VIRGINIA

Blacksburg, VA

188. Virginia Tech

University Libraries
Special Collections
Newman Library
1 Kent St.
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0434

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 90001
Blacksburg, VA 24062-9001

Phone: (540) 231-6308
Fax: (540) 231-9263
E-mail: specref@vt.edu
Website: http://spec.lib.vt.edu/
Hours: M-F 8 am–5 pm; appts. possible evenings and weekends

Contact person:
Aaron Purcell, Director, Special Collections: adp@vt.edu

Overview:

Here are located approximately 5000 cu. feet of manuscript material (the personal papers of individuals and families and the records of businesses and organizations) spanning the years from the fifteenth century to the present, with the greatest concentration of material in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Special Collections house significant sources of railroad history through the more than 200 cu. ft. of business records and drawings, photographs, personal papers, and publications relating to various regional railroads from the 1840s to the 1980s including Norfolk and Western Railroad, the Southern Railway, and the Richmond and Danville Railroad.

Notable scientific and technological collections include the papers of Robert E. Marshak, founder of the Rochester Conferences on High-Energy Physics; the papers of Samuel Herrick, founder of the field of astrodynamics; the papers of Christopher Kraft, former director of the Johnson Space Center; and the papers of John Parsons, the father
of numerical control or the application of computer technology to manufacturing. Notable business collections include the archival records of the predecessors of the Southern Railway and of the Norfolk and Western railway systems—collections that document the history of more than 300 railroads in the South and Midwest. Other business collections include a large group of nineteenth- and twentieth-century account books for small Virginia businesses. The Civil War history collection includes letters from soldiers, both Union and Confederate, to their families and friends, recounting their camp and battle experiences. Important Southwest Virginia collections include the papers of J. Hoge Tyler, a Radford, VA, native and governor of the state from 1898 to 1902; and the papers of such notable local families as the Prestons, Blacks, Kents, and Appersons.

Special Collections has three specialized archives: the Archives of American Aerospace Exploration (AAAE), the International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA), and the Appalachian Collection. The AAAE seeks to document early aeronautical and space history in the United States; the IAWA is concerned with the history of women’s involvement in the field of architecture worldwide, especially with the pioneer generation of women architects of the early twentieth century; and the Appalachian Collection focuses on collecting papers and records describing the cultural, religious, social, and economic conditions of southern Appalachia.

**Richmond, VA**

**189. Valentine Richmond History Center**

1015 E. Clay Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

**Phone:** (804) 649-0711  
**Fax:** (804) 643-3510  
**E-mail:** archives@richmondhistorycenter.com  
**Website:** www.richmondhistorycenter.com  
**Hours:** Research hours: Tu-F 12–4 pm; appointments required and must be made in writing

**Contact person:**  
Meg Hughes, Director of Archives and Photographic Services: (804) 649-0711 x342; mhughes@richmondhistorycenter.com
**Finding aids:** All finding aids are housed locally at the Valentine Richmond History Center.

**Overview:**

The Books, Manuscripts and Ephemera Collection is a portion of the Valentine Richmond History Center’s permanent collection and contains rare books, personal papers, business records, architectural notes and drawings, maps, prints, and general ephemera related to Richmond, VA. The Reference Library, containing over 7,500 books and over 100 lin. feet of research files, provides a comprehensive collection of research materials for studying the history of Richmond, VA. Total volume: Books, Manuscripts and Ephemera collection: More than 100,000 objects and 70 lin. feet of manuscripts; Reference Library: More than 7,500 books and 100 lin. ft. of research files from the mid-eighteenth century to the present, especially from the late nineteenth century to 1930.

**Noteworthy collections:**

- Richmond Exchange for Woman’s Work Records (MS. C 37) (1883–1957). Ca. 827 items. Joint stock company formed to aid women in financial distress by selling handmade items through the exchange’s store. The founding members belonged to Richmond’s five Presbyterian churches. Articles sold included food, clothing, and embroidery. Records include the original charter, annual reports, lists of life members, and officers, financial reports, letters, minutes, and other documents including a history of the exchange.

- Richmond Grain and Cotton Exchange Records (MS. C 39) (1883–1921). Ca. 236 items. Correspondence, by-laws, membership lists, market quotations, reports, and other data relating to the Richmond Grain and Cotton Exchange. Includes a letter from Governor Montague to Benjamin Jacob, the first secretary-treasurer of the organization.

  Primarily business papers of this Richmond theater owner. Contains records of business dealings with film companies and live acts for performances at the Byrd Theater and the Hippodrome in Jackson Ward. Included is material on black entertainers and films.

• Lawson Nunnally Papers (MS. C 56) (1765, 1838–1893). Ca. 95 items.
  Banker of Richmond, VA. Contains correspondence, accounts, and other legal and financial papers mostly concerning Nunnally’s business as trustee of various estates. Includes several documents concerning the hiring and ownership of slaves. Also contains a few notes and memoranda about the Richmond and Danville Richmond Co., and a genealogy of the Mason family in manuscript.

  Includes draft and published annual reports, monthly reports, proposals, historical information about the city, resumes, and other information about its chairmen. May also include bound reports, minutes, proposals, financial histories for the city, etc.

  These records include minute books, stock certificates, legal records, and photographs related to this Richmond shoe manufacturer and retailer, Stephen Putney Shoe Co. The company was founded in 1817 under the name Putney & Watts and was led by Samuel Putney until his nephew Stephen Putney took over company management in 1860. The business closed in 1986.

  Taylor was a leaf tobacco dealer and also served as president of the Richmond Tobacco Trade and sales manager of the Tobacco Growers’ Co-operative Association. Primarily correspondence and accounts of sale with leaf tobacco companies in Virginia and North Carolina regarding the purchase, shipping, and sale of leaf tobacco. Most of the correspondence is from 1930 to 1940.

  Founded in 1886, Miller & Rhoads operated as a full-service department store in Richmond and other locations around Virginia throughout the twentieth century. The company closed in 1989. Items in this collection include articles of incorporation, annual
reports, the employee newsletter *The Mirror*, catalogs, financial reports, market survey reports, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and general files. A large photograph collection accompanies these records.

- **National Tobacco Festival Records (MS. C 65) (1940–1984). 2.25 lin. ft.**
  The National Tobacco Festival was held in Richmond, VA, from 1949 to 1984 to promote Virginia’s tobacco industry and included balls, dinners, beauty contests, a parade, and a football game. The records mainly consist of souvenir programs as well as newspaper clippings and magazine articles. There are some 1940 and 1941 souvenir programs from the similarly named National Tobacco Festival held in South Boston, VA.

- **Cardwell Machine Company Records (MS. C 66) (1868–1960). 2.5 lin. ft.**
  John Wesley Cardwell (1820–1887) founded the Cardwell Machine Co. Starting as a manufacturing company for agricultural machinery, it grew to manufacture Confederate arms during the Civil War and later to manufacture tobacco processing and thrashing machines. It is reported to be Richmond’s oldest business. The company is now owned by Vokes, Ltd. of Britain and is a major supplier of tobacco processing machinery. This collection includes advertisements, catalogs, correspondence, legal documents, price lists, and photographs.

- **Tredegar Company Records (MS. C 67) (1842–1865). 0.25 lin. ft.**
  Tredegar Company (J. R. Anderson and Co.) was established as Tredegar Iron Works along the James River in Richmond in 1837. Joseph Reid Anderson was appointed director in 1841 and ran the company, now called J. R. Anderson & Co., until his death in 1892. Now called Tredegar Co., the factory produced munitions for the U.S. military during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1955, the factory site was damaged by a fire and soon afterwards was purchased by Ethyl (now NewMarket) Corp. The records include bills of sales, contracts, fund transfers, a stockholders’ report, and correspondence.

- **J. H. Shortt & Company Papers (MS. C 81) (1911–1937). 0.5 lin. ft.**
  The first reference to John H. Shortt in the Richmond City Directory is in the 1910 edition. His address was 720 N. 25th St., which remained his residence for his entire life. The directory lists his occupation as a machinist. His company, which operated a machine shop, is listed in the 1911 directory. A 1912 advertisement in the City Directory reads: “J. H. Shortt and Company, Practical
Machinists, 1445 East Franklin St.: Special attention given to tobacco machinery, printing presses, gasoline engines, etc. All kinds of automatic and special machine work given prompt attention. Satisfaction guaranteed. Monroe 3102." The company’s last listing is in the 1990 directory. Includes three business ledgers.

  Contains advertisements (lithographs, stencils, drawings) and packaging (boxes, tins, packs, bags) related to tobacco brands produced during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The advertisements are mainly housed in twenty ledger books and also include patent applications and photographs.

  Company manufactured and sold reproductions of antique furniture. The company was founded in 1890 originally as an antique furniture store on Main Street in Richmond. The lack of antiques to meet the demand soon put the new company into the reproduction business. The salesroom was moved to 900 West Marshall St. Other showrooms were later established in Atlanta, Washington, Baltimore, and New Orleans. In 1968, the company was acquired by General Interiors and became known as the Biggs Division. Some time before 1979, the company’s name was changed to the Kittinger Co. Includes catalogs, flyers, programs, pricing guides, and publications.

  Richmond men’s and women’s clothing retailer. The company originated as the dry goods store McAdams, Berry & Co., which was formed by George B. McAdams and Oscar H. Berry in 1879. Berry later bought out the company and renamed it Berry & Co. It moved to its 525 E. Grace St. location in 1926. In 1931, Burk & Co., a clothing company that originated in Baltimore, MD, bought out Berry & Co. to form Berry-Burk & Co. The company expanded to several Richmond stores. Berry-Burk & Co. was later purchased by New York-based Goldring, Inc. This parent company filed for bankruptcy in April 1989, and Berry-Burk ceased operations in July 1989. The records include financial reports, correspondence, general ephemera, and company letterhead.

  Collection of records documenting advertisements and fashion shows produced by Richmond department store, Thalhimer’s.
The records were collected by Elizabeth B. Bauder during her 40-year employment at Thalhimer’s from 1951 until 1990. Bauder began as a model and summer intern in Thalhimer’s Fashion Office and later worked from copywriter to Senior Vice President, Sales Promotion, until her retirement in 1990. Bauder was one of the first female executives of a major department store in the U.S. Records include employee newsletters, internal memoranda, client letters, fashion show setup information, correspondence, descriptions of events, newspaper clippings, store opening procedures, the beginning of Snow Bear, Christmas procedures and regulations, and speeches given by Elizabeth B. Bauder.

- Research Files (1850s–present). 100 lin. ft.
  Research files contain newspaper clippings, articles, and ephemera related to Richmond people, places, businesses, industries, organizations, and events. Many Richmond businesses and industries are represented in these research files.

190. Virginia Historical Society

428 N. Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23220 (for physical delivery)

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 7311
Richmond, VA 23221

Phone: (804) 358-4901
Fax: (804) 355-2399
E-mail: mcurrie@vahistorical.org
Website: www.vahistorical.org
Hours: Tu-Sat 10 am–5 pm; Staff is available by phone and e-mail on Mondays; appts. encouraged.

Contact persons:
Mary Virginia Currie, Business History Archivist: (804) 342-9678; mcurrie@vahistorical.org
Laura Gilmour Stoner, Asst. Archivist for Business Collections: (804) 340-2281; lstoner@vahistorical.org

Research center: Reynolds Center for Virginia Business History

Fellowships and grants: The fellowships offered are up to three weeks a year meaning 15 days in the VHS library. Awards include the Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowships, the Betty Sams Christian Fellowships in Business History, the Frances Lewis Fellowship in Gender and Women’s Studies, and
the Reese Fellowships in American Bibliography and the History of the Book in the Americas.

Conferences and other programs: Occasional lectures and seminars are scheduled.

Publications: The following publications are not just specific to the business history center: Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (quarterly journal); History Notes (quarterly newsletter); official papers, letterbooks, or diaries of three William Byrds [1652–1744], William Nelson [1711–1772], John Custis, IV [1678–1749], Edmund Pendleton [1721–1803], Benjamin Bartholomew [1752–1812], and Frances Fauquier, Lt. Governor of Virginia [1703–1768]. (Bracketed dates are life dates.)

Finding aids: Large business collections usually have linked finding aids. The society’s website has a section devoted to the Business History Center. In that segment, there is a listing of some of the larger business history collections available and whether there are finding aids with them. The website also gives users direct access to the full resource catalog.

Published information on archival holdings: Corporate collections for Best Products Co., Inc., for the founders of Best Products, Sydney and Frances Lewis, and A. H. Robins Co. have published guides. The Lane Co. records will soon have such a guide. See descriptions of these collections below.

Overview:

The collections include a reference library of books, pamphlets, serials, broadsides, and sheet music to support research about Virginia history and culture. The rare book collection contains extensive holdings of early travel narratives, Confederate imprints, pre-1870 Virginia imprints, architectural plan books, almanacs, and association books. The collections in the manuscript and archives division also generally reflect and support the study of Virginia history and culture. The library has over 160,000 volumes, over 300 serials, 4,000 broadsides, and 4,600 pieces; manuscripts and archives have ca. 7 million manuscripts overall. The Business History Center (BHC) possesses ca. 100 large collections, with 40 small collections specifically housed there. However, business records are also found in personal manuscript collections that are cataloged under the name of a person and housed separately from the BHC. Records date from 1394–present, and especially since 1600.

Noteworthy collections:

The records of this Richmond, VA, company are still being processed but can be available with the assistance of the business history archivist. Will soon contain an extensive film collection being processed offsite. Also includes over 100 oral history interviews of family and employees with full transcript. Consists predominantly of the business records of the founder of Reynolds Metals Co., Richard Samuel Reynolds, Sr., and his four sons, R. S. Reynolds, Jr., Julian Louis Reynolds, William Gray Reynolds, and David Parham Reynolds. Included are minute books; company publications, especially Reynolds Review; correspondence; memoranda; sales materials; photographs; film; clippings; and other memorabilia related to the company. Within the business papers of each of these five men, there are records about their private investments and ventures. There is also considerable information about the estate of R. S. Reynolds, Sr. An American twentieth-century company with subsidiaries around the world, this firm was engaged in the production, fabrication, and sale of both primary aluminum and aluminum products. In 1919, Richard Samuel Reynolds, Sr., a native of Bristol, TN/VA, founded the United States Foil Company, Reynolds Metals Co.’s parent company, in Louisville, KY. Reynolds Metals Co. was created as a subsidiary of U. S. Foil in 1928 and absorbed its parent in 1961. When the founder was analyzing the aluminum industry in 1937, he traveled to Europe to look at aluminum supplies. He realized that the Germans were stockpiling massive amounts of metals, so when he returned home, he made every effort to inform the U.S. president and Congress. To improve the future of his company, to draw attention to the monopoly that its major rival Alcoa had, and to support the war effort that was evidently looming on the horizon, he developed a business plan that led to several decades of success. After other sons ran the company after 1948, it was acquired by Alcoa in 2000.


These records concerning an early showroom retailer in Richmond, VA, came from several sources including the founders, Sydney and Frances Lewis; Robert L. Burrus Jr., corporate attorney and member of the boards of directors of the company; and the Best Products Foundation. Through the assistance of W. Edward Clingman Jr., the last CEO of Best Products and also the lawyer who handled the bankruptcy phase, a large group of
materials relating to bankruptcy, advertising, and showrooms was added to the collection. It consists of business papers that range from minutes of meetings of the board of directors to a complete run of Best Products Co.’s catalogs. Extensive files document the design, opening, and operation of individual store locations. Oral history collection completed before the papers came to the society, collected on cassette tapes; personnel and management files recording the daily operations; annual reports; federal and state financial and operational report filings; and internal company publications and press releases.

An adjunct collection is 39 lin. ft. with 240 oversize folders and boxes. These are the personal papers of Sydney and Frances Lewis, 1930–2000 (Mss1 L5888a FA2), which mainly concern the Lewis art collection, now mostly part of the collections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. There are files for each artist represented in the art collection. For exhibition loan requests, for correspondence, financial materials, insurance, inventories, and marked exhibition catalogs used by the Lewis family.

  Founded in 1912 as the Standard Red Cedar Chest Co. of Altavista, VA, the Lane Co. grew to become one of the largest furniture manufacturers in the Southern U.S. prior to its hostile takeover by Interco Corp. in 1987. While best known for its signature cedar chests, Lane, through mergers and acquisitions, produced quality furniture for every room of the home. It was established by Edward Hudson Lane (1891–1973), whose father, John Edward Lane (1857–1930), a successful Charlottesville, VA, contractor and builder of railroads, bought a dilapidated packing box plant at auction and dispatched his 20-year-old son to run it.

  This company turned early in its history to streamlining furniture production, invested heavily in research to improve its product and to prove that cedar wood was a natural moth repellant. It also invested in ways to recycle the waste wood that the production process generated, and developed in cooperation with the Adamson United Co. of Akron, OH, the Lanewood particle board process. In the 1950s, it began to diversify its product line with television cabinets for General Electric, a line of occasional tables, bedroom and dining room furniture, and in later decades, upholstered goods and recliners. Interco Corp. took it over in 1987 and sold it later to Furniture Brands International. The bankruptcy
filing of 1992 of Furniture Brands began the divestiture of several branches and began the shipping of its manufacturing processes overseas. This spelled the end of its most famous product, the cedar chest. The last Lane cedar chest to be manufactured in the U.S. rolled off the production line at Altavista in 2001.

Materials include early corporate records of the Standard Red Cedar Chest Co.; stockholder information of the Lane Co. and later the Bald Knob Furniture Co. that was bought by Lane in 1956; legal materials; files on equipment maintenance, specifications, and design drawings; extensive advertising materials and mailings sent to Lane furniture dealers; and some family-related materials such as applications for funding received by the Lane Foundation, a charitable organization created to provide assistance for the people and institutions of Altavista, VA. The takeover in 1987 severely impacted the residents of Altavista, and the foundation tried to support former workers as much as possible.

A second gift of Lane Co. records came to the VHS a few years after the first group. This addition of papers includes board of directors materials, 1959–1987; financial materials, 1913–1999; plane engineer files, 1930s–1996; Edward Hudson Lane Jr. (son of Lane’s founder) personal papers, 1944–1986; Lane subsidiaries materials, 1925–1992; and employee salary and insurance cards, 1948–2001. Significant is the addition of the papers of Lane Co. president R. Stuart Moore, which document what happened to the company once it left the control of the Lane family in 1987.

- A. H. Robins Co. Records (Mss3 R5535a FA2) (1885–2007). ca. 8,400 items in 21 boxes and 6 oversize folders with over 100 oral history interviews on cassettes and CD with full transcripts. Pharmaceutical company that began in Richmond, VA. Its predecessor was A. H. Robins Apothecary founded by Albert Hartley Robins in 1866. Several generations later, E. Claiborne Robins became the president in 1936. Collection reflects the company’s growth from that time until it was sold to American Home Products in 1989 due to the Dalkon Shield product and the resulting litigation, which forced bankruptcy and purchase. The current company that links back to A. H. Robins is Wyeth. Its best-known products include Robitussin, ChapStick and its Sergeants line of pet products. A. H. Robins is remembered today for its generosity toward its employees. It was said to be one of the two most revered employers in the Richmond area. (The other was Reynolds Metals Co.) Robins’s legacy is also the profound impact of its
related foundation, the Robins Foundation. E. Claiborne Robins and his family foundation have given tremendous donations to the community, especially the University of Richmond, which received 50 million dollars in 1969. Scarcely any major non-profit institution in the Richmond area has not received assistance from the Robins Foundation started by E. Claiborne Robins from the extensive revenues from his company and continued by his descendants.