



FINDING AID

Bernard Bishop collection on Sveas Söner Singing Society (Rockford, Illinois), 1922-1974

COLLECTION SUMMARY

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| Collection Title: | Bernard Bishop collection on Sveas Söner Singing Society (Rockford, Illinois) |
| Collection Number: | MSS P:349 |
| Dates: | 1922, 1945-1974 and undated (bulk 1965) |
| Size: | 1 box (.5 linear feet) and one oversized folder |
| Language: | English (bulk), Swedish |
| Creator/Collector: | Bishop, Bernard Sveas Söner Singing Society American Union of Swedish Singers |
| Subject Headings: | Rockford (Ill.) New York World's Fair (1964-1965 : New York, N.Y.) Choral societies--Illinois Song festivals Concert programs. Swedish American choral societies |
| Repository: | Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. |
| Abstract: | The Sveas Söner Singing Society of Rockford, Illinois was organized on January 23, 1890 and joined the American Union of Swedish Singers as a charter member in 1892. Its initial purpose was to perpetuate Swedish music. In 1965, to celebrate their 75 th anniversary, the chorus made a singing tour of Scandinavian countries, including a pre-tour performance at the World's Fair in New York City. Items were collected and saved by chorus manager Bernard Bishop. |

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

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| Conditions Governing Access: | Collection is open for research. |
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| Preferred Citation: | [item identification], in MSS P:349 Bernard Bishop collection on Sveas Söner Singing Society (Rockford, Illinois), Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. |

ACQUISITION AND RELATED MATERIALS

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| Provenance: | Donated by Deborah Smith in 2017. Smith inherited the collection after her mother's death in 1997. Her mother held the materials after Bernard Bishop's death in 1974. |
| Source of Acquisition: | Gift of Deborah Smith in 2017. |
| Publication Note: | For more information, see publication: <i>Fifty years, 1890-1940 : Sveas Söner Singing Society, Rockford, Illinois.</i> See Swenson Center's library collection for more publications from Sveas Söner Singing Society concerts. |
| Related Materials: | I/O:61 American Union of Swedish Singers records |
| Notes: | Two song albums were removed from this collection. One was cataloged into the library collection: <i>Festskrift : v. allmänna svenska sångarfesten 5-6 juli 1930 i Stockholm / Erik Ljungberger</i> One was removed as it already existed in the library collection: <i>Song album for the sixtieth jubilee singing festival : June 17, 18, 19 and 20, 1954.</i> |
| Processed By: | Finding aid written by Lisa Huntsha, 2017, following DACS description convention. |

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Administrative/Biographical History:

The Sveas Söner Singing Society was organized on January 23, 1890. The chorus joined the American Union of Swedish Singers as a charter member in 1892 and registered with the State of Illinois as Sångföreningen Sveas Söner (Svea's Sons Song Association). Its purpose was "to cultivate, promote and encourage the art of singing, particularly the rich Swedish melodies and compositions and transplant these in our beloved adopted homeland; to give descendants of Swedish ancestry a chance to cultivate their talents and thereby become better citizens; to give high grade, moral and clean entertainments, which will bring the members together in pleasant social intercourse, and also give sick benefit to such members who are entitled under the rules and pay special dues for such benefit" (from constitution). The name Svea refers to Sweden, söner means sons and as such, the group has identified as "Sons of Sweden." In the beginning, members were "any man of preferably Swedish parentage" (from constitution), however by 1965 membership included all nationalities, and their songs expanded to include show tunes and American patriotic favorites.

In 1965, to celebrate its 75th anniversary, the chorus performed at the World's Fair in New York City and made a European singing tour with stops in Sweden, Copenhagen, Paris, London, Dublin, and Scotland.

Bernard Bishop sang in and was manager of the chorus for almost thirty years before his death in 1974. He was an immigrant from England and did not speak Swedish. As manager, he made the arrangements for the performances including contracting guest artists that performed at the annual spring concert. He also organized the 1970 AUSS convention in San Francisco. He worked alongside director Dr. Bernhardt H. Westlund, accompanist Mrs. Percy W. Staublin, and president Tom Martenson.

Scope and Content:

Items in this collection include correspondence, concert programs and advertisements, newspaper clippings of chorus events and performances, and photographs of guest artists and the chorus.

The annual spring concert included special guests such as Lauritz Melchior, Marion Marlowe, Jane Morgan, Roger Williams, Lennon Sisters, John Gary, The New Christy Minstrels, Sergio Franchi, Marilyn Maye, The Lettermen, Dick Shaw and the Arbors.

Items were collected and saved by chorus manager Bernard Bishop.

System of Arrangement:

Collection is arranged into series by material type and chronologically. Series are as follows:

- I. Group History (including constitution and correspondence)
- II. Concert Programs and Advertisements (including annual spring programs with special guests)

- III. Programs Arranged by Bernard Bishop (including 1965 World's Fair performance, 1965 European Tour, and 1970 AUSS convention)
- IV. Newspaper Clippings
- V. Photographs

Collection Inventory (by folder number):

I. Group History

- 1. Constitution, background, letterhead, and business cards (undated)
- 2. Correspondence 1922, 1945, 1955, 1958-1961, 1965 (bulk), 1966, 1969-1971, and undated. Includes contracts and press releases. Correspondence regarding New York World's Fair performance and partial European tour itinerary.

II. Concert Programs and Advertisements

- 3. Concert programs and advertisements, 1922, 1945, 1950, 1952-1953, 1955, 1958-1959, 1961-1964
- 4. Concert programs and advertisements, 1965-1966, 1968-1969, and undated (one in oversized folder)

III. Programs Arranged by Bernard Bishop

- 5. World's Fair, 1965
- 6. European Tour, 1965
- 7. 1970 AUSS convention

IV. Newspaper Clippings

- 8. Newspaper clippings, 1955-1964, archival photocopies
- 9. Newspaper clippings, 1965, archival photocopies
- 10. Newspaper clippings, 1966-1974, archival photocopies
- 11. Newspaper clippings, 1955-1964, originals (one in oversized folder)
- 12. Newspaper clippings, 1965, originals (some in oversized folder)
- 13. Newspaper clippings, 1966-1974, originals (some in oversized folder)
- 14. Newspaper clippings, miscellaneous, undated, originals and photocopies

V. Photographs

- 15. Photographs, 1954-1955, 1958, 1960-1963
- 16. Photographs, 1964, 1966, 1968, and undated (one in oversized folder)
- 17. Photographs, undated
- 18. Photographs, negatives