



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Henry A. and Kenneth L. Toppin papers

1946-1978

Sc MG 459

Summary

Creator: Toppin, Henry A. (Henry Allan), 1884-1965

Title: Henry A. and Kenneth L. Toppin papers

Date: 1946-1978

Size: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of the Toppin Family, December 1993.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Henry A. Toppin (1884-1965), born in Barbados, immigrated to the U.S. in 1906. He became a licensed undertaker and established a funeral parlor in Harlem in 1934; his son, Alvin, joined the firm sometime later. Toppin was active in political and civic affairs; he was a member of the N.Y. State Democratic Committee, and a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1952. He was a Prince Hall Mason and a Shriner and held various offices in both fraternal organizations. Henry Toppin's other son, Kenneth (1917-1993), was a graduate of the Howard University College of Medicine, 1944, and served as attending physician at Harlem Hospital from 1952-1976. He was also associated with other New York City hospitals. Henry A. Toppin's papers consist of personal letters from relatives and friends, including letters from his wife while he visited Barbados in 1946, and letters from a cousin in Barbados regarding property there; mortgages, leases, receipts, and correspondence for property owned in Barbados and in New York City; letters and other documents concerning his activities with the Democratic Party and his role in the 1952 National Convention; and a few documents related to his membership in the Prince Hall Masonic lodge, M.W. Hiram Grand Lodge. Kenneth L. Toppin's papers consist of personal and professional correspondence (the latter deals primarily with appointments to hospital positions); and material related to his membership in the Guardsmen, a fraternal organization.

Preferred citation: [Item], Henry A. and Kenneth L. Toppin papers, Sc MG 459, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, 1993-1994.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Creator History

Henry A. Toppin (1884-1965), born in Barbados, immigrated to the U.S. in 1906. He became a licensed undertaker and established a funeral parlor in Harlem in 1934; his son, Alvin, joined the firm sometime later. Toppin was active in political and civic affairs; he was a member of the N.Y. State Democratic Committee, and a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1952. He was a Prince Hall Mason and a Shriner and held various offices in both fraternal organizations. Henry Toppin's other son, Kenneth (1917-1993), was a graduate of the Howard University College of Medicine, 1944, and served as attending physician at Harlem Hospital from 1952-1976. He was also associated with other New York City hospitals.

Scope and Content Note

Henry A. Toppin's papers consist of personal letters from relatives and friends, including letters from his wife while he visited Barbados in 1946, and letters from a cousin in Barbados regarding property there; mortgages, leases, receipts, and correspondence for property owned in Barbados and in New York City; letters and other documents concerning his activities with the Democratic Party and his role in the 1952 National Convention; and a few documents related to his membership in the Prince Hall Masonic lodge, M.W. Hiram Grand Lodge. Kenneth L. Toppin's papers consist of personal and professional correspondence (the latter deals primarily with appointments to hospital positions); and material related to his membership in the Guardsmen, a fraternal organization.

Arrangement: Arranged into two series: (1) Toppin, Henry A. and (2) Toppin, Kenneth L.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American businesspeople
African American families -- New York (State) -- New York
African American fraternal organizations
African American physicians
African American politicians
Barbadians -- New York -- New York
Caribbean Americans -- New York (State) -- New York

Names

Toppin, Henry A. (Henry Allan), 1884-1965
Toppin, Kenneth L. (Kenneth Lester), 1917-1993
National Association of Guardsmen

Container List

Toppin, Henry A 1946-1978

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical information 1960-1965
- b. 1 f. 2 Personal correspondence 1946-1964
- b. 1 f. 3 Property, Barbados 1960s
- b. 1 f. 4-5 Mortgages and leases for property
- b. 1 f. 6 Masonic organizations
- b. 1 f. 7 Democratic National Convention 1950-1952
- b. 1 f. 8 Estate 1970s

Toppin, Kenneth L 1938-1978

- b. 1 f. 9 Biographical information 1976-1978
- b. 1 f. 10 Personal correspondence 1938-1972
- b. 1 f. 11 Professional 1950-1975
- b. 1 f. 12 National Medical Association African trip 1971
- b. 1 f. 13 Howard University alumni
- b. 1 f. 14-15 National Guardsmen 1970s
- b. 1 f. 16 Business papers
- b. 1 f. 17 Clippings