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Womble (Thomas) Papers

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Kristen Merryman

North Carolina Collection Archives

300 N. Roxboro Street

Durham, NC 27701

Business Number: 919-560-0171

ncc@dconc.gov

URL: <https://durhamcountylibrary.org/ncc>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	5

Summary Information

Repository:	North Carolina Collection Archives
Source:	Webb-Bledsoe, Mayme
Creator:	Womble, Thomas
Title:	Thomas Womble papers
ID:	NCC.0197
Date [inclusive]:	1943-2006
Physical Description:	0.5 Linear Feet (4 containers: 1 flat box, 3 folders)
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

[Item, folder, and box information], Thomas Womble photographs and oral history (NCC.0197), North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, NC.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Thomas Womble was born in 1925 and raised in the West End neighborhood of Durham. Womble attended Hillside High and was a member of the 1943 football team at the school, considered one of the most accomplished in the school's history as they were not only undefeated that year, but also never scored on. He remained active in the 43 Hornet Club, a group of men who were on the 1943 Hillside High team who were active in civic and educational issues in Durham, including sponsoring scholarships for Durham black student athletes. The club also participated in adult athletic leagues in Durham. Womble attended North Carolina College at Durham (now North Carolina Central University) from 1949-1954 and while there played football.

Womble was a baseball player in the Negro Leagues, playing on several independent and minor league teams including the Durham Tigers (1941-1943), the Durham Eagles (1946-1947), the Raleigh Tigers (1947-1949), and the Durham Rams (1954-1955). Womble served in the army during World War II and during that time played baseball on one of the military teams. Later

in life, he was active in revitalizing the West End neighborhood of Durham, where he grew up. Womble passed away on January 18, 2011.

The West End is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Durham. The name "West End" refers to the location of the neighborhood, originally the west end of Durham, with its northern boundary the Southern Railroad line, Willard Street on the eastern boundary, and to the south, Morehead Avenue. Historically, blacks lived west of Buchanan Boulevard and whites, east. The segregation of the neighborhood was exemplified in the two schools that served the neighborhood, Morehead School for whites and West End Graded School for blacks, both established at the turn of the twentieth century. In the northwest section of West End, the Lyon Park community developed, establishing its own school for black children named Cemetery School, due to its location across from Maplewood Cemetery. The two-room facility was replaced in the 1920s with a Rosenwald school, which was expanded following a fire that burned down the West End Graded School in 1929. The school was renamed Lyon Park School and served as the school for blacks in West End until integration in the 1960s. The school went through several owners following integration and in 2003 was turned into the Community Family Life and Recreation Center at Lyon Park to serve as a community center for the Lyon Park community.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection includes photographs taken at the Lyon Park Community Center and at "We Are West End" reunions in the 1990s and photographs of Elite Club teams from Lyon Park, including the softball and baseball teams from the 1940s and 1950s. There is also a folder of materials relating to the history of Lyon Park School that date from 2003, when the Community Family Life Center at Lyon Park opened. Notes from an oral history done with Womble in 2006 are also included in the collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

The collection is organized by subject.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Mayme Webb-Bledsoe

Conditions Governing Use

There are no restrictions on the use of this material except where previously copyrighted material is concerned. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain all permissions.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- African American baseball players
- Citizens' associations -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Community life -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Negro leagues
- Webb-Bledsoe, Mayme

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
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Womble (Thomas) Papers

History of Lyon Park School, 2003 <u>Material Specific Details:</u> Photograph of Cemetery School dates to 1890s.	box 1 - Small Collections	folder 1	folder 1
Lyon Park baseball and softball team photographs, 1942-1956	box 1 - Small Collections	folder 2	folder 2
Elite Club team photographs, circa 1945-1955	box 1 - Small Collections	folder 2	folder 2
Oral history notes	box 1 - Small Collections	folder 3	folder 3
Lyon Park Senior Center photographs, 1984-1998	box 1		
We Are West End reunion photographs, 1995-2000	box 1		
Womble family photographs, 1998-2000	box 1		