



Francis Gurney du Pont and Walter G. Tatnall memo books 0297

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Summary Information

Repository:	Manuscripts and Archives
Creator:	Du Pont, Francis Gurney, 1850-1904
Title:	Francis Gurney du Pont and Walter G. Tatnall memo books
ID:	0297
Date [inclusive]:	1877-1905
Physical Description:	0.5 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Francis Gurney du Pont (1850-1904) was the youngest son of Alexis I. du Pont (1816-1857) and Joanna Smith du Pont (1815-1876), and grandson of Éleuthère Irénée "E.I." du Pont (1771-1834), founder of E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, a chemical company more commonly referred to as the DuPont Company. Walter G. Tatnall Jr. (1882-1949) was an engineer at the DuPont Pulp Keg Mill and president of the Department of Elections for New Castle County. The memorandum books from du Pont and Tatnall document their work for the DuPont Company, including data on the manufacture of pulp kegs.

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Biographical Note

Francis Gurney du Pont (1850-1904) was the youngest son of Alexis I. du Pont (1816-1857) and Joanna Smith du Pont (1815-1876), and grandson of Éleuthère Irénée "E.I." du Pont (1771-1834), founder of E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, a chemical company more commonly referred to as the DuPont Company.

Du Pont graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1870. The following year, he began his career with E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. as an operator of graining mills. In 1874, he became a junior partner of the firm and later served in the highly important capacity of general manager, and as vice president, until 1902. That year, even with the death of Eugene du Pont (1840-1902), du Pont declined the presidency of the firm due to ill health. He wanted to sell the company to competitor Laflin & Rand. He mistrusted the modern business practices that he believed the younger generation would implement at the DuPont Company. He lost control of the company to cousins Alfred I. du Pont (1864-1935), T. Coleman du Pont (1863-1930), and Pierre S. du Pont (1870-1954).

In 1888, du Pont supervised the building of the blasting powder mills at Mooar, Iowa. At Carney's Point, New Jersey, he superintended the plant which produced smokeless powder. In 1893, he and Pierre S. du Pont patented their solvent recovery process for the manufacture of smokeless shotgun powder.

Aside from his abilities as a chemist, du Pont was interested in astronomy and in the improvement of telescopes.

In 1871, du Pont married Elise Wigfall Simons (1849-1919). The couple had ten children. Du Pont died November 7, 1904, in Wilmington, Delaware.

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Biographical Note

Walter G. Tatnall Jr. (1882-1949) was an engineer at the Du Pont Pulp Keg Mill and president of the Department of Elections for New Castle County.

Tatnall was born March 21, 1882, in Wilmington, Delaware, to Walter Gibbons Tatnall and Annie R. Knight Tatnall. His father was engaged in the lumber business and served as state archivist for many years.

He attended Friends School and graduated from Wilmington High School in 1901. He then became associated with Harlan and Hollingsworth Corporation as an apprentice machinist, remaining until 1904. He left there to join the DuPont Company in its development department, first working on pulp powder kegs and later was in charge of construction. He was superintendent at the Experimental Station until 1913.

Following DuPont, Tatnall went to work at the former Bond Bottle Seal Company, first as superintendent of building construction and then as supervisor of operation and plant maintenance with the rank of general manager. He stayed with the Bond Company until 1919 when he became a manufacturers' agent; handling materials and equipment used on grounds of estates and institutions. He operated this enterprise under the name of W.G. Tatnall until 1938 when he retired.

Tatnall was a leader in a number of civic and social organizations. At one time, he was director of the Delaware Safety Council and during World War II, he was head of the transportation section of Delaware Chapter, American Red Cross. In 1933, he became president of the Department of Elections for New Castle County. He was first appointed by Gov. C. Douglass Buck and reappointed repeatedly by succeeding governors. Additionally, Tatnall served three sessions in the state legislature as a representative from 1929 to 1933.

In 1915, Tatnall married Madge Carpenter, and the couple had two daughters: Margaretta and Ann. He died January 15, 1949, in Wilmington.

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Scope and Contents

Memorandum books of Francis Gurney du Pont (1850-1904) and Walter G. Tatnall (1883-1949). The books date from circa 1877 to 1905. Tatnall was an engineer at the DuPont Pulp Keg Mill, and the book contains data on the manufacture of pulp kegs.

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Access Restrictions

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Controlled Access Headings

- Account books
- Gunpowder industry
- Powder mills

- E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company