



Finnish American Historical Archive – Scope of Collections

The FAHC is dedicated to the documentation, collection, preservation, perpetuation, and display of items that describe and record Finnish American ethnic life in all of its many facets. The archive serves as the chief repository of material knowledge surrounding Finnish American culture and history, and as such, seeks to provide individuals, communities, and organizations with the resources to preserve their material knowledge for future generations.

We are interested in items from all places where Finns settled, with particular interest in North America. Our collection currently represents a wide range of entities including churches, temperance societies, labor and political organizations, businesses and cooperatives, cultural organizations, Sámi and Swedish-speaking Finnish communities, families and genealogical resource groups, and we seek to expand as the Finnish American community continues to diversify.

What do we collect?

We collect a wide variety of archival materials and artifacts and are always willing to discuss the suitability of an item or collection with potential donors.

The archivist can be reached by email at:
joanna.chopp@finlandiafoundation.org

Audiovisual Materials: This includes photographs, films and audio recordings in any format, including digital materials. In the interest of preservation, we are capable of digitizing photographs, slides, and VHS tapes, as well as several audio formats on-site and maintain relationships with professional services when we do not have the capacity to digitize unique formats ourselves.

Manuscript records: These may include business, congregation, or society meeting minutes, membership ledger books, correspondence, special event ephemera like programs and advertisements, family history documents such as baptismal or citizenship records, diaries and journals, memoirs, research paper collections, and more.

Books and Periodicals: Our collections include scholarly works, fiction, biography, histories, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, annual reports, and more, all with an emphasis on their connection with Finnish American history, heritage, and culture. We are selective in the books we accept, and printed materials with unique provenance

or limited publication like self-published family genealogies or community anniversary books are especially sought after.

A NOTE REGARDING FINNISH BIBLES: We typically do not accept Bibles, though we gladly work with families to preserve any genealogy information that might be recorded in a family Bible. Please contact archive staff.

Textiles, Garments, and Jewelry: Finnish national dress (*kansallispuku*), immigration era clothing, rag rugs and ryijy weavings, as well as items like ethnic festival t-shirts, ephemeral buttons and ribbons, Sámi-made items, and more are currently represented in our collection.

Works of Art: The FAHC currently houses a large collection of Finnish-American art including portraiture, landscapes, and church altar paintings. Works in various media by famed Finnish artists Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Eero Nelimarkka, and Alpo Sailo are also important pieces in our collections. We house statuary, stained glass, Finnish designer and household glass and porcelain, carved wooden pieces, posters, maps, blueprints and scale-model architecture.

Material Culture: Items of material culture are those pieces used in everyday and special moments that define traditions and trends in Finnish American life and may include musical instruments, farming, fishing, and hunting tools, religious accoutrements, furnishings, decorative items, and more.

Digital Collections: As more people and organizations move increasingly toward document creation and collection in digital formats, our archive also seeks to collect and preserve materials in these formats. We accept digital materials such as organizational newsletters, photography, recordings, correspondence and more.

Why archive with us?

The Finnish American Historical Archive provides the facility, staff, and research support necessary to steward our unique collections. Our facility safeguards include both climate control and fire suppression systems. We work with a wide range of researchers to best facilitate access to our one-of-a-kind holdings, and we work closely with our donors to ensure that our practices best reflect their interests and needs.