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Varian Fry Genealogical Research Papers
1829-1966
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Summary

- Main entry:** Fry, Varian
- Title:** Varian Fry Genealogical Research Papers, 1829-1966 (bulk 1850s-1890s)
- Size:** 6 linear feet (16 boxes)
- Source:** Gift of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2008
- Abstract:** Varian Fry, born in New York City in 1907, was known as “the American Schindler” for his work in aiding over 2,000 endangered people from Nazi-occupied France until he was ousted by the Vichy government in 1941. In the final years of his life, Fry took on the role of family genealogist, collecting correspondence and other material belonging to members of his extended family, and researching his family’s origins. The Varian Fry genealogical research papers contains personal papers belonging to members of Varian Fry’s extended family dating from 1829 to 1921, family photographs, correspondence relating to Fry’s genealogical research dating mainly from 1958 through 1962, and a comprehensive index to the research.
- Access:** Advance notice required. Apply at <<http://www.nypl.org/mssref>>
- Preferred citation:** Varian Fry Genealogical Research Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
- Special formats** Diaries, Photographs, Scrapbooks

Biographical note

Born in New York City in 1907, Varian Fry was a Harvard-educated journalist who travelled to Marseilles in 1940 on behalf of the Emergency Rescue Committee in order to aid in the escape of endangered citizens, predominantly artists, writers, and intellectuals, from occupied France. In the thirteen months before his ouster by the Vichy government, Fry assisted over 2000 people in fleeing the Third Reich and earned the nickname "the American Schindler." Among those whose exits he facilitated were Hannah Arendt, Jean Arp, Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, André Breton, Max Ophuls, and Marcel Duchamp.

After the war, Fry returned to his writing career, and later, turned again to humanitarian efforts. He served on the board of the American Civil Liberties Union and the International League for the Rights of Man.

In the last years of his life, Fry assigned himself to the task of family genealogist, and began collecting family papers and researching his family's origins both in the United States and abroad. Fry died in 1967 at the age of 59.

Scope and content note

The Varian Fry genealogical research papers contains personal papers belonging to members of Varian Fry's extended family dating from 1829 to 1921, correspondence relating to Fry's genealogical research dating mainly from 1958 through 1962, and a comprehensive index to the research. The personal papers series is comprised of correspondence, notebooks, account books, diaries, and personal miscellany belonging to members of Varian Fry's extended family. Fry's research paid particular attention to his paternal great-grandfather, Francis Duncan, born in Scotland in 1810. Duncan, a mason, emigrated to the United States in 1832 and worked on such notable buildings as the "Marble Palace," home of A.T. Stewart & Company (and later, the *New York Sun*), and later became the director of the Peter Cooper Life Insurance Company. Other relations include Ambrose Lipscomb White, a prominent New York City surgeon and founding member of the New York Academy of Medicine, and his son Charles Belden White, a surgeon and Major in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Fry's genealogical research is chronicled through correspondence with churches; local, state and federal records bureaus; historical societies; and genealogical societies. In some instances, photostats and facsimiles of vital records are present. The body of correspondence between Fry and his cousins Jessie Bateman White and Elizabeth Richardson further illuminates family histories and relationships. Photographs of Fry's family date from the 1860s through the 1960s, and many include annotations from Jessie Bateman White.

Fry meticulously indexed and cross-referenced his research, as well as the personal papers collected from his family. The index traces his research through his own correspondence and family papers, as well as from such sources as vital records; newspaper, magazine and broadsheet articles; military records; legal documents; parish registers.

Arrangement note

The Varian Fry Genealogical Research Papers are organized in the following series:

- Series I. Family papers, 1829-1921
- Series II. Varian Fry genealogical research, 1898-1966 (bulk 1958-1962)
- Series III. Photographs, ca. 1856-1960 (bulk 1856-1890)
- Series IV. Index of genealogical research, undated

Series descriptions and container list

Series I. Family papers, 1829-1921

5 boxes, 2 linear feet.

This series consists of personal correspondence, school notebooks, diaries, and personal miscellany belonging to members of families related to Varian Fry, particularly Fry's great-grandfather, Francis Duncan; Duncan's wife Hester, and his daughters Hester Isabella ("Bella"), Katherine, and Margaret ("Maggie"). Francis Duncan's papers predominantly include account books and diaries; material relating to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; and correspondence with wife Hester from 1843 until his death circa 1860. Hester's papers include correspondence; leases and mortgage documents; and documents relating to her estate and the execution of her will. Also of note are letters from Dr. Charles Belden White, a Union Army surgeon, to his cousin Bella Duncan detailing his service at Fort Monroe and other military installations in Virginia between 1861 and 1863. The bulk of the material in this series dates from the 1860s through the 1890s.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Burchard family correspondence, 1906 -1913
		Duncan, Anna Elizabeth, 1855-1890, n.d. (Wife of Charles Fry)
	2	Letters received, 1858-1890, n.d.
	3	Letters sent, 1866-1871
	4-6	School notebooks, 1855-1862
	7	Duncan, E., birthday book, 1884
		Duncan, Francis, 1829-1860, n.d.
	8	Correspondence with Hester Duncan, 1843-1860
	9	Letters received, 1844-1860
	10	Letters sent, 1843-1860
2	1-4	Account books, 1848-1851
	5	Diaries, 1853, 1857
	6	Notebook, 1829
	7	Personal miscellany, 1856-1868 Includes Duncan's will; documents relating to his estate; and material relating to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.
	8	Wedding book, 1841
	9	Writings, undated
		Duncan, Hester Ann, 1839-1893, n.d.
	1	Letters received, 1839-1879
	2	Letters received, 1880-1893, n.d.
3	Letters sent, 1850, 1868	
3	4	Personal miscellany, 1864-1892 Includes leases and mortgage documents; and documents relating to her estate and the execution of her will.
		Duncan, Hester Isabella ("Bella"), 1851-1892 (Married Amos Maynard Lyon)
	5	Correspondence, 1864-1870
	6	Account book, 1886
	7	Diary, 1864-1868
	8	Personal Miscellany, 1859-1910 (Includes marriage certificate and will.)
	9	Sunday school class registers, 1851-1860
	10	Duncan, James, school notebook, 1856
		Duncan, Katherine Virginia, 1869-1889, n.d.
	11	Letters received, 1869-1880
12	Letters sent, 1870-1889	

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	13	Birthday book, undated
		Duncan, Margaret Elizabeth ("Maggie"), 1890-1921, n.d.
	14	Correspondence, 1890-1921
	15	Personal miscellany, 1892-1898, n.d. Includes material relating to family plot and tombstone in Green-Wood Cemetery; documentation of lawsuit against the estate of her sister, Bella; and material relating to her own estate.
	16	Fry, Charles R., correspondence, 1869-1891, n.d.
	17	Hopper, Alonzo, correspondence, 1867-1891, n.d.
	18	King, H. W., correspondence, 1872-1873
4	1	Mackey family personal miscellany, 1843, 1884, 1907 (Family register, hymn book, and ephemera.)
	2	White, Ambrose, letters received, 1848-1885, undated
	3	White, Charles Belden, letters to Bella Duncan, 1861-1863
	4	White, Jessie Bateman, correspondence, 1891, 1927
		White, John Pitts, 1848-1883, n.d.
	5	Correspondence with Sarah M. White, 1856-1860
	6	Correspondence with Sarah M. White, 1860-1882, n.d.
	7	Letters received, 1848-1869
	8	Letters received, 1870-1883, n.d.
	9	Account book, 1881
	10	White, Katie, correspondence, 1865-1869
	11	White, Norval, correspondence, 1863-1865
		White, Sarah M. ("Sallie"), 1850-1883, n.d.
5	1	Letters from Laura Pitcher Douglas, 1857-1869
	2	Letters from Laura Pitcher Douglas, 1875-1883
	3	Letters from William H. Pitcher, 1850-1863
	4	Letters from Mollie White, 1878-1881
	5	General correspondence, 1858-1868, n.d.
6	6	White, Thomas, correspondence, 1851-1859
5	7-8	Family invoices and receipts, 1847-1903
		Unidentified, 1862-1890, n.d.
	9	Correspondence, 1878-1890, n.d.
	10	Account book, 1862
	11	Poetry, undated

Series II. Varian Fry genealogical research, 1898-1966 (bulk 1958-1962)

3 boxes, 1.25 linear feet.

This series consists almost exclusively of correspondence between Varian Fry and various family members, genealogical organizations, and historical societies relating to his genealogical research. Photostats of vital records, including birth, death and marriage certificates, as well as military service documentation, are also included for some family members. Fry corresponded extensively with his cousin Jessie Bateman White between 1953 until 1966, who assisted him significantly in his research. The series is arranged alphabetically by family member, with each file representing Fry's findings relating to a specific individual, or his correspondence with that individual as it relates to his research.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>		
6	1	General correspondence, 1960-1961	
	2	Abraham, John, 1960-1961	
	3	Donoho miscellaneous, 1961	
	4	Duncan, Amy M., 1898, 1960	
	5	Duncan, Andrew, 1958-1961, n.d.	
	6	Duncan, Francis, 1958-1961, n.d.	
	7	Duncan, Hester Ann, undated	
	8	Duncan, Hester Isabella, 1910-1927; 1961	
	9	Duncan, Katherine Virginia, 1960-1961	
	10	Duncan miscellaneous, 1960-1961, n.d.	
	11	Fry, Arthur Varian, 1958	
	12	Fry, Duncan Halleck, 1958-1960	
	13	Fry, Edwin, 1960-1961	
	14	Fry, James, 1958-1965, n.d.	
	15	Fry miscellaneous, 1953-1961, n.d.	
	16	Gardner, Silas, 1598-1960	
	17	Gardner miscellaneous, 1958-1961	
	18	Goetschus miscellaneous, 1958-1961	
7	1	Knapp, Lebbeus, 1959-1961	
	2	Knapp, Jonas, 1959-1960	
	3	Knapp, Roger, 1939	
	4-5	Knapp miscellaneous, 1958-1961, n.d.	
	6	Le Seur, Elizabeth, 1959-1960	
	7	Lyman, Edward M., 1961	
	8	Lyon, Amos Maynard, 1960-1961	
	9-10	Lyon, Lilian Virginia, 1960-1961, n.d.	
	11	Lyon, Paul William, 1959-1961	
	12	Mackey, David Gardner, 1917, 1958-1962	
	13	Mackey, Lewis R., 1958-1961	
	14	Mackey, Lilian Rachel, 1951-1958, n.d.	
	15	Mackey, Loten Gardner, 1958, 1961	
	16	Mackey, Louis Nelson, 1958	
	17	Mackey, Silas Gardner, 1961	
	8	1	Mackey miscellaneous, 1958-1961
		2	Muller, Anna Catherina, 1960-1961
3		Price, Margaret, 1958	
4		Richardson, Elizabeth L., 1932-1938; 1958-1961	
5		Richardson miscellaneous, 1958-1960, n.d.	
6		Rose miscellaneous, 1961, n.d.	

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
8	7	Skene miscellaneous, 1960-1962
	8	Storm miscellaneous, 1958-1959
	9	Varian miscellaneous, 1963
	10	White, Almira Louise, 1961
	11	White, Ambrose, 1960-1961
	12	White, Ambrose Lipscomb, 1960-1962
	13	White, Charles Belden, 1961
	14	White, Elizabeth Fry, 1959
	15	White, Henry Kirk, 1961
	16-19	White, Jessie Bateman, 1953-1966, n.d.
	20	White, Joseph Rowen, 1961
	21	White, Samuel Wesley, 1960-1961
	22	White William Crawford, 1962
	23	White miscellaneous, 1960-1962, n.d.
	24	Miscellaneous genealogical notes, undated

Series III. Photographs, ca. 1856-1960 (bulk 1856-1890)

3 boxes, 1.38 linear feet.

This series contains photographs of Varian Fry's extended family.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
9	1	Burchard, Charles, undated
11	1	Clark, Nathaniel and Sara, undated
9	2	Duncan, Andrew, undated
	3	Duncan, Anna Elizabeth , 1863-1870, n.d.
11	2	Duncan, Anna Elizabeth, undated
9	4	Duncan, Francis, ca. 1856, n.d.
	5	Duncan, Hester Ann, undated
	6	Duncan, Hester Isabella ("Bella"), undated
	7	Duncan, Katherine Virginia, undated
	8	Fry, Clara Belle, 1890, n.d.
	9	Fry, Edna Louise, undated
	10	Fry, Maybell Dunoho, undated
	11	Fry, Lillian R., 1902-1908, n.d.
	12	Fry, Varian, 1908
	13-	Fry miscellaneous, ca. 1860s-1890s, 1954-1959
	14	
	15	Lyman, Edward M., 1895, n.d.
	16	Lyon, Lilian Virginia, 1899, n.d.
	17	Lyon miscellaneous, 1889, n.d.
	18	Mackey, Daniel G., undated
	19	Mackey, Laura Estelle, undated
	20	Mackey miscellaneous, undated
	21	Palmer, Barbara White, 1921, n.d.
	22	Palmer, June White, undated
	23	Rose miscellaneous, 1956, n.d.
	24	Sleigh, Charles, undated
	25	Sleigh, William, 1920-1923, n.d.
	26	Sleigh miscellaneous, undated
10	1	Taylor miscellaneous, 1899, n.d.
	2	White, Allen, 1936, n.d.
	3	White, Elizabeth, 1896, n.d.
	4	White, Jessie Bateman, 1893, 1960, n.d.
	5	White, Norval, undated
11	3	White, Anna Rebecca, undated
	4	White, Janina Clark Bateman, undated
	5	White, Joseph Rowen, undated
	6-7	White, Samuel Wesley, undated
10	6	White, Sarah Elizabeth, undated
	7	White miscellaneous, 1865, n.d.
	8	Wilson, George, undated
	9	Unidentified, undated

Series IV. Index of genealogical research, undated

4 boxes, 1.67 feet. The index files, arranged alphabetically, chart references to family names as found in the family correspondence and personal papers, and also references found in vital records; newspaper, magazine and broadsheet articles; military records; legal documents; parish registers; and his research correspondence with genealogical and historical societies.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
12	1	A-Fe
	2	Fry(e)
	3-7	Gardner
	8-9	Goetschius
	10	Gr-J
	11	Knapp
13	1-5	Knapp
	6	Le Sueur
	7	Lo-Ly
	8	Mackey
	9	Mo-Mu
	10	New York City
	11	O-R
	12	Rose
14	1-4	Rose
	5	Sn-St
	6-8	Storm
15	1-5	Storm
	6	Taylor
	7	V
	8	White
	9	W-Z