



Guide to the Richard Harvey Wright Papers, 1835-1980 and undated

This collection guide was produced in **2011**.

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: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Background	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Names and Subjects	6
Collection Inventory	6
Correspondence Series, 1873-1941 and undated	6
Legal Papers Series, 1879-1949 and undated	9
Printed Material Series, 1835-1945 and undated	10
Financial Papers Series, 1890-1950 and undated	10
Memorabilia Series, 1944-1945 and undated	10
Manuscript Volumes Series, 1875-1943 and undated	11
1987 Accession, 1928-1980 and undated	12
Oversize Material	13

Summary

Collection Title:

Richard Harvey Wright papers, 1835-1980 and undated

Creator:

Wright, Richard Harvey

Abstract:

Richard Harvey Wright (1894-1980) was a businessman of Durham, N.C., and founder of Wright Machinery Company. Wright Machinery merged with Sperry Rand Corporation on 29 March 1957. Collection dates from 1870-1980 and comprises correspondence, 1870-1941; legal papers; printed matter; business papers; financial papers; and clippings relating to Wright's business interests, particularly the Wright Machinery Company of Durham, N.C., manufacturer of packaging for tobacco products and various other kinds of commodities. There is much information on the economic history of Durham and the development of the tobacco industry. Volumes in the collection include financial records and letterpress books for business correspondence. Later additions comprise business correspondence; financial ledgers and statements; machinery licensing, leasing, and loan agreements; and legal documents of the Wright Machinery Company. Also includes one framed oil portrait of Wright, signed "Freeman. 1922."

Extent:

151.5 Linear Feet

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.01415

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1wb2j>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Richard Harvey Wright Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Background

Scope and Content

Collection (232,267 items; dated 1870-1980) comprises extensive files of correspondence dating from 1873-1941; legal papers; printed matter; many business and financial papers; and clippings relating to Wright's business interests, particularly the Wright Machinery Company of Durham, N.C., manufacturer of packaging for tobacco products and various other kinds of commodities. There is much information on the economic history of Durham and the development of the tobacco industry. Volumes in the collection include financial records and many letterpress books for business correspondence.

Additions (4-27-79) (2002-086) comprise business correspondence; machinery licensing, leasing, and loan agreements; and legal documents (2101 items, dated 1941-1967) of the Wright Machinery Company. Also includes one framed oil portrait of Wright, signed "Freeman. 1922."

Addition (2005-108) (65 items, 1.1 lin. ft.; dated 1877-1905) comprises one letter book; one financial ledger; a judgment appeal; general contractor reports and statements; rental statements; and checks.

Two accessions (97-087 and 97-105) containing chiefly print materials from Wright Machinery Company, including company newsletters, were separated from the Wright Papers and placed in the Wright Machinery Company Records collection.

Addition (2021-0025. 1.1 lin. ft.; dated 1835-1878) contains account and day books from Tally Ho and Durham, North Carolina. There is also a volume of "The Methodist Protestant" newspaper and "Gram's unrivaled family atlas of the world".

Biographical/Historical

Richard Harvey Wright (1894-1980) was a businessman and native of Durham, North Carolina. Founder of Wright Machinery Company. Wright Machinery merged with Sperry Rand Corporation on March 29, 1957. President of Allenton Company and Wright Real Estate, both family companies. Collection includes papers of his uncle, Richard H. Wright (1851-1929), partner of W. Duke and Son Tobacco Company and owner of Durham Traction Company and Durham Telephone Company.

[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: <http://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 copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The Richard Harvey Wright Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1979, 2002, 2005, and 2021.

Processing Information

Processed by Rubenstein Library staff.

Accession 2021-0025 processed by Laurin Penland, April 2021.

Encoded by Carrie Mills, April 2011

Accessions 4-27-1979, 2002-086, 2005-108. 2021-0025 were merged into one collection, described in this finding aid.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Material

[Wright Machinery Company Records, 1943-1989](#) (most print materials were originally accessions 97-087 and 97-105 from Wright Papers) Rubenstein Library, Duke University

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- Tobacco industry -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Industries -- North Carolina
- Durham (N.C.) -- Economic conditions
- Durham (N.C.) -- History
- Business records -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Sperry Rand Corporation
- Wright Machinery Company (Durham, NC)

Collection Inventory

Correspondence Series, 1873-1941 and undated

Physical Description: 245 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Additional correspondence (bound letterbooks from 1888-1905, 1928-1929) can be found in box 305.

1873-1887 Aug.	Box 1
1887 Sept.-1889 Apr.	Box 2
1889 May-1890 Nov.	Box 3
1890 Dec.-1891 Apr. 6	Box 4
1891 Apr. 7-1891 Aug. 26	Box 5

Guide to the Richard Harvey Wright Papers, 1835-1980 and undated

1891 Aug. 27-1892 Apr. 11	Box 6
1892 Apr. 12-1892 Dec.	Box 7
1893 Jan.-1894 Jan. 8	Box 8-9
1894 Jan. 9-1894 Nov.	Box 10
1894 Dec.-1895 July	Box 11
1895 Aug.-1896 June	Box 12
1896 July-1897 Jan.	Box 13
1897 Feb.-1898 Feb. 20	Box 14-15
1898 Feb. 21-1899 Feb.	Box 16-17
1899 Mar.-1900 Feb. 14	Box 18-20
1900 Feb. 15-1901 Feb. 8	Box 21-23
1901 Feb. 9-1901 Dec.	Box 24-27
1902 Jan.-1903 Mar. 11	Box 28-30
1903 Mar. 12-1904 Jan.	Box 31-33
1904 Feb.-1905 Jan. 20	Box 34-36
1905 Jan. 21-1906 Jan.	Box 37-40
1906 Feb.-1906 Oct.	Box 41-43
1906 Oct. 30-1907 June	Box 44
1907 July-1908 Jan.	Box 45-46
1908 Jan. 23-1908 Dec.	Box 47-50
1909 Jan.-1909 Dec. 15	Box 51-54
1909 Dec. 16-1911 Jan. 24	Box 55-59
1911 Jan. 25-1911 Dec.	Box 60-64
1912 Jan.-1912 July	Box 65-69

Guide to the Richard Harvey Wright Papers, 1835-1980 and undated

1912 Aug.-1912 Dec.	Box 70-73
1913 Jan.-1913 May	Box 74-78
1913 June-1914 Jan. 18	Box 79-83
1914 Jan. 19-1914 Nov.	Box 84-90
1915 Jan.-1915 June 21	Box 91-94
1915 June 22-1916 Jan.	Box 95-99
1916 Feb.-1916 Dec.	Box 100-107
1917 Jan.-1917 May 23	Box 108-111
1917 May 24-1918 Jan. 3	Box 112-115
1918 Jan. 4-1919 Jan.	Box 116-122
1919 Feb.-1919 Dec.	Box 123-128
1920 Jan.-1921 Jan.	Box 129-136
1921 Jan. 12-1922 Jan.	Box 137-143
1921 Apr. 20-1921 May	Box 144
1922 Feb.-1922 Dec.	Box 145-150
1923 Jan.-1923 Dec.	Box 151-156
1924 Jan.-1925 Jan.	Box 157-162
1925 Feb.-1925 Feb.	Box 163-167
1925 Dec. 28-1926 June	Box 168-171
1926 July-1926 Dec.	Box 172-175
1926 Dec. 28-1927 July	Box 176-179
1927 July 14-1928 Jan. 20	Box 180-183
1928 Jan. 21-1929 Jan.	Box 184-189
1929 Jan. 15-1930 Jan.	Box 190-195

1930 Jan. 9-1930 Nov.	Box 196-201
1930 Dec.-1931 Dec.	Box 202-208
1932 Jan.-1933 Jan.	Box 209-214
1933 Jan. 11-1934 Jan.	Box 215-221
1934 Feb.-1935 Mar.	Box 222-225
1935 Apr.-1935 Dec.	Box 226-228
1936 Jan.-1937 Jan.	Box 229-233
1937 Jan. 12-1937 Dec.	Box 234-238
1938 Jan.-1941 Dec.	Box 239-242
Undated	Box 243-245

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Legal Papers Series, 1879-1949 and undated

Physical Description: 11 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Additional legal papers can be found in box 270.

1879-1893	Box 246
1894-1901	Box 247
1901-1906	Box 248
1910-1915	Box 249
1915-1919	Box 250
1919-1925	Box 251
1926-1936	Box 252
1937-1949	Box 253
Undated	Box 254

Undated estate papers	Box 255
Patents, circa 1930	Box 265

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Printed Material Series, 1835-1945 and undated

Physical Description: 12 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Series includes a variety of printed matter including machinery advertisements and instructional guides, military recruitment materials, and international machinery catalogues. Additional printed materials can be found in box 272.

Print materials	Box 256-263
Print materials	Box 302-303
Gram, George F., "Gram's unrivaled family atlas of the world", 1883	Box 306
"The Methodist Protestant" newspaper vol. 2, 1835-1836	Box 307

Physical Description: 1 volume

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Financial Papers Series, 1890-1950 and undated

Physical Description: 37 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Series contains all financial records for Wright's companies, including Durham Traction Company, Wright Real Estate, Wright Machinery Company, and Allenton Company. Additional financial papers (financial record books) can be found in box 304. Box 269 also contains photos.

Financial papers, circa 1920	Box 264
Financial papers	Box 266-301

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Memorabilia Series, 1944-1945 and undated

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Series includes cigarettes boxes, photographs, blue prints, and calendars.

Collection of vintage cigarette boxes	Box 304
Oversize photographs, blueprints, calendars	Box 305

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Manuscript Volumes Series, 1875-1943 and undated

Physical Description: 174 volumes

Scope and Contents note

Series includes bound volumes consisting of correspondence, accounts, and journals.

Letterpress books, 1888-1934	Volume 6172-6257
Account books, 1901-1933	Volume 6258-6259
Address books, 1917-1927 and undated	Volume 6260-6261
Album of parts of four-pocket stamper, undated	Volume 6262-6265
Durham Traction Company Auditor's Report, 1907-1911	Volume 6266-6268A
Cash books, 1889-1932	Volume 6269-6274
Day books, 1893-1929	Volume 6275-6278
Journal, 1929-1932	Volume 6279
Day book, 1922-1923	Volume 6279A
Index, undated	Volume 6280
Invoice books, 1901-1922	Volume 6281-6284
Journals, 1889-1943	Volume 6285-6298
Invoice book, 1901-1922	Volume 6299
Land book, 1891	Volume 6300

Ledgers, 1890-1934	Volume 6301-6320
Index, undated	Volume 6321
List of patents, 1892-1909	Volume 6322
Economy Packing Machine Company minutes, 1898	Volume 6323
Order book, 1910-1919	Volume 6324
Record books, 1887-1930	Volume 6325-6329
Rent books, 1906-1933	Volume 6330-6336
Stock certificate Book, 1887	Volume 6337
Time book, 1890-1891	Volume 6338
Deeds book, 1891-1892	Volume 6339
Cash book, Tally Ho, North Carolina, 1875-1880	Box 308
Index	Box 308
Day book, Tally Ho, North Carolina, 1876-1877	Box 309
Day book, Tally Ho, North Carolina, 1877-1878	Box 309
Account book, Durham, North Carolina, 1875	Box 309
Account book, 1875-1878	Box 309

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

1987 Accession, 1928-1980 and undated

Physical Description: 3 boxes

Scope and Contents note

Addition (1-21-87) is an unprocessed collection of company records grouped by topic. Personal records in Box 3 include correspondence between Wright and his wife, Helen, military papers for J. D. Wright, and obituary articles for Wright and family.

Company records	Box 1-2
-----------------	---------

Company records Box 3

Personal papers Box 3

Physical Description: 1 folder

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Oversize Material

Physical Description: 1 folder

Oversize Material Box 3 > Folder 1

[Return to Table of Contents](#)