

Register to the Papers of  
Charles Rau

Carol Day  
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National Anthropological Archives  
Smithsonian Institution

## INTRODUCTION

At the time of his death in 1887, the library, archeological collections and private papers of Charles Rau became the property of the United States National Museum. The library, called the Rau Library of Archeology, became the nucleus of the archeological 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.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF CHARLES RAU

- 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 Archeology 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 CONTENT NOTE

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.

Other Rau related material in the NAA can be found in number 7070: Charles Rau Papers, 1850-1880; letters from Joseph Henry and Spencer F. Baird.

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. INCOMING LETTERS                      1839-1856    [3/4 inch]

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.

2. LETTERS TO CARL HERMANN BERENDT                      1869-1873, 1876. [ ½ inch]

Arranged chronologically.

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.

3. WRITINGS. All undated [ 4 ½ inches]

Arranged alphabetically.

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."

4. MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS COLLECTED BY RAU. 1865-1887. [1inch]

Arranged alphabetically.

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 Vatscutins, 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.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS (con't)

5. MISCELLANEOUS. [2 ½ inches]

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.

CONTAINER LIST

CONTAINER

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Series 1. INCOMING LETTERS

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

Folder 2.

1847, 1848 – Schlickum, Houtbourg, Clouth, Neuhoff

Folder 3.

1850 - --- Merker, Rau, Mollhausen, Lommell

Series 2. LETTERS TO CARL HERMANN BERENDT. 1869-1876

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1869-1872

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1873, 1876

CONTAINER LIST (con't)

Box 1 (con't)

Series 3. WRITINGS

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Brooklyn Lecture

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Fire and Sun Workshop, Cave Researches, etc.

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On the Parallelism in the Development of Mankind

Folder 5.

Petrifactions as Prehistoric Ornaments

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Prehistoric Fishing in Europe and North America

Folder 10.

Stone Age in Europe.

Box 2

Series 4. MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS COLLECTED BY  
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Jones, Charles. Silver Crosses.

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Keller, Ferdinand. Über Anfertigung von Steinbeilen....

Folder 3

Pim, Bedford & Seeman, Berthold. Seeman in Dottings by  
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Vatcutins, Philipp. Vorcolumbische Besiedlung Americas  
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Verzeichnis von 454 auf die Ethnologie. (bibliography)

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Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley.

Series 5. MISCELLANEOUS

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Notes: Game of Chung-kee

Folder 4.

Notes: Index to Archeological Topics in the [Smithsonian Institution] Annual Report, 1847-1875. A-B

Folder 5.

Notes: Index.... (con't) C-Georgia.