



The History of the Manor

In the 1540-ies a collection of estates was established in the lower part of the Drammen waterway. Behind this operation stood the the king's captain at Akershus fortress, Peder Hanssøn Litle, and waterfalls were bought with a view to operating saw mills and lumber trade on a large scale. Mr Litle built "king saw mills" by the Drammen river, the Akerselva and at Moss. Foss (which was the first name of the district around Fossesholm) was thus the beginning of Norway's first stake on saw mill running.

In 1763 Jørgen von Cappelen acquired Fossesholm and moved there. Jørgen had married to wealth through the widow of a supplier at Kongsberg who had made a fortune on deliveries to the growing numbers of workers at the Silver Mines. Soon after settling at Fossesholm the expansion of the buildings started and developed into a magnificent set of buildings in rococo style.

The main building was constructed in a style that was to reflect the great castles and manors throughout Europe. The classisistic exterior details were taken from the stone architecture's décor, and translated into the Norwegian material of wood. The party and ceremonial halls were placed in a row along the facade, like a parade suite between the great living room in the north and a room opening on to a garden. Some of the rooms were furnished with canvas wallpapers painted by the Swedish decoration painter Eric Gustav Tunmarck. The other rooms got hand-painted and hand-printed wallpapers imported from France, Germany and England.

The good times for lumber trade during the revolution and Napoleon wars in Europe, came to an abrupt halt at the end of 1807 when Norway came into war with the lumber market of England. Bankruptcy became a threat to most of the major business houses and operations. The owner of Fossesholm, Jørgen von Cappelen Omsted gave in in 1822 and the manor was submitted for auction. The respective units were sold one by one. Three big farmers at Eiker, Amund Larsen Besseberg, Christopher Borgersen Hoen and Hans Jørgen Elster, bought the main manor. In the 1840-ies the sons of Besseberg, Lars and Peder, split the farm between themselves. Fossesholm was operated as a farm up to 1973 when Eiker historical society, by means of Eiker Sparebank and Øvre Eiker municipality, bought the buildings including 22 acres of land.



Jørgen von Cappelen



Magdalena Darjes

