

MSS. Collection #244

**C.C. Fordham Family Papers, 1897-2008 [bulk 1920-1969].
1 box (27 folders), ca. 100 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

The C.C. Fordham Family Papers contain a variety of materials relating to Fordham Drug Store at 514 S. Elm Street and the Fordham family. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, financial and legal papers pertaining to downtown property bought and sold by the Fordham family, and newspaper clippings about the drug store and some family members. Also included are several photographs of the drug store and C.C. Fordham Jr. Researchers interested in Fordham Drug Store, the Fordham family, or downtown Greensboro businesses may find this collection useful.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into six series by document type and arranged within series by subject and/or document type. The series are: **Correspondence**, 1927-1994; **Financial**, 1909-1967; **Legal**, 1920-1967; **Miscellaneous**, 1957; **Photographs**, 1912-2008; and **Printed Materials**, 1897-1998.

Provenance: This collection was donated by C.C. Fordham III's eldest daughter, Pamela Fordham Richey, on behalf of herself and her sisters, Susan Fordham Crowell and Betsy Fordham Templeton. It was received in April 2018 and assigned the accession number 2018.9.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by intern Meredith Groce in June 2018.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The Fordham family was involved in both civic and business ventures in Greensboro, primarily through their ownership and operation of **Fordham Drug Store** (1898-2002) at 514 South Elm Street. The building was constructed around 1895 in the Italianate style with a large sculpture of a mortar and pestle at the top of its façade to indicate the location of a pharmacy. The drug store was known for its ornate, Mexican marble soda counter installed in 1909; shortly after the store closed in 2002, the counter was moved to Lane Drug Store at 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

Christopher Columbus Fordham Sr. (1869-1938) was born in Comfort, North Carolina, and joined the North Carolina Pharmaceutical Association in 1897. He opened Fordham Drug Store in Greensboro on July 21, 1898, and presided as head pharmacist until his death in 1938.

He and his wife, Maggie Barnes (1871-1961) of New Bern, North Carolina, had four sons: Christopher Columbus Jr., Jefferson, Woodrow, and Ed.

Christopher Columbus Fordham Jr. (1903-1969) was born in Greensboro and graduated from Greensboro High School, where he was a notably talented football and baseball player. He went on to play football at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and was on the national championship winning team of 1922. In 1927, he joined his father as a pharmacist at Fordham Drug Store, where he mixed medications and worked behind the soda counter serving drinks and ice cream. Upon his father's death in 1938, he took over the business. He was appointed to the North Carolina Board of Health in 1939 and also served as chairman of the Guilford County Board of Health, chairman of the N.C. Veterans Commission, director of the Bank of Greensboro, president of the N.C. Pharmaceutical Association, and president of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. Along with other members of his family, he was active at West Market Street United Methodist Church. He married Frances Clendenin (1903-1988), who eventually did the bookkeeping for the drug store, and the couple had two sons: Christopher Columbus III (1926-2008) and Henry Clendenin (1929-1958). The family owned a farm on Rock Creek Dairy Road, as well as several other properties throughout Greensboro. C.C. Fordham Jr. died of a heart attack while delivering a prescription on May 2, 1969.

Jefferson Barnes Fordham (1905-1994), a younger brother of C.C. Fordham Jr., graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and received his law degree from Yale University in 1930. He subsequently worked in both government service and private practice in Washington, D.C., and then served as a lieutenant commander in the Navy during World War II. After the war, he went on to hold law professorships at Louisiana State University, Vanderbilt University, and Ohio State University. In 1952, he joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. As dean of the law school, he testified at Congressional hearings in which he advocated for individual rights, racial equality, and fair housing, three causes on which his law career focused in both private and public practice. In 1972, he joined the faculty of the University of Utah at Salt Lake City Law School, where he remained until his death.

Christopher Columbus Fordham III (1926-2008) was born in Greensboro to Frances Clendenin and Christopher Columbus Fordham Jr. As a teenager, he worked at Fordham Drug Store as a soda jerk. He received his Certificate of Medicine from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1949 without completing his undergraduate degree, and earned his medical degree from Harvard in 1951. After practicing medicine in Greensboro until 1958, he joined the UNC Chapel Hill medical school faculty. He left to become Dean of the Medical College of Georgia in 1969, but returned to UNC Chapel Hill as Dean of the School of Medicine from 1971 to 1979. As chancellor of the university from 1980 to 1988, he instituted programs that brought awareness to the need for public education in North Carolina. He and his wife, Barbara Byrd (1927-2018), had three daughters: Pamela, Susan, and Betsy.

Biographical Sources: The sources used to compile this biographical note include materials in the collection (especially newspaper clippings), [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, and the obituary of C.C. Fordham Sr. (*Greensboro Daily News*, July 4, 1938). Additional information about C.C. Fordham III was obtained from "[Former Chancellor Chris Fordham '47 Dies at 81](#)" in the Carolina Alumni Review, "[Christopher Columbus Fordham, III and Fordham Hall](#)" in The Carolina Review: A Virtual Museum of University History, and [his obituary](#) (*The Carrboro Citizen*, August 21, 2008). Further details about the building at 514 S.

Elm St. that housed Fordham Drug Store were found through the [Guilford County GIS Data Viewer](#) and the [Greensboro Public Library website](#).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of correspondence, financial and legal documents, photographs, and a variety of printed materials pertaining to the Fordham family and their impact on local, regional, and national communities through their professional and civic activities. The majority of the collection relates to Fordham Drug Store from 1920 to 1969. The materials that make up most of the collection include letters from local businesspeople, financial and legal records of property transactions, and newspaper clippings about the drug store and family members. Researchers interested in Fordham Drug Store, Greensboro businesses, or the impact of certain members of the Fordham family may find this collection useful. In addition, researchers studying the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or the University of Pennsylvania Law School may find this collection useful because it includes documents from these schools spanning multiple generations of the Fordham family.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 10 folders (15 items). 1927-1994.

This series consists of both business and personal correspondence received by various members of the Fordham family. The first folder contains condolences sent to the family from law schools around the country upon the death of Jefferson Fordham (1:1). Also included is the manuscript of the eulogy given by Jefferson's colleague Jim Hollbrook at his memorial service at the University of Utah College of Law.

The professional accomplishments of C.C. Fordham Jr. are highlighted in a letter from North Carolina Governor Clyde R. Hoey appointing Fordham to the State Board of Health in 1939 (1:8). Also included is a certificate announcing this appointment signed by the governor. A personal remembrance of C.C. Fordham Sr. is noted in a letter to his grandson, C.C. Fordham III, from Banks D. Kerr (1:3). Kerr attaches an excerpt of the January 1936 issue of *The Carolina Journal of Pharmacy* that praises Fordham Sr. for his easygoing manner and remarkable kindness towards his close friends and customers.

Other items in this series include property appraisals for tracts of land on Greene, Elm, Market, and other streets in downtown Greensboro (1:2,4,10); these appraisals do not appear to concern properties owned by the Fordham family but rather adjacent to their properties. Of interest are the deeds to similar plots belonging to the Fordham family (1:7,9) for residences and farmland.

2. Financial. 4 folders (14 items). 1909-1967.

The financial documents mainly pertain to the sale and acquisition of property. One item records that C.C. Fordham Sr. sold a portion of his farm in northeast Guilford County in 1927 to acquire commercial property on Greene Street (2:3). Other documents show that this Greene

Street property continued to be appraised by his son, C.C. Fordham Jr., over the following decades (2:1). The most interesting materials in this series are the 1909 order forms for the marble counter and iceless fountain for Fordham Drug Store (2:4). The counter and fountain became well-known features of the store that were recognized in statewide publications, including the June 2016 issue of *Our State* magazine. This article claims that the counter was the first to serve Coca-Cola drinks in Greensboro. Researchers may find the order forms useful because they show how the counter was conceptualized. Miscellaneous items in this series that do not appear to pertain to the Fordham family include loans noted to J.B. Stroud and Boyd T. Toben (2:2).

3. Legal. 5 folders (23 items). 1920-1967.

This series is primarily comprised of deeds to land purchased on Elm and Greene streets by both C.C. Fordham Sr. and C.C. Fordham Jr. One such deed—between C.C. Fordham Sr. and J.T. Plot in 1922—includes a contract that lays out the conditions for a wall to separate the commercial properties of both men on South Elm Street (3:3). The last folder in the series contains several contracts finalizing the sale of multiple properties in downtown Greensboro to C.C. Fordham Jr. (3:5).

4. Miscellaneous. 1 folder (1 item). 1957.

This pastel portrait of C.C. Fordham Jr. was painted by artist D. Williams in 1957. Fordham is shown wearing a dark suit and tie.

5. Photographs. 1 folder (6 items). 1912-2008.

The photographs show Fordham Drug Store primarily during the time C.C. Fordham Jr. ran the business. Of particular interest is a photo of C.C. Fordham Jr. mixing what appears to be a soda behind the store's well-known marble counter in 1969. Another photo shows C.C. Fordham Jr. at the counter in the back of the store where he mixed medicines and prescriptions. Also of note are an undated exterior of Fordham Drug Store from across South Elm Street, and a 1912 interior that shows a portion of the marble counter, the shelves and goods on the store's walls, and three unidentified employees.

6. Printed Materials. 6 folders (38 items). 1897-1998.

The printed materials consist of certificates, school yearbooks, newspaper clippings, and published writings pertaining to the Fordham family and the many institutions with which they were affiliated. Included are C.C. Fordham Sr.'s 1897 membership certificate for the North Carolina Pharmaceutical Association and the 1953 Distinguished Service Award presented by the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce to Fordham Drug Store (6:1). The latter is signed by the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce for that year—C.C. Fordham Jr.

Materials relating to Greensboro High School include C.C. Fordham III's 1943 high school diploma and the directory given out at his 50th high school reunion in 1993 (6:2). The 1921 Greensboro High School yearbook, titled *The Reflector* (6:2), represents the year that C.C.

Fordham Jr. graduated; it mentions that he excelled on the football and baseball teams, and was president of the Athletic Association.

The newspaper clippings are separated into folders for Fordham Drug Store and the Fordham family. Coverage of the store includes a 1969 article entitled “Nostalgia Presides at Fordham’s” that shows how the store maintained historical elements, and contains images of objects in the store at the time. Another story published in 1995 highlights the store’s history of friendliness and excellent service over 97 years (6:3). Newspaper coverage of the Fordham family goes beyond the drug store, with clippings encompassing the appointments of family members to select positions within their respective fields, obituaries, and personal profiles. Multiple articles announce the sudden death of C.C. Fordham Jr. in May 1969. Other clippings highlight the appointments of Jefferson Fordham as dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and C.C. Fordham III as chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (6:4).

Miscellaneous documents included in this series are a placard about the history of the Fordham surname and a pictorial history of the football program at the University of North Carolina, which mentions C.C. Fordham Jr.’s involvement on the team in the 1920s (6:5). Also featured in this folder is a collection of poems by Charlie Sharpe, who worked at Fordham Drug Store from 1960 to 1991 (6:5); several of the poems are reflections and memories from his time at the store. Finally, the series contains the manuscript of a letter titled “Equality in American Constitutional Perspective” written by Jefferson Fordham and featured as the headlining piece of the December 1968 edition of the Philadelphia *Sunday Bulletin* (6:6). This letter reveals Fordham’s thoughts on the political inequalities of the time, which he claims are contradictory to the laws laid out in the Constitution.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Correspondence	-- Condolences -- Fordham, Jefferson (1994)
	2	"	-- Hoyle & Harrison (1927)
	3	"	-- Kerr Drug Stores (1988)
	4	"	-- Kornegay, Horace R. (1951)
	5	"	-- Miscellaneous (1967)
	6	"	-- North Carolina Pharmaceutical Association (1942)
	7	"	-- Stanley, Edwin M. (1946-1953)
	8	"	-- State of North Carolina -- Governor's Office (1939)
	9	"	-- Warner, Tim G. (1955)
	10	"	-- Yost & Little Realtors (1955-1961)
2	1	Financial	-- Certificates -- Fordham, C.C. Jr. (1961)
	2	"	-- Miscellaneous (1923-1967)
	3	"	-- Property Receipts (1927-1959)
	4	"	-- Soda Counter Order Forms (1909)
3	1	Legal	-- Deeds -- Fordham, C.C. Jr. (1946-1953)
	2	"	-- Deeds -- Fordham, C.C. Jr. (1958-1961)
	3	"	-- Deeds -- Fordham, C.C. Sr. (1920-1923)
	4	"	-- Deeds -- Fordham, Jefferson (1948)
	5	"	-- Property Contracts (1954-1967)
4	1	Miscellaneous	-- Pastel Portrait -- Fordham, C.C. Jr. (1957)
5	1	Photographs	-- Fordham Drug Store (1912-2008)
6	1	Printed Materials	-- Certificates (1897-1953)
	2	"	-- Greensboro High School (1921-1993)
	3	"	-- Newspaper Clippings -- Fordham Drug Store (1962-1998)
	4	"	-- Newspaper Clippings -- Fordham Family (1939-1980)
	5	"	-- Miscellaneous
	6	"	-- University of Pennsylvania Law School (1968-1974)