

CHARLES WILLIAM LENG PAPERS

A Special Collection in

The Archives and Library of

THE STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM

75 Stuyvesant Place, Staten Island, New York 10301

Arranged and Described by

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PROVENANCE:

Mrs. Charles Leng deposited many of these papers and scrapbooks and photographs in 1941 after the death of her husband. The balance of the papers was turned over to the Institute during the 1960s by Mr. Charles Leng's son, Charles Leng, Jr., who was Treasurer of the Institute.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Mr. Leng was born on Staten Island, April 6, 1859, but shortly thereafter the family moved to Brooklyn where they remained until 1879 when they returned to Staten Island.

He graduated in 1877 from the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science. He also helped to start the Brooklyn Entomological Society. He was an incorporator in 1885 and served again in that capacity in 1936 at the reincorporation of the Society. He was in various official capacities in that Society.

He was one of the founders of the Natural Science Association of Staten Island in 1881. One of the officers of the Association, he became Director of the Institute in 1919 and remained that until his death. In order to do this, he gave up his business—he was an iron merchant.

He wrote together with William T. Davis the five-volume history of Staten Island "Staten Island and Its People," published in 1929. He had been appointed Borough Historian in 1919, a post he held until the mid-1930s when he turned it over to Loring McMillen of the Staten Island Historical Society.

He was also author of many scientific publications, especially regarding the Coleoptera. His major work in this field was "A Catalogue of the Coleoptera of America, North of Mexico" published in 1920 by John D. Sherman Jr.

He died at home on January 24, 1941.

SCOPE & CONTENT:

This collection of five cubic feet is sparse compared with the collection of materials deposited at the Institute by Mrs. Leng's friend, William T. Davis. There are gaps existing, especially in the early years. It may be possible to fill in some of those gaps by consulting Leng's letters to Davis, which are stored in the Davis Collection (26.wtD).

The contents have been arranged in five entries: biographical materials and letters; manuscripts and letters regarding Staten Island History; letters about the Institute; scrapbooks; and ephemera.

In the first series, letters from other entomologists are in the ascendancy. The second series carries genealogical information about certain Staten Island families: Dalley (d'Ailey), Seguire, Lisk, Laurens, Lawrence, Rue, DeHart and Manee. Also included are certain military materials which have been "inventoried" to the Military Papers Collection.

The third series are a small group of letters and manuscripts about the Institute and its history. The scrapbooks are four: one ca. 1880, and three annotated page proofs with clippings of "Staten Island and Its People."

The fifth box contains articles written by Leng and by others, and a folder of undated photographs by Mr. Leng. The materials in the third box have been inventoried to the Institute's Archives.

It is our expectation and hope that additional materials will turn up and will be added as an accretion.

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Box Inventories:

Box 1/5	Folders		
	1-3	Death, memorials, school, dedication; biographical notes by W.T. Davis	1881-1971
	4	Memoirs of Zetosophian Society of Brooklyn; Journals kept by Leng	1876
	5-37	Letters and correspondence	1901-1934
Box 2/5	Folders		
	38-60	Notes and correspondence about Staten Island History; letter appointing him Borough Historians (1919; 1922 date of induction)	n.d., 1904-1931
Box 3/5	Folders		
	61-73	Correspondence and letters regarding S.I. Institute of Arts & Sciences and forerunners; scrapbook	1880, 1917-1931
Box 4/5			
	3 items	Annotated scrapbooks by Leng on "Staten Island and Its People: A History"	1925-1929
Box 5/5	Folders		
	79-94	Ephemerae: Publications written by by Leng, annotated and inscribed by him; photographs by Leng	1902-1941