

R. P. Richardson Collection

- Repository:** Rockingham Co. Historical Collections
Gerald B. James Library
Rockingham Community College
P. O. Box 38
Wentworth, NC 27375
- Title:** R. P. Richardson Collection
- Accession No.:** 80-010
- Extent:** 19 boxes
- Provenance:** The R. P. Richardson Papers were discovered in a warehouse formerly owned by the Richardson's and purchased by Chase Bag Company. The papers were scattered, poorly stored, partially looted, and the company was preparing to discard them. Phil Brooks of Chase Bag contracted V. Siler Rothrock and Bob W. Carter of the county historical society. Dr. G. Irvin Richardson, a physician of Reidsville, was contacted and the removal and donation of the papers to the Rockingham County Historical Collections at Rockingham Community College were arranged. The unsorted collection arrived in 25 boxes. Further material of R. P. Richardson Associates is in the care of its agent, Billy Clifton, a realtor of Reidsville. After sorting, six boxes of cancelled checks and tax information from the 1960s were returned to R. P. Richardson Associates.
- Inclusive Dates:** 1855-1967
- Subject Headings:** Business and industry – Rockingham County (N. C.)
North Carolina State Mental Health Board
Nu-Shine Manufacturing Co.
Old North State Tobacco Factory
R. P. Richardson, Jr. & Co.
Redd, Edmond Madison
Rich-Cog Mining Co.
Richardson, Anna Jane
Richardson, Edmund Ernest
Richardson, James Watlington
Richardson, Margaret Isabelle
Richardson, Marion School

Richardson, Mary Elizabeth
Richardson, Robert Payne, Sr., 1820-1909
Richardson, Robert Payne, Jr., 1855-1922
Richardson, Robert Payne, III, 1897-1967
Richardson, Sallie Anne
Rockingham Mining & Investment Co.
Tobacco industry – Reidsville (N. C.)
Tobacco industry – Rockingham County (N. C.)
Watlington, Mary Elizabeth
Watt, Bettie, d.1882
Watt, Pinckney, b.1877
Watt, Margaret Elizabeth
Wright, Elizabeth N.
Wright, Nathan

- Items Separated:** 19 boxes plus some oversized items stored separately
- Related Collections:** Richardson-Millner Collection 95-033
Watlington Family Papers 84-040
- Preferred Citation:** *R. P. Richardson Collection. 80-010. Rockingham Co. Historical Collections, Gerald B. James Library, Rockingham Community College.*
- Descriptive Note:** The collection reflects the various family business enterprises from 1855-1967 and may be the most important collection of business papers available in the county. The bulk of the material consists primarily of the business papers of R. P. Richardson III and is concentrated in the periods 1925-1965. In the collection are voluminous business correspondence and some personal correspondence; genealogical papers; miscellaneous receipts and bills; ledgers; deeds; tenants' accounts and records and correspondence relating to Tennessee lands, mining, Belmont development, Nu-Shine Polish Company, local textile mills, R. P. Richardson Associates, Reidsville Presbyterian Church, tobacco manufacturing and agriculture, local stocks and bonds, minutes and correspondence of the State Mental Health Board. The documents have been cleaned and sorted into general categories. Cleaning and sorting was completed as an Eagle Scout project of Tom Butler, Troop 701, who was aided by Bob Carter, Si Rothrock, David Meador, Will Butler, and Lindley Butler. Fay Talley has typed for the project.
- Biographical Sketch:** Four generations of the R. P. Richardson family have been important to the life of Reidsville and Rockingham County. Robert Payne Richardson I (1820-1909), who was a pioneer settler of Reidsville,

married Elizabeth N. Wright in 1842, daughter of Nathan Wright, and built their home on the west bank of Little Troublesome Creek across from the house of his father-in-law. The Richardson home is now the oldest extant structure in Reidsville. There he operated a store and a tobacco factory and farmed. After the death of his first wife in 1850, R. P. married Mary Elizabeth Watlington the next year. From the first marriage there were three daughters: Sallie Anne, Mary Elizabeth, and Margaret Isabelle, and this second family consisted of three sons and two daughters: James Watlington (died young), Robert Payne, Anna Jane, Edmund Ernest, and Marion School. Sallie and Margaret were the first and second wives of Col. Andrew J. Boyd, a prominent Reidsville attorney, industrialist, and banker. Edmund migrated to Louisiana and acquired large plantations in the state and Mississippi. The Richardson's were members of Bethesda Presbyterian Church (Caswell Co., NC) and charter members of the Reidsville Presbyterian Church (1875). A second home which is still standing was built in the late 1860s near the original homeplace.

R. P. Richardson, II (1855-1922) was educated locally and in Bingham School (Orange Co., NC) and joined his father's tobacco and mercantile business in 1873. In 1877 he formed R. P. Richardson, Jr. and Company for the manufacture of smoking tobacco, launching a new and successful label – "Old North State". Following the lead of Richardson, other local manufacturers who were primarily producing chewing tobacco, switched to smoking tobacco, and by 1900 Reidsville was second only to Durham in the production of smoking tobacco. As early as 1890, Richardson erected a five-story factory near the railroad, although it burned in 1917. It was partially rebuilt and continued in the family until 1926 when it was sold to Brown and Williamson of Winston-Salem. In 1912 a third family home, Belmont, was constructed in the neo-classical style to complete the finest assemblage of domestic architecture in Reidsville. Other family enterprises included acquisition of vast acreage in Tennessee, gold mining in Montgomery Co., NC and farming. R. P. Richardson, Jr. married Bettie Watt (d. 1882) in 1877, and they had a son Pinckney Watt. In 1892 he married Margaret M. Watt, the sister of his first wife, and she had three children – Robert Payne, Margaret Elizabeth (Mrs. Nathan Womack), and Sarah Dillard (died young).

R. P. Richardson, III (1897-1967) was educated in the local schools and Davidson College, graduating in 1918. After a year of service in the U. S. Marine Corps, he entered tobacco manufacturing with his father. When the company was sold in 1926, he went with Nu-Shine Manufacturing Company, a shoe polish factory, and served as company president from 1927–1938. This company had been founded in 1919 and was merged with American Products Company in 1938. Additional business interests of R. P. Richardson were the extensive Tennessee tracts (totaling 33,000 acres), Rich-Cog Mine

and Rockingham Mining and Investment Company, considerable agricultural interests in Rockingham County, suburban development of the Belmont section of Reidsville, and a holding company, R. P. Richardson Associates. He was active in Democratic party politics and served on the State Board of Mental Health (1948-1967). He married Lucy Irvin in (?) and they had three children – Robert Payne, George Irvin, and (?)

Lindley S. Butler

Contents:

Categories:

Agriculture:

16 books, deposits and receipts 1948-1966

12 books, tobacco sales 1937-1965

10 books, tenants' accounts 1957-1967

Miscellaneous receipts and bills, 1 foot

Books and Reports:

14 volumes, development plans, subdivision and highway plans, Davidson College, soil and water conservation

Maps, Plats, Blueprints:

*74 located in 11 manila tubes in archive office

*See R. P. Richardson Collection: Inventory: "Maps, Plats & Blueprints"

Mining:

1 letter, 1 journal, 2 files – correspondence, cancelled checks, stock, incorporation papers

Miscellaneous legal papers:

1 file – bonds, notes, indentures, deeds correspondence, 1855-1914

Nu-Shine:

3 files – correspondence, stock, checks and receipts

State Mental Health Board:

6 feet - correspondence, minutes, periodicals, reports, 1947-1967

Tennessee lands:

3 files – maps, correspondence, 1939-1948

Tobacco Manufacturing:

1 file – correspondence, cancelled checks

Textiles:

1 file – correspondence, stock

Unclassified:

4 feet – correspondence, business and personal
74 shorthand notebooks, 23 legal pad notes, 5 notebooks and
appointment books, 7 photographs of Belmont

* See “Maps, Plats & Blueprints” (Tubes 1-10) and “Diplomas &
Licenses” (Tube 1)

Maps, Plats & Blueprints:

Tube # 1 Blueprint
Fragile!!! Do Not Remove

Tube # 2 Gold Mines

Montgomery County, NC Gold Mine
Russell Gold Mining Company

Tube # 3 House Plans, Etc. Reidsville, NC

R. P. Richardson Homeplace 1909
Unidentified House (Terry)
Belmont Mansion Electrical Plans
Richardson Stables (by Barton)

Tube # 4 Miscellaneous

‘Big Cut Through Section R-3’
Camp Butner 1947

Tube # 5 Miscellaneous Properties. Reidsville, NC

Richardson Properties 1930
Richardson Drive, Extension 1937
Richardson – Sands Properties
Morehead & E. Market Street Properties 1951
Richardson Factory

Tube # 6 Miscellaneous Properties. Rockingham
County., NC

Leaksville Section. Tax Map
J. W. Corum Estate 1946

Tube # 7 Public Utilities. Reidsville, NC

Water Works Improvements 1936

Water Works Station Site 1939

Tube # 8 School Sites. Reidsville, NC

School Site Survey (Colonial & Sherwood Drs.) 1964
High School property Aerial Views
Middle School Site 1964
High School Site 1959

Tube # 9 Subdivisions. Reidsville, NC

Belmont 1952

Tube # 10 Subdivisions. Reidsville, NC

Oak Hills 1965
South Belmont undated
Belmont Forest & Woodland Park 1960

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**ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, NC MAPS, PLATS, BLUEPRINTS
MISCELLANEOUS**

Leaksville Historical Map. WilsonMiller Maps.
Reproductions. 1912

Mulberry Island Plat 1913

Rockingham – Caswell NC Railroad 1907

Soil Survey Map. 1977

Diplomas & Licenses:

Tube # 1

Diplomas Susie Elizabeth Richardson
Salem Academy 1898

Diploma George Irvin Richardson
Davidson College

Medical Degree George Irvin Richardson
Doctor of Medicine
06 Jun 1955
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC

State Medical License

George Irvin Richardson
State of North Carolina
23 Jun 1955

Genealogical List of Folders:

1. Busick Family
2. Gunn-Buchanan-Stevens Family
3. Millner Family
4. Richardson, Col. Edmund. 1818-1886
5. Richardson Family
6. Richardson Family Tree
7. Withers Family