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# Finding aid for the Samuel H. Ranck papers Collection 219

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on October 15, 2019.  
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections  
Department

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator:</b>	Ranck, Samuel Haverstick
<b>Title:</b>	Samuel H. Ranck papers
<b>ID:</b>	Collection 219
<b>ID [Archivists Toolkit Database::RESOURCE]:</b>	228
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1787-1952
<b>Physical Description:</b>	2.8 Linear Feet Eight boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Samuel H. Ranck (1866-1952) was director of the Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan for 37 years, covering the years 1904-1941. He was also an outdoor lover, an active member of the Grand Rapids community and a member of numerous organizations and associations throughout the state of Michigan and the nation. This collection contains bibliographical information about Ranck and various writings by Ranck. The bulk of the collection is photographs, diaries, writings and correspondence from his experience as an American Library Association librarian at Base Sector No. 1 in St. Nazaire, France, during World War I. Also included are various photos of Ranck, Franklin and Marshall College books, books read by Ranck and letters by his son, Wilson.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Samuel Haverstick Ranck was born near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, October 23, 1866, the oldest son of Jacob Eby and Martha Bausman (Haverstick) Ranck. At age 16, Ranck went to First Pennsylvania Normal School for two years and taught at a rural district school in Lancaster County for the winters of 1885-1886 and 1886-1887 before finishing his education. He graduated with an A.B. from Franklin and Marshall College in 1892. He also received his master's degree there in 1895 by writing a thesis entitled "The Early History of the Struggle for the Higher Education of Women."

Ranck started out his college career as a geology major, but found that he had a natural love for books. During his freshman year of college, he was selected to be an assistant in the Goethean Literary Society Library. For two years he served as librarian, during which he reorganized and re-catalogued approximately 6,000 volumes. In 1892, three months before his graduation, he went to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland and became a librarian's assistant. In 1898, he became assistant librarian, a position he held until 1904 when he accepted a job offer from the Grand Rapids Public Library to be a librarian.

Under Ranck's administration, the number of volumes the Grand Rapids Public Library owned increased from 60,000 to 400,000. He also succeeded in building what was said to be the largest and most important collection of books on furniture in America. He changed the library card membership from two years to four and within a year, the number of library cards increased. He allowed non-residents to become members for a fee and the non-resident children who attended the public school to be treated like resident children. He also made it possible for traveling men and transients to check out books and for corporations, societies and other institutions to be able to check-out more books than before. He also contributed a number of writings on the problems of financing, heating and ventilating a library.

As an outdoor lover, Ranck's favorite hobby was canoeing and he succeeded in canoeing nearly 60 rivers in the United States and wrote several books about his voyages. He also spent most of his summers on his Woodbrooke Farm tending his 35 acres of land. As an active member of the Grand Rapids community, Ranck founded the Grand Rapids branch of the Anti-Tuberculosis Society in 1905 and served as president for two years (1934-1936), when he later became honorary vice president. He also served as secretary for the Grand Rapids Historical Society (1905-?) and as chairman for the Citizens Committee, which was responsible for inaugurating the block system for numbering houses in Grand Rapids. Ranck was also a member and secretary of the Executive Committee of the Campau Centennial Celebration in 1926. In 1928, he was secretary-treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the David Wolcott Kendal Memorial School of Art. He was also a director of the Grand Rapids branch of the Izaak Walton League of America and president of the Phi Beta Kappa Grand Rapids branch (1925). He belonged to the University of Michigan Alumni Club of Grand Rapids and was an honorary life member of the Grand Rapids Teachers Club. He was elected as an honorary life member of the Grand Rapids Association of Commerce because of his contributions to the civic life of the community. Ranck also helped reorganize the prison libraries of Michigan State prisons. After 37 years, Ranck retired from the position of librarian on July 1, 1941.

In addition to the already mentioned positions, organizations, and associations, Ranck served as: the editor of the Franklin and Marshall College Catalog of Officers and Students (1887-1903), chairman of the Publishing Committee and editor of the Franklin and Marshall College Alumni Association's publication (1895), contributor to the Library Journal (1896), president of the Advisory Council of Alumni of Franklin and Marshall College (1903-1925) and member (1903-1938), president of the Michigan Library Association (1905-1907) and life member of Executive Committee, member of the American Library Institute (1908-?), member of the Executive Board of the American Library Association (1915-1918) and first vice president (1921-1922), member of the Michigan State Board of Library Commissioners (1919-1921), librarian for American Library Association at Camp Custer (1918), and librarian representative for American Library Association at St. Nazaire, France, Base Section No.1, where he was put in charge of some 300 libraries(1919). Ranck was honorary member or life member of the following organizations and associations: Michigan State Horticultural Society, National Geographic Society, American Historical Association, Maryland Historical Association, Lancaster County Historical

Society, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, Bibliographical Society of America, Camera Club, University life (a founder), Boat and Canoe Club, Furniture Designers Association, and Schubert Club.

Ranck was married to Judith Anne Blackburn, October 15, 1901, and they had three children: Elizabeth Powell (married Charles E. Hodgman), Theodore Valentine, and Wilson Marcy. Mrs. Ranck died December 4, 1936, in Grand Rapids. Samuel Ranck died Friday, December 19, 1952.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

111 Library Street NE  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

[localhis@grpl.org](mailto:localhis@grpl.org)

URL: <http://www.grpl.org>

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Samuel H. Ranck, Joann Dodson, Marjorie and David A. Wiltse and Michigan National Youth Administration. Accession numbers 1998.059, 1986.391, P2006.057, 2019.068, 2019.069

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Collection 109, GRPL Administrative Archives. Contains documents created by Ranck as Director of the Library.

Collection 141, Grand Rapids Historical Society Collection. Contains documents related to Ranck's participation in this organization.

Ranck was active in many organizations in Grand Rapids, and could potentially show up in correspondence or in activities within several archival collections.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Public libraries
  - World War, 1914-1918 -- Libraries
  - World War, 1914-1918 -- War work
  - Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
  - Ranck, Samuel Haverstick
  - Grand Rapids Public Library (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
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## Collection Inventory

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### Series I. Biographical

#### Scope and Contents

Included here is information about Ranck, including a Citizens Historical Association biography, magazine & periodical articles about him. Also here is information from his Canoe trips following the 17th century path of Pere Marquette, including a diary from the summer of 1931.

#### General Articles about Ranck. Arranged by date

Title/Description	Instances	
The Unionite, (1922) "Our Chief Librarian."	Box 1	Folder 1
Going Somewhere with Sam Ranck, by A.P. Johnson; Collier's, The National Weekly, 1923-01-06	Box 7	Folder 3
The Grand Rapids Spectator "Who's Who in Grand Rapids-VII," Jan. 28, 1928.	Box 1	Folder 1
The Commonwealth "Our Librarian Is a Worker as Well as Thinker," Jan. 1928. Facsimile.	Box 1	Folder 1
Town County Review, "Samuel H. Ranck, Of Grand Rapids, Mich.," Nov. 1, 1933.	Box 1	Folder 1
Citizens Historical Association in Indianapolis, May 3, 1941.	Box 1	Folder 1
A cartoon by Ray Barnes from Razzing the Rapids, N.D.	Box 1	folder 1
"Samuel H. Ranck, Former Librarian, Dies at 86." newspaper article, source unknown. Facsimile.	Box 1	Folder 1

Grand Rapids Press, Dec. 20, 1952. "Funeral Services on Monday For S.H. Ranck, Ex-Librarian." Facsimile. On microfilm.	Box 1	Folder 1
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## Writings about Ranck

Title/Description	Instances	
Biographical writing by an unknown author.	Box 2	Folder 1
The Grand Rapids Herald "Biographical Information," for Samuel H. Ranck by his son William M. Ranck.	Box 2	Folder 1
"Rogue River, May 14, 15, and 16, 1909," author unknown.	Box 2	Folder 2
Evening Press, Sept. 15, 1904. "Man for Librarian." Facsimile.	Box 1	Folder 2
Grand Rapids News, March 11, 1912. "Walk 25 Miles on Frozen Lake."	Box 1	Folder 2
Bulletin of the Grand Rapids Library, December 1918. "Librarian Ranck Sails For France."	Box 1	Folder 2
Collier's, Jan. 6, 1923. "Going Somewhere with Sam Ranck." Facsimile. Article at Reference.	Box 1	Folder 2
Grand Rapids Herald, March 10, 1934. "Ranck Elected President of G.R. TB Society." Facsimile.	Box 1	Folder 2
Women's City Club, Outdoor Number. "The Historical Society Meets At Woodbrooke Farm..." by Annie Archer Pollard.	Box 1	Folder 2

## Canoe Trips

Title/Description	Instances	
Pam bnd."Canoeing Down the Tahquemanon River." Formerly M91.R15t	Box 1	
Pam bnd."Canoeing Down the Muskegon River." Formerly M91.R15m	Box 1	
Pam bnd. "Canoeing Down the Big Manistee River." Formerly M91.R15b	Box 1	
Pam bnd."Canoeing Down the Pere Marquette River." Formerly M91.R15p	Box 1	
Canoe Trip, July - August 1931 [2019.069]	Box 1	Folder 11
Bnd.Cover title "Relations of Samuel H. Ranck, Wilson Marcy, Ranck, Charles E. Hodgman. About a Canoe Voyage in 1931 to trace the 1666-1675 voyage of Pere Marquette"	Box 1	

### General

Title page: Relations of Samuel H. Ranck ... pertaining to the divers and sundry adventures, observations, and experiences of each and all in connection with a voyage by canoe from the city of Quebec on the St. Lawrence



River to the city of Ottawa on the Ottawa River, both in Canada, July 24 to August 16, 1931, the same being the first leg of the project to retrace the journeys in American by canoe of the illustrious Pere Marquette between the years 1666-1675 / done on the typewriter by Cecile V. Holford. Dec. 1931.

Formerly M91.R15. Includes original photographs. Samuel Ranck may have been the source of the information, subsequently typed of Ms. Holford.

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Black Book Diary of Samuel Ranck. July 24 – Aug. 9 1931. Appears to be related to the Canoe trip.	Box 1	Folder 4
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## Series II: Library Related Activities

### Scope and Contents

This series is perhaps best described as a sampler of Ranck's writings, as it is believed Ranck wrote and published more widely than the limited items cited here. See also Coll. 109, for other examples of his work as head of the Grand Rapids Public Library.

### Subseries A. Writings by Ranck, various topics

Title/Description	Instances	
Social Service of the Public Library, by Samuel Ranck, reprinted from Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam, by William Warner Bishop and Andrew Keogh [2019.069], 1929	Box 1	Folder 3
Library Journal, June 1911. "The Relation of the Public Library to Technical Education," Reprint. (2 copies)	Box 1	Folder 3
Michigan Tradesman, Oct. 8, 1930. "Local Library Has Ample Room for Expansion."	Box 1	Folder 3
The Architectural Forum. Reprint December 1927. "Ventilating and Lighting Library Buildings." Reprint. Formerly MKG022.R15	Box 1	
Heating and Ventilating, April 1931. "Problems of Library Heating and Ventilation." Reprint. Formerly M022.8.R15	Box 1	
"History of the Grand Rapids Public Library" / by Samuel H. Ranck. Prepared for the Anniversary Number of the Standard-Bulletin, Friday Dec. 6, 1935. Old Photocopy.	Box 2	folder 3
The Grand Rapids Herald, Nov. 1, 1914. "Writers of Books Caused Great War." Facsimile. On microfilm. About Ranck?	Box 1	Folder 5
A letter to the Editor of the Press regarding War Memorial, Feb. 27, 1925.	Box 1	Folder 5

A.E.F. Bookworms fed by Librarian Ranck : Grand rapids Man tells of interesting work among dough boys and sailors. GR Herald. Sept. 21, 1919.	Box 1	Folder 6
"The So-called Indian Mounds Near the Lake Shore Crossing on Grand River," N.D.	Box 2	Folder 4
The Early History of the Struggle for the Higher Education of Women, thesis by Samuel H. Ranck, 1895	Box 1	Folder 12
Reading for Our Modern Civilization, text of address by Samuel H. Ranck, Librarian of the Grand Rapids Public Library before the Michigan Teachers Institute, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 21, 1927 [2019.069]	Box 2	Folder 9

## Subseries B. Miscellaneous

Title/Description	Instances	
Receipts, 1922. Unprocessed. 1986.381. Note: These may be either personal or library related.	Box 5	Folder 9
Untitled document about architecture, only pages 5 and 6. Unknown author and date. [2019.069]	Box 2	Folder 10
Draft of a letter or essay, handwritten, on part of an envelope [2019.069]	Box 1	folder 13

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## Series III: World War I

### Camp Schools in France.

Title/Description	Instances	
1. ALA Educational List. Books furnished by the American Library Association for use in connection with the schools established by the Army Education Commission. Paris. ALA, European Headquarters, 1919.	Box 2	Folder 5
2. Reading Course List	Box 2	Folder 5
3. Instructions for Filing. Mar. 14, 1919.	Box 2	Folder 5
4. Six Class Inspection Reports—Army Educational Commission	Box 2	Folder 5
5. A letter from the Section School Officer and the Area Educational Advisor for Base Section No. 1	Box 2	folder 5
6. Distribution of Educational Libraries letter from ALA-January 29, 1919.	Box 2	Folder 5

### War Service, Misc. Documents.

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
Books, Ships, Service Supplies, and Expense Account	Box 2	Folder 6
1. A List of Ship Names, Number of Officers and Men	Box 2	Folder 6
2. Weekly Report—Name of Ships with ALA books	Box 2	Folder 6
3. 2 Letters to ALA Representatives	Box 2	Folder 6
4. A Note from Ranck to Lieut. Glidewell about ALA Books	Box 2	Folder 6
5. 4 Services of Supply Letters	Box 2	Folder 6
6. Expense Account of Ranck	Box 2	Folder 6
7. "War Service Adventures of ALA Books"-author unknown	Box 2	Folder 6
8. Small sign. "American Library Association has supplied this boat with books" ...	Box 2	Folder 6

## Reports

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
"A Librarians Job In Base Section No.1" c.1; c.2 Formerly MKG92.R15	Box 5	Folder 1

## Miscellaneous WWI

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
American Red Cross includes Library Book List, Map of Paris, a letter to Ranck from Edith R. Mirriclees	Box 5	Folder 5
[American Red Cross.] Base Section No. 1, St. Nazaire, France reports of ALA activities.	Box 5	Folder 6
Telephone directory of Base Section No. 1	Box 5	Folder 6.5
Victory Liberty Loan poster. And They Thought We Couldn't Fight. / Clyde Forsythe. Ketterlinus, Phila. N.d. 5-C. Found folded and moved to FF. 5/24/2005.	Drawer FF-VIII-B	

## Finding Men Jobs After the War:

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
1. The Job Book	Box 5	Folder 8
2. "What Will our Soldiers do when they get home?" author unknown	Box 5	Folder 8
3. Letter to Library War Service from Gertrude Thiebaud	Box 5	Folder 8
4. Statement of Special Publicity Representative	Box 5	

	Folder 8	
5. Letters to various librarians by Marian Humble, Special Publicity Representative	Box 5	
	Folder 8	
Sheet music, The Regulars by Sgt. Chester Mason., 1918	Box 7	Folder 1

### Souvenirs From France folder includes:

Title/Description	Instances	
1)"The Battle-Fields of France and Belgium"	Box 5	Folder 7
2) Official Guide to Nantes	Box 5	Folder 7
3) Wilson / par Camille DuCray. (Collection Biographique Picart)	Box 5	Folder 7
4) ALA notice	Box 5	Folder 7
5) America-Europa	Box 5	Folder 7
6) Folded Map. St. Nazaire	Box 5	Folder 7
7) Folded Map in ID folder: Grande Carte De L'Europe Centrale" (Large map of Central Europe)	Box 5	Folder 7

### Diaries. 10 maroon cover notebooks

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Vol. I- "Personal Notes of Samuel H. Ranck in France, Jan. 1, 1919." Jan. 1-10	Box 4	
2. Vol. II Jan. 10-18	Box 4	
3. Vol. III Jan. 18-25	Box 4	
4. Vol. IV Jan. 26-Feb. 6	Box 4	
5. Vol. V Feb. 6-15	Box 4	
6. Vol. VI Feb. 16-23	Box 4	
7. Vol. VII Feb. 24-Mar. 3 – contains card from daughter Elizabeth	Box 4	
8. Vol. VIII Mar. 3-4	Box 4	
9. Vol. #? May 17-25	Box 4.5	
10. No vol.# "Samuel H. Ranck, Record of disposition of A.L.A. Books in France" Jan. 10-Aug. 25	Box 4.5	

### Military Publications

Title/Description	Instances	
Official Circulars [1]	Box 4.5	
Official Circulars [2]		

Box 4.5

**Miscellaneous Publications**

Title/Description	Instances
Seaside Resorts of Brittany from Mont Saint- Michel to Saint-Nazaire. (Joanne Guide Books) Hanchette C., 1916.	Box 4.5

**American Library Association, Library War Service.****General**

Small digital reproduction posters (not to the quality of the original). Note: These items have been placed in Ranck's collection as it is known that he served the ALA in provided library service to the troupes. However, his work was in France, whereas these posters all appear to have U.S. Locations, and may be moved to Coll. 318 in the future.

Title/Description	Instances	
[Poster 1]P2006.057. Poster 1 has 15 images, interior and exterior views. The interior view discussing branches in YMCA buildings is identified as Camp Custer, Michigan.	Box 7	Folder 4
[Poster 2]P2008.007. Poster 2 has 6 images, mostly interior views, with the top right being identified as Camp Custer, Michigan.	Box 7	Folder 4
Advertisements in French.	Box 4.5	

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**Series IV: Photographs****World War I related Photographs (5)**

Title/Description	Instances	
Officers Reading Books at various camps and hospitals (13)	Box 3	Folder 1
Various Library Stations (13, including dup. images)	Box 3	Folder 2
Schools (9)	Box 3	Folder 3
Transportation of Books- Shipping, Loading, and Unloading Books (48)	Box 3	Folder 4
Miscellaneous (7)	Box 3	Folder 5

**Images of Ranck.**

Title/Description	Instances	
Samuel H. Ranck. Ref. Copy. Original located in Col. #43	Box 3	Folder 6
Anti-TB Society group photo. 2 b/w photos	Box 3	Folder 6

Group photo. 2 Ref copies. Original located in Col. #54-33-22	Box 3	Folder 6
Headshot of Samuel Ranck and a photograph taken of him in the Ryerson Library on March 14, 1925. [2019.069]	Box 6	folder 7
Ranck family portrait including Samuel Ranck, his siblings and parents, date unknown [2019.069]	Box 7	folder 2

## Miscellaneous

Title/Description	Instances	
White River. (1 b/w photo, framed w glass). 2000.047. "From Samuel Ranck"--on verso. Possible from one of his canoe trips.	Box 4	

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## Series V: Franklin and Marshall Books

Title/Description	Instances	
"Annual Register of Franklin and Marshall College" 1894-1895	Box 6	
"Obituary Record Franklin and Marshall Vol. 1 1897-1900" 1900	Box 6	
"Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1787-1903" 1903	Box 6	
"Thirty-fifth Reunion-Class of 1892 Franklin and Marshall College" June 3, 1927	Box 1	Folder 7

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## Series VI: Books Associated with Ranck

Title/Description	Instances	
A Journey Across The Rocky Mountains by John K. Townsend 2 copies	Box 6	
The Voyageur's Highway by Grace Lee Nute	Box 6	
History of Peace by Homer L. Boyle	Box 6	
Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839 by Frances Anne Kemble	Box 6	
The College Woman by Charles Thwing, 1894	Box 6	
Vulgate Bible, Latin version printed in Lyon's France in 1515 and given to Samuel Ranck by the estate of John Lawrence, former President of the Board of Library Commissioners. [2019.069]	Box 7	

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## Series VII: National Activities

### Promotion of Grand Rapids for ALA Meeting

Title/Description	Instances	
Retailing, August 29, 1931, p.13. "Nation-wide Publicity Drive Planned by Grand Rapids."	Box 7	Folder 5
Grand Rapids Press, August 15, 1931, front page. "A.P. Johnson Given Big Job."	Box 7	Folder 5

### ALA Grand Rapids Conference ca. 1936

Title/Description	Instances	
"Grand Rapids Next" An Invitation	Box 1	
		Folder 9
"Your Host" Grand Rapids Next	Box 1	
		Folder 9

### Michigan National Youth Administration

Title/Description	Instances	
"Job Opportunities for Youth" Feb. 8, 1939. Formerly M174.Un3	Box 1	

### American Library Association

Title/Description	Instances	
Code of Ethics for Librarians, Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association. Wilson M. Ranck signed in the top corner, 1939	Box 1	Folder 10

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## Series VIII: Family

### Wilson Ranck

Title/Description	Instances	
A letter from Wilson Ranck to Professor William Herbert Hobbs- Facsimile. Real letter probably with the family.	Box 1	
		Folder 8
A letter from Professor Hobbs to Wilson-Facsimile. Real letter probably with the family.	Box 1	

Folder 8

Memories, guest book from Samuel H. Ranck funeral services [2019.069], 1952-12-22	Box 5	folder 12
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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)**Series IX: Correspondence**

Title/Description	Instances	
A Letter for all the Family. From S.S.La Lorraine. Original and transcriptions., 1918-12-25	Box 2	Folder 7
American Library Association. Library WarService. St. Nazaire, (France). (3 pgs. Typed), 1919-03-23	Box 2	Folder 7
St. Nazaire, 1919-04-19	Box 2	folder 7
From Mr. Ranck's Letter of May 15, 1919. (2 pages mimeographed)	Box 2	Folder 7
Letters on Library War Service, by S.H. Ranck (formerly MKG92.R15L), 1918-1919	Box 2	
To Uncle Sam from Chase S. Osborn [2019.069], 1941-01-27	Box 2	Folder 11
Written exchange between Theodore A. Distler at Franklin and Marshall College and Samuel Ranck regarding an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters [2019.069], 1942-01-24-1942-01-30	Box 2	Folder 12
To Miss Blackburn from Samuel H. Ranck [2019.069], 1894-11-28	Box 2	Folder 13
Rancks Letter of resignation to Mr. Smith, Sept. 4, 1940.	Box 1	Folder 1
Unknown letter to Ranck about his family history, N.D.	Box 1	Folder 1
Letter from Ranck to his son, Wilson. Facsimile. Nov. 8, 1939. Location of original letter unknown, perhaps still with the family. Letter contents primarily about Grand Rapids activities.	Box 1	Folder 5

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Three dimensional artifacts are typically out of the scope of the collection of The Grand Rapids Public Library's Local History and Special Collections department. However, as these items belonged to someone as important to the history of the Grand Rapids Public Library as Samuel Ranck, they have been added to his collection.

Title/Description	Instances	
Samuel Ranck's typewriter, unknown manufacturer and date		



Physical Location: Aisle 15, Bay C, Shelf 2

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Drafting tool set in a wooden box, unknown manufacturer and date

Box 8

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