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Erik Wikén*

In the March issue of SAG for 1985 on p. 16¹ a question is raised as to the identity of a tailor named Ern( e)st Nystrom, who is listed in Daggett’s City Directory for New York 1850-1851 and who was reported to have died in Paris 19 Oct. 1858 at the age of 35. He is said to have been born in New York, which would place his year of birth to ca. 1823.

One suggestion as to his identity has occurred to me. He could be the son of Johan Nyström, who is mentioned as being a merchant in New York. The latter was born in the St. Olai Parish in Norrköping 1 Sept. 1788, the son of an apothecary named Nils Nyström and his wife, Maria Christina Berholtz.²

The first mention of Nyström is in a letter from Klinckowström dated New York during the spring of 1819:

“S---r and N---m are here but they do not intend to return to the fatherland as they are planning to get married.”³

N---M can be no one else but Johan Nyström.⁴ S---r is Richard Seldener (1794-1854).⁵

The next reference is in a letter from the Swedish clergyman in Philadelphia, Dr. Nils Collin, addressed to Prof. C.A. Agardh of Lund, dated Philadelphia 30 March 1824—in which Collin suggests Johan Nyström and his brother in Göteborg as suitable contacts for the exchange of letters between Sweden and the United States.⁶

On 27 Nov. 1833 a passport was requested from the chancellery of the county (län) government of Göteborg and Bohus for Joh. O. Andrén, a bookkeeper, for a journey to the West Indies and America on behalf of J. Nyström, travel to be performed on a vessel belonging to Nyström. The passport was expedited the following day and on 13 Dec. of that year Andrén checked in at the passport control at Ft. Álvborg enroute to America.⁷

The following year, on 30 Sept. 1834, an individual named J. Nyström, born in Sweden, appeared at the police headquarters in Göteborg, stating that he was residing at the home of Fredrik Nyström, a wholesale merchant, and identical with the brother referred to above.⁸ The visit to Sweden lasted almost an entire year. It was not until 13 Aug. 1835 that J. Nyström, a wholesale merchant, received a passport in Göteborg for travel to Denmark, Germany, England and America.⁹

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On 19 Nov. 1835 an individual named Emanuel Petersson received a passport in Göteborg to America and informed the authorities that he was in the employ of John Nystrom of New York.

Johan Nystrom was married twice in the United States, the first time to Mary Caroline Ogden, born in 1804 and who died in 1838. He married for the second time Frances Adeline Carmichael, in her second marriage. Two children are mentioned in the first marriage—Louise Adele, born 14 Nov. 1825, married in 1851 to George Ticknor Curtis, and Emilie Christina, born 26 Oct. 1831. Additionally the above named Ern(e)st Nystrom could have been born in the first marriage.

Johan Nystrom was living in Morristown, NJ in 1843 when a Swedish visitor to the U.S., Eric Georg Danielsson, paid a call on him.

Johan Nystrom died in Morristown 26 Aug. 1848.