

12-1-1990

## When Andrew Jackson Helped a Swedish(?) Tailor

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### Recommended Citation

Olsson, Nils William (1990) "When Andrew Jackson Helped a Swedish(?) Tailor," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 10 : No. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol10/iss4/6>

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# When Andrew Jackson Helped A Swedish (?) Tailor

In the library of the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia is an interesting autograph of Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), seventh president of the U.S., giving relief to a Swedish tailor in Washington, DC named Christian Eckloff. The year was 1833 and the tailor complained to the president that a clerk in the Department of State, James Gooch, had ordered a suit from him costing \$64.50. When the clerk refused to pay, Eckloff sued, won a judgment, but Gooch claimed that he was bankrupt. Eckloff then sent the following letter to Jackson, dated 30 April 1833:

“To the President of the United States

Sir

The Signer of this your Humble Servant, begs leave of you to Lend an ear to the Statement of a Case of mine against James Gooch a Clerk in the State Department, He came to my store Nov. 26 1831 and got measured for a Suit of Clothes Amounting to \$ 64.50 for which he promised to pay me in 60 days, and his having the appearance of a Gentleman I took him to be one and let him have the articles on those terms. When the Sixty days expired I sent to him and he promised Farther until 11 or 12 Months expired and finding no other way of recovering my money I entered a Suit against him for which I received a Judgment after he entered the office when he took the Benefit of Insolvency, and having understood that your Highness had taken the steps for the benefit of Mechanics & Other Citizens of this place by removing or otherwise Making the Clerks pay their Honest debts and finding no other way of recovering my money I take this Liberty of requesting this great favour and hope It will not be in Vain as I have a Large family depending on me for Support and Loosing this would rob them of their dues.

Resp[ectfull]y

Your Humble & Obediant Servant  
Christian Eckloff”

President Jackson sprang into action and writing on the back of Eckloff's letter he penned the following note:

“Referred to the Sec. of State if on inquiry the fact stated be true, unless the clerk pays up the debt, let him be forthwith discharged.

The Government would become a party to such swindling provided it permits its officers to become indebted for necessaries & not see that they paid their debts out of their salaries, honest men will pay their debts, dishonest, must not be employed by the Government.

A.J.

This case is referred to Amos Kendall, Esq. and on ten dollars pr month being secured to Eckloff, Mr. Gooch to be continued in his office.

A.J.”

Note: The references to Christian Eckloff's being Swedish are rather sketchy. With the autograph in the Museum's collection is a printed description of the autograph, taken from the catalog, offering the item for sale for \$55.00. There is no way of telling from which catalog or firm the autograph was purchased by the Museum. The description included the following information:

“Christian Eckloff was a Swedish tailor, who had much trade among the officers of the Washington Garrison as well as among the Clerks of the State and War Departments.”

This statement was repeated by Nels Hokanson in his work on the Swedes in the Civil War<sup>1</sup> and also quoted by Allan Kastrup in his work on Swedish America.<sup>2</sup>

Further research is necessary to prove Eckloff's nationality.

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<sup>1</sup>Nels Hokanson, *Swedish Immigrants in Lincoln's Time* (New York 1942), p. 12, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Allan Kastrup, *The Swedish Heritage in America* (Minneapolis 1975), p. 213.

N.W.O.

## Correction

In the article “Swedes in the 1860 Census of Suffolk Co., MA” in the September 1990 issue of *SAG* an unfortunate omission occurred. In note 90 on page 125 an entire line inadvertently dropped out. The first two lines of that note should read:

“Though highly unlikely because of her age at this time (84 years) she may possibly be identical to Susanna Hall, b. in the Cathedral Parish in Göteborg 8 Oct. 1776, dau. of Richard Söderström, later Swedish consul in Boston and afterwards Swedish consul general in Philadelphia, and Susanna”