Inventory of the

Swedish Cultural Society
Rockford Chapter

Records

In the
Regional History Center

RC 273
INTRODUCTION

Robert Borden, the last Treasurer of the Swedish Cultural Society, Rockford Chapter, donated the organization’s records to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on April 13, 2006 and June 26, 2006.

Property rights in this collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 1.5
Number of containers: 3 boxes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 273

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Swedish Cultural Society Collection dates from 1951 to 2005, with the majority of the materials dating from 1980 to 2005. These records consist of meeting minutes and agendas, correspondence, program materials, membership lists, bylaws, newspaper clippings, and several photographs relating to the Rockford Chapter of this organization. The annual reports from 1971 to 1975 are written in Swedish.

Also located within this collection are items from the Chicago Chapter and National Council of the Swedish Cultural Society, including twenty years of the “Kulturarvet,” the Swedish Heritage newsletter. The Swedish Council of America is also represented here, as well as material from various Swedish organizations in Rockford and Geneva, Illinois, and Minnesota. General information on Swedish costumes and songs are also found here.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

On December 15, 1950 twenty people of Swedish decent met in the Rockford home of Axel Rehnberg to see if there was enough interest to form their own chapter of the Swedish Cultural Society in America. On February 4, 1951 they held their first official meeting at which bylaws were adopted and officers were elected, with Mr. Rehnberg chosen as President. The purpose of their organization was “to create a bond between Swedes and Swedish descendants residing in the [Rockford] area. To rekindle, sustain, and strengthen interest in and love of Swedish culture in its various forms. To preserve the Swedish language to the greatest possible extent.”

The Swedish Cultural Society in America was originally organized in 1910 when Augustana College and the Augustana Synod held its 50th anniversary celebration. In 1920 the Society reorganized and local chapters were established in locations where large Swedish
populations existed. Although Rockford had a large Swedish population it’s chapter was one of the last to be established.

Over the years the Rockford Chapter met regularly at the Tabor Lutheran Church and held entertaining and informative programs, as well as traveled to joint meetings with the Chicago and Minneapolis Chapters. Members of the Rockford Chapter also attended meetings of the Central Swedish Committee in Chicago.

As with many organizations of this type, as the members grew older the society saw its numbers decrease. At the November 5, 2005 Board of Director’s meeting, Betty Rottman, the Society’s President for the previous five years, resigned. In the discussion which followed the board noted that all of the board’s members had served for many years as there were no other members willing or able to do so, and that attendance at the meetings was dwindling. It seemed that this might be the proper time to disband. A letter was sent to all the members of the group inviting their vote on the issue of disbanding at the November 13th meeting. A vote was taken on the motion to disband and the majority of the twenty-two people in attendance voted in favor.

**SUBJECT TRACINGS**

Chicago
Erlander Home Museum
Geneva
Rockford
Rockford, Swedish Americans
Swedish Americans
Swedish Council of America
Swedish Cultural Society
Swedish Historical Society
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX</th>
<th>FOLDER</th>
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| 1   | 1      | Swedish Cultural Society, Rockford Chapter:  
        History and Bylaws, (1951-2004)  
        Photographs, 1985, 2003  
        Officers and Directors, (1951-2005)  
        Membership Directory [with photographs], 1985  
        Membership Lists and Correspondence, 1994-2004  
        Memorials (Obituaries), (1999-2005), n.d.  
        Programs and Banquets, (1982-2005)  
        Program Ideas for Future Dates  
        Meeting Minutes and Reports, 1969-2005; [1971-1975 Reports are in Swedish]  
        Correspondence, (1987-2005)  
        Correspondence for Swedish Immigration Jubilee Year 1996, 1994-1996  
        Certificates from Swedish Council of America, 2003, 2005  
        Chicago Trips by Bus, (1986-1991)  
| 12  | 3-5    | “Kulturarvet” Swedish Heritage Newsletter, 1980-2000  
        Records in Archives at North Park University, 1985  
| 14  | 6      | Swedish Council of America, 1995-2005  
| 15  | 7      | Swedish Day, Geneva, IL, June 1982  
| 2   | 1      | Swedish Cultural Society, Chicago Chapter, (1973-2004)  
        Swedish Cultural Society in America, National Council  
        Programs, Agendas, and Brochures, (1973-2002)  
        “Kulturarvet” Swedish Heritage Newsletter, 1980-2000  
| 2    | 6      | Records in Archives at North Park University, 1985  
| 2    | 7      | Swedish Council of America, 1995-2005  
| 2    | 8-10   | Swedish Day, Geneva, IL, June 1982  
| 2    | 10     | Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center brochure, ca. 1999  
| 2    | 12     | Swedish Songs and a Blessing  
| 2    | 13     | Swedish Costumes  
| 2    | 14     | Swedes and the Stanley Cup, 1996  

RC 273 - Swedish Cultural Society Records
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Membership Book, 1952-1957</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Membership Card Files, (1965-2005)</td>
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<td>5 vols.</td>
<td>5 vols.</td>
<td>Treasurer’s Records, March 1971-May 2005</td>
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