The present castle at Krageholm partly dates from the 1500s. The estate’s origins are in the 1200s, as a manor farm for several well-known Danish noble families such as Due, Thott, Brahe, Marsvin and Krabbe. Otto Marsvin, who owned Krageholm in the mid-1600s, claimed to have built a new castle or carried out an extensive restoration in 1639. Regardless of Marsvin’s claims, it is almost certain there was an earlier main building on the estate. Krageholm, like numerous others in the province, was originally a quadrangular building enclosing a courtyard and surrounded by a moat. After a fire in the 1670s, the house fell into disrepair before being restored in 1720, when its present appearance was created with a main building and two connected wings.

At the time of Sweden’s takeover of Scania, Iver Krabbe owned Krageholm. He was one of Scania’s richest and most distinguished men and lived for just over 10 years into the Swedish era. In 1670, he handed over ownership to his son, Jörgen Iversen Krabbe, who got into difficulties with the Swedish authorities as he was accused of collaborating with the Danes during the Scanian War. He was sentenced to death at a parody of a trial and executed in Malmö’s main square on 16 January 1678.

In 1704, Krageholm was acquired by the privy councillor and marshal, Count Carl Piper. He was one of Charles XII’s loyal subjects and served on his staff, both in peacetime and war. He was captured at the Battle of Poltava in 1709 and never returned to Sweden. His talented and dynamic widow, Christina Piper, then took over responsibility for both Krageholm and other properties (see Högestad). She was the daughter of one of Sweden’s richest men, Olof Hansson, ennobled as Törnflycht. Countess Piper stayed at Krageholm and put both the castle and the extensive park in order with the help of Nicodemus Tessin. The result was a splendid castle with regal drawing rooms and a magnificent castle chapel.

Krageholm, located 7 km north of Ystad by the beautiful lake, Krageholmssjön, has remained in the Piper family’s possession since 1704, with the exception of the period 1897-1930 when the estate was owned by one of the Brahe family. The present owner is Count Fritz Piper.

**Judicial murder in Malmö**

On 16 January 1678, there was a controversial event at Malmö’s main square, Stortorget. It was the day when Jörgen Iversen Krabbe was executed after what was widely considered a summary trial. He was accused of collaborating with his former countrymen in Denmark, which was a simple pretext to get rid of him by the Swedish authorities in Scania. Jörgen Krabbe was a learned, considerate man who was highly trusted, qualities that led to his appointment as leader of the Scanian nobility. He lived at Krageholm, but also owned Högestad, Baldringe, Tosterup and Fulltofta.

When the Treaty of Roskilde was signed in 1658, the landowning nobles were put in a quandary. They had since "time immemorial" owned and used their land under Danish sovereignty and now faced Swedish rule, which also wanted to confiscate their estates. Paradoxically, their existence in Scania was also threatened by their former countrymen, as the Danish state offered them "estates and land" if they left Scania and moved over the strait to Denmark. The Swedes acted more abruptly and made two ultimatums. Either they could have all the Swedish nobles’ rights and continue to own their land if they agreed to an oath of allegiance to the Swedish king, or, if they refused to take the oath of allegiance, they could remain in Scania with maintained rights, but not participate in the Swedish nobility’s privileges. The Danish promise of land that did not exist was no alternative, and swearing an oath of allegiance to Sweden felt like a betrayal in a time when the majority of people in Scania wanted nothing more than to be part of Denmark again. In reality, the nobles’ power had been considerably limited since 1660, when King Frederick III introduced an autocracy, which was an end to the epoch known as the aristocracy era.
Many swore allegiance to Sweden, not because they felt any loyalty, but more as a way of saving their estates. Such was the case for Jörgen Krabbe of Krageholm. The Danish state also requested the nobles’ allegiance when it became apparent that the oath to Sweden was without any legal value, as the Swedes had contravened the content of the Roskilde peace document. Krabbe therefore turned up in Copenhagen to sign the other allegiance document, but his double-dealing was revealed and he was not allowed to sign it.

On 29 June 1676, Denmark attacked Scania with the intention of recapturing the province. Initially the Danes had successes, but lost the bloody Battle of Lund on 4 December the same year, and thoughts of revenge had to be saved for the future. The end was near for Jörgen Krabbe, who was arrested and accused on 10 points concerning matters that were subsequently shown to be a pretext for sentencing him to death. Contemporaries felt the real reason was his refusal to sell his beloved Krageholm to a prospective Swedish buyer.

The legal process gave Krabbe no chance to defend himself and despite repeated pleas for clemency the death warrant was signed by Charles XI.

On the day of the execution, 16 January, the condemned man wore his best mourning clothes. He left his prison, Malmöhus, after a visit to the castle chapel and was taken to the main square, where a crowd of soldiers and civilians waited. He said farewell to his friends and prepared for death with prayers and hymn singing. He told the soldiers they were to shoot on his signal, and after repeating prayers that “Lord Jesus would receive his spirit” he raised his arms and a salvo from the soldiers ended his life.

Jörgen Iversen Krabbe’s body was taken to Tosterup, which he had owned during his lifetime, and was buried at the church.