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Descriptive Summary

Identifier        ICU.SPCL.COHNB
Title             Cohn, Bernard. Papers
Date              1942-2000
Size              4.75 linear feet (7 boxes)
Repository        Special Collections Research Center
                  University of Chicago Library
                  1100 East 57th Street
                  Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract          Bernard Cohn (1928-2003), Anthropologist, spent the bulk of his
                  professional life at the University of Chicago. Cohn first came to the
                  University of Chicago as a postdoctoral fellow in 1957 and returned in 1964
                  to join the faculty. In the intervening years, Cohn conducted research in
                  India and served as chairman of anthropology at the University of Rochester.
                  An expert on British colonialism in India, Cohn was among the first
                  anthropologists to integrate historical study into his ethnographic research.
                  The Bernard Cohn Papers consist mainly of materials related to his writings,
                  both published and unpublished. These materials include: drafts and
                  typescripts, research notes, and a small collection of related correspondence.

Information on Use

Access
Files in Series III are restricted for fifty years from the date of their creation.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Cohn, Bernard. Papers,
[Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note
Bernard S. Cohn (1928-2003) spent the majority of his academic year with the Department
of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. Born in Brooklyn, Cohn took a B.A. in History
from the University of Wisconsin (1949) and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell University
(1954). Upon graduation, Cohn served for two years as a research assistant specialist with the
U.S. Army in Fort Benning, Georgia. In 1960 he accepted a post as chairman of Anthropology
at the University of Rochester and remained in that position until joining the faculty of the
University of Chicago in 1964. Cohn spent the rest of his career at the University of Chicago,
retiring in 1995.
Cohn was an expert on British colonialism in India and pioneered the integration of historical study into anthropological research. Morever, Cohn was one of the first researchers to focus on the lower castes in India, arguing in his dissertation that while the caste system had predated the arrival of the British it had been solidified and influenced by colonial rule.

Well respected in his field, Cohn published widely on a range of topics, both concrete and theoretical. His seminal works include: Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge (1996), An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays (1987), and India: The Social Anthropology of a Civilization (1971).

Cohn died in Hyde Park in 2003 and was survived by his wife, Rella; four children; two granddaughters; and one brother

**Scope Note**

The Bernard Cohn Papers contain 4.75 linear feet of material and roughly cover 1942-2000, though the bulk of the materials were generated between 1950 and 1980. The collection consists primarily of materials related to Cohn’s writings. These materials include drafts and typescripts, related correspondence, and research notes. Many of these files include unpublished writings - primarily papers delivered at conferences and workshops. In addition to these materials there is a small series devoted to general files. This series consists primarily of research notes, correspondence, teaching materials (syllabi), reviews of Cohn’s work, and a small collection of prints and engravings.

**Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

University of Chicago. Department of Anthropology. Records

**Subject Headings**

- Cohn, Bernard S., 1928-2003
- University of Chicago. Dept. of Anthropology
- India -- Colonization -- Great Britain

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Writings**

- Box 1
- Folder 1
- Box 1
- Folder 2
"Changing Traditions of a Low Caste": Typescripts, 1958

Box 1
Folder 3
"Networks and Centers in the Integration of Indian Civilization" (with McKim Marriott): Typescript, 1958

Box 1
Folder 4
"Some Notes on Law and Change in North India": Typescript, reprint, 1959

Box 1
Folder 5

Box 1
Folder 6

Box 1
Folder 7
"From Indian Status to British Contract": Reprint, 1961

Box 1
Folder 8
"Political Systems in Eighteenth Century India: The Banaras Region": Reprint, 1962

Box 1
Folder 9
"Comments on Papers on Land Tenure": Reprint, 1963

Box 1
Folder 10
"The Role of the Gosains in the Economy of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Upper India": Typescript, reprint, 1964

Box 1
Folder 11
"Structural Change in Indian Rural Society, 1596-1885": Reprint, 1969

Box 1
Folder 12
"Urbanization and Social Mobility in "Early Modern" India: An Exploration": Typescript of paper presented at the Conference on International Comparisons of Social Mobility in Past Societies, Princeton, 1972

Box 1
Folder 13-14
"Public Ritual and Imperial Ideology": Typescripts, 1973

Box 1
Folder 15

Box 1
Folder 16
"From the "Pasts of an Indian Village" to the Pasts of an Empire": Typescript, 1973

Box 1
Folder 17
"African Models and Indian Histories": Photocopy, reprint, 1973

Box 1
Folder 18
"Authority, Ritual and Cultural Reformulation in Nineteenth Century Colonial India": Typescript, 1975

Box 1
Folder 19
"The Mughal, Court Rituals, and the Theory of Authority in the 16th and 17th Centuries": Typescript, 1977

Box 1
Folder 20-22
"The British and the Mughal Court in the Seventeenth Century": Typescripts, 1977

Box 2
Folder 1
"Honors, Titles, and Sovereignty: Part I": Typescript drafts, 1978

Box 2
Folder 2
"Part IV: The Spacial [sic] Order of the Imperial Assemblage": Typescript of section taken from unidentified larger work, 1978

Box 2
Folder 3
"History and Anthropology: Towards a Rapprochement?": Typescript of paper prepared for a conference on "History in the 1980s," 1980

Box 2
Folder 4
"The Constitution of European States and the Construction of Colonial Societies: An Interpretive Approach": Typescript, 1980

Box 2
Folder 5
"History and Anthropology: The State of Play": Reprint, 1982

Box 2
Folder 6
"Languages and the Establishment of a System of Colonial Rule in India": Typescript of paper presented at the Conference on the Subaltern in South Asian History and Society, Canberra, 1982

Box 2
Folder 7
"Representing Authority in Victorian India": Reprint of Cohn’s chapter from Hobsbawm and Ranger’s The Invention of Tradition, 1983

Box 2
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Box 2
Folder 9
"The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia": Typescript prepared for the Second European Conference on Modern South Asia, 1984

Box 2
Folder 10
"The Peoples of India: From the Picturesque to the Museum of Mankind": Typescript, 1984

Box 2
Folder 11
"The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art in 19th Century India": Typescript of paper presented at the NEH conference "Patronage in Indian Culture," 1985

Box 2
Folder 12
"Law and the Colonial State in India": Typescript of paper presented at the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research International Symposium, final report on related research project to the foundation, 1985

Box 2
Folder 13
"The Command of Language and the Language of Command": Partial typescript, 1985

Box 3
Folder 1
"Beyond the Fringe": Typescript, 1986

Box 3
Folder 2
"The Anthropology of a Colonial State and Its Forms of Knowledge": Typescript, 1988

Box 3
Folder 3
"India in England: Detritus of Empire": Typescript drafts of paper presented at the "Beyond Orientalism" conference, Santa Cruz, 1993

Box 3
Folder 4
"Anthropology's Histories": Typescript of memorial lecture given in honor of David Mandelbaum, 1993

Box 3
Folder 5
"Colonial Knowledges/Imperial Outreach: World War II and the Invention of Area Studies in the United States": Typescript prepared with fellow Anthropologist Piya Chatterjee, 1994

Box 3
Folder 6
"Race, Gender, and Historical Narrative in the Reconstruction of a Nation: Remembering and Forgetting the American Civil War" (with Teri Silvio): Typescript, outline, and proposal for paper presented at Religion and Nationalism conference, Amsterdam, 1995

Box 3
Folder 7

Box 3
Folder 8
"Change in India: A Comment": Typescript, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 9
Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India: Title page, table of contents, and acknowledgements, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 10
"History and Political Science": Photocopy of chapter from unidentified larger work, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 11
"Honor and Honors in Great Britain and India": Typescript, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 12
"Mapping Nostalgia": Typescript of a chapter for an unidentified longer work, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 13
"Recruitment of Elites in India Under British Rule": Typescript, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 14

Box 3
Folder 15
"What Happened to the Dispossessed?": Typescript, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 16
Partial proofs for unidentified text written by Cohn, n.d.

Series II: General Files

Box 3
Folder 17
Reviews of Cohn’s Work: Clippings and photocopies, 1989-1997

Box 3
Folder 18
Announcements for Cohn's India: The Social Anthropology of a Civilization, 2000

Box 3
Folder 19
Notes for various writing projects, n.d.

**Box 4**
**Folder 1-3**
Handwritten and typed notes on both Cohn’s ethnographic research and scholarly texts, 1952

**Box 4**
**Folder 4-5**
Correspondence, 1960-2000

**Box 4**
**Folder 6**
Correspondence with the War Department regarding the training of military personnel, 1942

**Box 4**
**Folder 7**
Catalog of personal library, 1995

**Box 4**
**Folder 8**
Copy of Cohn’s CV, 1988

**Box 4**
**Folder 9-11**
Course syllabi, 1963-1996

**Box 4**
**Folder 12**
Reading lists or oral examinations, n.d.

**Box 4**
**Folder 13**
Student paper, 1987

**Box 5**
**Folder 1**
Reviews, written by Cohn, of McKim Marriott’s Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions of India and Pakistan and T. Burrow and M.B. Emeneau’s A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary: Reprints, 1962

**Box 5**
**Folder 2**
Copy of Ruth Benedict’s "Thai Culture and Behavior," 1943

**Box 5**
**Folder 3-5**
Conference and workshop materials: Correspondence, conference schedules, papers presented, 1969-1997

**Box 5**
**Folder 6**

**Box 5**
**Folder 7-8**
Unidentified loose papers, n.d.

**Box 5**
Folder 9-10
Engravings from The Indian Empire Illustrated, 19th century

Box 6
Folder 1-2
Prints, 19th-20th century

Series III: Restricted

Box 6
Folder 3
Grant proposals, [Restricted 50 years: financial records], 1953-1982

Box 6
Folder 4
Guggenheim Fellowship: Correspondence, memoranda, expense sheet, [Restricted 50 years: financial records], 1964

Box 6
Folder 5
National Endowment for the Humanities: Materials regarding NEH summer seminar, led by Cohn, titled "Anthropological Models and the Study of Indian History": Correspondence, expense sheets, list of participants, project summary, seminar proposal, [Restricted 50 years: financial records], 1978

Series IV: Oversize

Box 7
Folder 1
Lithographs, n.d.

Box 7
Folder 2
Poster for Cohn talk on the "Creation of Colonial Sociology of Knowledge," 1981

Box 7
Folder 3
Maps of India, n.d.

Box 7
Folder 4
Engravings, 1793