

SIMON GUMBEL AND FAMILY PAPERS

Mss. 1490 Inventory

By Luana Henderson

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections

Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library

Louisiana State University Libraries

Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2005

SUMMARY

Size	2.5 linear ft.
Geographic Locations	New Orleans, La.
Inclusive Dates	1851-1949.
Bulk Dates	1922-1933.
Languages	English
Summary	Property tax receipts of the Gumbel family; business correspondence, minutes, financial papers relating to the administration and operation of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home.
Copyright	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries
Citation	Simon Gumbel and Family Papers, Mss. 1490, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
Stack Locations	P:21-22; OS:G

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Simon Gumbel was born April 18, 1832 in Kircheimbolanden, Rhein, Bavaria. In 1846, at the age of fourteen, he immigrated to Pointe Coupee Parish, La., where he worked as a peddler before opening his own merchandise store. Simon relocated to New Orleans, La., in 1864 where he began a wholesale notions business. He also established himself as a prominent member in the Jewish community, and became actively involved in charitable organizations. Later in 1873, he formed the firm of S. Gumbel and Co., Ltd., commission merchants, and served as treasurer of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows' and Orphans. He married Sophie Lengsfeld and together they had four sons and seven daughters. Simon became the first man to build and conduct a cottonseed oil mill. He invested in real estate and, at the time of his death on Aug. 14, 1909, he was a millionaire and the biggest individual taxpayer of New Orleans. Three sons, Joseph, Lester, and Henry administered the extensive real estate holdings and estate of their father. Sophie Lengsfeld Gumbel, wife of Simon Gumbel, was born July 28, 1844 in New Orleans, La. to Jacob H. Lengsfeld and Henrietta Falk, both natives of Bavaria.

The Sophie L. Gumbel Home was founded in 1917 by the heirs of Sophie Lengsfeld Gumbel; the City of New Orleans donated land from the Touro Shakespeare Almshouse for the building site, and contributed funding for its operation. The Home, originally named the Sophie L. Gumbel Home for the Blind and Feeble-minded, provided education and job training for girls and young women with mental disabilities. In 1943, the city took over its operation and began its use as a home for neglected and abandoned children. The Home closed in 1962, and reopened the next year as care and training center for mentally disabled children.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Simon Gumbel and family papers are divided into two subgroups, Simon Gumbel family papers and Sophie L. Gumbel Home records. Simon Gumbel family papers are comprised almost entirely of property tax receipts for city, parish and state taxes; remaining papers consists of three stock certificates and personal legal papers. Sophie L. Gumbel Home records include business correspondence relative to the management and financial operations of the home, bylaws governing the Board of Managers/Directors, and minutes of their meetings. Additional papers include city ordinances relative to the establishment and management of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home, administrative reports, and material related to the admission, evaluation, and activities of the residents. Financial records document funding and itemize expenditures for operations and maintenance of the Home. Printed items and graphic materials include newspaper clippings of pictures and articles related to the Sophie L. Gumbel Home and a sketch of a floor plan (undated). Of particular interest are the letters of Dagny Sunne, of Tulane University, and Thomas D. Boyd, President of Louisiana State University. Sunne reports on the varying degrees of mental retardation found in a sample of 550 New Orleans children from different economic and racial groups (April 5, 1919). In letters to Governor John Parker (Nov. 1, 1923) and to Lester Gumbel (March 4, 1924), Thomas D. Boyd discusses his resignation from Louisiana State University.

LIST OF SUB-GROUPS, SERIES, AND SUBSERIES

- Subgroup 1. Simon Gumbel Family Papers, 1851-1903**
- Subgroup 2. Sophie L. Gumbel Home, 1917-1949**
- Series I. Correspondence, 1917-1941, undated.**
- Subseries** Administrative correspondence, 1917- 1941, undated
- 1.** Financial correspondence, 1917-1939, undated.
- Subseries**
- 2.**
- Series II. Administrative Records, 1917-1943, undated.**
- Series III. Financial Records, 1922-1949, undated.**
- Subseries** Petty cash, 1924-1942.
- 1.** Treasurer's files, 1922-1935, undated.
- Subseries** Bank statements and vouchers, 1922-1949, undated.
- 2.** General financial records, 1922-1933.
- Subseries**
- 3.**
- Subseries**
- 4.**
- Series IV. Printed items and graphic material, 1917-1936, undated.**

SUBGROUPS, SERIES AND SUBSERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Subgroup 1. Simon Gumbel Family Papers, 1851-1903.

Family papers are comprised almost entirely of property tax receipts for city, parish and state taxes paid by F. Marcelus Sicard, Frederick Paris, Norbert Roderigues and Simon Gumbel (1851-1895). The remaining papers consists of three American Oil and Refining Co. stock certificates (May 28, 1901); an unsigned affidavit confirming the payment of J. H. Mason's debt (April 24, 1903); and a true copy of Alonzo Landry's power of attorney (Feb. 9, 1903). Additionally, there is a conveyance transferring a lot in the Irish District of New Orleans from Marx Meyer to Jacob H. Lengsfeld (May 10, 1873), and Simon Gumbel's voter registration certificate (1891).

Subgroup 2. Sophie L. Gumbel Home Records, 1917-1949.

Sophie L. Gumbel Home Records document the establishment, and administrative and business operations of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home.

Series I. Correspondence, 1917-1941, undated.

Subseries 1. Administrative Correspondence, 1917- 1941, undated.

Earliest letter confirms the Gumbel family's donation and puts forth the conditions for the construction of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home on the grounds of the Touro Shakespeare Almshouse (March 14, 1917); another reports on the completion of the project (Sept. 18, 1918). The remainder of the series pertains to the administration and management of the Home, and relates to admissions, evaluation, organized social activities, education, household chores, and daily activities of the residents; however, the largest portion of this series simply announces date and time of board meetings. Letters of Rebekah B. Thompson reports on the activities and meetings of the Auxiliary Board (1923). Correspondence also contains requests for the discharge of individual residents, and the Boards authorization their release to their parents or guardians, or for placement in the workforce under the supervision of other organizations. Letters from parents or guardians generally praise the care received by the girls; however, one letter of complaint alleges of physical mistreatment (March 22, 1928). Letters also discuss mental abilities, physical condition, and progress of the residents.

Additionally, letters contains recommendations for improvement to the premises offered by organizations with an interest in the institution. The Board of Commissioners of Prisons and Asylums praises the general condition of Home, but offers assistance in improving the internal management (Jan. 23, 1923). Caswell Ellis, Jr., chairman of the House Committee states that the building's heating is inadequate and the vegetable garden has no water source nearby (Nov. 29, 1927). Azzo J. Plough of the Auxiliary Board praises the excellent condition of the Home, but comments on the worn and hazardous floors and the need for a new refrigerator to keep perishables food (April 27, 1932). Letters from the Louisiana Rating and Fire Prevention Bureau cite the lack of fire protection within the building (March 29, 1928; Oct. 3, 30, 1931). Dagny Sunne, of Tulane University, reports on the varying degrees of mental retardation he found in a sample of 550 New Orleans children from different economic and racial groups (April 5, 1919). Thomas D. Boyd discusses his resignation from Louisiana State University in letters to Governor John Parker (Nov. 1, 1923) and to Lester Gumbel (March 4, 1924).

Subseries 2. Financial Correspondence, 1917-1939, undated.

Financial correspondence relates the financial operations of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home with respect to resources, funding and expenditures. Letters document contributions and donations received from individuals and charitable organizations, and public funding provided by the City of New Orleans. Correspondence between the Sophie L. Gumbel Home and the Budget Committee of the City of New Orleans reflects the Home's difficulty in obtaining adequate public funding from the City (1925-1935). Correspondence includes proposals from tradesmen for building projects, repairs, maintenance, and improvements on buildings and grounds. Letters from vendors offer cost estimates for coal, milk, ice, equipment, and coal. Letters also pertain to orders and payments made for these goods and services, as well as for clothing, shoes, household items, games and sporting equipment, and food items. In their correspondence, insurers detail insurance coverage on buildings and their contents, and gives information on exclusions, policy renewals, cancellations, and premiums. Additionally, letters show payments received for the board, and for the sale of arts and crafts produced in the Home. Of interest is a reference made to checks drawn on Canal Bank and Trust not honored by other bank (March 24, May 22, 1933) and authorization by the National Bank of Commerce to honor such a check (1933).

Series II. Administrative records, 1917-1943, undated.

This series, comprised primarily of city ordinances, bylaws, reports, and board meeting minutes, relates to the establishment and administration of the Sophie L. Gumbel Home. City ordinances stipulate the conditions for establishing the

Sophie L. Gumbel Home (April 21, 1917); creation the Board of Managers (Dec. 20, 1921, undated); and assigning supervision of the Home to the Dept. of Public Welfare of the City of New Orleans (ca. Dec. 31, 1942). Ordinances also concern the transfer of property from the Touro Shakespeare Almshouse to the Sophie L. Gumbel Home (Aug. 10, 1922); by-laws of the Board of Managers lays out the rules regarding meetings, election of officers and their duties, and the composition and role of the Finance Committee and the House and Grounds Committee (undated).

Report submitted to the Board of Managers include disbursements of funds (June 8, 1925; Oct., Dec. 1943; Jan. 1944); Louisiana Rating and Fire Prevention Bureau safety reports (Nov. 6, 1926; March 29, 1928; Oct. 3, 30, 1931; Oct. 26, 1932); and the superintendent's report on enrolled, health and entertainment (Jan. 1933; Jan., March 1935). U. S. Bureau of Education reports give information on enrollment, staffing, and the education activities provided at the Home (June 1927). Minutes of the Board of Managers reflect discussion and action taken regarding personnel, residents' activities, the Ladies Auxiliary Committee, budgets, building maintain ace, bylaws, and the organization and authority of the Board (1922-1927; 1932; 1943, undated). Other items include recommendations on gathering applicants' medical and psychological information (undated); schedules of classroom instruction and routine chores (undated); inventories of furniture, household items, and laboratory equipment (July 1, 1922); and drafts of admission forms (1922-1924;1926;1928).

Series III. Financial papers, 1922-1949, undated.

Subseries 1. Petty cash, 1924-1942.

Monthly petty cash records reflect daily financial operations of the Home. They consist of employees' monthly salaries, invoices, and lists of expenditures showing the purchase of food, transportation, repairs, dental visit, various sundries, and medication.

Subseries 2. Treasurer's files, 1922-1935, undated.

Monthly statements prepared by the treasurer record appropriations received from the City of New Orleans, donations, available petty cash, and funds distributed through the Home's bank accounts (1922-1935). Balance sheets record city appropriations and available cash balances, and itemize expenses of household items, utilities, salaries, coal and medical expenses (1923-1934).

Subseries 3. Bank statements and vouchers, 1922-1949, undated.

Bank statements list credits, debits and account balances. Vouchers name the payee, the reason for transaction, and amount paid.

Subseries 4. General financial records, 1922-1933.

General financial records consist of bills for electricity, heating gas and phone service; invoices, orders, shipping records, receipts from merchants, wholesalers, and tradesmen; and bids from tradesmen and retailer for carpentry work (April 6, 1926; Feb. 11, 1937) and installation of kitchen appliances (June 24, 1931).

Series IV. Printed items and graphic material, 1917-1936, undated.

Printed items contains an advertising brochure for Cloverland Dairy (ca. 1925), a pamphlet of pasteurization of milk (1925), a program for the Louisiana State Conference for Social Betterment (1927), and a blank initial status report form distributed by the Louisiana Office of the Commissioner of Labor (1936). Newspaper clippings include city ordinances concerning the Sophie L. Gumbel Home and the Touro Shakespeare Almshouse (undated), along with pictures and articles related to the Sophie L. Gumbel Home (Feb. 25, 1917) and the observance of founder's day (undated). Graphic material consists of a drawing of floor plan (undated) and an illustrated cover to a Christmas program (undated).

NOTE: Some highly acid papers were photocopied, and originals were removed to box 5. Photocopies are interfiled within the collection.

INDEX TERMS

Terms	Subgroup, Series, Subseries
Almshouses--Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I.1, II, IV
American Oil and Refining Co.	1
Banks and banking—Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I.2; III.2,3
Boards of directors.	2.I.1, II
Boyd, Thomas Duckett, 1854-1932.	2.I.1
Building--Estimates.	2.I.1, 2; III.4
Canal Bank and Trust.	2.I.2
Child abuse--Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I.1
Conveyancing--Louisiana--New Orleans.	1
Developmentally disabled children—Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I.1
Developmentally disabled--Employment--United States.	2.I.1
Dwellings--Maintenance and repair.	2.I.1,2; III.4
Fire prevention--Inspection.	2.I.1; II
Group homes for people with mental disabilities--Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I-IV
Insurance policies--Louisiana.	2.I..2
Louisiana Office of the Commissioner of Labor	2.IV
Louisiana Rating and Fire Prevention Bureau.	2.I.1; II
Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, La.)--History.	2.I.1
Mental health surveys.	2.I.1
Ordinances, Municipal--New Orleans (La.)	2.II, IV
Selling--Handicraft.	2.I.1
Taxation--Louisiana.	1
Touro Shakespeare Almshouse.	2.I.1; II; IV
Women with mental disabilities--Louisiana--New Orleans.	2.I.1
Wages—Louisiana—New Orleans.	2.III.1, 2

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder s</u>	<u>Contents</u>
	1		Subgroup 1. Simon Gumbel Family Papers, 1851-1903.
P:21 OS:G		1-4 1	Tax receipts, Papers Tax receipts, 1871-1895.
			Subgroup 2. Sophie L. Gumbel Home Records, 1917-1941.
			Series I. Correspondence, 1917-1941, undated.
P:21	2	1-10	Subseries 1. Administrative correspondence, 1917-1941, undated
	2	11-22	Subseries 2. Financial correspondence, 1917-1939, undated.
P:21	2	23-30	Series II. Administrative Records, 1917-1943, undated.
			Series III. Financial Records, 1922-1949, undated.
P:21	2	31-78	Subseries 1. Petty cash, 1924-1942.
	3	1-33	Subseries 2. Treasurer's files, 1922-1935, undated.
	3	34-49	Subseries 3. General financial records, 1922-1933.
	3	50-58	Subseries 4. Bank statements, 1922-1949, undated;
P:22	4a		Vouchers and checks, 1830-1849
	4b		Vouchers and checks, 1831-1840
P:22	5		Originals removed from collection.
			Series IV. Printed items and graphic material, 1917-1936, undated.
	3	59	Printed items, 1917-1936; illustrated cover, undated.
OS:G		1	Floor plan, undated.