

Thurman Family Collection

Collection Summary

Title: Thurman Collection

Summary/Abstract: Letters, newspaper clippings, photographs, scrapbooks, and memorabilia documenting the early life and family of James Collins Thurman, III, of Nashville.

Physical Description/Extent: 1.75 cubic feet

Language: English

Stack Location: 030601, 030602

Repository: Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Archives, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN, 37219.

Scope and Contents of the Collection

Letters, photographs, newspaper clippings and other materials documenting the social life and high school athletic career of James Collins Thurman III, as well as photographs and other materials documenting the lives of his parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother; James Collins Thurman, Jr. and Kathryn Shaw Parrish, William McMurray Parrish and Ethel McVitty, and Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw.

Biographical/Personal Sketch

James Collins Thurman, III (Jim), was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on April 14, 1939. Kathryn Shaw Parrish Thurman, his mother, was a Nashville native, born at Barr's Infirmary on March 8, 1909. After receiving her education at Ward-Belmont School, Kathryn worked as a dancing teacher and volunteered for the American Red Cross. She married a Navy veteran and Chattanooga, James Collins Thurman, Jr., in June 1933.

Kathryn's parents, William McMurray Parrish and Ethel McVitty Parrish, were also Nashville natives. Born on March 18, 1887, William Parrish started as a clerk for the Keith-Simmons Company, and worked his way up to company director. Ethel was born on June 13, 1885; the second child of Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw and Frank Dow McVitty. They were married on August 20, 1906, in Chicago, Illinois. Karl, her older brother, was born on February 27, 1883.

Jim's great-grandmother, Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw, was born in Nashville on February 2, 1864. Kathryn and her older brother Otto were orphaned as children when their parents, Peter and Barbara Burchartz, died between 1868 and 1870. The Burchartz family had ties to the German community in Nashville, and the two children were adopted by Carl and Pauline Giers. Carl, born in Germany in April 1828, was a photographer and opened a photography business in Nashville about 1852. His wife Pauline was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1825 and immigrated to the United States in 1845, the same year as Carl. The two were married in St. Louis, Missouri, on November 13, 1846. Carl died on May 24, 1877, and is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery. Pauline Giers died on March 15, 1895, and is also buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery with her husband, but there no marker. Carl's adopted son Otto worked with his father at their photography studio and later took over the business.

In 1881, Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw married Frank McVitty, an Ohio native, in Nashville. Sometime around 1900, the couple either separated or divorced, and Kathryn married Clark A. Shaw and possibly moved to Chicago with Shaw. She died on February 9, 1918. It is unknown where or when Frank McVitty lived after separating from Kathryn, but he died on December 21, 1919, and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis.

Karl, Kathryn and Frank McVitty's eldest child, worked for the State Department, and died in 1959. Their daughter, Ethel McVitty Parrish, died on March 21, 1948, with Amorphous Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) listed as the cause on her death certificate. Her husband, William McMurray Parrish, died on April 20, 1951. Their daughter Kathryn Shaw Parrish Thurman died in December of 1980; the exact date is unknown.

Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Organization: Arranged in four series:

- Series I: James Collins Thurman (Jim) III
- Series II: James Collins Thurman, Jr. and Kathryn Shaw Parrish
- Series III: William McMurray Parrish and Ethel McVitty
- Series IV: Photographs
- Series V: Oversize

Arrangement: Each series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

Restrictions on Access: In Archives use only. Available by appointment.

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Index Terms

Personal Names:

Aley, Ethel Dow Parrish (Polly)
Aley, Jerome Arnold
Giers, Carl, 1828-1877
Giers, Pauline Lissette Stotz
Giers, Otto, 1858-1940
Giers, Sallie Hunter
McVitty, Ethel Dow
McVitty, Frank D.
McVitty, Karl Giers
Parrish, William McMurray
Shaw, Kathryn Giers McVitty
Thurman, James Collins, Jr.
Thurman, James Collins, III.
Thurman, Kathryn Parrish

Subjects:

American Red Cross
Montgomery Bell Academy (Nashville, Tenn.)
Photography-Social aspects-History-19th Century
Photography-Social aspects-History-20th Century
Portrait photography-History-19th Century
Portrait photography-History-20th Century
Nashville (Tenn.)-History-19th Century
Nashville (Tenn.)-History-20th Century
Running races, 1950-1960
Track and field-United States

Places:

Nashville (Tenn.).

Genre/Document Types:

Certificates
Letters
Membership Cards
Memorabilia
Memoranda
Newspaper Clippings
Notebooks
Pamphlets
Photographs
Memorabilia
Ration Books
Scrapbooks
Visiting Cards
Writings

Administrative Information

Copyright: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Donated to the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Archives by James Collins Thurman, III (Jim) in 2005.

Ownership and Custodial History: Materials collected by Kathryn Parrish Thurman, and then given to her son, James Collins Thurman, III.

Processing Information: Processed and arranged by Jennifer Quier, Education and Outreach Librarian, in May 2014.

Accruals: No further accruals expected.

Detailed Description of the Collection**Box 1****Series I: James Collins Thurman, III**

Folder 1: Camp Hy-Lake

Folder 2: Lookout Mountain Camp for Boys
Folder 3: Memorabilia, Academic, Montgomery Bell Academy
Folder 4: Memorabilia, Academic, Parmer School
Folder 5: Memorabilia, Athletic *see **Oversize for athletic letters and Field Day awards***
Folder 6: Memorabilia, Social (1 of 2)
Folder 7: Memorabilia, Social (2 of 2)
Folder 8: Naval Reserve Records
Folder 9: Newspaper Clippings, Athletic
Folder 10: Newspaper Clippings, Social
Folder 11: OPA Ration Book, Issued 1942
Folder 12: Postcards
Folder 13: Report Cards

Series II: James Collins Thurman, Jr., and Kathryn Shaw Parrish

Folder 14: American Red Cross, Conventions and Meetings
Folder 15: American Red Cross, Correspondence, 1951-1967
Folder 16: American Red Cross, Newspaper Clippings
Folder 17: Family Genealogy
Folder 18: Kathryn Shaw Parrish, Personal Papers
Folder 19: Newspaper Clippings, Engagement and Wedding
Folder 20: OPA Ration Books

Series III: William McMurray Parrish and Ethel Dow McVitty

Folder 21: Personal Papers and Records

Box 2

Series IV: Photographs

Folder 22: Ethel Dow Parrish Aley (Polly)
Folder 23: Jerome Arnold Aley
Folder 24: Dorcas Brown
Folder 25: Carl Giers
Folder 26: Otto Giers
Folder 27: Pauline Giers
Folder 28: Sallie Hunter Giers
Folder 29: Inez Heermans
Folder 30: Christine McVitty
Folder 31: Frank Dow McVitty
Folder 32: Ethel McVitty Parrish
Folder 33: Karl Giers McVitty
Folder 34: William McMurray Parrish
Folder 35: Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw
Folder 36: James Collins Thurman, Jr.
Folder 38: James Collins Thurman, III-Family Photos
Folder 39: James Collins Thurman, III-Formals and Dances
Folder 40: James Collins Thurman, III-Portraits
Folder 41: James Collins Thurman, III-Tennessee Dew Drops
Folder 42: Kathryn Shaw Parrish Thurman

Folder 43: Photo Album #1
Folder 44: Scrapbook #1
Folder 45: Scrapbook #2 (in black 3 ring binder)
Folder 46: Sea Island, Georgia
Folder 47: Unidentified

Box 3

Folder 48: Daguerreotype, Unidentified Man
Folder 49: Daguerreotype, Unidentified Man (same as Folder 48)
Folder 50: Daguerreotype, Unidentified Woman
Folder 51: Daguerreotype, Unidentified Woman (same as Folder 50)
Folder 52: Handmade fold-out photograph album with four portraits, c. 1900s
Folder 53: Negative, Bishop McKinstry Portrait
Folder 54: Negatives, Noel Cheese Plant, dated June 1937
Folder 55: Negatives, Thurman Family photos
Folder 56: Negatives, Train Wreck, Russellville, KY, October 1946
Folder 57: Negatives, Unidentified
Folder 56: Tintype, Kathryn Giers McVitty Shaw as an infant
Folder 57: Tintype, group photo, Kathryn Giers Shaw McVitty is seated at right

Series V, Oversize

Folder 58: Book of Common Prayer
Folder 59: Athletic Letters *see "**Memorabilia, Athletic**" folder in Box 1, Series I*

Box 4

Folder 60: Baby Book, James Collins Thurman, III
Folder 61: Desk Blotter
Folder 63: Photograph Album, Parrish-Thurman Family Photos

Box 5

Folder 64: Newspapers
Folder 65: Newspapers
Folder 66: Newspapers
Folder 67: Scrapbook, "Jimmy Thurman, 8th Grade Parmer School, Christmas 1952"
Folder 68: Scrapbook, Athletic Clippings
Folder 69: Miscellaneous