



Guide to the Toms Family Scrapbooks, 1922-1936

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

Toms family scrapbooks, 1922-1936

Creator:

Toms, Mary Newby, 1871-1925

Abstract:

Mary Newby Toms (1871-1925) was married to Clinton White Toms Sr. (1868-1936), who was a trustee of Duke University from 1901-1932 and was president of Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company from 1928-1936. Collection consists of two albums created by the Toms family; one memorializing Clinton White Toms Sr., and one created by Mary Newby Toms documenting a 1922 family trip to California.

Extent:

2 Linear Feet (2 boxes)

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.01302

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1b95c>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Toms Family Scrapbooks, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

The collection consists of two albums, both assembled by the Toms family. The first album documents a "Trip to California" led by Mary Newby Toms in 1922;

the second is a memorial scrapbook created following the death of Clinton White Toms, Sr. in 1936.

Biographical/Historical

Clinton White Toms Sr. was born in 1868 in Hertford, North Carolina. He and his wife, Mary Newby Toms (1871-1925), had seven children, six of whom lived to adulthood. Mary Newby was also born in Hertford, North Carolina.

He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill at age 21, and became a principal at a Durham high school. In 1894, he became Superintendent of Schools in Durham. He was soon recruited by the Duke family, and left the education system to become a manager at American Tobacco's Durham plant. Following the breakup of the company, Toms joined the newly formed Liggett & Myers as a vice president and as a board member in 1911. In 1928, he was elected president of the company. He remained president until his death in 1936.

Toms was also a generous philanthropist and benefactor to many North Carolina charities and organizations. He served as a trustee of Duke University from 1901-1932.

The Toms' are buried in Maplewood Cemetery in Durham, North Carolina.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The Clinton White Toms Memorial Scrapbook was received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 2010. The "Trip to California" scrapbook was received from George Flowers as a gift in 2016. The albums were combined into the Toms Family Scrapbooks collection in 2025.

Processing Information

Processed by Meghan Lyon, July 2010; reprocessed to include second scrapbook by Meghan Lyon, April 2025.

Accessions in this finding aid: 2010-0084, 2025-0016

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Names and Subjects

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Scrapbooks
- Funeral rites and ceremonies
- Durham (N.C.)
- Railroad travel -- Canada
- West (U.S.) -- Description and travel
- Postcards -- United States
- Duke University. Board of Trustees
- Toms, Clinton White, Sr., 1868-1936
- Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company

Collection Inventory

"Trip to California, by Mrs. Clinton White Toms"
travel album, 1922

Box 2

Scope and Contents

Bound album measuring 8x6" with text containing a daily narrative of a 1922 trip by Mary Newby Tom and four others, accompanied by postcards and printed images of locations described. Most images are printed or commercially produced, with some original photographs included. Tom describes travelling by train from New York City to Niagara Falls, Chicago, Colorado, Arizona (including the Grand Canyon), California (including Long Beach, Los Angeles, and San Francisco), and Seattle, and then returning east through Canada.

The album's title page reads: "Trip to California by Mrs. Clinton White Toms," and lists the other travellers: Mrs. George D. Newby, Mrs. James W. Hall, Miss Mary Newby Toms, and Mrs. Clinton W. Toms. The date (1922) is based on date appearing on a photograph in the album (4-22-22) which matches the description of the narrative from that page. The album's title pages do not include a year.

Clinton White Toms Sr. memorial scrapbook,
1925-1936

Box 1

Physical Description: 4 folders Pages disbound, housed in 4 folders within one box.

Scope and Contents

Album is a 13x15 inch scrapbook, unbound in 4 folders, containing 19 double-sided pages. The book includes materials from Toms' memorial service and death, including letters of condolence (all within their original envelopes), calling cards, newspaper clippings, church bulletins, and obituaries. It appears to have been accumulated and assembled by Mary Newby Toms Erwin, one of Toms' daughters, as she is the main recipient of the condolence notes.

Also pasted in the scrapbook are letters and newspaper articles regarding the deaths of Clinton Toms' wife, Mary Newby Toms, in 1925, and his son, George, in 1926. Toms is usually acknowledging or thanking doctors or other friends for their kindness during those tragedies. The newspaper articles tend to discuss scholarships or other donations Toms has made in honor of his lost family members.