

**BENJAMIN PHILIP CUNY 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

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SUMMARY

<b>Size</b>	0.3 linear ft., 7 vols., 1 OS folder
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Louisiana, Texas
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	circa 1845-1949
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	circa 1845-1880
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	Personal correspondence, papers, and records of the Cuny family of Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, and the Clark family of Alexandria, Rapides Parish, Louisiana. The bulk of the correspondence is addressed 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.
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	None
<b>Reproduction Note</b>	May be reproduced.
<b>Copyright</b>	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
<b>Related Collections</b>	None
<b>Citation</b>	Benjamin Philip Cuny Family Papers, Mss. 4246, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	1:56; OS:C

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

Benjamin Philip Cuny (1804-1883) was the son of Richard Edmond Cuny and Tabitha Wells of Rapides Parish, Louisiana. He became a planter at Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish, and served as a constable from 1846-1857. Cuny married his cousin, Jane Catherine Lovelace, in 1832, and the marriage produced ten children, seven of whom survived childhood: Alexander Hamilton, Stephen Edmond (who became a doctor), Maria A. (Gillespie), Henry Thomas, Mary Jane (Blount), Fannie Lovelace (Clark), and Theodore Cholett.

In 1882, Fannie Lovelace Cuny married Thomas M. Clark, who died 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**

The 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. A personal letter written from Texas by Cuny's brother, Stephen Edmond, discusses Reconstruction politics and labor in Texas and 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 enslaved males (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 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 circa 1850; a similar volume with clippings pasted over business accounts (circa 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.

**Content Warning: Items in this collection contain historical terms, phrases, or images that are offensive, outdated, and/or harmful. These include demeaning and dehumanizing references to race, ethnicity, and nationality; enslaved or free status; physical and mental ability; and gender and sexual orientation.**

## **INDEX TERMS**

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found throughout the collection.

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

**CONTAINER LIST**

<b><u>Stack</u></b> <b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Contents (with dates)</u></b>
<b>1:56</b>	1	1	Correspondence and personal papers, 1852-1858
		2	Correspondence and personal papers, 1866-1891
		3	Correspondence and personal papers, 1907-1949, undated
		4	Carte-de-visite photograph of R. H. Cuny, undated
<b>OS:C</b>	--	OS 1	Property documents, 1890-1907
<b>1:56</b>	1	--	Vol. 1: Justice of the Peace court record book, 1846-1857
		--	Vol. 2: Plantation diary, 1851-1859
	--	Vol. 3	Account book with clippings, circa 1845
	--	Vol. 4	Court record book with clippings, circa 1850
	1	--	Vol. 5: Memorandum book, 1917-1919
		--	Vol. 6: Memorandum book, 1921-1928
		--	Vol. 7: Memorandum book, 1929-1932