

JAMES PAUL CHAPIN PAPERS

A Special Collection in

The Archives and Library of

THE STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM

75 Stuyvesant Place, Staten Island, New York 10301

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#### PROVENANCE:

The materials in this collection were donated to the Archives and Library of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences by Dr. Chapin's widow, Mrs. Ruth Chapin, and bear the following accession numbers: LI65.32, LI66.5, LI66.13, and LI77/78.32; and by Dr. Roswell Coles, former Director of the Staten Island Museum (1940-1949), during part of the time that Dr. Chapin acted as President of the Institute. The materials donated by Dr. Coles bear the following accession numbers: LI65.23 and LI69.33.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Born in Manhattan, New York City, 1889, Chapin's family moved in his third year of life to Staten Island. Became active member of the Institute in 1904 and participated with William T. Davis, Alanson Skinner, and Howard Cleaves in many tramps afield. Received a scholarship to Columbia in 1905 and started there next year. In 1909, he interrupted his college to join the first American Museum of Natural History expedition to the Congo (until 1915). He returned to college and obtained his bachelor's degree in 1916, and master's in 1917, thence to offer training at Plattsburg, NY. He sailed to France in 1918 as "commander." He was discharged the following year honorably. He married Suzanne Drouel in 1921. He continued his activities with the S.I. Institute of Arts & Sciences—in fact had been offered the director's post in many expeditions to Africa: 1926-27, 1930-31, 1937-48, 1949, 1953-58. The Oss sent him to Africa during World War II. During this time he divorced Suzanne and married Ruth Trimble. He was made President of the Board of the Institute (S.I.). He was the discoverer of the Congo peacock. His major work was the four-volume "Birds of the Belgian Congo." He died at his home in New York City in 1964.

JAMES PAUL CHAPIN PAPERS  
Box Inventories:

Box 1/20

Letters: personal, SIAS, Explorers' Club 1900-1949

Box 2/20

SI Field and Bird Notes; military notebooks,  
Calendar books; genealogy, autobiography 1904-1960

Box 3/20

School notebooks 1907-1922

Box 4/20

Columbia University manuals; bibliographical  
Articles; American Museum of Natural History  
(Ornithology Department) Chapin Collection  
Catalogue cards 1904-1979

Box 5/20

Personal documents; military records; marriages;  
Chapin colophons 1901-1961

Box 6/20

Career clippings and collected articles 1909-1964

Box 7/20

Influential books in youth 1860-1902

Box 8/20

Birds of the Belgian Congo 1932-1954

Box 9/20

Early youth – scrapbook 1906-1909

Note: there is no Box 10/20

Box 11/20

Oversize manuscripts n.d.

Box 12/20		
	Artifacts	n.d.
Box 13/20		
	Index of invertebrates: manuscript descriptions by Chapin with drawings of some of the animals	n.d.
Box 14/20 OS		
	Chapin honors	1909-1942
Box 15/20		
	Clippings	1950-1959
Box 16/ 20		
	Clippings	1960
Box 17/20		
	Clippings	1960
Box 18/20		
	Clippings	1960
Box 19/20		
	Magazines	1950-1960
Box 20/20		
	African newspapers	1950-1960

The collection accounts for 22 cubic feet. Photographs (2 boxes) and negatives (1 box) are now located in the appropriate storage room.