



Donating Your Organization's Records

The heart of your organization's memory is in its records.

If your organization values its history, you should act now and save the original letters, minutes, reports, photographs, publications, and other documents—in both physical and digital forms—that officers, members, employees, or volunteers have produced and collected over the years.

These documents provide unique testimony to the achievements of your organization. Such materials are extremely valuable for administrative, legal, fiscal, and public relations purposes. Your organization's history is important to your community, too. By donating your organization's records to an archival repository, you will assure that its history and heritage will be part of your community's collective memory.

What Can We Offer You?

Swenson Center staff will manage and care for the records according to accepted professional standards.

We provide research access to the records, both to members of your organization and to the public.

What Does the Swenson Center Collect?

The Swenson Center collects and preserves diverse materials surrounding Swedish immigration to North America, Swedish-American settlements and daily life, and Swedish-American organizations from the beginning of Swedish migration through present day.

We collect papers of Swedish-American individuals, businesses, and organizations including (but not limited to): photographs depicting Swedish immigrant life in the cities (such as store fronts, people working, photographs of gatherings and festivals); diaries and journals (especially of underrepresented groups such as women, professionals, and working-class people); correspondence among immigrants in North America and between immigrants and family in Sweden; and records from Swedish-American organizations through the present.

We also collect library materials—specifically items that were published in Swedish in the United States—such as publications of the Augustana Book Concern (Rock Island, Illinois), Engberg & Holmberg (Chicago), and other small publishing houses; publications issued by Swedish-American organizations, both current and defunct, in English and Swedish; and anniversary booklets from Swedish-American congregations (Lutheran, Covenant, Methodist, etc.).



The Swenson Center's archival storage

Printed family histories and genealogies are accepted if they are compiled as a book and include a title page with full title, compiler's name, date of compilation/publication, page numbering, and preferably a name index.

We generally do not accept Bibles and hymnals, duplicate items, items in poor condition, or artifacts more appropriate for a museum. Contact us if you are unsure.

We accept materials in both English and Swedish (and sometimes other languages).

What Materials are Historically Valuable?

An archives is interested in the records that best illustrate the purpose, activities, and policies of your organization. Such documents usually represent an "end product"—a final report, for example, instead of a draft. Archives are more interested in related groups of materials rather than individual items.

Records should be inactive—that is, no longer regularly used for routine business. Records of active and defunct organizations are both of interest. If your organization is still active, it is best to make periodic donations of records at appropriate intervals determined through discussion with the archivist.

Because the research value of records may be diminished if items are reorganized, records should not be weeded or rearranged before discussion with an archivist.

Some types of records we collect (not an exhaustive list!):

- Architectural records
- Articles of incorporation
- Budgets
- Bylaws (& revisions)
- Clippings
- Constitution (& revisions)
- Correspondence
- Directories
- Ephemera (tickets, bookmarks, swag, etc.)
- Film, video, audio recordings
- Financial statements
- Handbooks
- Legal documents
- Memos
- Minutes of meetings
- Membership lists
- Newsletters and other organization publications
- Pamphlets, brochures, flyers
- Photographs
- Planning documents
- Press releases
- Reports (annual, committee)
- Rosters
- Scrapbooks
- Speeches
- Subject files
- Tax returns
- Websites/blogs/social media
- ***Digital versions of the above items too***

The Swenson Center would also prefer to collect original items rather than copies.

The Swenson Center may not accept everything that you offer. If we cannot collect your materials, we may be able to refer you somewhere more appropriate.

Donation Process

The donation process is simple:

- 1) Start a conversation with the archivist
- 2) Sign a Deed of Gift
- 3) Arrange for shipping, drop off, or pick up of your materials.

Deed of Gift

The deed of gift identifies the donor, describes the materials, and transfers legal ownership of the materials. This legal agreement is in the best interest of both the

donor and repository. If you have any questions about the deed of gift, ask the archivist or consult your attorney.

Copyright

Donors are encouraged to transfer any intellectual property rights of their materials to the repository. This assists researchers in their scholarship by making it easier to quote from or publish documents. If you wish to retain some rights, you may include a provision in the deed of gift. To learn more about copyright, see www.copyright.gov, or ask your organization's legal counsel.

Deposits or Long-Term Loans

The cost of storing, preserving, and making collections available for research is so high that repositories generally can only afford to do so for materials they own. For this reason, the Swenson Center does not accept collections on deposit or long-term loan.

Tax Deductions

Your organization should speak with its tax accountant or attorney about the possibility of a tax deduction. Archivists cannot give tax advice, nor are they permitted to appraise the monetary value of a collection being considered for their own repository.

Monetary Donations

The Swenson Center is a nonprofit organization and any support is gratefully received. Arrangement, description, and preservation are expensive tasks. Staff time, rehousing materials in preservation quality enclosures, and maintaining a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment are just some of the costs associated with preserving materials. If you are able to make a monetary donation to help defray the costs of caring for your materials, we would greatly appreciate it!

Ready to Donate? Want more Information?

Contact the Swenson Center archivist, Janette Foss Garcia, at the address in the letterhead or 309-794-7496 or janettegarcia@augustana.edu. Thank you!