DORSEY, Thomas and William

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THOMAS AND WILLIAM DORSEY COLLECTION
Collection 132-1 to 132-2

Prepared by:
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June 1983
Scope Note

The Thomas and William Dorsey Collection spans the time period of the mid 1850's to the early 1900's, and the collection measures 1 linear foot. The collection contains autographs, correspondence, photographs, news clippings, scrapbooks, and several notable engravings. The collection was donated to the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center in 1980, by Mrs. Ruth L. Ramsey, in memory of her husband, James Ramsey, who was the great, great-grandson of Thomas Dorsey.

Thomas Dorsey (b.1812-d. Feb. 17, 1875), and his son William Henry Dorsey (b. Oct. 23, 1837 - d.?) were prominent 19th century Black Philadelphians. Thomas Dorsey escaped from slavery in 1836 and settled in Philadelphia, where he became one of that city's most distinguished and successful caterers. He also became widely known for the large assemblage of books, memorabilia and other items, he collected during his lifetime. This collection was displayed in Dorsey's "museum," and was one of the earliest efforts to document the accomplishments and achievements of Black Americans by placing them in a museum setting.

Thomas Dorsey's pioneering work as a collector was continued after his death by his son, William. William H. Dorsey distinguished himself as an artist, Black Americana collector, and civil servant. The present collection is a surviving fragment of the collecting efforts of the two Dorseys. Among the items of interest in the collection are: An engraving of the Rev. Peter Williams by Patrick Reason; a photograph of Robert W. Adger noted Black Philadelphia collector and bibliophile; and news clippings on selected 19th century achievers such as Rev. Augustine Tolton, first African-American Roman Catholic Priest ordained in the United States.

* Biographical information obtained from materials within the collection.
Series Description

Series A  Dorsey Family
Box  132-1  This series contains biographical information on Thomas and William Dorsey, as well as other members of the Dorsey family.

Series B  Other Individuals
Box  132-1 to Box 132-2  This series contains materials which document the lives, occupations, and accomplishments of various individuals: Including Robert W. Adger, noted Black Philadelphia collector and bibliophile; C.A. Fleetwood, Congressional Medal of Honor winner; E.B. Tompkins and John F. Brown, both nineteenth century Black artist; and Rev. Augustine Tolton, first African-American Roman Catholic priest ordained in the United States.

Series C  Scrapbooks
Box  132-2  This series contains xerox copies of two scrapbooks of news clippings. The clippings are primarily of Black related subjects and document occurrences during the late 1890's. The original scrapbooks are fragile and have been isolated in series D.

Series D  Fragile Items  DO NOT CIRCULATE
Box  132-2  Material in this series are extremely fragile, and therefore not available for general research use. These materials have been duplicated, and copies of each appear elsewhere in the collection.
Series A  Dorsey Family
Box  Folder
132-1 1 Dorsey Family - biographical information
      2 Thomas and William Dorsey - biographical information (Xerox copy-original located in 132-2 # 29)
      3 Thomas, J. Dorsey - biographical information
      4 William H. Dorsey - Photograph
      5 Thomas Dorsey Jr. (?) - Photograph
      6 Van Dyke Dorsey - Photograph

Series B  Other Individuals
7 John E. Addicks
8 D. Palmetto Adger
9 Robert W. Adger - Photograph
10 William C. Bolivar
11 E.A. Bouchet
12 John H. Brackett
13 Joseph Brister
14 Raymond J. Burr
15 Guy M. Burton
16 Richard H. Cain
17 Herschel V. Cashin
18 Jos W. Cassey
19 J.W. Cromwell
20 Thos. Graham Dorsey
21 Charles A. Dorsey
22 Charles R. Douglass
23 H. Ford Douglass
24 Joseph H. Doyer
25 Moses A. Dropsie
26 J.A. Emerson
27 C.A. Fleetwood
28 Horace B. Fry
29 Dr. Thos. Goodman
30 John Grigg
31 Dr. J.W. Hacks
32 Jesper Harding
33 Isaac Hazzard
34 Wm. P. Hibberd
35 Henry Johnson
36 Robert Jones, Sr.
37 Joseph Klapp M.D.
38 Samuel Lee
Series B  Other Individuals continued
Box     Folder
132-1  39 John D. Lewis
       40 Isaac Meyers
       41 J. Fields Needham
       42 Peter P. O'Fake
       43 T.H. Sands Pennington
       44 Elias Polk
       45 James R. Priest - Photograph

132-2  1 Charles Lennox Redmond
       2 Robert Ritchie
       3 Rev. S.T. Scott
       4 Thos. A. Scott
       5 Hans Shadd
       6 Chas. S. Smith
       7 John H. Smith
       8 John Strahan, Jacob Ballenger
       9 John Thompson
      10 Rev. Augustus Tolton - Photograph
      11 E.B. Tompkins and John F. Brown - Photographs
      12 James M. Trotter
      13 U.B. Vidal
      14 Henry O Wagoner Jr.
      15 A.G. Waterman
      16 Isiah C. Wears
      17 Horace Weston
      18 Francis Wood
      19 Judge J.J. Wright
      20 R.F. Wayman
      21 Prof. William J. Wilson
      22 Jacob C. White Jr.
      23 Rev. Geo. G. Whitfield
      24 Rev. Peter Williams - engraved print
      25 Photograph - unidentified woman
<table>
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<th>Container</th>
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### Series C: Scrapbooks
- **Box**: 132-2
- **Folder**: 26 Scrapbook #1 xerox copy
- **Folder**: 27 Scrapbook #2 xerox copy

### Series D: Fragile Items  DO NOT CIRCULATE
- **Box**: 132-2
- **Folder**: 28 Scrapbook #1 (original)
- **Folder**: 29 Scrapbook #2 (original)
- **Folder**: 30 Thomas and William Dorsey - Biographical information (original)