

Jaakko Ilkka, the man of people

Once upon a time there was a tough Ostrobothnian folk, which was against injustice. The peace with Russian after the war was signed in year 1595. After this it was assigned too, that Finnish peasants had to accommodate and give food for soldiers, whose had to be ready if a war breaks out again. These were called “castle camps”. This order debased a lot the status of Finnish peasants. It was also so that soldiers, who lived in houses of peasants caused a lot of trouble for families, because they rob houses and villages and drank a lot.

This was the last drop! The people of Ostrobothnia filled up and a rebellion was born. Initially in that it took only a part of Ostrobothnia, including Jaakko Ilkka. He went to see shopman Hans Fordellin and together they start making a resistance. The intention was to release the full Ostrobothnia for castle camps. War has started. At first it looked like they were winning, but when the enemy got more men, they defeated. Jaakko Ilkka was arrested. He was put in a jail in the castle of Turku, but he managed to escape in January 1596.

Resistance didn't stop there. The whole thing turned to a war, latter called Cudgel War (1596-97). The plan was to vanquish the enemy forces in South-Ostrobothnia. Men from other provinces joined the war. Now they did not only defended their homes, they fight in the war!

Jaakko Ilkka was still in prison, when men from Ostrobothnia sent him a message in which they asked Ilkka to become the leader of team of “cudgel men”.

Jaakko Ilkka escaped from the prison. It is told that he twined a rope out of his clothes and went through a hole in an old fashioned Finnish toilet, where there is a hole on a wooden bench and a big fall after that. (It is also told that there had to be somebody to help him.) He went down from the Castle of Turku for freedom!

At the time Jaakko Ilkka (lived about 1545-96) was approximately 50 year-old-man. He was a shopman and has been also working as rural police chief. At the time Ilmajoki was very wealthy municipality, because of big cattle ranches and making a lot of tar. The ranch Ilkkala, which was given to Jaakko Ilkka as legacy, became more prosperous because of the skills Jaakko Ilkka had when he was trading. Jaakko Ilkka was respected man.

The spirit of rebellion decreased fast. The army, which was fighting on the opposition side was getting bigger and in front of superiority “the cudgel men” had to back off and escape. So did also Jaakko Ilkka. Those who were agains rebellion, arrested Jaakko Ilkka in Ilmajoki. They had an instant legal proceedings which gave a doom: to die in a brutal way!

“Castle camp” -system was decommissioned just when the war was over. An ordinary people lost the war, but Jaakko Ilkka became a hero legend, not so much because of his achievements in the war, but because of the way his acts which showed that actions of an ordinary human being can influences grievances. -That's why also we think that Jaakko Ilkka is a legend.



Sara and Jimi standing on a place where Jaakko Ilkka had his house.