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# Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago
# Manuscript Collection #29
# Helga Stromberg (1886-1971) Papers, 1901-1971

Boxes: 7

## HISTORY:

Helga Stromberg (nee Henning) was born March 14, 1886 in Gothenberg, Sweden. After graduating from secondary school in 1904, Helga attended a teachers college in Stockholm for a year. She then attended a nurses training school in Hamburg, Germany and in 1913 joined a Swedish Red Cross ambulance team serving in Serbia, where she was decorated. In 1914 she married a student of astronomy, Gustav B. Stromberg (MSS 22) in Paris, France. In 1916 Gustav received a stipend from the Mt. Wilson observatory, and the two moved to Pasadena, California where they lived the rest of their lives.

Helga started writing poetry in Pasadena under the nom de plum of Sister (or Syster) Benediction. She was published quite frequently in the Swedish-American press and the Pasadena Star. She also had six poem collections published, three in English and three in Swedish. She became an honorary member of the Eugene Field Society in 1940.

Helga's husband Gustav died in 1962, and Helga continued to live in the same house, 1383 North Marengo, until her death on July 7, 1971 at the age of 85.

## DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS:

The papers of Helga Stromberg occupy seven boxes and span the years 1901-1971. They are divided into five categories: Personal Items, Correspondence, Manuscripts, Clippings, and Music & Sketches.

Papers within the Personal Items category occupy the first seven folders of box 1. A biography written by an unknown author in 1956 and an obituary occupy folder 1. Two certificates are housed in folder 2, one for nursing (1908) and one from the Eugene Field Society (1940). Folder 3 contains a diary of Helga Stromberg's nursing duties, 1908-1913. A devotional notebook and booklet are housed in folder 4. Club memberships from the Svenska Forfattarforbundet, and the Pasadena University Club occupy folder 5. Folders 6 and 7 house various travel itineraries and memorabilia from Helga Stromberg's trip with her husband to an International Astronomical Union meeting in Stockholm, 1938.

Correspondence occupies fourteen folders of boxes 1 and 2. All but one folder are of a general nature. Folder 5 of box 2 houses letters and manuscripts from Mary Malmquist (1944).

A number of old postcards have been placed in an envelope in box 1 folder 8.

Papers within the Manuscript category occupy the remainder of box 2, box 3 and box 4. Most of the manuscript material is drafts of poetry, but there are three folders of prose. The prose manuscripts include a draft of Cross Roads, a series of biographies entitled "Bland Stora Man", and general essays. Included among the poetry are drafts from some of Helga's poetry books Dromda Varldar, Worlds Within, and Selected Poems. The bulk of the manuscripts are rough drafts and were seemingly in no intentional order. Box 4, folder 8 contains typed reviews of Helga's published works.

Clippings occupy all but one of the remaining folders of the collection. The first sub-category of this category is Published Works. This includes two folders of journals containing poems, mock-ups of planned books using clippings from newspapers, scrapbooks with newspaper clippings dating from 1936-1949, and loose clippings organized by newspaper submitted to. All this material is housed in box 5 and 6 except for three folders of oversized scrapbook clippings which have been placed in a flat box (box 7). The second sub-category of the Clippings category is Collected Articles. This includes clippings of reviews of Sister Benediction's works, obituaries of various people, journals, material on Tomtar (Swedish elves), a Time magazine article on "Sin and Sweden", with clippings of reader responses, and general clippings.

The final category, Music & Sketches, consists of one musical score and two sketches housed in box 7.

PROVENANCE: The Helga Stromberg Papers were donated to the Archives of the Swedish American Historical Society in 1976 by Frances Paelian, 2304 Paloma Street, Pasadena, California. Relevant material may also be found among the papers of her husband, Gustav Stromberg, in these same archives (MSS 22).

RESTRICTIONS: None

PROCESSOR: Eric Lundberg, November 1985

SEPARATION RECORD: A folder of correspondence regarding the donation of the papers, between Frances Paelian and Selma Jacobson was placed in the Archives files. A large number of photographs were placed in the Photograph Collection. The following books were placed in the book collection:

*Bibeln* (Bible). Stockholm : Isaac Marcus, 1900.
Benediction, Syster. *Dromda Varldar*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, n.d.
----------. *Fran Solljusa Strander*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, n.d.
----------. *Selected Poems*. New York: Exposition Press, 1939.
----------. *Through Windows of Love*. New York: Henry Harrison, 1940.
----------. *Viskande Vindar*. Stockholm: Kvalitetstryck, 1948.

----------. *Worlds Within*. New York: Henry Harrison, 1941.

CONTAINER LIST:

| BOX | FOLDER | FOLDER TITLE | SPAN DATES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PERSONAL ITEMS** | | | |
| 1 | 1 | Biography, Obituary | 1956, 1971 |
| 1 | 2 | Certificates: Nursing, Literary | 1908, 1940 |
| 1 | 3 | Diary: Nursing Duties | 1908-1913 |
| 1 | 4 | Devotional Notebook | c1929 |
| 1 | 5 | Club Membership: Svenska-Amerikanska Forfattarforbundet, University Club | c1950 |
| 1 | 6 | Memorabilia: International Astronomical Union, Stockholm | 1938 |
| 1 | 7 | Memorabilia: Trans-Atlantic Cruises | 1938 |
| **CORRESPONDENCE** | | | |
| 1 | 8 | General | 1901-1937 |
| 1 | 9 | General | 1938-1939 |
| 1 | 10 | General | 1940 |
| 1 | 11 | General | 1940 |
| 1 | 12 | General | 1940 |
| 1 | 13 | General | 1941-1949 |
| 1 | 14 | General | 1950-1954 |
| 2 | 1 | General | 1955 |
| 2 | 2 | General | 1955 |
| 2 | 3 | General | 1956 |
| 2 | 4 | General | 1957-1968 |
| 2 | 5 | Letters and Manuscripts: Mary Malmquist | 1944 |
| 2 | 6 | General | n.d. |
| **MANUSCRIPT: PROSE** | | | |
| 2 | 7 | Cross Roads | n.d. |
| 2 | 8 | “Bland Stora Man”, series | 1945-1947 |
| 2 | 9 | General | 1946-1948 |
| **MANUSCRIPT: POETRY** | | | |
| 3 | 1 | Dromda Var Idar, pages 1-140 | n.d. |
| 3 | 2 | Dromda Var Idar, pages 141-Index | n.d. |
| 3 | 3 | Worlds Within | 1941 |
| 3 | 4 | Selected Poems | c1939 |
| 3 | 5 | Submitted to Vestkusten (Swedish) | c1956-1959 |
| 3 | 6 | Rough Drafts | n.d. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | Rough Drafts | n.d. |
| 3 | 8 | Rough Drafts | n.d. |
| 4 | 1 | Rough Drafts | n.d. |
| 4 | 2 | Rough Drafts: Scrapbook | n.d. |
| 4 | 3 | Rough Drafts: Children's Poems | n.d. |
| 4 | 4 | Rough Drafts (Swedish) | n.d. |
| 4 | 5 | Rough Drafts (Swedish) | n.d. |
| 4 | 6 | Rough Drafts (Swedish) | n.d. |
| 4 | 7 | Rough Drafts (Swedish) | n.d. |
| **MANUSCRIPT: REVIEWS** | | | |
| 4 | 8 | Published Works | c1941-1942 |
| **CLIPPINGS: PUBLISHED POETRY** | | | |
| 5 | 1 | Journal Submissions | c1940-1945 |
| 5 | 2 | Journal Submissions | c1950-1952 |
| 5 | 3 | Mock-up: Fran Solljusa Strander, part one | n.d. |
| 5 | 4 | Mock-up: Fran Solljusa Strander, part two | n.d. |
| 5 | 5 | Scrapbook | 1936-1940 |
| 5 | 6 | Scrapbook | 1940-1941 |
| 5 | 7 | Scrapbook | 1941 |
| 6 | 1 | Scrapbook | 1942 |
| 6 | 2 | Scrapbook | 1944-1949 |
| 6 | 3 | California Veckoblad | c1940-1965 |
| 6 | 4 | Vestkusten | c1940-1965 |
| 6 | 5 | Various Newspapers | c1940-1965 |
| **CLIPPINGS: COLLECTED ARTICLES** | | | |
| 6 | 6 | Reviews on Sister Benediction | c1940-1965 |
| 6 | 7 | Obituaries: Various People | c1955-1965 |
| 6 | 8 | Journals | 1940-1941, 1962 |
| 6 | 9 | Tomtar | n.d. |
| 6 | 10 | Time Magazine, "Sin and Sweden" | 1955 |
| 6 | 11 | General | c1926-1950 |
| 6 | 12 | General | c1951-1960 |
| 6 | 13 | General: Scrapbook | c1960-1965 |
| **OVERSIZE MATERIAL: PUBLISHED POETRY** | | | |
| 7 | 1 | General | 1940-1941 |
| 7 | 2 | General | 1946-1948 |
| 7 | 3 | General | 1949-1955 |
| **MUSIC AND SKETCHES** | | | |
| 7 | 4 | Songsheet and sketches | n.d. & 1949-1955 |
| 7 | 5 | "Stockholm through artist eyes" book by Carl G. Laurin | 1912 |