Feb 7 1924
Copy to E B K

RE - BENJAMIN MATERIAL

Benjamin said in 1883 to Francis Lawley of London, who was attempting to write his biography, that there was no material available for that purpose with perhaps the exception of letters he had written to Mrs Jefferson Davis.

Benjamin devoted his last day in Richmond to burning secret service papers of the Confederacy, and the last few weeks of his life to destroying the private papers and letters that still remained in his possession and did not leave among his own effects one half dozen pieces of paper. His nephew, E B Kruttschnitt, is an attorney and was living in New Orleans in 1907. He made some attempt after Benjamin's death to get together material existing there about Benjamin.

Butler in his life of Benjamin says that the most valuable source for materials upon Benjamin's life prior to the Civil War is the collection of newspapers on file at the City Hall in New Orleans. These include New Orleans Argus, Bee, Courier, Crescent, Delta, True Delta, Jeffersonian, Picayune, Times, Tropic.

The New York Times and Tribune, 1861-65, are useful as publishing intercepted Confederate correspondence.

The Jewish Chronicle for May 9th, 1884 and Jewish World for May 16th, 1884 published articles on Benjamin.

Considerable information regarding Benjamin's Civil War acts is to be found in the Confederate Diplomatic and Counselor correspondence now preserved in the Treasury Dept at Washington, D C, known as the Pickett papers. These consist of papers and dispatches captured when Jefferson Davis was taken and would contain any letters up to 1865.

E B Kruttschnitt had a collection of letters covering the years 1864-83 from Mr Benjamin to his relatives in New Orleans. Whether these are still in possession of Mr Kruttschnitt, I am unable to say.

Mrs W S Hilles of Wilmington, Delaware, a daughter of one of the Bayards, has a small collection of interesting and important letters from Benjamin to James A and Thomas F Bayard. On these letters are notes that Thomas Bayard made with reference to

Benjamin. Both the Bayards were friends of Benjamin prior to the Civil War.

Letters from 1868 on from Benjamin to Jefferson Davis and Mrs Jefferson Davis are at the present time in a chest containing some 2000 letters in the possession of the Confederate Historical Society, Richmond, Va. I have the permission of Jefferson Hayes Davis to read these and use whatever material will be of help. The Society is supposed to sort out those letters of historical value from those of a purely personal nature and return the letters in the latter class. This has not as yet been done.

In the secret archives of the War Department is a code key found in Benjamin's office in Richmond by federal troops when Richmond was captured in 1865. A copy of this can be obtained.

FHB