



# Guide to the Ralph Leslie Rusk Papers, 1782-1981

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

103 Perkins Library, Duke University

Durham 27708-0185

919-660-5822

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Ralph Leslie Rusk papers, 1782-1981

**Creator:**

Rusk, Ralph L. (Ralph Leslie), 1888-

**Abstract:**

Professor of American Literature at Columbia University, 1925-1953. One of the founders of the journal *American Literature*. Married Clara Gibbs in 1915. The Ralph Leslie Rusk Papers span the years 1782-1981, and chiefly concern Rusk's teaching and research in American Literature, notably the life and letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The collection contains research papers and notebooks, and travel diaries related to Rusk's research and teaching; a large series of correspondence covering the years 1912-1963; teaching materials such as lecture notes; clippings files and articles related to Rusk's publications and related activities; many photographs; Rusk, Gibbs, and Emerson family papers; and papers relating to his wife, Clara Gibbs, including a scrapbook and wedding mementoes. Some of the papers and photographs refer to a period of time spent teaching in the Philippines, around 1912-1914. Acquired as part of the Jay B. Hubbell Center for American Literary Historiography.

**Extent:**

30 Linear Feet  
25,276 Items

**Physical Location:**

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

**Language:**

English

**Language:**

Material in English

**Collection ID:**

RL.01121

**Permalink:**

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/ruskralph/>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Ralph Leslie Rusk Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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## Background

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### Scope and Content

The Ralph Leslie Rusk Papers span the years 1782-1981, and chiefly concern Rusk's teaching and research in American Literature, notably the life and letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The collection contains research papers and notebooks, and travel diaries related to Rusk's research and teaching; a large series of correspondence covering the years 1912-1963; teaching materials such as lecture notes; clippings files and articles related to Rusk's publications and related activities; many photographs; Rusk, Gibbs, and Emerson family papers; and papers relating to his wife, Clara Gibbs, including a scrapbook and wedding mementoes. Some of the papers and photographs refer to a period of time spent teaching in the Philippines, around 1912-1914. The collection was originally arranged by additions, described below in more detail. Some boxes have been reordered to reflect a chronological or topical sequence, thus, some box numbers appear out of order.

The original collection (6-19-78) (32 items; dated 1939-1956) contains an essay on William Peterfield Trent, and 31 letters regarding Rusk's academic activities. There are letters from Bliss Perry, Stanley T. Williams, Henry A. Pochmann, George C. D. Odell, Newton Arvin, John Erskine, Randall Stewart, Harry H. Clark, and Ernest E. Leisy.

The addition (9-25-85) (5982 items; dated 1880-1979) relates primarily to Rusk's research for editing *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, and his teaching. Rusk maintained journals and ledgers during research trips in Europe, where he retraced the travels of Ralph Waldo Emerson. There are photostatic copies of Emerson family letters, articles about Emerson and related topics, and a clippings file featuring reviews of Rusk's book. In addition, Rusk's lecture notes are held in three volumes, notebooks, and notecard files. There are also photographs, photograph albums, and letters (1912-1914) from the period Rusk spent as a professor at the University of the Philippines. These items including descriptions of the islands and culture. There are also miscellaneous items and scrapbooks.

The addition (12-18-85) (100 items; dated 1883-1980) contains an inventory and appraisal of Rusk's private library now housed at Columbia University; as well as Clara Gibbs' scrapbooks, correspondence, and various commencement invitations. There are also items related to their marriage, including her bride's book, a wedding announcement, and their marriage certificate.

The addition (6-25-86) (16,920 items; dated 1782-1963) contains correspondence, clippings, travel diaries, and pictures for the Rusk and Gibbs families. The clippings refer to Rusk's books THE LIFE OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON, LETTERS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON, and THE LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE WESTERN FRONTIER. The correspondence pertains to Rusk's research and teaching.

The addition (87-116) (12 items; dated 1941-1981) comprises official documents concerning the deaths of Rusk family members. Acquired as part of the Jay B. Hubbell Center for American Literary Historiography.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Statement**

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### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

All or portions of this collection may be housed off-site in Duke University's Library Service Center. The library may require up to 48 hours to retrieve these materials for research use.

Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library to use this collection.

### **Use Restrictions**

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of

the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

### **Acquisition Information**

The Ralph Leslie Rusk Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1978, and 1985-1987.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Jonathan Grilli.

Encoded by Jonathan Grilli, April 2009

Accessions from 1978, 1985, 1986, and 1987 were merged into one collection, described in this finding aid.

Portions of this collection may not be arranged beyond original order. Please consult with a reference archivist before coming to use this collection.

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## **Names and Subjects**

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- American literature -- History and criticism
- American literature -- Study and teaching
- Diaries
- Philippines -- Description and travel
- Philippines -- Pictorial works
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- University of the Philippines -- Faculty
- Gibbs, Clara
- Gibbs family
- Rusk, Ralph L. (Ralph Leslie), 1888-
- Rusk family
- Columbia University -- Faculty
- Rusk, Ralph L. (Ralph Leslie), 1888-
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882
- Emerson family

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## Collection Inventory

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### Correspondence, 1912-1963

**Physical Description:** 32 boxes

**Scope and Contents note**

Boxes have been reorganized into chronological sequence; box numbers therefore appear out of order.

Correspondence ca. 1912-1950s	Box 13
Letters, 1913-1923	Box 29
Letters, 1923-1925	Box 30
Letters, 1925-1927	Box 31
Letters, 1926-1927	Box 32
Letters, 1928	Box 33
Letters, 1929	Box 34
Letters, 1931	Box 35
Letters, 1932	Box 36
Letters, 1933-1934	Box 37
Letters, 1939	Box 38
Letters, 1940-1949	Box 39
Letters, 1943-1944	Box 40
Letters, 1949	Box 41
Letters, 1949-1951	Box 42
Letters, 1952	Box 43
Letters, 1953-1954	Box 44
Letters, 1955-1956	Box 45

Letters, 1957	Box 46
Letters, 1958	Box 6
Letters, 1959	Box 7
Letters, 1960	Box 8
Letters, 1961	Box 1
Letters, 1962-1963	Box 2
Letters - Travel	Box 12
Photocopies of Emerson letters	Box 9
Emerson research: photocopies of Emerson letters	Box 10
Transcriptions of Emerson letters	Box 11
Photocopies of Emerson letters, articles	Box 24
Photocopies of Emerson letters	Box 25
Photocopies of Emerson letters	Box 48
Clara Gibbs Rusk letters	Box 49

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## Writings

**Physical Description:** 7 boxes

Reviews of Writings	Box 5
Writings by Rusk: Novel	Box 14
Writings by Rusk	Box 16
Writings by Rusk	Box 17
Writings - Miscellaneous Authors	Box 28
Writings: Novel	Box 56
Writings: Novel	Box 57

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### **Photographs, 1880-1981**

**Physical Description:** 3 boxes

Family Pictures, 1880-1981, bulk 1880-1930	Box 3
Pictures	Box 23
Tenure as professor at the University of the Philippines, 1912-1914	Box 23
Family Pictures	Box 23
Family Pictures	Box 50

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### **Miscellaneous Material**

**Physical Description:** 16 boxes

Clippings	Box 4
Lecture Notes	Box 15
Notebooks and Journals	Box 18
Notebooks of Lecture Notes	Box 19
Lecture Notes	Box 20
Miscellany	Box 21
Clippings	Box 22
Miscellany	Box 26
Clara Gibbs Rusk Papers	Box 27
Gilbert Imlay Research	Box 47
Personal Papers, Diaries	Box 51
Student Enrollment Books [closed to access]	Box 52

Recordings	Box 53
Scrapbook	Box 54
Card Files, Playbills	Box 55
Miscellaneous	Box 58

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### **1987 Accession**

**Physical Description:** 1 folder

**Scope and Contents note**

Comprises official documents concerning the deaths of Rusk family members.  
Located in Box 58.

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### **Oversize Material**

**Physical Description:** 2 folders

Three diplomas	Box Sec. A OV8
Emerson genealogy	Box Sec. A OV8

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