

HUGH POWELL 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:

Hugh Powell has been coming to the Institute as a researcher, a volunteer, and sometimes as a staff member, since 1962. He has made many gifts to the Institute's archives and historical collections, his first gift being made in 1964 and carrying the accession number 64-33. He has made copies of his historical articles and research available to the Institute. On learning that we were setting them up as a collection, he cooperated to the extent of giving us materials which were lacking and providing us with an extensive biography and family photographs.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Hugh Powell was born June 17, 1932 at the Staten Island Hospital to Robert and Ida (Brooke) Powell. His parents were separated. His mother remained on Staten Island, living with her parents. He was educated in Public School 12, Concord, Staten Island and later went to a public school in Dongan Hills. He graduated public school at P.S. 20, Port Richmond, and attended Port Richmond High School, but left before graduation. His mother died in 1972. He had learned that his father died sometime early in the 1960s.

He became interested in the history of Staten Island, and from 1961 began to read and do research in the history on Staten Island. In 1962, he became a volunteer at the Staten Island Historical Society, as he did in the Library and Archives of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.

He has worked on his research of Staten Island history in every repository in the City of New York, and his record of his research is maintained in this collection.

SCOPE & CONTENT:

This collection of 26 cubic feet includes the papers of Hugh Powell of the past twenty years and also collected items which he deposited at the Institute, such as the manuscript record of the public school sanitary inspectors, an 1881 autograph album belonging to a Miss Ellis from Rossville, and other items.

In addition to small articles written on the movies, on the ponds of Staten Island, on various families of Staten Island, there is research on artists, printmakers, businessmen of Staten Island, photographers, postcards of Staten Island, hotels, black history, New York City history and other areas.

Mr. Powell's major works are "The Iconography of Staten Island," which is a history of Staten Island through its prints with historical annotations, similar to and inspired by the Stokes' "Iconography of Manhattan Island." Mr. Powell researched this work through every repository in New York City. The second is his "Governmental History of Staten Island 1614-1898" which is an annotated overview of Staten Island's governments for those years which preceded the consolidation of Staten Island with New York City as the fifth borough. And a third is his biography of "John Whetten Ehninger," an artist living on Staten Island during the 19th century.

These three manuscripts have not been published and therefore access is restricted: they may not be reproduced, but they may be consulted.

The same restrictions apply to several other manuscripts and these are noted on the box lists.

The majority of his research has been on 19th-century items of history. He particularly has been interested in the Civil War years on Staten Island, and has amassed a great deal of materials relating to those years.

His achievement also presents items about Staten Island as found in other repositories in New York City and New Jersey. Bringing them together in one collection like this is a contribution to researcher's needs.

HUGH POWELL PAPERS

Box Inventories:

Box 1/11

Folders		
1-11	Biographical materials; Mother's papers; inventory of personal collection	1909-1979
11-22	Research on Staten Island families	(1750-1897)
23	Thomas F. Patterson letters	1897
24-30	Research on Staten Island families	(1694-1900)
31	Dr. and Mrs. J. Walter Wood, letters, receipts	

Box 2/11

Folders		
32-51	Research and manuscripts on Iconography of Staten Island, by Hugh Powell	1962-1970

Box 3/11

Folders		
52-61	Check lists, indices, surveys of photographs and photographers of Staten Island	1962-1970

Box 4/11

Folders		
61-76	Research on artists, actors, and movie industry on Staten Island. Artists include John Whetton Ehninger, Fred S. Cozzens, and Thomas Nast	(1834)-1980

Box 5/11

Folders		
77-84	Research notes on Black history (local)	1978-1979
85	Broadsides & handbills	1977
86	Clay industries of Staten Island	1977
87-88	Land papers	1977
89-106	New York and New Jersey research	1978

Box 6/11

Folders		
107-112	Pond research	1866-1975
112	Quarantine	1806
113	Sports on Staten Island	1972
114-127	SIAAS/SIIAS research	1972-1979

Box 7/11

Folders		
128-159	Research notes and collected items on Staten Island history	1886-1976

Box 8/11	Folders 160-167	Governmental History of Staten Island Ms by Hugh Powell	1614-1898
Box 9/11	Folders 168-174	Newspaper transcripts of Staten Island general descriptions and legal notices	1850-1870
Box 10/11	Folders 175-188	Newspaper transcripts: Staten Island general descriptions	1799-1902
Box 11/11	Folders 189-192	Newspaper transcripts: Staten Island items from the Times. Movies and research cards on the movie industry	1851-1962