



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Charles Rau papers, 1839-1887

Carol Day

1976

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository: National Anthropological Archives

Title: Charles Rau papers

Date: 1839-1887

Identifier: NAA.XXXX.0182

Creator: Jones, Charles C., Jr. (Charles Colcock), 1831-1893 (Correspondent)
Möllhausen, Balduin, 1825-1905 (Correspondent)
Rau, Charles, 1826-1887
Berendt, C. Hermann (Carl Hermann), 1817-1878 (Correspondent)

Extent: 1 Linear foot

Language: English; Most of the letters are in German script.

Summary: At the time of his death in 1887, the library, archaeological collections and private papers of Charles Rau became the property of the United States National Museum. The library, called the Rau Library of Archaeology, became the nucleus of the archaeological department library. The papers represented by this collection are numbers 1180, 1182- 84, 1186-1190 and 1230 of that library, together with some uncataloged personal correspondence, invitations and newspaper clippings, all of which were transferred to the National Anthropological Archives in March of 1976 by the Smithsonian Institution Libraries. There were no restrictions on the use of this collection, which is contained in two boxes.

Included in his private papers are the manuscripts of some of his publications; early personal correspondence; copies of research papers; a few research notes and some newspaper clippings. Of the approximately 60 incoming letters, only eight were written after Rau's emigration to the United States from Germany in 1848. Of possible interest to the historian are the boyhood letters from his period of apprenticeship in the iron industry of Westphalia and those from the year 1848 which contain much material on the political upheavals of that year. Charles Rau's letters to Dr. Carl Hermann Berendt (1817-1878), a German political refugee and Central American anthropologist, are concerned mainly with personal matters but contain also comments on the American political scene and much small talk of the contemporary world of anthropology. Included is some rather frank professional criticism of the other scholars and of the Smithsonian Institution hierarchy. This correspondence is in German and for the most part in German script as are the earlier letters. Two letters from Heinrich Balduin Mollhausen, a German artist whose drawings of Indians appear in the National Anthropological Archives are filed with the incoming letters.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Rau papers were transferred from the Smithsonian Libraries to the National Anthropological Archives in 1976.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds MS 7065 Letter to Charles Rau, MS 7066 Letter to Charles Rau, and MS 7125 Catalogs of collections of American and European antiquities.

The Smithsonian Institution Archives holds Record Unit 7070, Charles Rau Papers.

Preferred Citation

Charles Rau papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Biographical / Historical

Charles Rau was born in Belgium and was educated in Germany. He left his studies in 1839 and became an apprentice in the iron industry in Siegen and, later a mining superintendent in Remagen. In 1848, he immigrated to the United States, settling in the St. Louis area. There, while teaching languages in order to support himself, he collected archaeological specimens and began to investigate nearby archaeological sites. Beginning in 1859, he regularly published articles on archaeology and other anthropological concerns. In 1861, he moved to New York and, while still teaching, continued archaeological work that would make him one of America's leading authorities in that field. In 1863, he became a contributor to Smithsonian publications and, in 1875, was employed to prepare the anthropological exhibit of the Smithsonian and Bureau of Indian Affairs at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. In 1881, he was appointed curator in the Department of Archaeology of the United States National Museum, a position he held until he died in 1887.

1826	Born Carl Rau in Verviers, Liege, Belgium to German parents
1839	Left his studies and home in Heidelberg to enter into an apprenticeship in the iron industry in Siegen, Germany
1844	Became a mine administrator (superintendent) near Remagen
1848	In October, emigrated to the United States; first to New Orleans and then to work as a language teacher in Bellesville, Illinois
1856-1863	Moved to New York where he also taught languages
1863	Began to write for the Smithsonian Reports
1875	Was asked to prepare ethnological section of the SI Centennial Exhibition
1876	Living in Philadelphia
1881	Became curator of the Department of Archaeology of the United States National Museum
1882	Made an honorary Ph.D. by the University of Freiberg in Baden
1887	July 26, died in Philadelphia

Scope and Contents

Charles Rau (1826-1887), described by *The Dictionary of American Biography* as "the foremost American archeologist," was curator for archeology of the United States national Museum from 1881 until his death. Included in his private papers are the manuscripts of some of his publications; early personal correspondence; copies of research papers; a few research notes and some newspaper clippings.

Of the approximately 60 incoming letters, only eight were written after Rau's emigration to the United States from Germany in 1848. Of possible interest to the historian are the boyhood letters from his period of apprenticeship in the iron industry of Westphalia and those from the year 1848 which contain much material on the political upheavals of that year.

Charles Rau's letters to Dr. Carl Hermann Berendt (1817-1878), a German political refugee and Central American anthropologist, are concerned mainly with personal matters but contain also comments on the American political scene and much small talk of the contemporary world of anthropology. Included is some rather frank professional criticism of the other scholars and of the Smithsonian Institution hierarchy. This correspondence is in German and for the most part in German script as are the earlier letters.

Two letters from Heinrich Balduin Mollhausen, a German artist whose drawings of Indians appear in the National Anthropological Archives are filed with the incoming letters.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Arrangement

Arranged in 5 series: (1) Incoming letters, 1839-1856; (2) letters to Carl Hermann Berendt, 1869-1876; (3) writings, undated; (4) material collected by Rau, 1865-1887; (5) miscellany, undated

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Archaeology

Names:

Smithsonian Institution

Places:

Georgia
Germany -- Politics -- 1850s
North America

Container Listing

Series 1: INCOMING LETTERS, 1839-1856

Scope and Contents: Arranged chronologically by the first date of each group of letters, with all letters from one correspondent kept together. Where letters are undated they are retained in their original sequence. Approximately 60 letters. One note in French, all of the others in German.

Box 1, Folder 1 1839-1846 -- Wishmann, Deutgen, Hexamer, Dunkes, Castendyck, Wagner, Koster, Beckmann, Korthos, Wiessen, Midy, Menzlev

Box 1, Folder 2 1847, 1848 -- Schlickum, Houtbourg, Clouth, Neuhoff

Box 1, Folder 3 1850 - --- Merker, Rau, Mollhausen, Lommell

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Series 2: LETTERS TO CARL HERMANN BERENDT, 1869-1873, 1876

Scope and Contents: Approximately forty letters, short notes and postcards written from New York and Philadelphia to Dr. Berendt in New York. Several letters from Berendt to Rau are included and are filed according to dates with the Rau letters. Where dates are missing the letters have been left in their original place in the sequence.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1 1869-1872

Box 1, Folder 2 1873, 1876

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Series 3: WRITINGS, All undated

Scope and Contents: Here are found handwritten copies of a lecture given before the New York Liberal Club; a paper identified by Rau as "Brooklyn Lecture"; three short papers and the entire manuscript of the book *Prehistoric Fishing in Europe and North America.*"

Arranged alphabetically.

Box 1, Folder 1	Brooklyn Lecture
Box 1, Folder 2	Fire and Sun Workshop, Cave Researches, etc.
Box 1, Folder 3	The Happy Age. Lecture before the New York Liberal Club
Box 1, Folder 4	On the Parallelism in the Development of Mankind
Box 1, Folder 5	Petrifactions as Prehistoric Ornaments
Box 1, Folder 6, 7, 8, 9	Prehistoric Fishing in Europe and North America
Box 1, Folder 10	Stone Age in Europe

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Series 4: MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS COLLECTED BY RAU, 1865-1887

Scope and Contents: A letter from Charles Jones, later published in the SI Annual Report, describing two silver crosses found in Georgia; a paper by Atreus Wenner about Indian relics near York, Pennsylvania; a selection copied from a work by Bedford Pim; a copy, in German or an article about stone axes by Ferdinand Keller; and one about pre-Columbian settlements in America by Philip Vatcutins, also in German, and the bibliography from a book by Theo. Waitz on ethnology. Also a couple of excerpts from Squier and Davis' book on mounds and artifacts in the Mississippi Valley.

Arranged alphabetically.

Box 2, Folder 1	Jones, Charles. Silver Crosses
Box 2, Folder 2	Keller, Ferdinand. Über Anfertigung von Steinbeilen....
Box 2, Folder 3	Pim, Bedford & Seeman, Berthold. Seeman in Dottings by the Roadside in Panama. (selections)
Box 2, Folder 4	Vatcutins, Philipp. Vorcolumbische Besiedlung Americas durch Africanische Stamme.
Box 2, Folder 5	Verzeichnis von 454 auf die Ethnologie. (bibliography)
Box 2, Folder 6	Wanner, Atreus. Relics of an Indian Hunting Ground.
Box 2, Folder 7	Squier, Ephraim George and Davis, Edwin Hamiltion. Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley.

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Series 5: MISCELLANEOUS

- Scope and Contents:
1. Invitations to International Congresses.
 2. Obituary for Karl Heinrich Rau, a prominent German scholar who was perhaps the uncle of Charles Rau; a clipping containing a critical review of contemporary German poetry, by Charles Rau; a clipping about the return visit to Germany of an 1848 political refugee.
 3. Notes: Undated, unfinished index to archeological topics in the Annual Report; notes labeled Game of Chung-kee.

Box 2, Folder 1	Invitations to International Congresses
Box 2, Folder 2	Newspaper clippings
Box 2, Folder 3	Notes: Game of Chung-kee
Box 2, Folder 4	Notes: Index to Archeological Topics in the [Smithsonian Institution] Annual Report, 1847-1875. A-B
Box 2, Folder 5	Notes: Index.... (con't) C-Georgia.

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