

**See also: UPA Microfilm 6061,
Series B, Part 1**

BENJAMIN TUREAUD FAMILY PAPERS
Mss. 427, 560, 794, 811, 1100
Inventory

Compiled by
Luana Henderson

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

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Revised 2025

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SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Size | 1.8 linear ft, 93 volumes |
| Geographic Locations | Ascension Parish, La.; St. James Parish, La.; New Orleans, La.; Nicaragua; France |
| Inclusive Dates | 1805-1939 |
| Bulk Dates | 1849-1880 |
| Languages | English, French |
| Summary | Sugar plantation records, business records, and correspondence pertaining to the Bagatelle, Brule, and Houmas plantations and the Benjamin F. Tureaud family of Ascension and St. James Parishes in Southeastern Louisiana. |
| Access Restrictions | None |
| Reproduction Note | May be reproduced. If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm. |
| Copyright | For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law. |
| Related Collections | Louis A. Bringier and Family Papers, Mss. 43, 139, 544, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. Bagatelle Plantation Cotton Record Book, Mss. 19, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. |
| Also Available On: | UPA microfilm 6061: "Records of Southern Plantations from Emancipation to the Great Migration," Series B, reels 3-13, certain items not available on microfilm – see container list |
| Citation | Benjamin Tureaud Family Papers, Mss. 427, 560, 794, 811, 1100, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. |
| Stack Location(s) | E:114-116; J:1-3; OS:T |

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Benjamin F. Tureaud, grandson of Emanuel Bringier and the son of Judge Augustin Dominique Tureaud, was a sugarcane planter in Ascension and St. James Parishes in Southeastern Louisiana. He operated a plantation store and conducted business under the name of Benjamin Tureaud & Co. He was married to the former Marie Elizabeth Aglae Bringier, daughter of Michel Doradou Bringier and Louise Elizabeth Aglae DuBourg de Ste Colombe. The Tureauds had two sons, Benjamin and Henri, and a daughter, Aglae. Benjamin Tureaud died on December 5, 1883, at the age of sixty-five.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Benjamin Tureaud Family Papers are arranged into two series and multiple subseries. Note that although the finding aid description lists several subseries within the papers series, this series is physically arranged chronologically regardless of the subseries. The manuscript volumes series is arranged into twelve subseries according to type.

Correspondence and financial records pertaining to the operation of the Bagatelle, Brule, and Houmas plantations and the business transactions of Benjamin Tureaud & Co. comprise most of the collection. Records include plantation payrolls (1867-1889, undated); receipts for taxes, labor accounts, and shipment of merchandise (1867-1875). Also included are statements of account (1873-1875) and waybills with details of the carrier, cargo, and charges.

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.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

Series I. Papers, 1805-1932, undated

Subseries 1. Business Papers, 1805-1932, undated

Subseries 2. Family Correspondence, 1851-1883, undated

Subseries 3. Printed Material, 1875-1925, undated

Series II. Manuscript Volumes, 1805-1911, 1939, undated

Subseries 1. Cashbooks, 1865-1911

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Subseries 3. Daybooks, 1873-1881

Subseries 4. Accounts Due Books, 1872-1876

Subseries 5. Grinding Report Books, 1877-1879

Subseries 6. Journals, 1872-1881

Subseries 7. Ledgers, 1858-1881, undated

Subseries 8. Notebooks, 1836-1882

Subseries 9. Payroll Books, 1866-1882

Subseries 10. Plantation Journal, 1854

Subseries 11. Time Books, 1872-1881

Subseries 12. Bound Transcriptions, 1805-1939

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Papers, 1805-1932, undated

This series contains business papers, family papers, and newspaper clippings. Selected items are listed in more detail below.

Subseries 1. Business Papers, 1805-1932, undated

Correspondence and financial records pertaining to the operation of the Bagatelle, Brule, and Houmas plantations and the business transactions of Benjamin Tureaud & Co. comprise most of this series.

(1805-1817)

Additional early documents relate to the sale and transfer of land (March 25, 1805) to Alexander Stirling of West Feliciana Parish, La.; authorization given to Philip Hickey by James Proffit of New Orleans (Oct. 8, 1807) to sell Marshall Plantation; and a verdict (Sept. 2, 1806) rendered by William Bell, Spanish alcalde of St. Helena Parish, sentencing a man for defaming the character of two women of good reputation. Additionally, early business papers contain promissory notes, bills, and receipts for travel, as well as personal and household items such as hardware, books, clothing, and tobacco products (1807-1833). Other topics discussed in correspondence include weather, crop conditions, and the public sale of sheep and mares (Aug. 25, 1817).

(1828-1857)

Antebellum papers include a series of letters (1845-1855) from Tureaud's brother-in-law, Martin Gordon, Jr., a New Orleans commission merchant. His letters pertain to cotton, sugar, and tobacco prices; imports and exports; molasses sales and sugar production; and he advises on the Bringier family estate, including the sugar crops at Houmas, Brule, and Whitehall plantations. He makes references to Bringier family disputes and sugar production at Hermitage Plantation (Nov. 11, 1849). Gordon also reports that the size of the Whig party will be greatly reduced after the New Orleans city elections (Nov. 7, 1849), and he describes bank closures and economic conditions in New Orleans due to the banking panic (Oct. 15, 1857).

Legal documents and some correspondence concern the sale (May 8, 1828, Jan. 30, 1835) and treatment (Dec. 30, 1852) of enslaved people, articles purchased for the enslaved (Dec. 30, 1850), and the fear of cholera among the enslaved (June 6, 1855). Other topics include the presence of cholera at Houmas Plantation (Sept. 19, 1850) and the German coast, and the absence of cholera at Houmas and Brule plantations (June 6, 1855). There is also a list of borders at the University of Louisiana (Jan. 6, 1856) and an account of the Phoenix Company of Louisiana in the Mexican War, giving dates of mustering in and

discharge, undated. This account gives the history and military activities of the company and those of other military units.

(1860-1865)

Of note is a letter (March 9, 1860) from Alexander Dimitry, the U. S. Foreign Minister to Nicaragua and Costa Rica, to his son, John Bull Dimitry in Costa Rica, in which he discusses his duties as foreign minister, the intrigue among officials over the establishment of a transit, approval by President James Buchanan for Dimitry's plan for a land-and-water transit route across Nicaragua, hostility towards U.S. citizens caused William Walker's destruction of Granada, and poor social conditions existing there. He also congratulates his son for his views on Costa Rica.

The few papers of the Civil War period consist of a poem critical of General Butler (July 16, 1863), a petition in the succession of George Mather filed in St. James Parish District Court naming his heirs (June 20, 1861), a judgment in favor of Mrs. A. Tureaud against L. A. Bringier (March 1, 1863), payroll sheet for Union Plantation (Feb. 4, 1865). Letters from another brother-in-law, Duncan Farrar Kenner of Ashland Plantation, deal primarily with the business of Benjamin Tureaud & Co. However, in a letter to Governor Thomas O. Moore (Sept. 25, 1864), he expresses his opinions that bond issues are acceptable for the payment of Confederate taxes, the Confederate Treasury Department is slow to deliver funds, and he expects General Henry Grey to be elected to Congress. Kenner also states that he does not despair over the fall of Atlanta, Ga., and that General Grant holds on only for the political effect on the Presidential election. **[Note: Sept. 25, 1864, letter not available on microfilm].**

(1867-1875)

After 1867, papers consist chiefly of business records that include waybills for sugar and molasses shipments; statements of account for purchases made by Benjamin Tureaud and Co., for sugar shipments to New Orleans and merchandise purchased for Tureaud's plantations and store, along with receipts for miscellaneous expenditures and repairs on the plantations. Other items include a certificate issued by the Democratic Party recommending to "all Democrats" the protection and employment of the bearer (Nov. 3, 1868).

Records related to plantation labor contain receipts for wages and lists of laborers reflecting hours worked and wages earned; payrolls generally list names of laborers, note whether they were white or Chinese; there is also a receipt (July 1, 1871) for the transportation of Chinese laborers to Houmas Plantation. Other topics appearing in the correspondence concern contracting laborers, breeding mares (March 24, 28, April 3, 1875), an outbreak of "charbon" among the cattle at Ashland Plantation (July 25, 1875), grange movement in Illinois (Sept. 20, 1875), and a preference for African American laborers to whites during grinding of the sugar cane (Aug. 6, 1875).

Joseph Richard, Jr., talks of lumber purchased at Plaquemine or Baton Rouge, the lack of sawmills in operation at Bayou Goula, and of one in operation at Manchac (Aug. 3, 1875).

(1874-1911, undated)

Later correspondence from Gordon Martin, Jr. concerns plantation labor, sugar market, and freight rates (1874-1878). A letter from John Lidgerwood to L. A. Bringier describes the sugar culture and milling (May 10, 1887), and there is a reference to Mr. Kenner repairing two crevasses (1892). Tureaud's letters (1875-1879) direct the management of Brule, giving instructions on preparation for sugar cane cutting and grinding, making hay, fences, and the selection of laborers. His letters also pertain to the treatment of "charbon," the sugar crop, livestock feed, risk of shipping currency, and an unsigned letter expresses an adverse criticism of marriage (1892).

Other items include receipts for bread tickets issued by Porta's bakery, Union, La., (1882-1886), printed pedigree of the horse "Silverheels" (undated), Ben Tureaud, Jr. reports no one was killed installing six boilers near the old bagasse boilers at Tezcuco Plantation (undated), and comments by Joseph S. Mather on the financial speculation in Louisiana oil (Sept. 10, 1911).

Subseries 2. Family Correspondence, 1851-1883, undated

Family letters are found throughout the collection and relate to business, family matters, and social activities; several letters are written in French. Correspondence from the children includes letters written by Ben Tureaud, Jr., from Paris depicting Parisian social life, progress of his studies at Clare Mont, and his observations on the news of Maximillian's death (1866-1868).

Letters from Phil Tureaud (1869-1871) discuss his studies and social activities, including baseball, at St. John School in Mississippi, and Trist Bringier discusses student activities at Virginia Military Institute (Nov. 30, 1877). References made to notable individuals include favorable comments on the singing ability of Jenny Lind (Feb. 14, 1851), the captivating Sarah Bernhardt (Feb. 16, 1892), and a proposed visit by Isaac Delgado to the coast; Lotta and Thompson play to fine audiences, however, burlesque is corrupting New Orleans (Jan. 31, 1872), and a description of Mrs. Tom Thumb (March 11, 1883).

Subseries 3. Printed Material, 1875-1925, undated

Newspaper clippings (1875-1925, undated) relate to political elections, political figures, World War I (undated), prohibition (circa 1923), religion, undated, the Ku Klux Klan (undated), and an exhausted Union Sulfur Co., mine near Lake Charles, La., (Feb. 1, 1925). Printed cards are made up of trade cards, business cards, and a ticket for passage on the steamer *Selma*.

Series II. Manuscript Volumes, 1805-1911, 1939, undated

Ninety-three manuscript volumes primarily record the business transactions of Benjamin Tureaud and Co., and the operation of Bagatelle, Brule, and Houmas plantations. They relate to store sales, accounts, freight, labor costs, and sugar production. Included among the volumes are typed transcriptions of the original documents in the Tureaud Papers that were compiled during a project by the Works Progress Administration in 1939.

Subseries 1. Cashbooks, 1865-1911

Twelve cashbooks for Benjamin Tureaud and Co. show business transactions and indicate expenses involved in the operation of the Union and Houmas plantations. Volume 7 also includes: "Rules and Regulations Governing the Upper Public School, 4th Ward, Parish of St. James," and student rolls arranged by reading level (circa 1880-1900); handwritten copies of invoices for merchandise received from merchants are also included (1911).

Subseries 2. Checkbooks, 1872-1884

The two checkbooks here relate to financial records from Houmas Plantation.

Subseries 3. Daybooks, 1873-1881

An unbroken run of seventeen daybooks shows plantation store sales with detailed records of items purchased by laborers, noting some purchases made by Chinese laborers; vol. 30 contains entries for steamboat carriers.

Subseries 4. Accounts Due Books, 1872-1876

Account books on due bills for Benjamin Tureaud and Co. are in vol. 31-35 and list accounts and payments made on these accounts.

Subseries 5. Grinding Report Books, 1877-1879

The three grinding report books in the collection record the watches or work shifts of laborers grinding sugarcane at Houmas Plantation.

Subseries 6. Journals, 1872-1881

Journals of accounts, record sales transactions from daybooks for customers of Benjamin Tureaud and Co., with entries for Houmas, Brule, and Bagatelle plantations, vol. 39-47.

Subseries 7. Ledgers, 1858-1881, undated

There are twenty-nine ledgers containing plantation records for Houmas, Brule, and Bagatelle plantations and store sales posted from daybooks for Tureaud's store. They contain store accounts, including merchandise charged to Houmas and Brule plantations and labor accounts for both plantations; vol. 50 also contains entries for steamboat carriers.

Subseries 8. Notebooks, 1836-1882

Notebooks are in vol. 77-80, and two were student notebooks kept by Benjamin Tureaud while attending the University of Virginia. The "A. Mather" notebook [in English and

French] is a student notebook from Paris, France, and relates to course study. A notebook regarding the letter patents of Joseph and Stanhope Jones, vol. 80 (1882), contains handwritten copies, not true copies of papers and legal documents related to patents, including a petition to the Commissioner of Patents to grant a letter patent for Joseph Jones' improved method of preserving wood, specifications.

Subseries 9. Payroll Books, 1866-1882

Payroll books comprise vol. 81-84, and record wages for workers on the Brule and Houmas plantations.

Subseries 10. Plantation Journal, 1854

Plantation journal maintained by Thomas Y. Bell that records work schedules (Jan.-March) and the amount of wood cut down on Houmas Plantation.

Subseries 11. Time Books, 1872-1881

Time books record the hours worked and wages paid at both Houmas and Brule plantations.

Subseries 12. Bound Transcriptions, 1805-1939

These last two volumes are typed transcriptions of the original documents in the Tureaud Papers that were compiled during a project by the Works Progress Administration in 1939.

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