

**Watertown Free Public Library**

123 Main Street

Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

**Local History Collection**

**Newcomb Family papers and  
photographs, circa 1850-1912**

**HIST 929.2 NEWCOMB 1850-1912**

## Summary

**Collection name:** Newcomb Family papers and photographs, circa 1850-1912

**Collection number:** HIST 929.2 NEWCOMB 1850-1912

**Repository:** Watertown Free Public Library (Watertown, Massachusetts)

**Creator:** Newcomb Family

**Extent:** 0.22 cubic feet (12 items in 1 clamshell box)

**Language:** English

**Provenance:** The source of this acquisition is unknown. It may have been received as a gift in 1990.

**Processing information:** Former Local History Librarian Kay Westcott originally cataloged, boxed and inventoried the items in this collection. In 2019, Julia Grabianowski rehoused and drafted a finding aid pulling from Westcott's item level descriptions and bibliographic record. Caroline Littlewood reprocessed the collection in 2020, drawing from Westcott and Grabianowski's earlier work.

**Conditions governing access:** Collection is open for use in the Local History Room, Watertown Free Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** Newcomb Family papers and photographs, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

## Historical Note

William Manton Newcomb (1861-1929) was born in 1861 to William Coomb Newcomb and Mary Jane (Logan) Newcomb. He grew up in Eastport, Maine, the ninth of twelve children. William Manton (hereinafter referred to as William M.) married Addie Villa Colson (b. 1862) in 1882. They had three children: Lula Beatrice (b. 1883), William Coombs (1885-1978), and Ella Elizabeth (b. 1899).

William M., Addie, and the children relocated to Watertown, Massachusetts around 1898 and settled on Fifield Street. William M. and his son, William C., worked as machinists at the nearby Watertown Arsenal. Both men remained at the Arsenal until after World War I, when William M. left to work as a janitor at the Parker School. William C. continued at the Arsenal as a machinist, foreman, and then assistant works manager through World War II.

In 1908, William C. married Ethel H. Glover, daughter of Charles and Sarah Glover. It was around this time that William C. and William M. purchased and registered a touring car, a C. H. Blomstrom Motor Company Queen model. Open to the elements and roomy enough for the whole family, the vehicle was a source of recreation as well as transportation. When William C. and Ethel's daughter, Marion Newcomb, was born in 1912, family outings grew to include a third generation of Newcombs. William M.'s daughters Lula and Ella also joined in these activities.

Lula Newcomb worked as a stenographer and married Francis Perry in 1914. Her younger sister Ella lived with their parents and worked as a clerk until her marriage to Herbert Smith later in life. William M. Newcomb died in 1929, and William C. moved to 117 Park Drive, Boston a few years later. Though he spent the final decades of his life residing outside Watertown, he remained a lifelong member of Watertown's Pequossette Lodge.

## Organization and Arrangement

This collection consists of two series:

Series I. Automobile documents and photographs, 1907-1912 (inclusive)

Series II. Unidentified portraits, circa 1850-1869

## Scope and Content Note

This collection contains photographs and documents relating to William M. Newcomb (1861-1929) and his son, William C. Newcomb, Jr. (1885-1978).

Series I, Automobile documents and photographs, consists of five items. It includes outdoor portraits depicting Newcomb family members and automobiles, a postcard, a 1907 automobile operator's license, and a 1907 automobile registration. One 1912 group portrait depicts family members Charles Glover, William C. Newcomb, William M. Newcomb, Addie V. Newcomb, Ella E. Newcomb, Marion Newcomb, Lula B. Newcomb, and Ethel Glover Newcomb (item 5).

Series II, Unidentified portraits, consists of seven undated photographs. No individuals in these photographs are identified, though they are likely relatives of William Coomb Newcomb and Mary Jane (Logan) Newcomb. One half plate daguerreotype portrait, circa 1850-1855, depicts a man, two women, and five children (item 6). All other items are

ambrotype or tintype studio portraits in cases. Some items appear to be related to each other: items 11 and 12 depict the same man, and the women in items 8 and 10 are dressed similarly. Most items appear to date to the 1850s or early 1860s.

## Inventory

Series	Item #	Item Description
I	1	William C. Newcomb's Massachusetts automobile registration, 1907 (in a case marked "Peter Robertson Automobile Sheet Metal Work 17 Charles Street Boston")
	2	William M. Newcomb's Massachusetts automobile Operator's License, 1907
	3	Photograph of child seated at the wheel, "Ella Newcomb Smith daughter of Wm. M. Newcomb who owned the car April 1907" written on back
	4	Postcard dated Aug. 24, 1911, from Mrs. G. H, Jonesport, Maine, to Mrs. William Newcomb
	5	Photograph of family in car, labeled on back (left to right): "Charles Glover (standing), Wm C. Newcomb, Wm M. Newcomb, Addie V. Newcomb, Ella E. Newcomb with Marion Newcomb [baby], Lula B. Newcomb, Ethel Glover Newcomb, 1912"
II	6	Group portrait of one man, two women, and five children, circa 1850, half plate daguerreotype in case
	7	Collodion positive portrait of a young man over tintype or ambrotype portrait of a different man, both in one union case
	8	Full portrait of young woman in cape, circa 1860, ambrotype or tintype in case
	9	Portrait of woman and girl in floral prints and jewelry, circa 1855, ambrotype in case
	10	Portrait of woman in bonnet with flowers, ambrotype or tintype in case
	11	Man, ambrotype or tintype in case
	12	Man, ambrotype or tintype in case

## Access Points

### People:

Newcomb, William M. (Manton), 1861-1929

Newcomb, William C. (Coombs), 1885-1978

### Subjects:

Automobiles

Leisure

Portrait photography

Recreation

### Places:

Watertown (Mass.)

### Forms:

Ambrotype

Daguerreotype