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 #22 Gustav Stromberg (1882-1962) Papers, 1913-1962

Boxes: 6

HISTORY:

Gustav Benjamin Stromberg was born December 16, 1882 in Gothenburg, Sweden. He was educated in Gothenburg, and later at the University of Stockholm and Kiel University in Germany. He received his PhD in the field of astronomy from the University of Lund, Sweden in 1916. He worked for a period of time with the Swedish Meteorological Commission where he studied the harmonic analysis of air temperature in Stockholm, 1894-1911, based on sun and moon phases. As a result of this work he published Stromberg's Kalendar, a long-range weather forecast almanac.

Stromberg emigrated to the United States in 1916 and the following year was employed at the Mount Wilson Observatory near Pasadena, California, where he later became a prominent astronomer. At the New York World's Fair in 1939-40 his name was listed on the 'Wall of Fame' as one of the Americans of foreign birth who had made outstanding contributions to American civilization. Stromberg published a book, The Soul of the Universe, in 1938 and 1940, in which he expressed his philosophical views of the universe. The book brought him a measure of notoriety, as did his 1959 work, The Searchers (Nya Vidder).

After a term of research with the U. S. Navy and Air Corps during the Second World War, Stromberg retired from Mount Wilson in 1946. For the remainder of his life, he was very interested in developing a mechanism using solar power, particularly in the distillation of salt water. He filed a patent on February 24, 1955 for a "new type of heat engine", however his design was not accepted by the scientific community as a whole, so it never saw fruition.

Gustav Stromberg married Helga Henning before immigrating to America. Helga was well known in the west coast Swedish community and some literary circles for her poetry written under the nom de plume of Syster Benediction.

Gustav lived with his wife Helga in Pasadena, California until his death on January 30, 1962.

DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS:

The papers of Gustav Stromberg occupy 5 1/2 boxes and span the years 1913-1962. They are divided into four categories: Personal History, Correspondence, Writings, and

Clippings.

Papers within the Personal History category occupy five folders of box 1. Biographical information is contained in and biographical essays from unknown sources. Folder 2 contains various diplomas and membership certificates, 1916-1944, from universities, professional associations, churches, etc. Two notebooks, one financial, and one related to chemistry, are included in folder 3. Tax returns from 1955-1957 and an undated passenger program occupy folders 4 and 5 respectively.

Papers within the Correspondence category occupy 25 folders and span the years 1913-1961. Included within these folders are also patent proposal drafts, found among that correspondence dated 1949-1961. The correspondence is organized chronologically, with the exception of two folders containing correspondence (1938-1960) with Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur (a publishing firm in Stockholm, Sweden) which were placed at the end of box 2 and the beginning of box 3.

Papers within the Writings category occupy 19 folders and are arranged into three subcategories: Proposals, Manuscripts, and Published Works. One folder containing proposals and patent applications has been placed, due to its size, in the final folder of box 6. The Proposals subcategory spans 1949-1960 and includes five folders of patent drafts and proposals. Water desalinization is the focus of the papers in folders 2 and 3. The contents of folder four relates to Stromberg's designs for an efficient heat engine using solar power, primarily for use in water desalinization. Folder 5 contains various proposals.

Folder 6 of box 3 through folder 3 of box 4 house manuscripts of books, articles, and songs. Folder 3 contains miscellaneous writings, undated. The published works of Gustav Stromberg occupy box 4, folders 4-9, with folders 10 and 11 housing book covers and publicity flyers. Stromberg's Kalendar, his first work, occupies folder 4. Folders 5-8 contain published articles in English, most within their original periodical. Folder 9 holds published articles in Swedish.

The Clippings category occupies box 5, and box 6, folders 1-3, and is composed of journal articles not written by Stromberg, as well as newspaper clippings. Box 5, folder 6 houses copies of Congressional Bills from 1949 concerning water desalinization. Box 6, folder 3 holds a Swedish Hydrographic Biological Commission Report from 1913. The final folder of box 6 contains oversized proposals and patent applications, as well as a radio script from a KNX-Los Angeles broadcast, October 22, 1950, concerning the possibility of water shortage in California.

<u>PROVENANCE</u>: The Gustav Stromberg Papers were donated to the Swedish American

Archives of Greater Chicago in 1976 by Frances Paelian, 2304 Paloma St., Pasadena, California, 91104. Relevant material may also be found among the papers of his wife Helga Stromberg (a.k.a. Syster Benediction) in these

same archives.

RESTRICTIONS: None

PROCESSOR: Eric Lundberg, May 1985

CONTAINER LIST:

BOX	FOLDER	FOLDER TITLE	SPAN DATES
PERSO	ONAL ITEMS		
1	1	Biographical Information	n.d.
1	2	Diplomas and Membership Certificates	1916-1944
1	3	Notebooks	1916, 1920
1	4	Tax Returns	1955-1957
1	5	Passenger Program: Swedish-American Line	n.d.
CORR	ESPONDENC	E	
1	6	General	1913-1929
1	7	General	1930-1939
1	8	General	1940-1948
1	9	General	1949
1	10	General	1949
1	11	Sealed for Patent Purposes	1949
1	12	General	1950
1	13	General	1951
1	14	General	1952
2	1	General	1952
2	2	General	1953
2	3	General	1954
2	4	General	1955
2	5	General	1956
2	6	General	1957
2	7	Carnegie Institute	1957
2	8	General	1958
2	9	General	1959
2	10	Israeli Colleagues	1959-1960
2	11	General	1960
2	12	General	1961
2	13	Dr. Z. Picha, Reykavik, Iceland	1961
2	14	Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur	1938-1948
3	1	Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur	1949-1960
WRIT	INGS: Proposa	als	
3	2	Water Desalinization Methods	1949-1950
3	3	Water Desalinization Methods	1951
3	4	New Type of Heat Engine	1951-1957
3	5	Miscellaneous Projects	1950-1960
WRIT	INGS: Manuso	cripts	
3	6	The Soul of the Universe: Chapters 1-5	1940
3	7	The Soul of the Universe: Chapters 6-12	1940

3	8	Universums Själ	1938
4	1	Det Eviga Sökandet	1948
4	2	Songs	n.d.
4	3	Miscellaneous	n.d.
WR	ITINGS: Pu	blished Works	
4	4	Kalendar	1916
4	5	Various	1924, 1942
4	6	Various	1915-1962
4	7	Various	1915-1962
4	8	Various	1915-1962
4	9	Various (Swedish)	1915-1962
4	10	Book Covers	1938-1950
4	11	Publicity Flyers	1938-1950
CLI	PPINGS: Jo	urnal Articles	
5	1	Various	1915-1962
5	2	Various	1915-1962
5	3	Various	1915-1962
5	4	Various	1915-1962
5	5	Various	1915-1962
5	6	Various	1915-1962
5	7	Congressional Bills	1949
	PPINGS: Ne		
5	8	Gustav Stromberg	1940-1962
5	9	Reviews of Published Works	1940-1962
6	1	General	1940-1962
6	2	General	1940-1962
6	3	Ur Svenska Hydrografisk Biologiska	1913
		Kommissionens Skrifter	
	ITINGS: OV		
6	4	Patents, Diagrams, Radio, Script	1950-1960