

John L. Stewart papers

Ms. Coll. 1101

Finding aid prepared by Rive Cadwallader.

Last updated on January 20, 2016.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 July 13

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Stewart, John Lammey, 1867-1927
Title	John L. Stewart papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1101
Date [bulk]	1890-1927
Date [inclusive]	1806-1927
Extent	0.7 linear feet (2 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>This collection contains the papers of John L. Stewart, an educator and Public Service Commissioner for the state of Pennsylvania. Ranging in date from 1890 to 1927 (with one 1806 newspaper) these letters, newspaper clippings, notes and pamphlets outline the progression of Stewart's career from principal of the Northeast Manual Training School to professor at, and eventually president of, Lehigh University. Documents concerning a 1926 Pennsylvania Supreme Court case that questioned legality of Stewart's position on the Public Service Commission are included in this collection, as are many letters of condolence received by Stewart's wife upon his death.</p>

Cite as:

John L. Stewart papers, 1806- 1927 (bulk: 1890-1927), Ms. Coll. 1101, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

John Lammey Stewart was an educator, president of Lehigh University and Pennsylvania Public Commissioner whose 1926 quo warranto case for that office was reviewed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Born in Philadelphia in 1867 to John and Anne Lammey Stewart, John L. Stewart graduated from Central High School in 1887, entered the University of Pennsylvania as a junior that same year, and graduated from the Wharton School in 1889.

After graduating, Stewart began to teach history and economics at the Northeast Manual Training School (now known as Northeast High School). In 1896, Stewart was selected to serve as the principal of the Northeast Manual Training School, a position which he held for two years until he was offered a professorship at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Stewart taught history and economics at Lehigh. In 1923, Governor Gifford Pinchot appointed Stewart to the Public Service Commission of Pennsylvania, an agency established to regulate public utilities including railroad and telegraph corporations. Leaving Lehigh University (and a generous pension) behind, Stewart was a member of the commission for the rest of his life, although a 1926 court case filed on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sought to remove him from office. Stewart was appointed to the commission twice by the Governor. However, after Stewart's second appointment, Governor Pinchot "evidently changed his mind relative to the wisdom of his selection" and proposed different candidates to the state Senate. The Senate objected to this replacement, as Stewart was currently serving on the commission, which led to his being issued quo warranto. It is unclear what prompted Pinchot's reversal of opinion of Stewart, however a tribute to Stewart written upon his death states that the "bitter storm of controversy" was caused by one particular decision of the commission and that "Governor Pinchot... who should have known John's character, accused him of a selfish betrayal of the public."

John L. Stewart died in April of 1927 after only a few hours of infirmity. He fell ill at one of meetings of the Commission, prompting his colleagues to claim that "his life was expended in the service of the State, for his sudden and fatal illness was due, as the attending physicians state, to the weight of the responsible duties he had undertaken." To memorialize Stewart and provide financial support to his wife, a group of Stewart's friends (led by Samuel McCune Lindsay) established the John Lammey Stewart Memorial Fund. Donations to this fund helped to ameliorate the loss of Stewart's pension to his wife, and to endow memorial libraries at the University of Pennsylvania and Lehigh University.

Sources: "A History of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission," 2007, accessed July 16, 2015. http://www.puc.state.pa.us/assets/downloads/PUC_History.pdf

"John Lammey Stewart" *The Nudge: University of Pennsylvania Class of 1889 Bulletin*. June, 1927

Lindsay, Samuel McCune. *The John Lammey Stewart Memorial Fund*. Letter

Tate, Mercer B. Jr, Hull, George Ross, Roberts, Owen J. Brown, Francis Shunk., *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ex rel. George W. Woodruff, Attorney General, Plaintiff, vs. John L. Stewart, Defendant: Brief for Defendant*. 1926.

Scope and Contents

This collection is comprised largely of the professional correspondence of John L. Stewart as his career progressed from principal at the Northeast Manual Training School to professor and then principal of Lehigh University before being elected to serve as a Public Service Commissioner for the state of Pennsylvania. Stewart compiled letters of recommendation promoting him for each subsequent office as well as some personal correspondence with past students and colleagues. A quantity of Stewart's notes, lectures and speeches are included in the collection along with some pamphlets, programs and small publications significant to his work. Also included in this collection are court documents relevant to Stewart's 1926 hearing over the legality of his appointment to Public Service Commissioner. A large scrapbook (presumably composed by Stewart's wife, Mary) contains letters and telegrams of condolence received upon Stewart's death in 1927, as well as earlier newspaper clippings and letters to Stewart. The first portion of Stewart's collected correspondence (series one) consists mainly of letters from his past students, friends and professional acquaintances and ranges in date from 1891 to 1910. Many of these letters were sent from cities abroad, including Zurich, Leipzig, Hamburg, London, Edinburgh, Lunenburg (Nova Scotia) and Greytown (Nicaragua). A later file in this series contains several letters recommending Stewart for the position of principal at the Northeast Manual Training School including a letter from school faculty to the selection committee, as well as a newspaper clipping about a Northeast High School alumni reunion and a program for the commencement ceremony of the school's forty-third class. A portion of an unbound scrapbook holds newspaper clippings about John Stewart's professorship at Lehigh University, and more of his collected letters.

Series two of this collection regards Stewart's time at Lehigh University and contains letters, notes and written material from 1898 to 1927. Included in this series are letters congratulating Stewart on his professorship, a course catalog from the Lehigh University Evening School of Business Administration and three binders (numbered 4, 5 and 6) presumably compiled by Stewart. The first binder contains numerous lecture notes on history and economics along with a few newspaper clippings. The next binder contains Stewart's written works, lectures and the publications to which he contributed, while the lattermost binder consists only of letters recommending Stewart for the position of Lehigh University President. Included in the second binder is a pamphlet titled *The Club* which was "printed and surreptitiously circulated upon the occasion of our twenty-first birthday, celebrated... May 10, 1905" and gives the rather jovial backstory of a literary discussion group of which Stewart was a member. Documents concerning Stewart's service in the Public Service Commission of Pennsylvania as well as his quo warranto writ for that office are included in series three and dated from 1924 to 1926. Stewart's papers concerning his court appearance contain some duplicates. Several of Stewart's initiatives as a Public Commissioner are also outlined in this series.

Series four (circa 1927) contains information about the John L. Stewart memorial fund, including a letter of explanation by the fund's committee, donation forms, and an article about the fund in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Also included are a list of books donated to Penn Libraries after Stewart's death, and related correspondence. A portion of an unbound scrapbook is filled with dozens of telegrams and letters addressed to Mary Stewart which express sympathy and condolence over her husband's abrupt death. The final series in this collection, a set of miscellaneous materials, is dated mostly from 1899 to 1924 but includes a copy of the Connecticut Courant published on September 31 [sic], 1806. This 1806 newspaper is printed on one sheet and features a range of advertisements and notifications. Other documents in this

series include newspaper clippings, letters, research on the Royal Scots Greys, genealogical research and a pencil sketch of a child in highland dress.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 July 13

Finding aid prepared by Rive Cadwallader.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Custodial History note

Gift of Mary Stewart, 1953.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Lehigh University.
- Pennsylvania. Public Service Commission.
- University of Pennsylvania. Libraries.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Lecture notes
- Publications (document genre)
- Scrapbooks

SUBJECT(S)

- Education--Pennsylvania
- Universities and colleges--United States--Administration

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE, 1891-1924.

	Box	Folder
Adams, Henry, 1907-1910.	1	1
Bernstein, Lester; Thomas Messinger Drown; Herbert Friedenwald; "Hector", 1895-1898.	1	2
Henderson, C. Hanford, 1892-1898.	1	3
Henderson, Harriet B. and Samuel McCune Lindsay, 1892-1893.	1	4
Miller, Dickinson Sargeant, circa 1894-1898.	1	5
Patton, Simon N. and Leo Stanton Rowe, 1898, undated.	1	6
Whitmer, Lightner, 1891-1898.	1	7
Regarding appointment as principal of Northeast Manual School (includes newsclip and commencement program), 1896, 1924.	1	8
Scrapbook (probably compiled by Mrs. Stewart) of letters to and newsclippings regarding John L. Stewart, 1899-1904.	2	4

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY, 1898-1927.

	Box	Folder
Congratulations on professorship, 1898.	1	9
Course description, undated.	1	10
"Binder 4," Writings and lectures, circa 1898-1927.	1	11
"Binder 5," lectures, writings and publications, 1886-1906, undated.	1	12
"Binder 6," letters of recommendation regarding Stewart's election to the president of Lehigh University, 1921 February-March.	1	13

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, 1924-1926.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence and legal documents about reappointment, 1926 January-February .	1	14
Speeches, writings and newspaper clippings regarding rural electric and commodities, 1924-1925, undated.	1	15

JOHN L. STEWART DEATH AND MEMORIAL MATERIAL, 1927.

	Box	Folder
List of books in Stewart Library donated to Penn Libraries by Mrs. Stewart and related correspondence, circa 1927.	1	16
Tributes and memorial fund documentation, 1927.	1	17

Scrapbook (probably compiled by Mrs. Stewart) of letters sent following the death of John L. Stewart, 1927.	2	1-3
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MISCELLANEOUS CLIPPINGS AND ANCESTRY INFORMATION, 1806, 1899-1924.

		Drawer
Connecticut Courant, 1806 September 31.		49
	Drawer	
Clippings, 1924.	1	18
Ancestry research, 1899-1922.	1	18