

6-1-2016

## Collection Feature: John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois records

Lisa Huntsha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Huntsha, Lisa (2016) "Collection Feature: John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois records," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 36 : No. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol36/iss2/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@augustana.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@augustana.edu).

# News from the Swenson Center

## Collection Feature – John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois records

By LISA HUNTSCHA  
ARCHIVIST/LIBRARIAN

Given that it is a presidential election year here in the States, it seems fitting to feature the John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois records. This collection was recently reprocessed and is a good example of the type of political activities undertaken by Swedish-Americans.

The John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois (it was first named the Swedish-American Republican League of Illinois) was organized and incorporated in 1894 in order to exert a Scandinavian-American influence on American politics. On December 4, 1894, after numerous advisory meetings, a meeting was held in Chicago of leading Republicans of Swedish descent from the counties of Cook, Henry, Knox, Rock Island, Will, and Winnebago. First officers were Edward C. Westman of Chicago, president; Hjalmar Kohler of Moline, vice president; Will S. Hussander of Chicago, secretary; A. L. Anderson of Andover; treasurer.

The League held an annual convention and banquet on or around March 9 in celebration of John Ericsson Day.

This day was to honor Captain John Ericsson, Swedish-American engineer and inventor best known for his creation of the Union ironclad warship *U.S.S. Monitor*, which battled the Confederate ironclad warship *C.S.S. Merrimac* in a naval battle on March 9, 1862. The use of ironclads by the Union was an important factor in securing a Union victory in the Civil War. The first League convention was held on March 9, 1895, in Chicago.

Over the years, leading Republicans have attended and addressed League conventions and banquets, including President William Howard Taft in 1912, Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Warren L. Wood, Illinois Governor William G. Stratton, United States Senator from Illinois Everett M. Dirksen, and Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte.

These materials were likely accumulated by George C. Lofgren of Galesburg, IL. Lofgren was born February 22, 1900, and died December 1962. He was elected president of the League in 1956 and served during 1957.

Of note in the collection is a letter from King Gustaf V of Sweden

written to the League on the 50th anniversary of the 1862 Battle of the Monitor and Merrimack, in 1912.

The collection also contains many programs from the League's annual conventions and tickets, flyers and ephemera, particularly during the 1950s. Also represented are newspaper clippings that are related to the League's and Republicans' activities, photographs of conventions, and photographs from Prince Bertil's visit during the Swedish Pioneer Centennial of 1948.

Watch the Swenson Center's Facebook page to see these items in an upcoming exhibit this fall!

[www.facebook.com/SwensonCenter](http://www.facebook.com/SwensonCenter)



*Hotel Custer, Galesburg, Illinois. 1957 Annual convention of the John Ericsson Republican League of Illinois.*