



Guide to the Wright Machinery Company records, 1943-1989

This collection guide was produced in **2022 Oct.**
This PDF version was created on **April 3, 2026.**

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Background	3
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	5
Names and Subjects	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary

Collection Title:

Wright Machinery Company records, 1943-1989

Creator:

Wright Machinery Company (Durham, NC); Wright, Richard Harvey

Abstract:

Manufacturing firm founded in 1893 in Durham, N.C. that produced machinery for the packaging industry. Collection includes articles, brochures, clippings, correspondence, memorabilia, newsletters, photographs and other materials. Materials touch on business acquisition, company events, employee policies, retirements, staff promotions, stock and other issues. Individuals and companies represented in the collection include ACMA, Emhart, John Thomas Dalton, John L. Moorhead, Rexham, Richard Harvey Wright, Richard Harvey Wright II, and Sperry Rand.

Extent:

3.0 Linear Feet

Language:

Materials in English.

Collection ID:

RL.12028

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1gh96>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Wright Machinery Company records, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Background

Scope and Content

Collection includes articles, brochures, clippings, correspondence, memorabilia, newsletters, photographs and other materials. Materials touch on business acquisition, company events, employee policies, retirements, staff promotions,

stock and other issues. Individuals and companies represented in the collection include ACMA, Emhart, John Thomas Dalton, John L. Moorhead, Rexham, Richard Harvey Wright, Richard Harvey Wright II, and Sperry Rand.

Biographical/Historical

Manufacturing firm founded in 1893 in Durham, N.C. that produced machinery for the packaging industry.

Wright Machinery was founded by Richard Harvey Wright, a former partner in W. Duke and Sons tobacco enterprise. Wright left the Duke firm in 1885 to promote and sell automated tobacco packaging machinery. Wright's Automatic Tobacco Packing Machine Company began in 1893; around 1912 Wright formed a partnership with engineer and inventor John Thomas Dalton and together they formed the Wright-Dalton Machinery Company. Dalton left the firm in 1937; Wright renamed the company the Wright Automatic Machinery Company. During World War II Wright manufactured precision instrumentation for the U.S. Navy; during this time the Sperry Rand Corporation acquired a partial interest, and eventually gained full control of the company in 1949. In 1967 a group of Durham area investors bought the company back from Sperry and renamed it the Wright Machinery Company. Wright merged with the Rexham Corporation in 1978 and became a subsidiary of the larger company. Wright was subsequently acquired by the Emhart Packing Group in 1985, then sold to Italian firm ACMA Group in 1987, which closed the Durham factory in 1989. In 2012 the Wright building at 915 Holloway Street in Durham was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places as an example of Modern Movement industrial architecture.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the Rubenstein Library's Citations, Permissions, and Copyright guide.

Acquisition Information

The Wright Machinery Company records were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1997 and 2001.

Processing Information

Processed by Richard Collier, Oct. 2022;

Accessions described in this collection guide: 1997-0105, 2001-0054, 2001-0217.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Material

Related materials may be found in the following Rubenstein Library collections:

Durham Chamber of Commerce records;

J. Walter Thompson Company. Brouillard Communications vertical files;

J. Walter Thompson Company. Competitive advertisements;

Richard Harvey Wright papers.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- Packaging

Collection Inventory

10th anniversary, 1977	Box 1
Brochures, 1958-1982	Box 1
Bulk and Dribble newsletter, 1981-1983	Box 1
Clippings, 1967-1978	Box 1
Clippings, 1973-1989	Oversize-folder 1
Common stock, 1967-1976	Box 1
Company history notes, 1978-1988	Box 1
Correspondence, etc., 1967-1989	Box 1
Event announcements, 1977-1986	Box 1
It can be done: A biographical sketch of John Thomas Dalton, approximately 1970	Box 1
Job description--Secretary to Manager, approximately 1970	Box 1
John L. Moorhead--50th anniversary book, 1943	Box 1

Memorabilia--Paperweight, pins, tie clasp, approximately 1960-1970s	Box 3
Memorabilia--Staff work coat, approximately 1960	Box 4
North Carolina Citizens Association--We the People publication, 1967, 1978	Box 1
Physical Description: 2 folders	
Obituaries and memorials, 1979-1989	Box 1
Photographs of company events, facilities, retirements, etc., 1957-1988	Box 3
Physical Description: 16 folders	
Promotions and retirements, 1974-1986	Box 1
Rexham acquisition, 1978	Box 1
Rexham employee newsletter, 1978-1984	Box 1
Wright News newsletter, 1957-1963	Box 2
