



**Laura M. Bragg papers, ca. 1890-1977**

**SCHS Call # 1009.00**

**Containers: 11/80-88, 44/21 & 25, 33/15**

**Creator: Bragg, Laura M. (Laura Mary), 1881-1978.**

**Description:** 3.5 linear ft. + 4 sound cassettes.

**Biographical/Historical Note:** Charleston, S.C. museum director, librarian, and cultural leader. Born in Epping, N.J., she became director of the Charleston Museum in 1920, leaving in 1931 to serve as director of the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Mass. After retiring from the Berkshire Museum in 1939 she returned to live in Charleston. A patron of the arts, Bragg was a founder of the Poetry Society of South Carolina and was the first librarian of the Charleston County Library.

**Scope and content:** Papers consist of correspondence, writings, museum papers, notes, photographs, audio cassettes, and other items. Included are writings of Robert W. Marks.

Correspondence includes family letters and Bragg's correspondence with John Bennett, DuBose Heyward, and many others. Topics include museum work and exhibits, an artist colony at "Snug Harbor," literature, art, travel, intellectual pursuits, personal matters, and the College of Charleston. Photographs are of Bragg, her family, friends, and associates, Charleston buildings and ironwork, art by Edward I.R. Jennings, and other subjects.

Writings include research notes on biology, museums in the Southeast, Edward I.R. Jennings, and Charleston architecture, gardens, and history; manuscripts of articles and essays; and notes on historic Charleston houses.

Museum papers include programs, proceedings, reports, membership lists, minutes, and correspondence related to the Association of Southern Museums (of which Bragg was president) and other organizations, as well as letters, announcements, clippings, photographs, and other items pertaining to the Berkshire Museum. Papers relating to the Poetry Society of S.C. include manuscripts of poems, printed poems, meeting invitations, and lists of prizes.

Other items include Bragg's college notebooks; diaries of European trips; notepads (1971-1978) containing written communications (necessitated by her hearing impairment) between Bragg and her visitors; and watercolor paintings by various individuals.

Audio cassettes contain an interview conducted by Marian Herbert in which Bragg discusses her early days in Charleston, work with the Charleston Museum, and retirement; and conversations (1975) between Bragg and Jessica W. Kenny, Robert W. Marks, and Richard Haymaker.

Papers (1932, 1973-1974) of Robert W. Marks, a Charleston author, consist of manuscripts and photocopies of articles and essays on subjects such as culture, art, education, and utopias.

**Preferred citation:** Bragg, Laura M. (Laura Mary), 1881-1978. Laura M. Bragg papers, ca. 1890-1977. (1009.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

**Series and container outline:**

**1009.01 PERSONAL PAPERS**

**1009.01.01 Bragg, Laura M. (Laura Mary), 1881-1978. Laura M. Bragg papers, ca. 1890-1977 (3.5 linear ft., 4 sound cassettes)**

- 11/080/01-04 Personal correspondence, 1904-1919 (ca. 70 items)
- 11/080-081 Personal correspondence, 1920-1939 (0.5 linear ft.)
- 11/081-082 Personal correspondence, 1940-1977 (0.5 linear ft.)
- 11/083/01-03 Correspondence, 1937-1950, 1976 (ca. 100 items)
- 11/083/04-05 Writings, 1932, 1973-1974 (35 items)
- 11/083/06-12 Museum papers, 1924, 1930-1935 (ca. 150 items)
- 11/084/01-10 Museum papers, 1937-1939 (0.5 linear ft.)
- 11/085/12-13 Papers, 1920s-1930s (ca. 50 items)
- 11/085/01-04 Writings, 1929 (ca. 100 items)
- 11/085/05-11 Writings, ca. 1920s-1940s (ca. 150 items)
- 11/086/01-07 Papers, 1898-1974 (0.25 linear ft.)
- 11/086-087 Conversation notepads, 1971-1976 (21 items)
- 11/088 Photographs, ca. 1890s-1970s (0.25 linear ft.)
- 44/21 & 25 Audio cassettes, 1972-1977 (4 sound cassettes)

**Container Listing:**

**11/80-81 Personal correspondence, 1920-1939**

Charleston Museum Director. Correspondence (1920-1939) of Laura M. Bragg. Correspondents include Hervey Allen, John Bennett regarding Madam Margot, writing and personal matters; Laura M. Bragg, Lyman D. Bragg and other family members in Epping, NH; Marion and Henry Seidel Canby; William Halsey, Isabella Heyward, Jane Screven Heyward, Dorothy & Dubose Heyward; Harriet K. Leiding regarding race relations (2/16/32); Helen G. McCormack, Robert Marks, New York NY regarding magazine publishing, music, Deems Taylor and other matters; Lewis Mumford (10/12/34); Julia Peterkin (1935); Josephine Pinckney, Anita Pollitzer, Emma Richardson, Alice H.R. Smith, Alice B. Toklas, Paris, France (5/9/35) regarding visit to Charleston and Robert N.S. Whitelaw. Letters regarding writing, art, painting, marriage, family matters, European travels, family deaths, books, gatherings, artist colony at "Snug Harbor," Porcher's Bluff, Charleston Co., painting in Mexico, museum work in Charleston, Richmond VA, and Pittsfield MA. Letters from Charleston, Hendersonville NC, Boston MA, New York NY, Bermuda, London England, Rome Italy, and elsewhere. See also (11/82/6-11) for undated letters from Dubose Heyward and others.

**11/80/1-4 Personal Correspondence, 1904-1919. Approx 70 items**

Charleston Museum director. Correspondence (1904-1919) of Laura M. Bragg. Letters mostly from Laura M. Bragg to her father, Lyman D. Bragg and other family members regarding the Charleston Museum, expeditions with the Charleston Natural History Society and other personal and intellectual matters. Letters also from Isabelle Heyward and Laura M. Bragg's report cards- Simmons College (1905-1906). Letters from Charleston, Boston MA, and elsewhere.

- 11/81-82 Personal Correspondence, 1940-1977. ½ ft.**  
 Charleston promoter of the arts and former Charleston Museum director. Letters (1940-1977) to Laura M. Bragg from John Bennett, Barbara Bragg, Marion Canby, Richard Coleman, Raymond Dart, South Africa; William Halsey, Dorothy Heyward, Stephan Hirsch, Carson McCullers (12/54), Robert Marks, Lewis Mumford (1966); Faith Murray, Josephine Pinckney, Una Platts, New Zealand, and elsewhere; Anita Pollitzer, Elsa Rogo, Albert Simons, and others. Letters regarding museum work and exhibits, literary and art work, personal matters, travel, the College of Charleston, and other intellectual pursuits. Many undated letters at the end of the series from Dubose Heyward and others. Also Xerox copies of title pages of Gertrude Stein's books with inscription to Laura M. Bragg. Letters from Washington DC, London England, Boston MA, Richmond VA, NH, NC, Pittsfield MA, Charleston, Mexico and Rome, Italy.
- 11/83/1-3 Correspondence, 1937-1950, 1976. Approx 100 items**  
 Pittsfield MA Museum director and Charleston arts promoter. Correspondence, mostly from Pittsfield MA from a young man who received help from Laura M. Bragg after serving a prison term in 1937. Correspondents include the man's lawyer, his girlfriend, and others regarding his trouble with the law, troubles getting a job due to police record, his employment, his Air Force service and re-imprisonment. Also includes records of money Laura M. Bragg lent him. Also see Laura M. Bragg's personal correspondence, 1940's.
- 11/83/4-5 Writings, 1932, 1973-1974. 35 items**  
 Charleston writer; typescripts of articles and essays of RM given and/or written for Laura M. Bragg regarding culture, mysticism, existentialism, religion, existence, Judaism, art, work, killing and cruelty, Utopias and philosophy of art.
- 11/83/6-12 Museum papers, 1924, 1930-1935. Approx 150 items**  
 President, 1934 [Southern Conference of American Association of Museums]. Correspondence (1924-1935) programs, invitations, and plans regarding The Southern Conference of the American Association of Museums and the Southern States Art League. Much correspondence of H.E. Wheeler, Birmingham, AL. Public Library.
- 11/84/1-10 Museum papers, 1937-1939. ½ ft.**  
 Pittsfield MA Museum Director. Letters, bills, museum proposals, planetarium description, exhibit announcements, news clippings, and other material regarding operation of Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield MA. Also an appreciation of Laura M. Bragg by the trustees of the museum; and photographs and a book on Pittsfield, MA.
- 11/85/1-4 Writings, 1929. Approx 100 items**  
 Charleston Museum director. Papers regarding Laura M. Bragg's article on Charleston artist Edward I.R. Jennings, including ms lists of Edward I.R. Jennings's work, chronology of his life, news clippings, exhibition programs, a note from John Bennett to EIRJ, notes, many photographs and some drawings of EIRJ, notes, many photographs and some drawings of EIRJ's work.
- 11/85/5-11 Writings, ca. 1920s-1940s. Approx 150 items**  
 Charleston Museum director. Notes, mss, letters, photographs on history and Charleston architecture and gardens. Includes notes on Charleston gardens with

letters to Josephine Pinckney; typescript and holograph versions of "Shrubs and Trees of Middleton (Place) Gardens," and an article on the exhibit at the Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, regarding 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Middleton Place Gardens. Also includes notes, correspondence, and photographs with descriptions of ironwork, regarding many Charleston dwellings; typescripts, notes, clippings regarding the Heyward-Washington House and the Manigault House, Charleston; and a ms. Regarding Arnold J. Toynbee's Study of History. Also misc. research notes.

**11/85/12-13 Papers, 1920s-1930s. Approx 50 items**

Charleston co-founder of the Poetry Society of SC. News clippings, poetry mss, printed poems, list of prizes, invitations to meetings regarding the SC Poetry Society (1920s-1930s). Also mss. Of poems read before the Society (2/27/30). Notes, art, photographs, poetry, including a holograph mss by Dubose Heyward, printed poetry by others, artwork, water colors (including one by Anita Pollitzer) regarding Laura M. Bragg's meetings of artists and others at "Snug Harbor," Porcher's Bluff, Charleston Co. Oversized materials (33-15) includes photographs by Doris Ullman and others of Laura M. Bragg and others. Also artwork by Josephine Pinckney, William Halsey, John Bennett, Edward I.R. Jennings and Anna Heyward Taylor. Also a diploma of Laura M. Bragg. (Also, 33-15)

**11/86-87 Conversation notepads, 1971-1976. 21 notepads**

Charleston promoter of the arts. Notepads concern the conversations and visitors Laura M. Bragg had in 1970s when visitors communicated with her by notepad. Visitors include Robert Marks, Helen G. McCormack and others. Subjects include history, philosophy, art, Charleston, personal subjects and other matters.

**11/86/1-7 Papers, 1898-1974. ¼ ft.**

Charleston Museum Director. High school composition notebook of Laura M. Bragg (1898); student scientific experiments book with some history notes in the back; memo books of Laura M. Bragg regarding her studies and European trips; index cards with names and addresses of participants in Laura M. Bragg's morning classes (1974) and Laura M. Bragg's appointment diaries with notations of visitors (1971-1972).

**11/88 Photographs, ca. 1890s-1970s. ¼ ft.**

Charleston museum director. Photographs of Laura M. Bragg, her friends and family. News clippings regarding Laura M. Bragg and museums with which she worked.

**44/21&25 Audio cassettes, 1972-1977.**

Charleston Museum director. Recollections of Laura M. Bragg's life as Charleston Museum Director (1920's-1930's) and in retirement (1939-1972). Interviewed by Mariam Herbert. Tape 1975 of Laura M. Bragg and Jessica W. Kenny and tape (1975) of conversation between Laura M. Bragg, Robert Marks, and Richard Haymaker.