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Repositories of Scandinavian-American Materials: A Partial Directory

Rolf H. Erickson*

Eventually a genealogist or historian has to turn to a library or archives. The Scandinavian-American researcher has several collections to consider in the search for material. I have listed only those collections with sizeable amounts of useful material. The archives of the Scandinavian-American colleges, universities, and churches also hold information which may be of interest, but since the focus of those institutions is on their own histories, they are not included here.

Any researcher approaching these collections to solve a genealogical problem must be aware that these collections were not formed to serve genealogists and, in most instances, they are not organized to answer genealogy questions.

However, even a genealogist can find pertinent information with the right techniques. Approach a problem from a local history point of view. For example, you may have all the vital statistics about your Norwegian aunt Elsie and her Swedish husband Thure Asplund of northern Oconto County, Wisconsin, but want to know what sort of life they had and if they participated in local affairs, approach what you think may be the appropriate repository. You probably have already learned that the only Scandinavian community in the vicinity of their home was Danish and it was called Maple Valley. It had as its central institution, Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, a member of the United Lutheran Church. An appeal from the church archives did not bring results, so you turn to the Danish Immigrant Archives but ask for documentation of this Danish colony rather than for specific information about the Thure Asplunds.

Three of the groups, the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, have published guides to manuscript collections. They can be used on site, you may ask a librarian to borrow the guides through inter-library loan procedures, and you should urge appropriate local libraries to purchase them.

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Part of any genealogist's or local historian's obligation is to paint as well-rounded a picture of the milieu of the subject as possible. Few readers, if any, are interested in perusing mere lists of people's names and dates. It is the primary source materials from Scandinavian-American communities found in archives and libraries which give life to the final document.

American Swedish Historical Foundation-Museum

1900 Pattison Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19145

Museum Educator: Birgitta Davis
(215) 389-1776

The American Swedish Historical Foundation-Museum was founded in 1926. While there is no printed brochure available *The Official Museum Directory* (1989) notes that the building is located on a Queen Christina land grant from the 17th century. Collections: Swedish colonial and immigrant experience in the United States from 1638. There is a 12,500 volume reference library. The hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; noon to 4 p.m. Saturday; closed Monday; Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. There is an entrance fee to the building of \$2.00. Birgitta Davis stresses that the collection contains material about the seventeenth century immigrations and very little about later immigration of Swedes to America. Researchers wishing to use the collection should call beforehand; visitors are urged to come Tuesday-Friday since the weekend staff is small and unable to provide service of the archival material. Copying facilities are available.

American Swedish Institute Archives & Library

2600 Park Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Archivist: Marita Karlisch
(612) 871-4907

The collection focuses on the history of the Institute, Swedish-Americans in the Upper Midwest and the Twin Cities, and Sweden in general. Included are Swedish-American church records (on microfilm) for the Minnesota Conference (old Augustana synod), *Svenska-Amerikanska Posten* (on microfilm) 1888-1940, Minneapolis city directories from 1914, St. Paul city directories from 1920, and selected emigration records. The collection is non-circulating. Hours: 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; Wednesday open 12:00 to 8 p.m. The third Saturday of every month open 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. No charge to members if research is done in person (with minimal staff assistance); there is a \$10.00 half day charge to non-members if research is done in person (with minimal staff assistance). Research fees for research done by ASI staff: \$15 an hour (min. one hour). Photocopying available.

The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies

Library	Reference Librarian: Patricia M. Procino
18 S. 7th Street	Archivist: Carla Zimmerman
Philadelphia, PA 19106	(215) 925-8090

The Balch Institute was founded in 1971. The library collects every kind of printed and written material relating to ethnicity and immigration history in North America for the period 1789 to the present. The collection documents 80 ethnic groups including the Scandinavians. However, the library houses only one manuscript collection which contains Swedish genealogical information: the Amandus Johnson Papers, 1897-1974, containing genealogical information on the early Swedish settlements on the Delaware in the 17th and 18th centuries. An unpublished register is available. Membership costs: life \$1,000; sustaining \$500-999; supporting \$100-499; contributing \$50-99; family \$25-49; individual \$15-24. The library is open, however, without charge. Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9:00-5:00.

Baptist Conference Archival Center	Archivist: David Guston
Bethel Theological Seminary	(612) 638-6282
3949 Bethel Drive	Librarian: Norris Magnuson
New Brighton, MN 55112	(612) 641-6183

The archives is housed in the Carl H. Lundquist Library and focuses on the history of the Baptist General Conference (formerly Swedish Baptist) and Bethel College. The collection contains yearbooks of the conference from 1856, books, periodicals, manuscripts and memorabilia including paintings by John Alexis Edgren, an early leader of the Conference. Special collections include the Skarstedt Collection in Scandinavian Pietism. The collection can be serviced by either David Guston or Norris Magnuson. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Danish Immigrant Archives	Archivist: Rudolf Jensen
Grand View College Library	(515) 263-2800 (ask for Archivist)
1351 Grandview Avenue	
Des Moines, Iowa 50316	

“The archives is not geared to the study of genealogy and not much help can be given in this area.” Since the archivist also teaches, he is not always available. Generally speaking, though, access to the archives can be had when the college library is open. During the school year the hours are 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.; summer hours, May - August, are 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. “There is no charge for minor research but extensive research will require some prior arrangement.” Membership in the Danish American Heritage Society is \$15, membership is not required for “minor research.”

International Order of Good Templar Archives

2926 Cedar Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Archivist: Margit Crusell
(612) 721-7606 (office)

The archives is in its infancy and is mainly the result of the work of Mrs. Crusell who invites would-be researchers to contact her at her home telephone (612) 339-3473. The focus of the archives is the history of the Good Templar lodges, now called chapters. Because so many of the lodges in the Twin Cities area were Norwegian or Swedish (and, as Mrs. Crusell explains, "the Norwegians and Swedes have done so much more than others to keep their history") the collection has many Norwegian and Swedish records. The collection contains membership rolls, minute books, publications, and memorabilia. Mrs. Crusell is at the Archives Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and at other times by appointment. Copying service is available in the office at ten cents a copy.

**Luther College Library & Winneshiek
County Historical Society Archives**
Luther College
Decorah, Iowa 52101-1060

Archivist: Duane W. Fenstermann
(319) 387-1164

The prime function of the archives in the Luther College Library (Preus Library) is to document the history of Luther College and Winneshiek County (Iowa). Holdings are not focused on family history nor are they arranged with a separate section for family history research. Some of the material useful to family historians is located in different parts of the library: microfilm section (census of northeast Iowa, Norwegian-American newspapers, Decorah English language newspapers), open stacks, and reference (obituary index to the Decorah English language newspapers). These are available whenever the library is open. Summer and holiday hours vary; call for details. The library has the most extensive holdings of Norwegian-American newspapers (all on microfilm) in the U.S. The published list of 1975, *Norwegian-American Newspapers in Luther College Library*, is now slightly out of date. Winneshiek County's early population consisted of English, German, Irish, Czech and *Norwegian* settlers. Write to the archivist with a list of questions before travelling to Decorah. Questions regarding family history in Norway should be addressed to the Vesterheim Genealogical Center (see entry below). The archives contain over 500 collections (over 1700 linear feet) including Papers of the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and major 19th century Norwegian church leaders/educators. Hours for the archives are: 8 a.m. - noon, M-Th and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Friday (other arrangements must be made in advance with the Archivist). Research costs: no charge for requests not involving extended research; research involving translation of the Norwegian language or extensive research will be forwarded to a qualified researcher. The researcher will contact the requestor before incurring any research fees. Extensive photocopy cost: \$.18 a sheet (legal and letter size), \$.25 for 11 x 17 sheets, plus postage and handling.

Minnesota Historical Society

The Society's mission is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Minnesota. Founded in 1849, it is the world's largest repository of Minnesota materials. The collections which contain books, pamphlets, periodicals, microforms, documents, newspapers, paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, films, video tapes, maps, tape-recordings, photographs, manuscripts and artifacts, are housed in three separate buildings, the Historical Building, the Fort Snelling History Center and the Research Center. Shuttle bus service is provided weekdays from the Historical Building to the Research Center. For information about this service call (612) 296-6126. All of the collections will be brought together in one location when the Minnesota History Center opens in 1991.

Historical Building

690 Cedar Street (next to the State Capitol)
St. Paul, MN 55101

(612) 296-6126

Hours: Monday-Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Fort Snelling History Center

St. Paul, MN 55111

(612) 726-1171

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Research Center

1500 Mississippi Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Archives and Manuscripts

(612) 296-6980

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Museum Collections

(612) 296-0148

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
(by appointment)

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

c/o St. Olaf College
Northfield, MN 55057

Archivist: Forrest Brown
(507) 663-3221

The association, founded in 1925, has as its central task the chronicling of the broad aspects of Norwegian migration to America and most of its efforts go into its ambitious program of publishing books annually on Norwegian-American history. The archives contains much of interest to the genealogist including family histories, histories of communities in Norway (*bygdebøker*), microfilm copies of

Norwegian emigrant records back to 1867 of those who left Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Kristiansand (Stavanger's records were burned but a listing of those who left Rogaland is available) and a biographical file of 150,000 newspaper clippings covering the years 1914-ca. 1970 (records before 1914 are incomplete). A *Guide to Manuscripts Collections of the Norwegian-American Historical Association* compiled and edited by Lloyd Hustvedt (1979, 158 p., \$7.50) is available. Books and periodicals belonging to the NAHA are found in the St. Olaf Library which is open while school is in session (inquire about hours before hand). Associate membership is \$20.00 a year and life membership \$200; books published by the NAHA are sent free to members. Hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 12 noon (other arrangements should be made in advance). Charges are usually only for xeroxing of material; if extensive searching is required, there is a fee of \$3.00.

Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago

Caroline Hall, North Park College
5125 North Spaulding Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60625

Director of Archives:
Timothy J. Johnson
(312) 583-2700 ext. 5267
SAHS: (312) 583-5722

As its name implies, the focus of the archives collection is on Swedes in Chicago. The archives contains 175 linear feet of manuscript material, a photograph collection, serials, newspapers and 5,000 volumes dealing with Swedish-America spanning the years 1838 to the present. A description of the manuscripts collections, *The Jacobson Index* (1987/88), is available. The North Park [College] Archives and the Covenant Archives are also located on the North Park campus.

The Swedish-American Historical Society (which retains ownership of the archives) also publishes the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. Annual membership in the society is \$25.00 a year; life membership \$500. Copies of the *Guide to Swedish-American Archival and Manuscript Sources in the United States* are available from the Swedish-American Historical Society at this address for \$20.00 postpaid. S-AA of GC hours 8 a.m. to Noon, 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Research costs for members of the SAHS \$6.00; for non-members: \$12.00.

Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center

Augustana College, Box 175
Rock Island, Illinois 61201

Archivist: Kermit Westerberg
Researcher (Genealogy):
Christina Johansson
(309) 794-7204
Acting Director: Kermit Westerberg

Major collections include records of Swedish-American churches, lodges, organizations, and newspapers as well as microfilm records of embarkations from the ports of Göteborg and Malmö, Sweden; all collections are reference only except the Swedish-American newspapers on microfilm are available on inter-library loan; a printed guide to newspaper holdings on microfilm (published in 1981) is available for \$3.00 from the Office of Librarian, Augustana College, above address. Significant portions of the Center's manuscript collections (up to 1982) are listed in the *Guide to Swedish-American Archival and Manuscript Sources in the United States*. In-house data bases are used to generate special detailed lists of all church, organizational and private manuscript collections on microfilm on deposit with the Center. The **Swenson Center News** is sent free on request. An associate membership in the Swenson Center is \$25 a year. Hours: 8:30 - Noon; 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. (closes at 4:30 p.m. in summer); researchers are asked to call in advance for an appointment. The research fee is \$15 an hour; \$10 an hour for Swenson Center Associates.

The Vesterheim Genealogical Center
4909 Sherwood Road
Madison, Wisconsin 53711

Director: Gerhard Naeseth
Assistant: Blaine Hedberg
(608) 271-8826

The center exists to assist and encourage genealogists with Norwegian and Norwegian-American problems. The collection consists of microfilmed Norwegian parish records and census records, published family histories, cemetery transcripts and Norwegian community histories (*bygdebøker*). Mr. Naeseth is in process of compiling a listing of all Norwegians who emigrated to the U.S. up through 1850. The center publishes *Norwegian Tracks* periodically to assist center members with genealogical inquiries, list new publications and additions to the holdings. Membership is open to members of Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum. Museum membership: \$10.00; membership in the Genealogical Center: an additional \$6.00. Life membership in the museum: \$150; life membership is available to museum life members in the center for an additional \$100. Inquiries about membership should be sent to the Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa 52101. Inquiries about genealogical problems should be sent to the Madison, Wisconsin address. Cost of research is \$8.00 an hour for members; \$12.00 an hour for non-members. Hours: by appointment only.

Manuscripts and University Archives Division

Suzzallo Library F M 25
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98190

Curator: Mrs. Karyl Winn
(201) 543-1879

The Division collects materials about the entire history of the Pacific Northwest and most specifically Western Washington. There is considerable

material about the ethnic groups but its emphasis is on local history and it is not organized for genealogical research. The Division reports its holdings to the *National Union Catalog of Manuscripts* and a book catalog of holdings exists: *University of Washington Libraries Comprehensive Guide to the Manuscripts Collection and to the Personal Papers in the University Archives* (1980). Hours: 8 a.m. to 12; 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. There is no charge to use the collections; copying facilities are available.

As noted previously, the various colleges and universities founded by Scandinavian-Americans maintain their own institutional records. They can be especially useful in documenting the careers of family members who attended or taught at the institutions. Inquiries to institutions without archivists might safely be addressed to the Registrar:

Danish:

Dana College
Blair, NE 68008

St. Olaf College
Archivist, Ms. Joan Olson
Northfield, MN 55057

Grand View College
1351 Grand View Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50316-1599

Swedish:
Augustana College
Rock Island, IL 61201-2296

Finnish:

Suomi College
Hancock, MI 49930

Bethany College
Lindsborg, KS 67456-1896

Norwegian

Augustana College
Sioux Falls, SD 57197-0001

Bethel College
3900 Bethel Drive
St. Paul, MN 55112

Concordia College
Archivist, Sharon Hoverson
Moorhead, MN 56560-9981

Gustavus Adolphus College
Archivist, Edi Thorstensson
St. Peter, MN 56092

Luther College
Archivist, Duane Fenstermann
Decorah, IA 52101

North Park College and Seminary Archives
Archivist, Tim Johnson
5125 North Spaulding
Chicago, IL 60625

Pacific Lutheran University
Archivist, Kerstin Ringdahl
Tacoma, WA 98447-0013

Upsala College
East Orange, NJ 07019