



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Bennie Benjamin papers**

1907-1992

Sc MG 604

Compiled by P. Williams, 1998. Finding aid edited and adapted to digital form by Kay Menick in 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Benjamin, Bennie

**Title:** Bennie Benjamin papers

**Date:** 1907-1992

**Size:** 1.42 linear feet (5 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Patricia E. and Howard M. Larsen, and Jack N. Albert (executor) in 1997.

**Abstract:** Claude A. "Bennie" Benjamin was a well-known lyricist of popular songs from 1941 until his death in 1989. This collection comprises biographical information, correspondence, sheet music, printed material, and four scrapbooks. The scrapbooks contain letters, postcards, flyers, notes, cards, photographs, v-mail (faxes), and newspaper and magazine clippings from Decca, Cashbox, Billboard, and the Virgin Island Daily News from 1941 to 1955. The bulk of the collection documents Benjamin's agreements with music publishing companies, artists' agreements with Benjamin's music publishing companies, and sheet music.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Conditions Governing Access:**

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**Conditions Governing Use:** Information on copyright available from repository.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Bennie Benjamin papers, Sc MG 604, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by P. Williams, 1998. Finding aid edited and adapted to digital form by Kay Menick in 2016. Photographs transferred to the Photographs and Print Division. Recordings transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division. Posters and other artifacts transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division.

## **Creator History**

Claude A. "Bennie" Benjamin was born in Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands in November 1907, and relocated to New York City at the age of twenty. He was a well-known lyricist of popular songs from 1941 until his death in 1989. Benjamin, Sol Marcus, and Eddie Seiler wrote the lyrics and music for "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire," a song made famous by the Ink Spots. He also co-authored, with George Weiss, the hit song, "When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World)." Benjamin and Weiss wrote the musical scores and lyrics for two Walt Disney full length movies, "Fun and Fancy Free" and "Melody Time." He was both a co-owner with singer, Perry Como (1950), and later sole owner (1968) of his own music publishing company.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Lyricists -- United States  
Popular Music -- 1941-1980  
Popular music -- United States  
Popular Music -- Writing and publishing -- United States

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Scrapbooks  
Sheet music

### **Names**

Como, Perry, 1912-2001  
Marcus, Sol, 1912-1976  
Powell, Adam Clayton, Jr., 1908-1972  
Seiler, Eddie, 1911-1952  
Weiss, George

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical Information 1907-1989
- b. 1 f. 2 Memorial Book
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence 1957-1989
- b. 1 f. 4 American Guild of Authors/Composers - Copyrights, Contracts 1975-1979
- b. 1 f. 5 Bennie Benjamin Music, Inc 1979-1983
- b. 1 f. 6 Chappell Music Company 1975-1988
- b. 1 f. 7 Laurel Music Corporation 1949-1955
- b. 1 f. 8 Leeds Music Corporation 1944-1946
- b. 1 f. 9 Oxford Music Corporation 1947-1948
- b. 1 f. 10 Santly-Joy Inc 1946-1948
- b. 2 f. 1 Valando Music Corporation 1951-1954
- b. 2 f. 2 Sundry Companies 1945-1954
- b. 2 f. 3 List of Songs undated
- b. 2 f. 4 Recording Artists undated
- Programs
- b. 2 f. 5 Bennie Benjamin 1978-1992
- b. 2 f. 6 Other Programs 1983, 1989, undated
- b. 2 f. 7 Musical Play of BB by Edward Earle undated
- b. 2 f. 8 Press Releases 1964
- Printed Matter
- b. 2 f. 9 Newspaper Clippings 1959-1983
- b. 2 f. 10 Newsletters 1987, undated
- b. 3 Sheet Music 1941-1966
- Scrapbooks
- b. 4 1925, 1941-1955
- b. 5 1949-1952