

CUNY (BENJAMIN PHILIP) FAMILY PAPERS

Mss. 4246

Inventory

Compiled by

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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2003

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Summary

Size. 25 items and 7 volumes

Geographic Locations. Louisiana, Texas

Inclusive Dates. ca. 1845-1949

Bulk Dates. ca. 1845-1880

Languages. English

Summary. Personal correspondence, papers, and records of the Cuny family of Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, and the Clark family of Alexandria, Rapides Parish, Louisiana. Bulk of correspondence to Benjamin Philip Cuny from family members. Various legal and personal records and volumes pertain primarily to the ownership and management of the family's property.

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Citation. Benjamin Philip Cuny Family Papers, Mss. 4246, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Stack location. 1:53

1845-1949

Biographical/Historical Note

Benjamin P. Cuny (1804-1883) was the son of Richard Edmond Cuny and Tabitha Wells. Moving from his native Rapides Parish, Cuny became a planter and constable at Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, Louisiana. He married his first cousin, Jane Catherine Lovelace, in 1832, and the marriage produced ten children, seven of whom survived childhood: Alexander Hamilton, Stephen Edmond, Maria A., Henry Thomas, Mary Jane, Fannie Lovelace, and Theodore Cholett. In 1882, Fannie Lovelace Cuny married Thomas M. Clark, who died shortly thereafter in 1885. The Clarks had two daughters, Rosa Lovelace and Jeanette "Nettie," neither of whom married. The bulk of Benjamin P. Cuny's Catahoula Parish estate appears to have been purchased by or passed to the Clark family through Fannie Lovelace Cuny.

Scope and Content Note

Collection consists of personal correspondence, papers, and records of the Cuny family of Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, Louisiana. Letters are primarily written to Benjamin P. Cuny between 1852 and 1870. One personal letter written from Texas by Cuny's brother, Stephen Edmond, discusses Reconstruction politics and labor there and in Louisiana (1868). Other letters from Cuny's children of interest include: a letter from his daughter, Maria, describing her and her husband's efforts to farm cotton near Trenton, DeSoto Parish, Louisiana (1866); and two letters from his son, Theodore, describing his involvement in steamship ventures in New Orleans (1869-70).

Legal documents comprise various property records, including Cuny's purchase of two male slaves (1857). Legal papers pertain exclusively to Benjamin P. Cuny and his wife, Jane Lovelace, their daughter, Fannie L. Clark, and her two daughters, Rosa Lovelace and Jeanette "Nettie," the latter of whom resided in Alexandria, Louisiana. Also included in the collection are various financial records and receipts, an 1880 teaching certificate for Catahoula Parish, a carte-de-visite portrait of R. H. Cuny, a 1920 poll tax receipt, and a fragment of a corrected child's essay (1855).

Manuscript volumes include: a record book kept by justices of the peace, including Benjamin P. Cuny, at Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish (1846-1857), containing minutes of minor suits; a plantation diary kept by Benjamin P. Cuny for 1853 with additional information for the years 1851-1859 and pencil notations added later by Cuny's widow, Jane C. Lovelace, concerning crops, the 1897 flood, a revival, deaths, and recipes; a volume containing clippings with household hints and recipes that was originally a record book of suits tried by Cuny ca. 1850; a similar volume with clippings pasted over business accounts (ca. 1845); and three memorandum books from the 1920s and 1930s probably kept by Cuny's daughter, Fannie Lovelace Clark. In these three latter volumes, recorded primarily in Alexandria, the author gives accounts of boarders from 1917-1919 and references World War I activities such as Liberty Bond purchases and "Food Regulations." Later volumes contain memoranda regarding traveling, daily expenditures for food and household needs, and occasional references to local politics, including family difficulties during the Huey Long governorship of Louisiana.

INDEX TERMS

Abstracts.
Alexandria (La.)--History--20th century.
Cartes-de-visite.
Civil law--Louisiana--History.
Clark, Fannie Lovelace.
Clark, Jeanette "Nettie"
Clark, Rose Lovelace.
Contracts.
Cotton growing--Louisiana--19th century.
Cuny family.
Cuny, Benjamin Philip (1804-1883)
Deeds.
Essays.
Freedmen--Louisiana.
Letters.
Long, Huey Pierce (1893-1935)
Mortgages.
Patents (land)
Plantation owners--Louisiana--Catahoula Parish.
Receipts.
Recipes.
Reconstruction--Louisiana.
Sicily Island (La.)--History--19th century.
Women landowners--Louisiana.
World War, 1914-1918--Economic aspects--United States.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u>			
<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
			Correspondence and personal papers
1:53	1	1	1852-1858
		2	1866-1891
		3	1907-1949, undated
		4	Carte-de-visite: R. H. Cuny, undated
			Manuscript volumes
1:53	2	Vol. 1	Justice of the Peace court record book (1846-1857)
		Vol. 2	Plantation diary (1851-1859, bulk 1853)
		Vol. 3	Account book with clippings (ca. 1845)
		Vol. 4	Court record book with clippings (ca. 1850)
		Vol. 5	Memorandum book (October, 1917-November, 1919)
		Vol. 6	Memorandum book (1921-1928)
		Vol. 7	Memorandum book (January, 1929-April, 1932)