

9-1-2004

News from the Swenson Center

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Recommended Citation

(2004) "News from the Swenson Center," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 24 : No. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol24/iss3/4>

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News from the Swenson Center

Thank you, Volunteers!

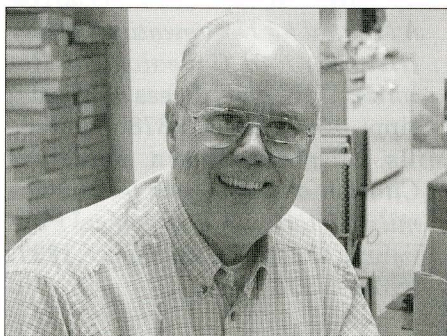
This section usually features news from the Swenson Center, but in this issue we are pleased to feature two volunteers whose efforts over the years have helped improve our research resources. They diligently waded through materials that would otherwise remain untouched. We are deeply grateful for the work of volunteers.

Pastor Robert Pearson of East Moline, Illinois

Bob Pearson has volunteered nearly every Wednesday afternoon for the past five years processing archival material from Upsala College. When Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, closed its doors in 1995, several hundred boxes of the school's archival holdings were donated to the Swenson Center where they are being preserved for the future.

Working with the records from Upsala College fascinates Bob Pearson for personal reasons. Bob earned a B.A. from Upsala College in 1958. He eventually became a U.S. Army Chaplain where he served around the world until he finished his career in the ministry serving Lutheran parishes in the Midwest.

He has processed over 117 linear feet of the material so far. The Upsala College collection does not include



Robert (Bob) Pearson.

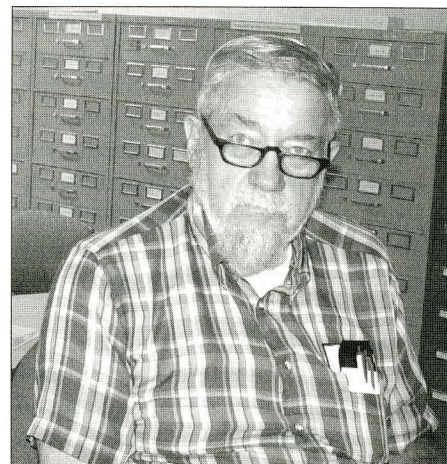
student transcripts, but it does contain, among other things, presidential papers, files from the dean's office, records of board of trustee meetings, faculty publications, photos of early campus life, and student theses. Bob sorts the papers and is generating a detailed finding aid for the collection. The closing of an historically Swedish-American college is unfortunate, but Bob appreciates working with the archives. He finds the correspondence endlessly interesting. The Swenson Center is fortunate to have the opportunity to preserve the history of Upsala College and grateful for the hundreds of hours that Bob Pearson has volunteered.

Robert Seaholm of Moline, Illinois

Bob Seaholm has been a volunteer at the Swenson Center off and on for the last 10 years. He makes indexes of immigrant members of Swedish-American churches for use in genealogical research.

Bob was born in Moline, and raised in Andover, Illinois. All of his ancestors emigrated from Skåne, Småland, and Västergötland to Moline, and Andover. In the 1980s Bob's wife Marjorie (Marge) and her cousin Doris Anderson began making card indexes of church records by pulling names of immigrants from the membership books and noting the book and page number where the person was found. Indexed in that era were Augustana Lutheran in Andover, IL, First Lutheran in Moline, IL, and First Lutheran in Rock Island, IL.

After Bob retired from his job as a draftsman at Deere & Company's headquarters in Moline, Marge



Robert (Bob) Seaholm.

started bringing him along to help make church indexes. In the 1990s, Bob and Marge would occasionally come in and work on other churches and to see their daughter Jill, who works at the Swenson Center. Marge worked on the enormous Immanuel Lutheran in Chicago while Bob indexed St. Paul Lutheran in Orion, IL. Bob has a sentimental attachment to the family names and the churches whose records he works with, so he works on churches from his own family background whenever possible.

Widowed in August 2003, Bob has since dutifully volunteered every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, and has completed St. Paul in Orion, Immanuel in Chicago, and recently indexed Immanuel Lutheran in East Moline, where he himself was baptized. He enjoys the atmosphere of the Swenson Center and the challenge of deciphering old Swedish handwriting. We are extremely thankful for Bob Seaholm's help and company twice a week in our Reading Room.