

# Guide to the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture Collection, 1960-2023

## Overview of the Collection

- Repository:** Special Collections & Archives  
McIntyre Library  
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire  
P.O. Box 4004  
105 Garfield Ave.  
Eau Claire, WI 54702 – 4004  
(715) 836-2739  
<https://library.uwec.edu/archives/>
- Reference Code:** USGZE UHC382
- Accession Number:** 23-020
- Collection Number:** UHC 382
- Creators:** Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (Nordenfolk)
- Title:** Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture Collection
- Dates:** 1960-2023
- Quantity:** 3.8 linear feet (7 archives boxes, 1 oversized Folder);  
Digital Materials: files, 722 MB
- Location of Collection:** B6/3g (Box 1-7); Oversize Folder: Rm. 5012 Folder 01,  
Drawer 01; Digital Asset Preservation Storage:
- Languages:** Collection materials are primarily in English.
- Summary:** The Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (Nordenfolk) collection shows the influence of ethnic Scandinavian roots on local Midwestern culture and documents the activity of the organization both regionally and abroad. Includes primarily meeting minutes, program materials, and correspondence from 1961-2023 (bulk 1970s-2010s).

## **Biographical / Historical Note**

The Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (Nordenfolk) was founded on July 6, 1960, under the name Wisconsin Institute of Scandinavian Culture by A. Elmer Anderson, Mrs. Kempton German (also called Mrs. K. L. German), Orville Torgerson, Ralph Gilbert, Trygve Ager, Henry Christoffersen, Gerald O. Thorpe, and Lawrence Wahlstrom. Since the earliest days of the organization, the main goal was “to promote a better understanding and appreciation of Scandinavian Culture among all people regardless of race, religion, age, or ethnic background.” The founders wanted to fill a gap in opportunities for people to learn about the history and culture of Scandinavian countries. They emphasized the importance of both historical and contemporary Nordic culture on Midwestern culture. Throughout the years, they held annual programs to celebrate holidays like Syttende Mai and retreats to encourage student involvement. To help the institute afford the costs of the organization, they opened a retail Scandinavian Shop at 16 S. Barstow St in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, alongside donations from family members and supporters.

A year after their founding, the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture began their tradition of celebrating Syttende Mai, a tradition they still hold today. Alongside Syttende Mai, they have celebrated Finnish Independence Day, Midsummer, and more. The institute encouraged community interest in contemporary Scandinavian culture by inviting performance groups to get involved in local events. The organization understood the importance of student involvement and held retreats every year to educate the younger generation about their heritage. For students that could not afford to attend, they sponsored them through the Wallenberg Fund.

Their involvement extended beyond holiday programming in 1971, when they purchased 50 acres of land in Eastern Dunn County, and a few years later, they received 8 additional acres. L. Wahlstrom had the ambitious plan of creating a Nordic Center that would provide students and hobbyists a way to study Nordic life. However, the Nordic Center was never built because they did not raise enough money and Wahlstrom refused to go into debt. After Wahlstrom’s death, Dawn Bergstrom planned to turn the land into a memorial to the original founders through signs. On May 30, 2012, the institute’s board of directors approved a resolution to enter the land into the Wisconsin Managed Forest Program and by December 29, 2022, the land was sold for \$118.5k and given the name “Elk Creek Bottoms Preserve.”

As of 2023, the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture has a website that continues to update their members on their activities and community involvement. On their website, they claim to “support Scandinavian Culture with Workshops, Retreats and Presentations. Projects include a local Folk Fair, Wahlstrom Nordic Workshop for college students, and a yearly Syttende Mai celebration.”

To learn more about the institute, look at their website:  
<https://www.nordenfolk.online/>

## **Content Description**

The Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (Nordenfolk) collection shows the influence of ethnic Scandinavian roots on local Midwestern culture and documents the activity of the organization both regionally and abroad. The materials of this collection date from approximately 1960-2023, with the bulk of it falling between the 1970s and 2010s.

Included in the collection are meeting minutes, correspondence, emails, maps, annual reports, certifications, director's manuals, program statements, photographs, negatives, blueprints, program materials, membership lists, newsletters, and a 30 minute digitized videocassette documentary of the organization's history, associated with the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (Nordenfolk).

This collection is arranged into six series. Series 1 of Administrative Materials shows the history of the institute, constitution and bylaws, director's manuals, dedications, blueprints, maps, photographs, a 30 minute digitized videocassette documentary of the organization's history, and certifications, ranging from 1968-2022. Series 2 includes meeting minutes and related correspondence from 1968-2023; Series 3 includes correspondence letters and emails from 1962-2013; Series 4 includes program materials that are associated with the various public activities of the institute (some papers are written in English and Swedish/Norwegian) from 1961-2018; Series 5 and 6 include membership lists and newsletters from 1971-2022.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Acquisition Information:**

Transferred to the University Archives by Timothy Siverston in December 2022.

### **Access Restrictions:**

Collection is open to the public.

### **Use Restrictions:**

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. Copyright owned by the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

### **Processing Note:**

Processed by Guinevere Fischer in August 2023.

**Arrangement:**

By series.

**OCLC #:** [Cataloger will add OCLC number later.]

**Subjects**

**Personal Names:**

Aalto, Alvar  
Ager, Trygve  
Anderson, A Elmer  
Bergstrom, Dawn  
Bergstrom, Mr. Everett  
Borssen, Per-Ake  
Christoffersen, Henry  
Eichinger, Evadine  
German, Mrs. Kempton  
Gilbert, Ralph  
Ingwerson, Niels  
Mr. Stapleman  
Proctor, David  
Shakelford, Jole  
Thorpe, Gerald O.  
Thorpe, Gordon  
Torgerson, Orville  
Wahlstrom, Jon  
Wahlstrom, Lawrence

**Corporate Names:**

Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture  
Sons of Norway  
Wisconsin Institute of Scandinavian Culture

**Subject Terms:**

Architecture  
ASI  
Charitable Organization  
Conservation  
Finnish Independence Day

Folk Fair  
Green Thumb Project  
Leif Erikson Day  
Midsummer  
Midwestern Culture  
Nordic Center  
Nordic Culture  
Scandinavian American Organizations  
Scandinavian Americans  
Scandinavian Cookbook  
Scandinavian Culture  
Scandinavian Dance  
Scandinavian Music  
Scandinavian Studies Minor  
Scandinavian-American food  
Student involvement  
Study Abroad  
Swedes in Town  
Swedish costumes  
Swedish Folklore  
Syttende Mai  
Wahlstrom Nordic Workshop  
Wallenberg Fund  
Wisconsin Managed Forest Program

**Geographical Terms:**

Dunn County, Wisconsin  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
Elk Creek Bottoms Preserve  
Elk Creek, Wisconsin  
Finland  
Scandinavia  
Scandinavian Countries  
Sweden

**Detailed List of Contents**

Series 1: Administrative Material

History of the institute, constitution and bylaws, director's manuals, dedications, blueprints, maps, photographs, a 30 minute digitized videocassette documentary of the organization's history, and certifications that show the administrative history of the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture (MWISC).

Dates: 1968-2022, bulk 1971-2005

Extent: 1.4 linear feet (1 archives box, 1 oversized folder); Digital Materials: 722 MB (1 videocassette)

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>
1/1	Certificate of Charitable Organization	1995
1/2	Constitution and Bylaws	1968
1/3	Bylaws	1993
1/4	Director's Manual	1994
1/5	Director's Manual	1999
1/6	Bylaws	2013
1/7	Investment Policy	undated
1/8	Program Statements	1974-1985
1/9	Program Statement	1993
1/10	Photo of Land	Undated
1/11	MWISC Maps	Undated
1/12	Legal Description of Property	1971-2012
1/13	Tree Planting	1971
1/14	Norden Hus: Inspiration for Nordic Center	1973
1/15	Annual Reports	1973, 1980
1/16	Dunn County Property Photos and negatives	1974
Oversized Folder	Streambank Improvement Project Map	1972
1/17	Streambank Improvement Project	1974-1983
1/18	Ampitheater- steep bank	1977-1980
1/19	Green Thumb Project	1977-1980
1/20	Photos of Steambank Improvement award given by West Central Area of Soil and Water Conservation District	1979
1/21	Grant Proposal	1980s
1/22	Timber Sale	1981
1/23	Road Construction	1980-83
Oversized Folder	Zoning Map	1982-89
1/24	Dedication	1984
Oversized Folder	Blueprints and Correspondence	1991
1/25	Uses of the center	1992
Oversized folder	Blueprints	1992-1998
1/26	Energy plan	1994

1/27	Photos	2000-2007
1/28	Future of land	2001
1/29	Rip Rap	2002
1/30	Architect Materials	2004-2005
Oversized folder	Blueprints	2005
1/31	Sign	2007, 2010-2012
Oversized Folder	Rip Rap Map	2015
1/32	Land Purchase Landmark	2022
1/33	Landmark Conservancy Dedication	2022
1/34	Program Slide presentation notes on MWISC	undated
1/35	History of WISC (Wisconsin Institute of Scandinavian Culture) and MWISC	1981-1994
1/36	Legal Change of Name	1979
Folder "UHC382 MWISC"	Documentary on history of MWISC (30 minutes)	722 MB

## Series 2: Meeting Minutes

Detailed overviews of each meeting, alongside related correspondence.

Dates: 1968-2023, bulk 1975-2023

Extent: 0.4 linear feet (1 archives boxes)

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>
1/37	President's Report and Minutes	1968-1999
1/38	Minutes	1975-1981
2/1	Minutes	January 1981-December 1983
2/2	Minutes	1984-1990
2/3	Minutes	1991
2/4	Minutes	1992
2/5	Minutes	1993-1994
2/6	Minutes	1999-2002
2/7	Minutes	2003-2006
2/8	Minutes	2009-2010
2/9	Minutes	2011-2014
2/10	Minutes	2015-2019
3/1	Minutes	2019-2023

Series 3: Correspondence

Letters and emails associated with the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture.

Dates: 1962-2013, bulk 1968-2009

Extent: 0.8 linear feet (2 archives boxes)

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>
3/2	Correspondence	1961-1982
3/3	Correspondence with Niels Ingwerson	1968-1999
3/4	Correspondence with Grounders	1970-1974
3/5	Correspondence with Mr. Everett Bergstrom	1979
3/6	Correspondence with Per-Ake Borssen	1977-1979
3/7	Correspondence with Mr. Stapleman	1979-1982
3/8	Correspondence on Scandinavian Studies Minors	1988-1989
3/9	Minutes and Correspondence from Larry's final years. Contains minutes from July 1989, 1995	1989-1999
3/10	Correspondence with Betsy Geiger	1992-1993
3/11	Correspondence with Jole Shakelford	1993-1998
3/12	Correspondence with Evadine Eichinger	1997
3/13	Correspondence with Eva T. Jarvi	1998
3/14	Correspondence with Marvin Market	1999
3/15	Correspondence in Wahlstrom Era	May 1999
3/16	Correspondence	1999-2000
3/17	Wahlstrom Death Correspondence	February 2000
3/18	Correspondence with Jon W	2001-2005
3/19	Minutes and Correspondence	2000-2012
3/20	Correspondence	2001-2003



4/1	Emails	Jan.-March 2001
4/2	Emails	April-Dec. 2001
4/3	Emails	Jan.-May 2002
4/4	Emails	June-Dec. 2002
4/5	ASI Correspondence	2002-2005
4/6	Emails	Jan.-May 2003
4/7	Emails	June-Dec. 2003
4/8	Emails	Jan.-May 2004
4/9	Emails	June-Dec. 2004
4/10	Emails	2005
5/1	Emails	Jan.-Dec. 2006
5/2	Correspondence	May 2006-2007
5/3	Correspondence	2008-2009
5/4	Correspondence	Jan. 5, 2013

#### Series 4: Program Material

Papers, letters, emails, brochures, and meeting minutes that are associated with the various public activities of the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture. Some papers are written in English and Swedish/Norwegian.

Dates: 1961-2018, bulk 1968-2016

Extent: 1.1 linear feet (2.75 archives boxes)

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>
5/5	Special Projects Notebook	1980-1985
5/6	Advertising Counselors	1977-1976
5/7	Auction	1977
5/8	Cookbook (correspondence and recipe cards)	1980-1981
5/9	Swedish Costumes	1982-1985
5/10	Finnish Independence Day	1997-1992
5/11	Leif Erikson Day	1982-1984
5/12	Midsummer Nordic Run	1978-1981
5/13	Midsummer Photos	1980
5/14	Midsummer	1988-1993
5/15	Retreat	1974
5/16	Retreat	1975
5/17	Retreat	1976-1977
5/18	Retreat	1978
5/19	Retreat	1979

5/20	Retreat	1980
5/21	Retreat	1981
5/22	Retreat	1982
5/23	Retreat	1984
5/24	Retreat	1985
5/25	Retreat	1986
5/26	Retreat	1989
5/27	Retreat	1990
5/28	Retreat	1991
5/29	Retreat	1992
5/30	Retreat	1993
5/31	Retreat	1994
5/32	Retreat	1995
5/32	Retreat	1996
5/33	Retreat	1997
5/34	Retreat	1998
5/35	Retreat	1999
6/1	Culture: What is it	1987-1988
6/2	Norden F. Speakers Bureau	2003-2017
6/3	Syttende Mai	1961-1964
6/4	Syttende Mai	1965
6/5	Syttende Mai	1970-1997
6/6	Syttende Mai	2008
6/7	Syttende Mai	2010
6/8	Syttende Mai	2017-2018
6/9	Tablewalk	1986
6/10	Tablewalk	1987
6/11	Tablewalk	1988
6/12	Tablewalk	1993
6/13	Norlandskoren	1962
6/14	Hordiskittel Parker	1963
6/15	Lund University Singers	1963-1964
6/16	Pal Rostad	1964-1966
6/17	Swedish Folklore Ensemble	1965
6/18	Swedish Folklore Group	1968
6/19	Sons of Norway	1972-1991
6/20	Bjorfo Baudet	1973
6/21	IGE Group	1974
6/22	Svardsjo Folkdans och Spelmanslag	1975
6/23	Norwegian Band	1975

6/24	Klovsjo Folkdraktspasad	1975
625	Norwegian Band	1976
6/26	Folkdanslaget	1976
6/27	Sponsored Groups and Programs	1976-1977
7/1	Rattviks Spelmanslag	1977-1979
7/2	Traskogillet	1977
7/3	Viksangskyrkokoren	1977
7/4	Breistein Men's Chorus	1978
7/5	Jemtland Folk Dancers	1978
7/6	Jularbo Gille	1978
7/7	Tingsryd Jazzflickorna	1978
7/8	Svenska Folkdans Nilsson Sorman	1978-1988
7/9	Alfta Folkdanslag	1979
7/10	Folklore Village	1979
7/11	Liljans Folkdansarc och Kristine Ungdomskor	1979
7/12	Skonborgs Folkdanslag	1979
7/13	Emmigrantorgestern	1979
7/14	Wadkopings Folkdansgille	1979
7/15	Swedes in Town	1980
7/16	Trip	1980
7/17	Myron Floren	1980-1981
7/18	Peggy Leinenhugel Troupe	1981
7/19	Sherman School Scandinavian Day	1991-1994
7/20	Study Abroad	2016

#### Series 5: Membership Lists

Lists of people involved with the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture, including general membership, board members, donators, and directors.

Dates: 1971-2003

Extent: .1 linear feet (.25 archives boxes)

Container	Contents	Dates
7/21	Membership lists	1971-1997
7/22	Membership lists	2001-2003
7/23	Board Members	2000-2002

7/24	Grounders List	1975-1979
7/25	Arkkitehti List	1977
7/26	The King's Court and Grounders	1978-1985
7/27	Board of Director's	1978-1994

Series 6: Newsletters

Materials that were published by the Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture.

Dates: 1993-2022

Extent: 1 folder

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Dates</b>
7/28	Newsletters	1993-2022