F.M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections Brandel Library, North Park University 3225 W. Foster Ave. Chicago, IL 60625 tel. (773) 244-6224 ● archives@northpark.edu

Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago Manuscript Collection #19 Swedish Typographical Union of Chicago Records, 1893-1970

Boxes: 1

HISTORY

On the 23rd of August 1893 Swedish typographers of Chicago met in discussion regarding "huruledes kunna de svenska typographerna i Chicago bäst organiseras." (In what matter can the Swedish typographers of Chicago be best organized.) Up until this time there was only a Norwegian-Danish typographical union, but from the conclusion of this discussion, along with two months of continuing discussion, a Swedish typographical union was formed on October 5th 1893. The organization's first elected committee included: President, John J. Engberg; Vice-President, John L. Danielson; Secretary, Eric C. Elm; Treasurer, C. O. Williamson; Sargent-of-arms, Anton T. Nelson; and Accountants, H. Hesselroth, Ernest Younggren, and Claes Larson.

On November 2nd of that same year, after the assassination of Mayor Carter H. Harrison, a resolution of sympathy was written by C. O. Williamson, Eric C. Elm, and John L. Danielson. It was published in Chicago's daily newspapers and marked the first life sign of the Union's activity.

On April 4, 1894, after a request and two months of decision making, the Union decided to become a charter member of the International Typographical Union. The Union's official title became The Chicago Swedish Typographical Union, No. 247 of the International Typographical Union (I.T.U.) There were 51 members, of which 17 were charter members and 34 were general members

From the very beginning the Union was both instrumental in securing higher wages and being supportive of its members. Until 1912, health and death benefits were combined in one fund to which every member was obligated to contribute. The death benefits were discontinued when the I.T.U. increased their life insurance benefits to \$400. A retirement home, Union Printers Home, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was strongly supported by the Union and its members. To be admitted one had to be a union member for a minimum of ten years. A pension fund and a life insurance fund were also eventually established.

Some celebrated events which the Society tried to promote annually were Founder's Day, October 5th, and a summer family outing. These events were celebrated in La Grange, Illinois. They also celebrated 20, 30, and 70 year anniversaries.

Their first twenty years were relatively active, with a combined membership of 34 in 1913. They published a memoir of their first twenty years, and this is where most of the Union's only documental history is recorded. After 1913, the Union continued to be an integral part of Chicago's Swedish and American printing life. They revised their bylaws, scale of prices, and shop rules in 1926.

This collection is missing a bulk of its documented material which mainly consists of minutes for the years 1894 to 1959. From the available records, the Union started to regain its activity in 1944. Between 1944-1966, the Union's most organized years (except for the twenty years after founding), documented material is in abundance, in comparison to the total collection.

The minutes and correspondence are very helpful in recovering information about these years. In 1964 they celebrated their 70th anniversary, which consisted of only 14 members. After 1964 the union dwindled because of lack of interest and old age. The minutes stop on August 6, 1965.

About 1970 Hjalmar Johnson, secretary of the union for 50 years was awarded his 60-year I.T.U. long service emblem and certificate. A few days after this event, because of dwindling membership, Local No. 247 voted to surrender its charter. The few remaining members transferred to Local No. 16 of the I.T.U. and Mr. Johnson passed away. Thus, the Chicago Swedish Typographical Union was in existence for 76 years, 1894-1970.

DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS

The records of the Swedish Typographical Union of Chicago are comprised of 17 folders in one box. The inclusive dates of the Union are 1893-1970, but most of the material, in this incomplete collection, is between 1893-1914 and 1959-1970. The bulk of the existing records in this collection are found in two main categories: financial records, and membership.

In Folder 1 the history of the Swedish Typographical Union, until their 20th anniversary, is described in detail in a booklet published by the union on October 5, 1913. It also contains membership lists covering current, transferred, and deceased members for 1913. There are two copies of this booklet, written in Swedish.

The bylaws and scale of prices for the Swedish Typographical Union of Chicago, as well as for the International Typographical Union are found, as an incomplete assortment, in Folder 2. This material is both in Swedish and English.

The minutes of the Swedish Typographical Union between the dates January 8, 1960 and August 6, 1965 are found in Folder 3. These are the only minutes which have been given to the Swedish American Historical Society, and, as an overview, these years were the most active. This material is completely in Swedish.

Folders 4 and 5 contain the only existing financial records found in this collection. Folder 4 contains a few disbursement stubs and a receipt made by the Chicago-Swedish Union. Folder 5 contains a state of agreement and a sample contract which was used for each union member's employment process. These records are in English.

Folders 6-13 contain information pertaining to the union's membership. A register recording where the members were born, when they joined, what benefits they had, their addresses, and when they died (between the period of 1893 to 1938) is found in folder 6. A somewhat similar, but incomplete register spanning the dates 1911 to 1914 is contained in folder 7. An official directory of the International typographical Union of 1962 is contained in folder 8. A rollbook recording the attendance of officers and members at union meetings between 1959-1960 can be found in folder 9. General applications for membership, dating 1946-1966 are located in folder 10. Death notices and mortuary benefit applications of 1944 and 1968 are in folder 11. An application for affiliation to the Illinois State Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, along with a few accompanying pieces of correspondence, is in folder 12. There are three copies of five year apprentice examinations for the year 1928 in folder 13.

Folder 14 contains general correspondence for the years between 1944 to 1966. Folder 15 contains two programs of events happening in the years 1923 and 1943. Folder 16 contains two clippings from 1940, and ca.1970; the latter notes the transfer of the few remaining members to Local 16, International Typographical Union.

PROVENANCE: Unknown

<u>ACCESS RESTRICTIONS</u>: There are no access restrictions on the materials, and the collection is open to all members of the public. However, the researcher assumes full responsibility for

conforming with the laws of libel, privacy, and copyright that may be involved in the use of this collection.

<u>PROCESSOR</u>: Jeffrey Raymond Jones <u>CONTAINER LIST:</u>

BOX	FOLDER	FOLDER TITLES	SPAN DATES
1	1	History - (Swedish)	1893-1913
1	2	Bylaws - scale of prices (Swedish and English)	1894-1967
1	3	Minutes (Swedish)	1960-1965
FINANO	CIAL RECORI	OS .	
1	4	Disbursements	1958-1963
1	5	Scale of Prices Agreement	1962
MEMBI	ERSHIP	•	<u>.</u>
1	6	Register	1893-1938
1	7	Register	1911-1914
1	8	Official International Directory	1962
1	9	Roll Book	1959-1965
1	10	General Applications	1946-1966
1	11	Mortuary Benefit Applications	1944-1968
1	12	Affiliation Application	1962
1	13	Apprentice Examinations	1928
1	14	Correspondence	1944-1966
1	15	Programs	1923,1943
1	16	Clippings	1940, ca. 1970