

# Ernest Wilhelm Olson papers, 1870-1958

**Size:** 1.25 linear feet, 4 boxes

**Acquisition:** Transferred to SSIRC from Special Collections at Augustana College in 1981.

**Access:** The collection is open for research.

**Control num.:** MSS P:12

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## Biographical Sketch

Ernest Wilhelm Olson was born in the town of Mjölkalånga in Finja parish, Skåne, Sweden. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1878 with his parents and nine siblings. The family settled on a farm near Wahoo, Nebraska. His early schooling was somewhat irregular, but he did attend the Luther Academy for periods of time. In 1887, he enrolled at Augustana College and graduated with a B.A. degree in 1891. While attending Augustana, Olson developed an interest in journalism and begun to contribute to the school paper and other campus publications.

In 1893, Olson was offered the position of editor for *Nya Pressen*, a Swedish newspaper published in Moline, Illinois. He became the editor for *Fosterlandet*, also published in Moline in 1897. In 1900, he accepted the editorship for *Svenska Tribunen* in Chicago. He left the field of journalism in 1905 and went to work as the Christian literature editor at the Engberg-Holmberg publishing company in Chicago. In 1911, he was offered a similar position at the Augustana Book Concern in Rock Island, Illinois. He worked for ABC for 38 years and became well known for his literary contributions in both Swedish and English. Olson also edited the *Observer*, a forerunner to the *Lutheran Companion* in 1913 and *Ungdomsvännen* 1914-1918.

Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas presented Olson with an honorary atrium magister degree in 1899 and in 1926 Augustana College conferred upon him the honorary degree of L.H.D. In recognition of his literary achievements, Olson was knighted by the Royal Order of Vasa. Furthermore, he won the St. Eric's Society of New York's Swedish poetry competition in 1922. Olson was also instrumental in developing the new hymnal and service book for the Augustana Lutheran Church, published in 1927. Among his published works are:

History of Swedes in Illinois 2 vols. 1908

En bokhandels historia 1910

Kantat för jubelsynoden with music 1910

Reformationskantat (Swedish and English text with music 1917)

The Swedish Element in Illinois 1917

Pilgrim of the Prairies, dedicatory chatter Messiah Festival Lindsborg, Kansas 1929 and 1931

Augustana Book Concern, a History 1934

Life and Work of Olof Olsson 1941

Valda dikter (Swedish and English) 1947

"Svensk Diktning" and other textbooks Olson collaborated in "Svenskarna i Amerika" 2 vols., 1925 and the 300th Anniversary volume "Swedes in America," 1938.

Ernest William Olson is listed in Who's Who in America and the last entry appeared in 1952.

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## Description

The collection reflects Olson's interest in religion and his professional life in the publishing business and includes his own articles and writings, notebooks, letters and newspaper clippings. Olson's writings contain lectures and speeches he gave, articles on a wide variety of topics, hymns, poems, and published copies of music, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks.

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## Folder inventory

### Box 1, folders 1-10

1. Biographical material, obituaries, clippings incl. portrait of E.W.O from Augustana 1891.

2. Letters received by E.W.O. 1899-1942.

2a. Correspondence 1926-1946, professional and personal (transferred from the L.C.A. archives, date unknown)

5. Lectures and speeches

"Making the world over," n.d.

"Adelphie Society" (a literary club) n.d.

"För skolan ej, för lifvet" speech given at the Adelphie Society meeting

Dec. 8, 1893

"Något om färg i allmänhet och College-färger i synnerhet" kåseri af E.W.O.

"The Dispensation of Light."

"Really Truly Blues."

"Kritisk teckning av G.N. Swan 1909 (utdrag)

"Fest Dikt, vid svenska Nationalförbundets midsommarfest i Moline, IL

1913"

"Alumni address, fiftieth anniversary banquet, Luther College May 16, 1933

by E.W.O.

"Quit You Like Men" A brotherhood Message Delivered on Brotherhood

Sunday St. John's Lutheran Church, Rock Island, IL

"Köttgrytorernas Land." n.d

"Rödjure."

## 6. Lectures and Speeches

"Speech prepared for the Swedish Republican Club Meeting June 7, 1895."

"Luther in the hands of the enemies, n.d."

"Slips of the Mind" (thoughts on how to improve the writing within the Lutheran church)

Untitled speech addressing young people, n.d.

Untitled speech/essay addressing the responsibility of the press, n.d.

Untitled speech questioning the necessity of Women's rights

"Edgar Allan Poe."

"Thoughts on sleep."

"Våra kulturbevarare, några ord med tydlig adress" (kritik af föreningen Svenskhetens bevarande E.W.O.)

"A man of God and his work" outline of Dr. Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist by E.W.O.

"Portrait of Jules Mauritzon"

## 7. Swedish Language use, incl. Olson's *Style Manual*

### 8. Notebooks and Calendars

a. Notebook from 1948 with lists of Swedish words, notes on language use, and clippings from Swedish language newspapers

b. Notebook from 1949 with lists of Swedish words and explanation, notes Swedish language use, and clippings from Swedish language newspapers.

c. Appointment calendar, 1946

d. Notebook with lists of Swedish words and explanation, n.d.

9. Misc. clippings from newspapers

10. Misc. articles and writings

## **Box 2**

Swedish-American publications, misc.

## **Box2a**

1. Hymn for the Pioneers (Banbrytarhymn) New Sweden Tercentenary Hymn (1638-1938) Swedish Text by E.W. Olson. Music by Howard Hanson.

2. Kantat vi Augustana-Synodens femtioårsjubileum 1910 af Ernst Olson. Komponerad for Soli, Kör och Orkester af Reynold Lagerström (typewritten); Reformation Cantata. For the Quadricentennial of the Reformation as it is to be celebrated in the Augustana Synod, written by Ernst W. Olson (ABC, n.d.); Reformationskantat för Sopran, Tenor, Bas, Kvartett, Kör och Orkester.... (ABC, 1917)

3. "Ode to John Ericsson" Lyrics and music written for the dedication of the Ericsson Monument at Washington by Ernst W. Olson.

4. "Augustana College Song" music and lyrics by Ernst W. Olson, n.d.

5. Hymns, songs, and poems by Ernst W. Olson.

6. Clippings from various newspapers, including E.W.O's writing.

7. Clipping/scrapbook entitled "Trall" 1898-1903

8. E.W.O's published writings:

- "A Word to Patriot in All Camps. An open letter to Mr. Lewis and others"
- "Den europeiska konflikten. Yttranden och åskådningar, uppgifter och episoder." Sammanförda för Ungdomsvännen. Nov. 1914.
- "Mexiko just nu." Ur "The Real Mexican" af Hamilton Fyfe. Utdrag och bearbetning för Ungdomsvännen, July 1914. Vol. II entitled "Mexikansk krigföring."
- "Current Events and Present Conditions. The Foreign Loan and American Trade"
- "När året lutar mot sin graf." För Ungdomsvännen, n.d.
- "Relikvarium. Fornt och färskt ur vår amerikahistoria." Ungdomsvännen Jan. 1917 vol. I and II
- "Shakespeareminnet." Utdrag ur Henrik Schucks uppsats. April, 1916
- "Ungdom och evangelium." Ungdomsvännen, n.d.
- "Ett kyrkomöte för fem hundra år sedan. För Ungdomsvännen, n.d.
- "Hvad blef det af Luthers afkomlingar?" Ungdomsvännen, n.d.
- "Några bindestreck mellan Sverige och Amerika." April, 1916
- "När grundades Augustana College" Ungdomsvännen, May 1917
- "Homespun." March 1915- Jan. 1929

9. Writings by E.W. Olson II (not in any particular order)

- "Gethsemane."
- "Tidningsmannavisa."
- "Patmosröster. Vid Augustanas sextiåriga minneshögtid"
- "Abraham Lincoln." A toast given at the University of Upsala in 1865.
- "Rock-Island visan."
- "Lifsfrågan."
- "Augustana-synoden och fredssaken."

10. Writings and clippings by E.W.O.

- "Huru Ericssons Monitor kom till" Ungdomsvännen, March 1912
- "Under segerns örnar. Till hundraårsminnet af Napoleons ryska fälttåg" Ungdomsvännen, Nov. 1912
- "I trasor och spillror. Moskva -Beresina. Till hundraårsminnet af Napoleons ryska fälttåg." Jan., 1913
- "Runebergs tankar om Tegnens skaldskap." Feb. 1914
- "En samlare." Några anteckningar om Axel Lindegaards privatkollektion. Sept. 1913
- "Konstnärinnan Ava Lagercrantz." Ungdomsvännen, Jan., 1913
- "Svenska konstindustriutställningen i Chicago" Jan. 1913
- "Meunier: en arbets skulptör." March 1914
- "De vackra visornas mamma. Ett och annat om fru Alice Tegner." Aug., 1914
- "Scoutrörelsen. En öfverblick för Ungdomsvännen." Sept. 1914
- "Amerikanska nationalsångens hundraårsdag." Ungdomsvännen Sept. 1914
- "Världsfreden bruten." April 1914
- "Den europeiska konflikten. Några synpunkter sammanförda för Ungdomsvännen Oct. 1914
- "Femte Olympiaden. Några bilder och brottstycken." Ungdomsvännen Sept. 1912
- "A.U. Bååth." Ungdomsvännen Oct. 1912
- "Homespun" 1913
- "America" Revised. n.d

"For Sale-Doctor's Degrees." n.d.  
"The Indian Catechism" June 8, 1912  
"Den nyvalde påfven i Rom."  
"Tronskifte inom påfvedomet." Oct. 1914  
"Blåmånsar" Aug., 1914  
"Bilder till den mexikanska krönikan."  
"Krig eller icke krig? June 1914  
"Home rule och Ulster. June 1914  
"Flygningen öfver Atlanten." Aug. 1914  
"Suffragettofoget i England." Aug. 1914  
"Tronföljare fallen för mördarhand." Aug. 1914  
"Empress of Ireland-katastrofen Aug. 1914  
"Svensk slöjd." Jan. 1914  
"Vårt land visavi Mexiko." Dec. 1913  
"Frithiofsstatyn på Vangsnäs." Dec. 1913  
"Lobbyismen." Sept. 1913  
"Kättarhalstret." Sept. 1913  
"David Livingstone, missionären och upptäckaren." March 1913  
"Kejsar Wilhelm II som regent. Öfversikt med anledning af 25 årsjubileet." June 1913  
"Balkankrigets tarfliga slutakt. July 1913  
"Oscar Montelius, en fornforsknings banbrytare." July 1913  
"Händelserna i Europas oroliga hörn." May 1913  
"Besök hos en spåkvinna. Till A. Jernbergs tafla." March 1913  
"På Gettysburgs slagfält. Nu och för femtio år sedan"  
"Wilson-Marshall." Dec. 1912  
"God jul-och välkommen till oss!" Dec. 1912  
"Barnens julfest." Dec. 1912  
"Ett svensk-amerikanskt minnesmärke." Dec. 1912

### **Box 3**

Books, incl. family bible., *Valda Dikter* by E.W.O. and *Amerika-Svenska Lyrik*.

### **Box 4**

1. *Bibeln* 1906
2. *Chor-Sånger* 1881
3. *Amerika-Svensk Lyrik* 1949
4. *Valda Dikter*, selected poems by E.W. Olson 1947
5. *Business Law and Procedure* 1937.