated the 13th July 1854<sup>10)</sup>.

There now comes a long period without any data regarding the fate of the archives of the Saaremaa Noble's Association.

According to the existing data, at the beginning of the 20th century the Noble's Association had the intention of making a collection of land records. In 1903 the Noble's Registration Commission made a proposal to the Diet: — 1. To induce the Saaremaa nobles to deposit collections of letters valuable both from the historical and genealogical points of view in the Noble's Association archives. 2. To ask the chief of the Higher Churchwarden's Office to deposit the old church registers and other old documents in the fire-proof vaults<sup>11)</sup> of the Noble's Association house. This proposal was accepted. In 1906 the Diet decided to remove the Kuressaare State Property Department archives to the same premises<sup>12)</sup>. Besides this, the Association resolved to bring back all the judicial and administrative archives of the periods prior to the judicial reforms, i. e., up to the year 1889, which were to be found in the Riga Circuit Court. The work of selecting the records of the corresponding Saaremaa institutions was given to P. G. Hermann, the archivist of the Riga Circuit Court. The task was quite difficult as at Birkenruh there were assembled the records of 46 establishments in a state of woeful confusion. Nevertheless, it was found possible to select 290 poods (1 pood = 39 lbs) for the Saaremaa archives. The work of selection cost Rbls. 280.—<sup>13)</sup>. The documents arrived

<sup>9)</sup> SRüA, A, 16, p. 25.

<sup>10)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>11)</sup> SRüA, A, 927, p. 88 v.

<sup>12)</sup> SRüA, A, 963, p. 9.

<sup>13)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3—6.

at Kuressaare in bags in the spring of 1907 and were placed in the cellars of the house belonging to the Noble's Association.

Before the arrival of these records, the secretary of the Association, Baron B. Freytag-Loringhoven, made a proposal to the County Council to rebuild one room of the Kuressaare castle as a room for the archives at a cost of about Rbls. 330.— The cellar of the Association's house was unsuitable, although a part of the records had already been placed there. At the same time he proposed that a commission be appointed to settle the location and arrangement of the records expected<sup>14</sup>). In 1907 an Extraordinary Diet passed a resolution to the effect that the old archives should be put in order so that they might be more easily accessible to research workers and that an archive committee be appointed. The following were elected members of the committee: — County Councillor Baron L. Freytag-Loringhoven, Baron C. Buxhoevden and Baron B. Freytag-Loringhoven, the Secretary of the Association<sup>15</sup>). The proposal about the room was also agreed to. The Association, at the beginning of this century, had purchased the Kuressaare castle from the Russian government. After a thorough repair of the building, which lasted from 1905 to 1911, a special room in the basement<sup>16</sup>), the adaptation of which cost about Rbls. 375.—, was set apart for the housing of the archives<sup>17</sup>). On the 16th November 1911 all the archives were transferred to these premises from the Association's house<sup>18</sup>). This collection, according to the report of the Archive Commission dated the 8th March 1912, consisted of the following records: —

1. The County Court and the County Orphans' Court from the seventeenth century till 1770.
2. Circuit Court.
3. Kuressaare Magistrate's Court. These records had been purchased by the Noble's Association<sup>19</sup>).
4. The Audit Commission.
5. The Economic Commissary's Files.
6. The Provincial Chancellery together with the Vice-Governor's records.
7. The Economical Department.
8. The Vice-Governor's (Baron Campenhausen's) files.
9. The Economic Administration.
10. Treasury (Taxes and Financial Affairs).
11. District Commissariat.
12. Licensing and Port Department.
13. Revenue Bank.

<sup>14</sup>) SRüA, A, 963, pp. 9 — 9 v.

<sup>15</sup>) SRüA, A, 958, p. 95 v.

<sup>16</sup>) SRüA, A, 986, Schloss Arensburg. Grundriss des Kellergeschlosses.

<sup>17</sup>) *Ibid.*, Kostenanschlag zum Ausbau des Bischöflichen Schlosses in Arensburg.

<sup>18</sup>) SRüA, A, 1058, p. 3 v.

<sup>19</sup>) SRüA, A, 963, p. 25.

14. The Government Land Department.

15. Orders of the Consistory <sup>20)</sup>.

The first data of the activities of the Archive Commission appear in 1910. The Commission informed the county councillors that there had been almost insurmountable obstacles to overcome in the performance of this important task, i. e., in the work of arrangement. In the first place there was the question of suitable premises, and in the second it was impossible to find a single person capable of undertaking such complicated work. However, the commission found a way out of the difficulty and Ernest Hahn, a student of law, undertook the work. O. von Möller, the archivist of the Association allowed his work room in the Association's house to be used as the first repository of the archives. The commission asked the Noble's Association for Rbls. 200.—<sup>21)</sup> for the provisory carrying on of the work. Generally, the Archive Commission's reports and announcements dealt with questions regarding the arrangement and housing of the archives. About the archives of the office of the Association itself only the following note is found in the report from the Commission: — 1910. In Autumn, Baron B. Freytag-Loringhoven, secretary of the Noble's Association and a member of the Archive Commission has arranged the old records of the Saaremaa Noble's Association, and has assembled and systematically arranged the scattered leaves of the very earliest records. The estate documents of the beginning of the XV century are especially interesting. They are, without exception, copies but in the absence of originals very valuable. They are a source of material for Fr. von Buxhoevden's "Materialien zur Gütergeschichte Oesels'." (The abovenamed documents had evidently been deposited in the archives of the Association.) The Noble's Registration Commission also got something extra. This Commission laid great store by an account for a chalice from Christopher Janitzer, dated 1595. The chalice had been presented to the Danish King, Christian IV, by the Saaremaa Noble's Association. According to the data in the hands of the Commission, the chalice should have been in the "Oružeinaja Palata", Moscow, in 1910 <sup>22)</sup>. As to whether Baron B. Freytag-Loringhoven prepared a register "of the old records of the Noble's Association" there is no information. At the present time the corresponding register is not to be found among the records. According to the data, temporary registers for the new archives, e. g., County Court, etc., assembled at the Noble's Association archives were prepared. In the cataloguing, the arrangement of the Livonian Appeal Court archives was to have been the model, but what this particular arrangement was we cannot say, as the catalogues are not to be found among

<sup>20)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29 v.

<sup>21)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>22)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

the archives; they were either lost in subsequent years or remained in possession of the then members of the Archive Commission.

E. von Hahn made the following note about the work: — “All these things had lain in utter confusion and part was in very bad condition. (i. e., rotted by dampness). It was only after I had first put them into some kind of order and classified them that I was able to start with the selection and arrangement.

The catalogue is not quite systematic because I was unable to change the old arrangement or the later arrangement (already mentioned) according to the old system without loss of time and much difficulty <sup>23</sup>).“

From the above then it is clear that the Saaremaa Noble's Association really had the desire to put the archives in order. It is a matter for regret that there could not be found an individual with the necessary knowledge and interest in the work, who might have done the job with a proper understanding of the principles of archive arrangement. The members of the Archive Commission let the papers lie from 1907—1910 in a damp cellar in the house belonging to the Noble's Association on the excuse that there were no suitable premises for them and that it was impossible to find qualified assistance. When at long last the work was really begun, it was confined chiefly to the drying of the papers as they had suffered severely from the moisture in the cellar, part of them having been quite destroyed <sup>24</sup>), and to their classification according to institutions. It is quite evident from the records that the catalogues bear an excessively temporary character.

After 1912 no information about the activities of the Archive Commission is to be obtained. In its last report the Commission asks the County Council for an appropriation of Rbls. 100. for the purpose of binding some of the most important records <sup>25</sup>). In 1912 the Diet adopted the report of the Archive Commission and agreed to the expenditure of the sum abovenamed <sup>26</sup>).

What the archivist of the Nobles' Association did is a mystery. He was not a member of the Archive Commission nor is there anything to show that he took part in the arrangement either of the county archives or of the Noble's Association archives.

These archives were not evacuated from Saaremaa during the Great War, as the Nobles' Association considered that they did not think it quite impossible for the archives to remain where they were, even though Saaremaa were taken by the enemies' troops <sup>27</sup>).

<sup>23</sup>) SRüA, A, 963, p. 15 v.

<sup>24</sup>) *Ibid.*, p. 24 v.

<sup>25</sup>) *Ibid.*, p. 26 v.

<sup>26</sup>) SRüA, A, 1014, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup>) SRüA, A, 1081, p. 8.

After the February Revolution of 1917 and the reign of the Provisional Government in Russia (till the 25th July 1917) the Convent of the Nobles decided to do everything they could to keep the Kuressaare castle in the hands of the Association as well as the records stored therein as among these were ancient historical documents of great importance <sup>28)</sup>.

During the occupation of Estonia by the Germans from the 15th October 1917 till November 1918, the Saaremaa Noble's Association was too much interested in the question of a union of the Baltic countries with Germany <sup>29)</sup> to pay any attention to the archives. The archives remained the property of the Association even during the first years of Estonian independence. In 1920, according to the law passed by the Constituent Assembly abolishing ranks and privileges, the whole of the property belonging to the Saaremaa Noble's Association was transferred to the Saaremaa Provincial Council <sup>30)</sup>, together with the archives. Owing to the lack of a suitable repository, the Provincial Council handed over a part of the records to the Central State Archives at Tartu in 1921. The records when taken from the unheated castle were in such great disorder and so mildewed and wet that they had to be put out in the sun to dry before being packed into boxes. But another piece of misfortune was in store for these luckless papers; some of the boxes were so frail that they fell apart during the unloading of the ship that transported them from Saaremaa. On the 15th September of the same year, i. e., 1921, fifty-two boxes of records arrived at Tartu. A part of the judicial and a part of the Noble's Association records were kept back for the use of the Provincial Council <sup>31)</sup>. In 1923 some of the Noble's Association records found a resting-place in the attic of the Saaremaa Provincial Council house whither they were transferred from the extremely damp castle. The head of the Gov. Archives at Tallinn, Dr. A. Nuth, who spent a short time in Kuressaare, from the 14th July till the 10th August 1923, made a temporary register of this part, at the same time noting those documents which it was to the interest of the Provincial Council to retain in Saaremaa for some time. The remainder, 90 boxes, arrived in 1923 at the Central State Archives, Tartu <sup>32)</sup>. There still remained a certain number of documents which were subsequently conveyed to Tartu <sup>33)</sup> in two lots — on the 6th June 1931 and the 26th August 1934 <sup>34)</sup>.

The Central State Archives at Tartu had to continue the work of drying the Saaremaa archives which had arrived in 1921.

---

<sup>28)</sup> SRüA, A, 1062, p. 8.

<sup>29)</sup> SRüA, A, 1057, p. 5.

<sup>30)</sup> Riigi Teataja 129/130, 254, 1920.

<sup>31)</sup> C. S. A. office file No. 1, 1921/22, p. 24.

<sup>32)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>33)</sup> C. S. A. office file No. 14a I, 1931/32, p. 24a.

<sup>34)</sup> C. S. A. office file No. 14a, 1934/35, p. 57.

Only thus was it possible to begin the preliminary work of arranging and classifying them. It was, of course, very inconvenient that a part of the material had to remain in Saaremaa for so long a time, but the register made by Dr. A. Nuth already mentioned was of the very greatest help in the task of preparing an inventory, which was finally got ready in 1933.

There is the following to be said about the archives themselves. They are full of gaps — deeds are missing, other single documents are also missing, and many of the papers have suffered severely from dampness.

The oldest series comprises the correspondence which begins with original documents on parchment, leather, etc. The very oldest document is the confirmation of the Saaremaa bishopric's privileges given under the hand of the Danish King, Christophorus III, in 1446. The Noble's Association itself considered the most ancient document to be the charter of privileges granted by the Danish King Abel in 1251 as is clear from the 1726 enumeration of the documents<sup>35)</sup>. Judging from its contents, this document must have belonged to the archives of the Saare-Lääne bishopric, for the Noble's Association did not exist at that time. Grand Duke Magnus in 1563 ordered the Saare-Lääne bishopric archives to be taken from Haapsalu to Kuressaare where, with the coming into power of the vassals, it evidently passed into the hands of the Noble's Association. The Danes took away a part of these archives to Copenhagen when they surrendered Saaremaa to the Swedes in 1645, thereby breaking the Brömsebro treaty. Here they were kept together with the Royal Danish Archives. The parchment documents are almost without exception copies of the 15th century. Copies of these same documents are to be found at Tartu in the Central State Archives<sup>36)</sup>. A small number of the older Saaremaa documents are also to be found in the Swedish Government Archives at Stockholm. Of the records entered in the register of the Saaremaa documents in 1776 there now exist about half the number. The document series finishes with Tsar Alexander III's letters, dated 1856, confirming the privileges of the Saaremaa Noble's Association. Besides the privileges, there are to be found in the document series the decisions of the Court of Arbitration, contracts, noble's charters, etc., all for the most part on parchment. The general correspondence series begins in 1574. Of the 16th century there exist only a few single letters, the number of those received beginning to increase noticeably in the second half of the 17th century. The abundance of instructions sent to the Noble's Association is especially striking. This is due to the fact that the Association

<sup>35)</sup> SRüA, A, 163, p. 187.

<sup>36)</sup> ERüA (Noble's Association's Archives of Estonia), 42 Urkunden Abschriften aus dem Königl. Dänischen Geheim-Archiv zu Copenhagen vom Jr. 1241 bis 1561 von der Livländischen Ritterschafts-Canzelei dem Estl. Ritterschafts-Archiv übersand.

from time to time acquired more administrative functions. Drafts of protocols already appear at the end of the 17th century, and not only the Diet's but also those of the Noble's Covent are registered together with the other protocols. In the 18th century there were added a series of very primitive cash-books and the parish registers of expenditure for 1729—1739, and the cash-books continuously from 1763. After the arrangement of the archives in 1799—1800, the letters received appear in bound volumes in which may be found instructions from the government, patents, and letters from the members of the Noble's Association. Necessity also called into being a new branch in the correspondence series — registers of letters sent, beginning from 1796. The 19th century brought a radical change in the correspondence series. From 1828 they began to register the letters of the Noble's Association in a précis book. The number of patents also increased and a special series was formed of those documents which seemed more important or which were much used. For this purpose an alphabetical index, prepared in the office of the Association was put into the cover of each volume, a thing which was not done for other series as, for example, for the series of letters received, letters sent, or protocols. In the same year there appeared a register of mortgages in the cash-book series. The year 1830 saw a new arrangement of the Association correspondence series, namely, the classification of the correspondence according to contents, the letters being put into files under different headings. At the same time the files were registered in alphabetical order. Parallel to this there remained the series of letters received, patents and letters sent. The following twenty years represent a transitional epoch in the filing of correspondence, and a rather irregular one. In 1833 the landmarshal series begins. This series continued only for a short time and consists of 15 files, which were not put together according to any special system but which were entirely dependent on the peculiar fancies of each individual marshal. So, one marshal files all letters addressed to him during his term of office into one file, but another files them under specific headings. The years 1832—1833 increase the cash-book series by the introduction of general land-tax revenue and disbursement files (on strings). In 1848 the register of letters sent was changed, only a short précis of the contents of each outgoing letter being entered with its number in the file. But at the same time copies of outgoing letters were also taken and filed. In 1852—53 the series of patents and outgoing letters is lost and at the same time the series of landmarshal's files comes to an end. In future, correspondence was only bound, but the whole time, evidently depending on the office staff, there also remained a loose series of letters. The volumes representing the series of Association protocols also finished in 1852. The protocols were now kept in files, sometimes the Diet and Covent protocols together in one file, sometimes in separate files. In any case, the method of preser-

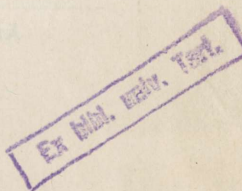
vation left much to be desired, the tables of contents are missing from the files, and the protocols themselves are only rough copies. This 1852 system was continued till 1920. In the cash-book series a cash ledger was opened in 1870. It finished in 1897.

The Saaremaa Noble's Association as a ranking corporation had to keep a list of its members as only noblemen were permitted to take part in the affairs of the nobility, e. g., participation in the Diet was contingent upon whether one possessed noble's rank or not. Therefore, in order to sift the truth of claims to noble blood, the Registration (Matriculation) Commission, already referred to several times in this paper, gradually came into existence and kept registers for purposes of reference. Owing to the absence of data it is impossible to fix with any certainty from what time the Commission abovenamed began to work independently. There are data regarding its activity from 1900—1918. By it there were made files concerning 84 families belonging by right to the Saaremaa nobility. On the initiative of the Commission, data regarding these noble families was gathered from the Saaremaa parish registers. The Commission took for its model the archives of the Registration Commission of the Livonian Noble's Association<sup>37</sup>). The other commissions of the Saaremaa Noble's Association were mostly appointed to formulate the Peasants' Code and to settle agricultural questions.

It is impossible to enumerate here all the various phases of the activity of the Association or the petty details of its office.

So far as material is concerned, the collection of the Saaremaa Noble's Association archives is one of the wealthiest and most original. It gives ample information not only about the nobility but about the peasants and the relations of the classes to each other. From the standpoint of the history of law it gives abundant material, as there are different projects of laws relating to the peasants drawn up by the commission appointed by the Association. The peasants' department of the Court of Appeal in Livonia under the County Council contains matters not only about real but also about formal law. As regards the administrative department, i. e., the activities of the Noble's Association working through and by means of the County Council, there is a protocol series rich in data together with a correspondence series of letters both out and in: here is also to be found information about the structure of the administration, as the Noble's Association had many points of contact with the local official authorities. Matter regarding the economical history of the 18th century is copious. An original Peasants' Bank, which also operated in grain, is worth mentioning here. Besides all the abovementioned there are to be found in the archives of the Association data in profusion about cultural, clerical, political, social, agrarian and parish history.

<sup>37</sup>) SRüA, A, 1331, pp. 77—78 v.



Material from the abovementioned archives has been used in the following publications within the last few years: — Sketches of the Agrarian History of Saaremaa during the Danish Epoch <sup>38)</sup>; History of Saaremaa <sup>39)</sup>; History of the Saaremaa Parishes <sup>40)</sup>; The Condition of Education in Saaremaa during the Northern War <sup>41)</sup>; Saaremaa Cultural Conditions <sup>42)</sup>; The Kuresaar Schools <sup>43)</sup>.

### Saaremaa rüütelkonna arhiiv.

Saaremaa geograafiline asend ja ta mitmeti mandrist lahku minev ajalooline taust on kaasa aidanud Saaremaa rüütelkonna kujunemisele, tema haldus- ja teiste funktsioonide tekkimisele ja nende arenemisele. Otseseid andmeid ülalnimetatud tegevusalade kohta sisaldab Saaremaa rüütelkonna arhiiv, mis on moodustunud paralleelselt rüütelkonna tegevusega. Kuid arhiivi korras hoiu ja paigutuse küsimused on rüütelkonnale omakorda mitmeti sünnitanud raskusi nii majanduslike küsimuste kui ka korraldus küsimustes asjatundlike isikute puudumise tõttu.

Saaremaa rüütelkonna arhiiv kui tervik koosneb kahest osast: 1) Saaremaa rüütelkonna kui korporatsiooni arhiiv ja 2) Saaremaa rüütelkonna juures tegutsenud asutiste ja komisjonide arhiivid. Käsiteldud on peamiselt vaid Saaremaa rüütelkonna arhiivi kitsamas mõttes, mis ulatub 15. sajandist 20. sajandini.

Ainese poolest on Saaremaa rüütelkonna arhiiv omapärasemaid ja rikkamaid. Ta pakub palju materjali nii aadli kui ka talurahva ja nende vastastikuse vahekorra kohta. Õiguseajaloo seisukohalt pakuvad ainek rüütelkonna komisjonide poolt välja töötatud mitmesugused projektid. Majanduseajaloo ainek sisaldab ülikülluses 18. sajand. Nimetamist väärib siin juba omapärane Talurahva Pank, mille operatsioonid toimusid ka viljas. Peale selle leidub arhiivis küllaldaselt andmeid halduse-, kultuuri-, kiriku-, poliitika-, sotsiaal-, agraar- ja kihelkondade ajaloo kohta.

<sup>38)</sup> E. Blumfeldt, Ajalooline Ajakiri 1931 (X), pp. 15—31 78—100.

<sup>39)</sup> E. Blumfeldt, Saaremaa, Tartu 1934, pp. 263—350.

<sup>40)</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 388—390, 444—463, 476—485, 499—513, 528—540, 565—582, 598—607, 642—654, 671—680, 698—710, 724—736, 756—761, 774—787, 810—827.

<sup>41)</sup> A. Soom, Ajalooline Ajakiri 1929 (VIII), pp. 121—133.

<sup>42)</sup> A. Soom, Saaremaa, Tartu 1934, pp. 206—244.

<sup>43)</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 827—831.