

ASTRID LINDGREN ARCHIVES

REF N° 2004-12

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

SUMMARY

The Astrid Lindgren Archives document the work and influence of what is probably the world's most renowned author of children's books in the twentieth century. The archives were compiled by Astrid Lindgren herself and include nearly all of her original manuscripts (also a few early unpublished ones), short hand drafts, press clippings and an extensive collection of international correspondence.

Most of her books are regarded as classics and have already been read by generations of children and their parents. They transgress the boundaries of age, gender, geography and politics. They are also included in literary canons in their own right and on literary merit alone.

Astrid Lindgren was not only an outstanding author, recognized worldwide (her books translated into more than 85 languages) but also a courageous and ardent advocate for children's rights. As such her influence went far beyond the educational and cultural spheres usually concerned with children's literature. Many of her contributions to public debate found echo on the front pages of newspapers all over the world and she has influenced the attitude towards children and children's rights in many countries. This is amply exemplified in the collection of letters and press clippings which give a unique insight into her public and private life during the second half of the twentieth century.

2 *DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR*

- 2.1 Name (person or organisation)
Kungl. biblioteket (The Royal Library, National Library of Sweden)
- 2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated
The Royal Library has received the Astrid Lindgren Archives as a donation from the founder of the Archives and from her heirs
- 2.3 Contact person (s)
Gunnar Sahlin, National Librarian
Anders Burius, Curator, Manuscript Collection
Lena Törnqvist, Astrid Lindgren Specialist
- 2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)
Postal address:
Kungl. biblioteket, Box 5039, SE-102 41 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: +46 8 463 40 00
e-mail: gunnar.sahlin@kb.se
e-mail: anders.burius@kb.se
e-mail: lena.tornqvist@kb.se

3 *IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE*

- 3.1 The Astrid Lindgren Archives (Astrid Lindgren-arkivet) are listed as L230 in the inventory of manuscript collections at Kungl. biblioteket. The archives are owned by the Swedish state and kept in custody at Kungl. biblioteket (The Royal Library, National Library of Sweden), Box 5039, SE-102 41 Stockholm, Sweden

3.2 Description

Astrid Lindgren (1907-2002) is one of the internationally best known Swedes of all time. Her importance in recognizing children's and young people's literature as an established literary genre throughout the world is unquestionable. With the translations of her works into more than 85 languages on all continents and regardless of political ideologies, she stands out as a truly international author and she has been recognized by learned societies worldwide. In her lifetime, Astrid Lindgren received more than eighty national and international awards and four honorary doctorates (University of Leicester, United Kingdom, University of Warsaw, Poland and University of Linköping, Sweden – in Letters and Medicine).

Her literary characters have (through books and films) provided role models for children everywhere. Pippi Longstocking demonstrating girl power and her boy protagonists opposing the male stereotypes has helped to break down traditional gender concepts. For generations of children all over the world Astrid Lindgren has meant encouragement and solace in hard times but also – and not least important – laughter and imaginative inspiration.

During the last 25 years of her life Astrid Lindgren assumed a high profile role in public debate. An ardent advocate for children's right not only cultural, but first and foremost, to caring adults and their children's safe upbringing. Lindgren used her influence to further this cause whenever she had the opportunity. She raised her voice for all those without power or influence; for children, refugees and animals, and she spoke out against violence, environmental pollution and inhumanity of all kinds. Although initiated in Sweden, these debates created newspaper headlines all over the world and influenced public opinion in many countries.

Through her work and career, Astrid Lindgren demonstrated the importance and influence of culture for children and young people and how it can affect many aspects of human life.

The Astrid Lindgren Archives consist of approx. 100 shelf metres of manuscripts, short hand drafts, correspondence, clippings, photos, audiovisual recordings and other material. The archives were created by Astrid Lindgren herself and her entire career. They are unique in their scope as the author kept virtually all material related to her work, including what is probably one of the largest existing collections of letters from readers all over the world. About fifty percent of the tens of thousands of letter writers are children, the rest adults from all walks of life. There are letters from royalty, statesmen and her family as well as from bus drivers, nursery teachers, publishers or colleagues. Thanks to the wide range of contacts, the letters become a documentation of both private and public life in the second half of the twentieth century. This is a feature adding to the uniqueness of these archives and separating them from other authors' archives.

Although Astrid Lindgren hardly ever made copies of her outgoing correspondence there are some four hundred carbon copies of letters from her. The archives also include the manuscript to almost all of her books, films and plays, including classics such as *Pippi Longstocking*, *Mio, My Son*, *Karlson on the Roof* and *The Brothers Lionheart*.

Since 1980 twenty acquisitions have been registered by the library and the archives are still, to a limited extent, augmented by the author's heirs. In 1999 special funds for the work were put at disposal and work began arranging and recording the material. It is calculated to last for at least another two years. Eventually it will result in inventories and a catalogue of letter-writers. The intention is that these inventories and catalogues will eventually be made accessible on the Internet.

As the archives consist of material at the most some sixty to seventy years old, there is no immediate threat to their physical state and condition. Therefore there are at the moment no plans for conservation measures other than those applied to all manuscripts and collections in the care of the Royal Library. As the material is being processed it is placed in folders and clam shell-boxes and placed in the climate controlled, underground manuscript stacks of the library.

Bibliography: The archives have so far not been accessible to researchers.

Referees:

- Dr Boel Westin, Head of Children's Literature Studies, University of Stockholm
- Dr Horace Engdahl, Permanent Secretary to the Swedish Academy
- Dr Hans Heino Ewers, Head of Institut für Jugendbuchforschung, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

The authenticity of the archival finds is guaranteed by the fact that Astrid Lindgren herself compiled the material and transferred most of it to the Royal Library during her lifetime.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

Astrid Lindgren's literary influence crosses all cultural, ethnical, political and social boundaries. This is reflected not least in the vast collection of letters from her readers.

It is furthermore unique that a woman primarily concerned with children's literature gained such universal recognition as Astrid Lindgren did and had an influence stretching far beyond her original field of work.

These very comprehensive archives include nearly all her manuscripts, drafts, and correspondence and were compiled and collected by Astrid Lindgren herself, the earliest of the documents dating before her first appearance as an author. This direct link to the author makes the archives even more unique and irreplaceable.

4.3 Criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style

Time

Through Astrid Lindgren's extensive correspondence the archives reflect in a very direct way public and private life during the second half of the twentieth century.

Place

Astrid Lindgren's literary works are firmly rooted in Swedish cultural life and yet they have a unique international appeal.

People

The archives demonstrate that an authorship however local in its settings can have universal appeal and be enjoyed by readers in Greenland and Central Africa alike.

Subject and themes

Astrid Lindgren has been recognized as an outstanding author all over the world. She wrote for children and that made her even more aware of the importance of literary standards. She worked in all literary genres and with many different themes. However, all her creative work deals with eternal ethical issues and her message was always that of democracy and humanity. She has spread this message to generations of children and to their parents.

Form and style

The comprehensiveness of the archives also adds to their importance, as does the fact that they were created by Astrid Lindgren herself. Apart from manuscripts, drafts and letters, also a vast collection of clippings and other prints as well as more ephemeral material are included.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

Rarity:

The archives are unique and consist primarily of original manuscripts and letters.

Integrity

The archives are complete as received by the author/compiler.

Threat

There are no foreseeable threats to the archives. They are kept in modern (1997) climate controlled stacks.

Management plan

The archives fall under the same care and regulations as all other manuscripts in the Royal Library.

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The Royal Library
Box 5039
SE-102 41 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone +46 8463 40 00
e-mail: kungl.biblioteket@kb.se

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

As above

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership
Owned by the State

(b) Accessibility

Freely accessible when inventory and catalogues are completed. Parts of the archives will, for the sake of securing personal integrity, require special permission for some years.

(c) Copyright status

Reproduction restricted according to EU copyright laws. Copyright is held by Astrid Lindgren's estate and by the correspondents subject to these laws.

(d) responsible administration

The Royal Library

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 There is no specific management plan for these archives. They are, however, stored together with the other collections of the library's Manuscript Department in underground, climate controlled stacks and supervised by the Section of Conservation and its expertise staff.

When the archival material becomes accessible it will be available for research in a special reading room for manuscripts and rare books and handled by qualified personnel.

During the inventory and cataloguing process, the Section of Conservation is continuously consulted.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 a) The Royal Library, Box 5039, SE- 102 41 Stockholm
Gunnar Sahlin, National Librarian
b) The Manuscript Department
c) The Swedish National Memory of the World Committee

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 The greatest risk to the archives is that – when accessible – some parts of the material can be foreseen to be in great demand. Plans are therefore already made to digitize some documents.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 The present physical state is due to storage in a private home (in an attic). During the process of classifying and cataloguing the archives, paper clips, rubber bands and plastic folders are removed and substituted by paper folders and clam shell-boxes.