

Inventory of the

**Central Market**  
Geneva, Illinois

Records

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 72**

## INTRODUCTION

Ira W. Johnson donated the records of the Central Market; Geneva, Illinois to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on July 23, 1979.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 2.25  
Number of containers: 2 + 3 volumes  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 72

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection partially documents the business activities of the Central Market in Geneva, Illinois, from 1902-1977. Documents before the late 1930's, however, are sparse and yield little information; the bulk of the material pertains to later years.

Box 1 contains a deed, a license, correspondence, governmental memos, census information, and employer tax returns related to withholding and social security. Box 2 includes store accounts, sales records, bank accounts, employee and payroll records, an American Legion Post's finances for Labor Day, 1921, and various printed materials. Housed with the boxes are two account and one payroll ledgers.

Researchers interested in the Central Market primarily because of its connection to the Swedish immigrant community in the region may wish to consult two additional Regional History Collections, the Fred C. Soderboom Papers (RC 33) and the International Order of Good Templars (RC 66). Geneva, Illinois: A History of Its Times and Places, edited by Julia M. Ehresmann, (Geneva, Illinois: Geneva Public Library District, 1977) may also be useful.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Central Market was a mainstay of the Geneva, Illinois business community from 1895 until early 1979. O.P. Johnson and Henry Sandholm purchased the market at 121 W. State Street in November of 1895. Known as the Sandholm and Johnson Meat Market, it was renamed the O.P. Johnson Central Meat Market in 1900 when Johnson became sole owner. Axel Peterson became a partner in 1917, and a year later the market moved to 209 W. State Street where it was located until its demise in 1979. O.P. Johnson retired in 1935; his son, Ira Johnson, and Leslie Danielson became co-owners then and operated the store thereafter.

The Central Market is best known for its Swedish ethnic origin and connections. Ira Johnson's ancestors were part of the massive influx of Swedish immigrants to America in the

nineteenth century. In 1895 approximately one half of the population of Geneva was of Swedish origin; the Eastern side of town was well known as the Swedish section of the community. Geneva had its own lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars and has formally celebrated Swedish Day since June 1925 when the Good Templar Park was completed. O.P. and Ira Johnson were part of the ethnic Swedish business community that sought to cater to immigrants and their descendants. At first the market specialized in meat and fish. Employees took weekly trips to Chicago to personally select the fish, and orders were taken from and deliveries made to homes in the Geneva area. Gradually other products were added to the store's stock. A prominent businessman, Ira Johnson has also served in various county and township administrative offices since 1931. The market was accidently destroyed early in 1979 when an adjacent building collapsed, severely damaging it.

#### SUBJECT TRACINGS

Central Market  
Geneva  
Grocery Trade  
Meat Trade  
Retail Trade

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	
1	1	Deeds, 1917; license, 1948	
	2	Correspondence, memos, War Food Administration, 1943	
	3	Correspondence, registration, Office of Price Administration, 1943	
	4	Censuses of Business, 1954, 1958, 1963	
	5-7	Employer's Tax Returns, withholding, social security, 1937-1971	
	8	Price charts, accounts, by name, c. 1935	
	2	1-6	Accounts, daily, sales, 1969-1975 incomplete
		12 booklets	Accounts, daily, by name, 1960-1968
1 envelope		Accounts, names, addresses, n.d.	
4 booklets		Bank accounts, receipts, 1936-1937; 1947-1974	
1 envelope		Bank Balance, 1958-1959	
1 booklet		Accounts, 1902-1908	
1 volume		Employee history record	
7 volumes		Payroll records, 1944-1948	
1 envelope		Payroll record, 1943	
1 booklet		American Legion Post 75, Labor Day, finances, 1921	
1 volume		<u>Elburn, Lily Lake Telephone Directory, 1947</u>	
1 volume		<u>Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles Telephone Directory, 1947</u>	
1 volume	<u>Master Meat Pricer, 1953</u>		
Oversize	1 volume	Payroll ledger, 1956-1969	
Oversize	1 volume	Accounts ledger, daily, December 1941-September 1965	
Oversize	1 volume	Accounts ledger, daily, October 1965-September 1973; January 1976-August 1977	