



H. Toms' Jewelry Store – All photos from Richland County History Room unless noted otherwise.



H. P. (Henry Parfrey) Toms

Toms' Jewelry Store – 155 East Court Street - 1895.

Ornamented only by a small cornice featuring a row of dentil trim and corbeled brick this small one-story commercial vernacular building is characterized by a storefront comprised of a recessed “stepped-up” entrance with double leafed doors topped by a transom window and flanked by cast iron columns. Wooden frames surround the large plate glass store windows.

Built in 1895 for J.M. Barnes and H.P. Toms to house their jewelry store, this small retail building later was known as the Toms' Jewelry Store when this partnership was dissolved. From 1945 to 1948, it was operated as the Burnham Jewelry Store. The Toms building was later incorporated into the C. Meadows Property at 155 East Court in 1979.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. and Mirah Hart Toms



Henry P. Toms was a leading jeweler and skilled optometrist of Richland Center, and his elegant establishment was located on the leading business street of the city of Richland Center. Mr. Toms was a native of the city, having been born in Richland Center on Jan. 3, 1871, and he was the son of Capt. Henry Toms, an old and highly respected citizen. Capt. Henry Toms was a native of England, born Aug. 6, 1829, and he resided there until 1853, when he immigrated to the United States, first stopping at Lyons, N.Y., where he worked at the cabinet-making trade. He subsequently moved to St. Johns, Mich., and then, in 1859, he came to Wisconsin and located at Richland Center.

He was engaged in the manufacture of fanning mills until 1861, when he enlisted in Company D, of the eleventh Wisconsin infantry. He was at first made corporal of the company, but soon thereafter was promoted to the rank of captain and served in that capacity until the regiment was mustered out of service. Then returning to Richland Center, Captain Toms established the furniture business, and was the oldest cabinet-maker and furniture dealer in the city of that era.

He was married to Miss Mary A. Parfrey in 1864, and they had seven children, Clara, Ada, Henry P., Edwin, Josie, Emma and Arthur.

Henry P. Toms was reared in the city of his birth and received his education in the Richland Center schools, and graduated from high school with the class of 1890.

He then launched upon his independent career by engaging as an apprentice in the jewelry business; devoting three years in perfecting himself in the knowledge of that trade.

H.P. Toms first started fixing clocks in the summer of 1890 when he worked in the Speidel Jewelry Store. He then worked in the J.C. Clark shop for a couple of years. In 1895, he formed a partnership with J. M. Barnes, under the firm name of Barnes & Toms. This

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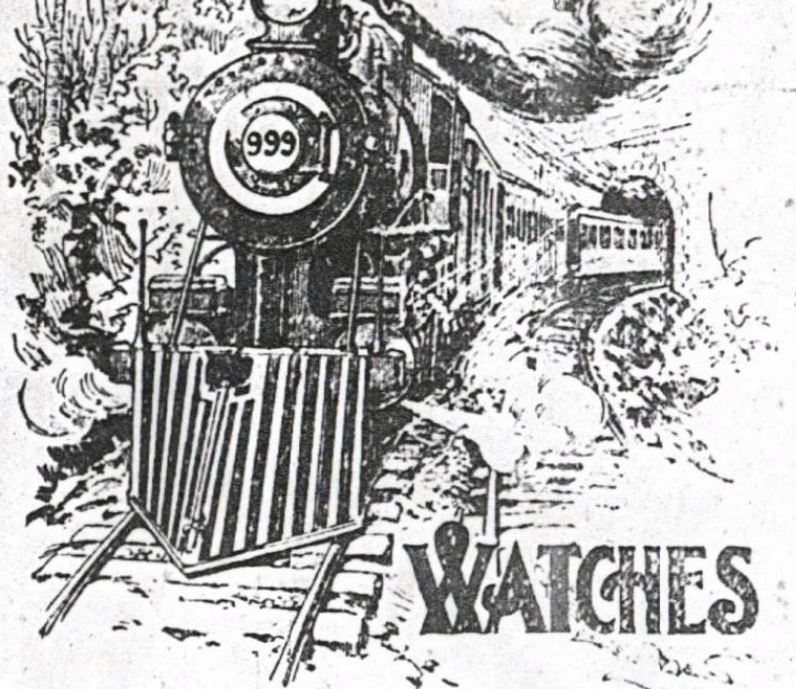
One Door East of
Sheridan's Market

Richland Center, Wis.

association continued until Sept. 1, 1902, when Mr. Toms purchased the interest of his partner, and became the sole proprietor of the establishment, carrying a full line of diamonds, watches, clocks, jewelry, cut glass, novelties, etc.

In 1894 he took a course under W. S. Fowler in the optical department of the Chicago Watchmakers' Institute. He afterward completed a course at the Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology, receiving the degree of Doctor of Optics on Mar. 27, 1901, and the degree of Bachelor of Ophthalmology from the same institution on Feb. 20, 1903. Mr. Toms was married, Oct. 28, 1903, to Miss Mirah Caroline Hart, daughter of T. M. Hart, of Richland Center. The Toms had three children. Ada Caroline, 1904-2007; Helen Ariel, 1912-2009; and Henry Hart, 1912-1935. Fraternally, H.P. Toms was a member of both the Blue Lodge and Chapter of the Masonic order at Richland Center and was also a Knight of Pythias and a member of the Modern Woodmen of the world.

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