

Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. scrapbooks

Ms. Coll. 1036

Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.

Last updated on April 09, 2015.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 March 31

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Gates, Thomas Sovereign, Sr., 1873-1948
Title	Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. scrapbooks
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1036
Date [bulk]	1927-1948
Date [inclusive]	1835-1951
Extent	10.6 linear feet (13 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. (1873-1948), a Philadelphia native and University of Pennsylvania alumnus, served as the first president of the University of Pennsylvania from 1930 to 1944. The collections consists of 36 volumes of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, programs, and ephemera, largely dating from the years immediately preceding Gates' presidency at the University of Pennsylvania through his death in 1948.

Cite as:

Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. scrapbooks, 1835-1951 (bulk: 1927-1948), Ms. Coll. 1036, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. (1873 March 21 - 1948 April 8) was the first president of the University of Pennsylvania as well as a University of Pennsylvania alumnus and Philadelphia native. His term as president lasted from 1930 until 1944, before which he had served nearly ten years as a Trustee of the University and Chairman of the University of Pennsylvania fund. Prior to his election, Gates worked in banking; and in 1906, he fathered Thomas S. Gates, Jr., who would eventually become the United States Secretary of Defense.

Gates' accomplishments as president of the University of Pennsylvania were many and varied. His job description, as stated during his inauguration was as follows: "The Trustees shall discharge all their executive duties through an officer who shall be styled 'President of the University.' He shall be appointed by resolution of the Trustees at any meeting of the Trustees to hold office at the pleasure of the Trustees." The primary focus of his early administration was the establishment of the College of Liberal Arts for Women, which was opened on July 1, 1933 and provided the same four-year curriculum as that of the College of Arts and Sciences. Gates' commitment to women's education is also visible in his work on establishing the School of Nursing in June 1944, which allowed women to partake of two years of preliminary college work followed by vocational training through the already-instituted University Hospital-affiliated program. The founding of schools and programs, however, was not limited to those benefitting women. Gates also formed the Fels Institute of the Wharton School in March 1937 as a part of his plan to increase the school's social service efforts.

Gates also helped expand the physical footprint of the school, being present for the acquisition of the Morris Arboretum in 1932 and forwarding the attempt to create a new campus at Valley Forge in the late 1920s to 1930s.

Perhaps his most important contribution as University President was his great foresight with regard to the beginning of World War II. Though the United States did not officially declare war until December 1941, Gates appointed a University Committee on National Defense in October 1940, and in December, the Engineering School initiated a training program in military defense. Once the war began, the Committee on Acceleration instituted a number of summer courses, beginning in 1942, in order to accelerate students' progress in medical, law, and engineering degrees so that students in those fields could progress to military training as quickly as possible. In 1943, the University began training programs for medical officers and Navy sailors and later, an Army Specialized Training Program.

Other notable achievements referenced in the collection include Gates' reforms to the school athletic system in and around 1931 and his 1936 institution of the Bicentennial Fund, a major fundraising campaign, for the 200th anniversary in 1940.

Scope and Contents

The Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. scrapbooks are composed of 36 volumes containing primarily

newspaper clippings pertaining to Gates' time as President of the University of Pennsylvania. Thirty-three of the scrapbooks have been removed from three-ring binders, and the other three are bound codices. It is believed that Thomas Sovereign Gates, Sr. was the primary creator of the collection; however materials published after his death in 1948 (found in volumes 32, 33, 35, and 36) suggest that there must have been another creator involved, who either created the entire collection or continued Gates, Sr.'s work after his death, completing his large collection of scrapbooks. Materials from before his birth seem to be the creator's collected materials related to family history; only a few pages of these materials are included. Scrapbook materials date back as far as 1835 and up to 1951, but the bulk of the materials dates from 1927 to Gates' death in 1948 and documents the years immediately preceding Gates' presidency at the University of Pennsylvania and his tenure as president.

The first four volumes focus on Gates' life prior to his service as University President, including his work in business and banking. The volumes covering the early- to mid-1930s deal with Gates' inauguration and some of his early reforms, most notably his controversial changes to the Penn athletics system. From the late 1930s through 1945, contents primarily focus on World War II, although the University's 1940 bicentennial celebration and Gates' related fundraising efforts starting in 1936 also appear. The bicentennial festivities appear in volumes 25 and 26. The final volumes, dating from 1946 onward, cover Gates' life after his time as president as well as his death in 1948. These include a bound volume commemorating Gates (volume 35), presumably from his funeral.

Other significant events include the institution of the Woman's College in 1933, and the establishment of the School of Nursing in June 1944. The collection also includes mentions of University's affiliation with the Pennsylvania School of Social Work in 1935, which provided services to the public in addition to educational services for students, and the formation of the Fels Institute of the Wharton School, another social service effort, in July 1937. There is also some information on plans for a new campus at Valley Forge, which were published in 1937 but never came to fruition; and the successful creation and dedication of the Morris Arboretum in June of 1933. Throughout the collection, researchers will find references to Gates' work for the University of Pennsylvania Fund which was established shortly before his inauguration.

These scrapbooks may be of particular use to those who wish to study the history of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania around the time of World War II through the eyes of the University's first president.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 March 31

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Related Materials

Separated Materials note

Oversized materials have been removed from their original locations and placed in boxes 11 and 12. Each item is labeled with its original location as well as a circled letter or letters that correspond to a paper marker located in the oversized item's original place.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- University of Pennsylvania.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Scrapbooks

SUBJECT(S)

- Education--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
- Universities and colleges--United States--Administration
- World War, 1939-1945--United States

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

This collection contains a very large amount of newspaper that is extremely brittle, particularly the largest pieces. All materials within should be handled with great care.

If using oversized materials, please request assistance from reading room staff.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Volume 1, 1835 January 1 -1927 November 5.	1	1-6
	11	1
Volume 2, 1923 September 17-1928 January 13.	1	7-10
	11	1
Volume 3, 1927 November-1928 October.	1	11-16
	11	1
Volume 4, 1928 January 27-1931 December 7.	2	1-5
	11	1
Volume 5, 1930 May-1931 January 10.	11	1
	2	6-10
Volume 6, 1931 January 10-1931 March 15.	11	2

2 11-13

Volume 7, 1931 March 15-1931 September 28.

11 2
2 14-17

Volume 8, 1931 September 28-1931 December 8.

3 1-4
11 2

Volume 9, 1931 December 8-1932 April 21.

3 5-8
11 2

Volume 10, 1932 April 23-1932 September 30.

3 9-12
11 2

Volume 11, 1932 September 30-1932 December 6.

3 13-15
11 2

Volume 12, 1932 December 6-1933 May 26.

4 1-5
11 2-3

Volume 13, 1933 May 25-1933 November 1.

4

6-10

11

3

Volume 14, 1933 November 2-1934 February 19.

4

11-14

11

3

Volume 15, 1934 February 20-1934 November 5.

11

3

4

15-19

Volume 16, 1934 November 6-1935 June 30.

11

3

5

1-6

Volume 17, 1935 July 1-1936 June 30.

11

3-4

5

7-12

Volume 18, 1936 July 1-1937 March 22.

11

4

5

13-18

Volume 19, 1937 March 23-1937 October 19.	12	1
	11	4
	6	1-5

Volume 20, 1937 October 20-1938 January 10.	6	6-10
	12	1

Volume 21, 1938 January 11-1938 May 11.	6	11-15
	12	1

Volume 22, 1938 May 12-1938 June 30.	12	1-2
	7	1-5

Volume 23, 1938 July 1-1939 March 31.	12	2
	7	6-11

Volume 24, 1939 April 1-1939 November 30.	7	12-16
	12	2

Volume 25, 1939 December 1-1940 July 1.	12	2-3
	8	1-6

Volume 26, 1940 August 4-1940 October 10.	8	7-12
	12	3

Volume 27, 1940 October 10-1941 May 31.	8	13-17
	12	3

Volume 28, 1941 June 1-1942 February 12.	9	1-5
	12	3

Volume 29, 1942 February 14-1942 December 31.	9	6-10
	12	3

Volume 30, 1943 January 3-1944 January 31.	9	11-15
	12	3-4

Volume 31, 1944 February 3-1945 June 4.	10	1-6
	12	4

Volume 32, 1945 February 4-1948 April 9.	10	7-11
	12	4

Volume 33, with insert, 1895 May 17-1951 December 2.	10	12-15
	12	4

Volume 34, 1931.		13
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Volume 35, 1948 April 24.	10	16
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Volume 36, 1950 June 12.	10	16
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