

Louis Cohen was born in Liverpool, England in 1854. He died in England in 1945. He was a journalist, diamond buyer, stockbroker.

In 1872 at the age of 17 he sailed for the Cape with a friend called Lewis Woolf. Upon landing in the Cape they left for the diamond – fields of Griqualand West. Cohen joined Barney Barnato in a partnership in 1873. (Louis Cohen was a cousin of Barney Barnato). During this time, Cohen was a contributor to the Dutoitspan Herald. His articles dealt with topical events i.e. life on the diamond fields.

He wrote 2 books

- 1) Reminiscences of Kimberley,
- 2) Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London.

The first book was so scandalous that he was sued for libel by one of the great mining magnates, J.B.Robinson. As a result, Louis Cohen went into bankruptcy.

In 1894 Cohen returned to England and worked as a journalist for The Rialto and contributed to The Winning Post in which a series of articles were published.

In 1932 he made drafts of his last two works, namely Memoirs of Priscilla, Countess Whopper. Cohen also wrote several short stories, plays, and sketches.

This collection has papers dating from 1899 to 1921.

There are also 5 volumes and 2 boxes.

Included are a draft of his last work Memoirs of Priscilla, Countess Whopper, published in 1932, and transcripts of several of his short stories, plays and sketches, with parts of the original Mss; several English play-bills, bills, programmes, tickets etc. for plays and sketches produced by Cohen in London. Also a volume of clippings from The Winning Post, London, 12 Apr-15 Nov.1913, in which Reminiscences of Johannesburg first appeared, and a bound volume of The Winning Post edited by R.S.Siever 7 Aug.1907 - 8 Aug.1908 (plus some odd numbers); 9 editions of Tit-Bits, London, containing his memoir 'The magic and madness of diamonds and gold'. Scrap-books include a volume of press clippings, 'Gems from Johannesburg history', 1912, a volume of clippings on the death of Barney Barnato, June 1897, and an album of clippings concerning the charge of perjury brought by Sir Joseph Robinson against Cohen in 1914. The correspondence includes a letter to S.B.Joel dated 1899, a reply from Joel's attorneys threatening prosecution for libel and Cohen's reply. Names of other correspondents include Sir A.Conan Doyle, Sir David Harris, John Hay, S.H.van Diggelen; letters from Cohen to J.G.Gubbins who purchased the collection. Also photographs of Cohen, 6 postcard photographs of Benoni in the early days, legal documents, press notices of Cohen's works and other miscellaneous papers.

#### Classification

- A. Correspondence
  - 1.1 Personal
  - 1.2 Legal.
- B. Publications:
  - 1.1 articles
  - 1.2 Transcripts.
- C. Miscellaneous

- D. Press clippings
- 1.1 Scrapbooks
- 1.2. Press clippings / loose.

- E. Photographs
- F. Notes

#### Inventory

- A Correspondence (23 items)
- 1.1 Personal letters from:
  - a) G. de Battel ? undated
  - b) C. Barken 24 November 1908
  - c) Colonel R. Bettington 15 May 1923
  - d) R.C.S Cromwell 1911
  - e) Sir A. Conan Doyle 12 May 1911
  - f) S.H. van Diggelen 5 April 1909
  - g) J. Fowles ? x II XI
  - h) T. G. H. Glynn 8 March 1908
  - i) J. G. Gubbins
  - j) Sir D. Harris (x2), 27 March 1911, 21 September 1911
  - k) G. W. Hay, undated
  - l) S.B. Joel 18 May 1899
  - m) S.W. Matthews (x2) 19 July 1908, 14 September 1908
  - n) Leonard Rayne, undated
  - o) J. Russell 20 April 1908
  - p) L. Streeter 4 March 1912

- 1.2 Legal
  - a) copies of affidavits by: S. Parker  
W.M. Esdebski  
J. Reed  
J.J. Raaff
  - b) copy of High Court summons issued on behalf of Sir J. Robinson, 1911
  - c) copy of bankruptcy petition issued against Cohen on behalf of Robinson 1912
  - d) Reporters notes at the old Bailey trial of Louis Cohen
  - e) letter from Lewis and Lewis
  - f) reply from Joel's attorney 23 May 1899
  - g) E. Phillips – life governor C.T. Schools.
  - h) E. Sayers – 1906

- B. Publications (17 items)
- 1.1 Articles published:
  - (a) "Kimberley, Johannesburg and London 1872 – 1907" by L. Cohen, 18 January 1908 – 8 August 1908. The Winning Post.
  - (b) "The Magic and Madness of Diamonds and Gold" 7 May 1932 – 9 July 1932 Tit-bits

In both these articles, Cohen describes the life in the early days in Johannesburg and Kimberley.

- 1.2 Transcripts
  - a) "Memoirs of Priscilla, Countess Whopper" published in 1932
 Transcripts of short stories / plays:

- b) "Napoleon's heart", "The birth of Napoleon",
- c) "Our Mr Hocking"
- d) "The Children of the Chains" 1894
- e) "Pillars of the Turf" 1894
- f) "Chamber of Horrors" 1894.
- g) "The rise and fall of Venusberg"

C Miscellaneous (13 items)

- 1) "The Tivoli Programme" (x2) advertising "a naval up-to-date phantasy" 29 May 1909
- 2) programme from the London Coliseum
- 3) a ticket for the play "En voyage and Marshal Ney, or soldiers of France" which was issued by the National Sporting Club, 27 April 1903
- 4) poster advertising "Edmund Kean" 31 January 1910
- 5) photograph of the programme of "The Octoroon" performance 1883 (London)  
photograph removed
- 6) Holborn Empire (x2) programme advertising "The Drummer of the 76th." 11 February 1907
- 7) Royal West London Theatre programme – "A glass of port", 16 May 1907.
- 8) The Oxford programme – "La Carmencita", adapted by Cohen 13 May 1907.
- 9) Wyndham's Theatre (poster) "Marshal Ney" 1903
- 10) Poster – "Mr Louis Cohen, a Banquet or Testimonial" 1911
- 11) Sadler's Wells Theatre, "Nelson", 25 April 1910

D. Press clippings (15 items)

1.1 Scrapbooks

One bound volume of press clippings, called "Gems from Johannesburg history" 1912.

1.2 a volume of press clippings on the death of Barney Barnato, June 1897

1.3 a volume of press clippings on "Reminiscences of Johannesburg" by L. Cohen 1913.

2 Press clippings (loose)

- 1) Press opinions of "En Voyage" 20 Dec 1883
- 2) press notices of "The land of Diamonds" 1884
- 3) loose article from Winning Post called: "Sir J.B. Robinson and Mr L. Cohen in the law courts". 25 November 1911.
- 4) "Illustrated Sunday Herald" – "Barnato's wife and son serve their country" 4 July 1915 (photographs)
- 5) "Pall Mall Gazette" - "Romance of Gold" – "The great mining deal", Mr S. Joel acquired Sir J. Robinson's interests in the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company. 28 December 1916.
- 6) "South Africa" 12 June 1925, source unknown
- 7) Cohen writes a letter to the editor called "The land of diamonds"
- 8) Sunday Times notice of "Reminiscences of Johannesburg" with a portrait of the author 1925.
- 9) "Robinson & Cohen" - source and date unknown
- 10) "The Rialto", "Reminiscences of Kimberley".
- 11) "The Sunday Times", "Loo Cohen looks back", 26 April 1925.
- 12) "The Sunday Times" "A matter of prejudice" 19/9/1976
- 13) "The Star" "Not kitchen sink but Loo" 5 March 1979.
- 14) "Winning Post" odd issues 17 Dec 1904 – 6 May 1905

- E.        Photographs (7 items)  
            1) print of B. Barnato and C. Moses 1878  
            Photographs removed  
            2) 6 postcards of Benoni in the early days.
- F.        Notes (loose sheets) (30 items)  
            1) Portion of MS of "Kimberley in the seventies" 4 pages  
            2) Original index of "Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London", 10 pages.  
            3) "Land of Diamonds", 1 page.  
            4) Original preface to "Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London" 5 pages.  
            5) Notebook on "Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London".