

Reuben Moore Benjamin Collection

Processed by
Brigid R. McBride

Fall 2009

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Collection Information:

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1809-1930
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History.
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	See also—Photographic Collection—People: Benjamin

Brief History

Reuben Moore Benjamin was born in June of 1833 in Columbia County, New York. Benjamin graduated from Amherst in 1853 and attended Harvard Law School. He came to Bloomington in 1856 and practiced law with Asahel Gridley. Abraham Lincoln served as a member of his examination committee and signed his qualifications to practice law in Illinois. Benjamin practiced law with several other well known attorneys in McLean County.

Benjamin served in the Union Army for several months during the Civil War and became a member of the constitutional convention to redraft the Illinois Constitution in 1870. Benjamin was elected Judge of the County Court of McLean County and served several terms. He also co-founded the Bloomington Law School at Illinois Wesleyan University and was Dean for several years. Upon retiring from the practice of law in 1893, he focused on writing and teaching.

Benjamin was known as a populist lawyer fighting for regulation of monopolies and trusts. He took the Chicago and Alton Railroad to court for unfair fees for hauling lumber. Even though Benjamin was a radical, he strictly adhered to the Republican Party's ideals. He was described as a "pioneer antimonopolist" and at the same time a "radical opponent" of socialism.

He married Laura Woodin from Chatham, New York in 1856. They resided at 510 E. Grove St. in Bloomington where he remained until his death in 1917.

Scope Note

The Reuben Moore Benjamin collection contains a variety of genealogical information about the Benjamin Family, newspaper clippings, Reuben Benjamin's writings and some publications, correspondence, deeds, abstracts of title, and ledger books containing newspaper articles and law notes.

Folder 1: Deeds, Contracts

- 1.1.1 Deed from William Row and Darius Benjamin, April 1835, Canaan County, New York
- 1.1.2 Abstract of title; Sec. 4-24-2E and 19-25-3E; possibly for DeWitt County, 1836
- 1.1.3 Warranty deed; John Rogers to Darius Benjamin, July 1, 1843
- 1.1.4 Deed; Henry Crego to David G. Wooden, New York, November 4, 1851
- 1.1.5 Agreement to rent property; Ralph Thompson and Martha Benjamin, February 5, 1853
- 1.1.6 Note to Benjamin from S. Tenner, October 6, 1873, concerning lecturing a course in Bloomington
- 1.1.7 Contract, Darius Benjamin and Starks apparently for land, January 30, 1829
- 1.1.8 Statement from Inspectors of the Common Schools approving Dewitt Clinton Benjamin as instructor, March 24, 1842 (photocopy and typed copy)
- 1.1.9 Note from father Darius Benjamin to son Reuben at Amhurst College, April 7, 185?
- 1.1.10 Local Preacher's License, for Dewitt C. Benjamin, March 14, 1831
- 1.1.11 Contract for \$5,000 due to David Rider from Darius Benjamin, April 1, 1809
- 1.1.12 Photocopies of receipts from Darius Benjamin to David Rider
- 1.1.13 Receipts
- 1.1.14 Abstract of Thos. P. Rogers for Benjamin
- 1.1.15 From the Public Library of the City of Boston, concerning donation of R.M. Benjamin, 191?
- 1.1.16 United States Land Office, abstract of title(?), 1858
- 1.1.17 Abstract of Title, W.W. 1/4 Sec. 33 Township 25 North, Range 2 East of the Third Principal Meridian
- 1.1.18 United States Assessor's Office, eighth collection district, State of Illinois, April 28, 1863
- 1.1.19 Report of the Sunday School at Buck Creek, July 14, 1833

Folder 2: R.M. Benjamin Newspaper

- 1.2.1 Title page for obituary, 1917
- 1.2.2 "R.M. Benjamin Memorial Held," *Daily Bulletin*, September 11, 1917
- 1.2.3 "Veteran Justice Called," *Pantagraph*, August 6, 1917
- 1.2.4 "The Evolution and Prevention of Trusts and Monopolies," *Daily Bulletin*, June 24, 1906 (3 copies)
- 1.2.5 "A Plea for an Anti-Monopoly Amendment to the Constitution of the United States," *Pantagraph*, April 4, 1872, p. A-14, by R.M. Benjamin (6 copies)
- 1.2.6 "D.A.R. Takes Stand For Peace," *Pantagraph*, May 15, ??
- 1.2.7 "Reuben M. Benjamin, McLean County's Great Populist Lawyer" Bill Kemp, no date

Folder 3: Speech

- 1.3.1 "The Bar of McLean Co. Prior to 1856," R.M. Benjamin, photocopy
- 1.3.2 "The Bar of McLean Co. Prior to 1856," R.M. Benjamin, typescript Attorneys at the time: Gridley, Wickiser, Holmers, Packard, Hanna and Scott, Swett and Orme, Briar and Birch, Strain and Rodgers, Hogg, Reeves

Folder 4: Benjamin Family Papers

- 1.4.1 "A List of Townships in the County"
- 1.4.2 Sermon, no date, R.M. Benjamin
- 1.4.3 Notes, no date
- 1.4.4 "Rule in Shelley's Case," no date, typescript and photocopy
- 1.4.5 "Mirabeau" sermon (?) R.M. Benjamin, typescript
- 1.4.6 Sermon (?) R.M. Benjamin, typescript
- 1.4.7 "Morning," RMB, no date
- 1.4.8 "Absence," R.B., December 1862
- 1.4.9 "Night- A Fragment," R.M.B, no date
- 1.4.10 "Martha Wood Clark, Feb. 12, 1789- Oct. 6, 1873"
- 1.4.11 Certificate from the Bloomington Library Association for Reuben M. Benjamin is a life member of the Association, dated March 2, 1867
- 1.4.12 "Twin Citians Featured in Book," *Pantagraph*, September 17, 1972
- 1.4.13 Floor plans to Judge Reuben Benjamin's house on East Grove, photocopies with several handwritten notes
- 1.4.14 "Children of Laure E. and C.W. Huffman" "Children of Reuben B. and Annie K. Benjamin"
- 1.4.15 List of Benjamin family members, death dates and location of death
- 1.4.16 Writing, "Perhaps there is no country..." by R.M. Benjamin, no date, (photocopy and typed)
- 1.4.17 Writing, "...and no storm cloud is lowering in the political horizon..." by R.M. Benjamin (photocopy)

Folder 5: Correspondence

- 1.5.1 Correspondence from L. Rogers and R. Thompson to Dear Cousin dated Jan. 5, 1835 concerning various family members and weather (typed)
- 1.5.2 Correspondence from Darius Benjamin to Reuben Benjamin dated April 7, 1850 concerning loan of money to pay expenses, school (typed copy, photocopy of original, and photocopy of envelope)
- 1.5.3 Correspondence from George F. Betts to D. Clinton Benjamin (brother of Judge Reuben M. Benjamin) dated May 21, 1853 concerning written work (typed copy)
- 1.5.4 Note from Rollie to unknown, no date concerning Civil War fighting, followed by correspondence to dear Mary from Rollie dated September 5, 1862, concerning the Civil War fighting at Jackson, Tennessee (photocopies)
- 1.5.5 Correspondence from Reuben M. Benjamin to Laura dated January 21, 1863 concerning Civil War fighting (photocopy)
- 1.5.6 Correspondence from Sallie E. Fish to dear Granpap dated March 17, 1863 concerning health, business, moving and corresponding (original, photocopy, transcript)
- 1.5.7 Correspondence from Brother, George H. Woodin to dear Sister dated July 27, 1863 concerning injury received in Civil War (photocopy)
- 1.5.8 Correspondence from unknown to D.C. Benjamin dated July 30, 1863 concerning Civil War, rifle cleaning and inspection (2 photocopies)
- 1.5.9 Correspondence from Valentine (?) D.C. Benjamin dated 1863 concerning Civil War (original)

- 1.5.10 Correspondence from F.C.B. to Brother dated March 26, 1864 concerning moving West, babies, agriculture, paper mill (original and typed copy)
- 1.5.11 Copy of Recommendation for D.C. Benjamin's Arithmetic from Ira Moore and E.W. Simmons, dated April 14, 1864 and May 1, 1846 (1864?) (typed copy)
- 1.5.12 Correspondence from T.R.B to Mother dated June 26, 1864 concerning business, agriculture (photocopy of typed and original)
- 1.5.13 Correspondence from unknown to Father dated March 11, 1867 (typed copy)
- 1.5.14 Letter to Mother, from unknown in San Francisco, February 20, 1868
- 1.5.15 Correspondence from unknown to dear Mother dated January 10, 1869 concerning agriculture, business (typed copy)
- 1.5.16 Correspondence from R.S. Rust to D.C. Benjamin dated June 23, 1870 concerning donation of book, Arithmetics, to the Freedmens Aid Society of the M.E. Church
- 1.5.17 Correspondence from Mrs. Geo. H. Treadwell to R.M. Benjamin Dated September 22, 1903 concerning genealogy of the Benjamin Family
- 1.5.18 Correspondence to from Nelly B. Wilson R.M. Benjamin dated November 3, 1903 concerning Benjamin Family genealogy, the ancestors of R.M. Benjamin
- 1.5.19 Correspondence from Catherine Crandall to Judge R.M. Benjamin, June 3, 1905, concerning Benjamin Family genealogy
- 1.5.20 Correspondence to Judge (R.M. Benjamin) from Marcus Benjamin, November 6, 1906, concerning family relations
- 1.5.21 Correspondence from S.G.W. Benjamin to Hon. R.M. Benjamin November 26, 1906, concerning genealogy
- 1.5.22 Correspondence from Marcus Benjamin to R.M. Benjamin January 9, 1907, concerning genealogy
- 1.5.23 Correspondence from Lucietia (?) W. Smith to R.M. Benjamin, January 25, 1908, concerning genealogy
- 1.5.24 Correspondence from Marcus Benjamin to R.M. Benjamin June 13, 1908 concerning printing of the Benjamin Family Genealogy
- 1.5.25 Correspondence from Marcus Benjamin to R.M. Benjamin June 18, 1908 concerning printing of Benjamin Genealogy
- 1.5.26 Correspondence from F.H. Wells to R.M. Benjamin January 11, 1912, concerning Benjamin Genealogy
- 1.5.27 Correspondence from F.H. Wells to R.M. Benjamin March 16, 1912, concerning genealogy
- 1.5.28 Correspondence from Mrs. James M. King to Reuben M. Benjamin dated April 19, 1912 concerning Benjamin Genealogy booklet and request for information
- 1.5.29 Correspondence from the Commissioner of the Department of the Interior Bureau of Pensions dated July 28, 1915 concerning the pension of Darius Benjamin in the War of 1812
- 1.5.30 Correspondence from Chas. T. Newton Secretary's Office of Henry Ford Company dated December 5, 1929, March 1, 1930, and May 27, 1930 concerning the sale of R.M. Benjamin's desk and law library (photocopies, include envelopes)
- 1.5.31 Correspondence from O.H. Price to the *Daily Pantagraph* "Rollie Hunt Editor" dated march 25, 1941 concerning Civil War letters **1.5.5**, **1.5.7**, and other letters, includes brief family histories, and tax information

- 1.5.32 Correspondence from Catherine Crandall to John Benjamin, no date concerning Benjamin family history in Columbia County, New York
- 1.5.33 Correspondence to R.M. Benjamin from unknown, no date, concerning family history
- 1.5.34 Photocopy of page of correspondence, concerns Civil War, death of General Pemberton's wife, grim battle, and life on the front lines

Folder 6: Legislation

- 1.6.1 "Legislation to Control the Anthracite Coal Corporations," R.M. Benjamin, October 9, 1902 (2 copies)
- 1.6.2 "Railroad Legislation Speech of Hon. R.M. Benjamin of McLean in the Constitutional Convention," (photocopy)
- 1.6.3 "Plea for an Anti-Monopoly Amendment to The Constitution of the United States" R.M. Benjamin 1914 (photocopy)

Folder 7: Pedigree Charts

- 1.7.1 Correspondence from Ellis Benjamin Baker to R.M. Benjamin, November 5, 1903, contains listing of Benjamins
- 1.7.2 Group Record for Reuben M. Price and Robert Carol Price (Reuben)
- 1.7.3 Group Record for James Corbie Underwood
- 1.7.4 Group Record for Scott Price
- 1.7.5 Group Record for Rolla Benjamin Price and William Sheaffer
- 1.7.6 Group Record for Orlo Henry Price with photograph of Lewis Price
- 1.7.7 "Applicant's Working Sheet" for Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), lineage for Laura (Price) Robeson
- 1.7.8 Robert Carroll Price ancestral chart
- 1.7.9 Portrait Pedigree of the Progenitors of Laura (Price) Robeson
- 1.7.10 Pedigree chart for John Benjamin, Darius Benjamin, Ebenezer Benjamin, Obed Benjamin, Joseph Benjamin, and Darius Benjamin
- 1.7.11 "Scott Price, Son of George Wall and Matilda Prunty"
- 1.7.12 "Autobiography of Laura Price Robeson (Descendant of John Price, The Immigrant)"
- 1.7.13 Photocopy of correspondence from Reuben M. Benjamin to wife Laura, dated January 21, 1863
- 1.7.14 Photocopy of photograph of "Family Kids Party"
- 1.7.15 Photocopy of "Scott Price is Taken By Death," *Pantagraph*, August 16, 1926 and two photographs
- 1.7.16 Photocopy of photograph of "Benjamin Farm Home"
- 1.7.17 Photocopy of picture, D.C. Benjamin
- 1.7.18 Photocopy of photograph "Judge Benjamin's Office in Bloomington, Ill."
- 1.7.19 Photocopy of photograph, wedding of Ethel Witherell and Orlo Price
- 1.7.20 Photocopy of picture of R.M. Benjamin and Mrs. Benjamin
- 1.7.21 Photocopy of "The Benjamin Families from Columbia County, NY," no date
- 1.7.22 Photocopy of "Benjamin Family in the Line of Judge Reuben Benjamin of Bloomington, ILL"
- 1.7.23 Photocopy of notes containing service information about Ebenezer Benjamin
- 1.7.24 Photocopy of the Home of R.M. Benjamin

1.7.25 Photocopy of correspondence(?) concerning the history of the John Benjamin Family coming to America, no date (2 copies)

Box 8: Miscellaneous

Box 9: Poem

1.9.1 Copy of R. M. Benjamin poem. Original held at Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

Folder 8: Miscellaneous

- 1.8.1 Cross Reference Sheet, letter dated January 21, 1863 in the **Civil War Era Correspondence Collection Box 1**
- 1.8.2 Sheet referring to the Manuscript of Law Book by R.M. Benjamin on display in “Politics Gallery” exhibit
- 1.8.3 Handwritten item inventory

Loose Items

Autograph Book of R.M. Benjamin, 1803-1870, donated by Hon. R.M. Benjamin, October 25, 1912

R.M. Benjamin Scrapbook, contains newspaper articles, photos from newspapers, some handwritten notes, Lincoln reminiscences, Civil War remembered articles

R.M. Benjamin, 1864, handwritten, contains legal terms, legal papers, definitions, and regulations, 292 pages