

**Roanoke Public Libraries  
Virginia Room  
Roanoke Drug Company Collection**

**Collection Description:**

**Repository:** Roanoke Public Libraries, Virginia Room

**Accession Number:** 2005.9.13

**Title:** Roanoke Drug Company Collection

**Physical Characteristics:** 1 record storage box and 1 small storage box

**Donated by:** Richard and Carol Conway

**Arrangement:** Documents are arranged alphabetically by document type with larger items stored at the end of the files. Artifacts are stored in Box 2.

**Creator:** unknown

**Reproduction Restrictions:** No known restrictions on publication. Virginia Room copy fees apply.

**Processor:** Dyron Knick  
Lynsey Allie, June 16, 2014

**Introduction:**

The Roanoke Drug Company collection contains various articles related to Roanoke Drug Company and the various companies related to it, both before and after the company was known as Roanoke Drug Company. Interoffice memos, letters, and newsletters make up a large percentage of the collection. The rest of the collection is comprised of stock ledgers, photos, office directories, ephemera and artifacts.

**Biographical Note:**

Roanoke Drug Company has a long and complex history. Commercial druggists companies boomed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One such company that began during this time was Benton, Myers, & Company formed in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1884, Benton Myers merged with the Hall-Van Gorder Company. Meanwhile, in Roanoke, the Bowles-Robertson Drug Company had set up shop in downtown on Salem Avenue. In late 1916, the name would change from Bowles-Robertson to Roanoke Drug Company. It would remain Roanoke Drug Company until 1929, when drug conglomerate, McKesson-Robbins would take over after merging with Hall-Van Gorder the previous year, in 1928. Many of the records have Dorothy Layman's name on them. Ms. Layman began working at Bowles-Robertson during her early 20s. She later married and became Dorothy Cline, as some of the memos indicate. She was the only female accountant and office manager the company ever employed<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://books.google.com/books?id=UJjP\\_T4h3\\_AC&pg=PA148&lpg=PA148&dq=%22roanoke+drug+company%22+virginia&source=bl&ots=TeyBXk86KC&sig=JRqBiqrpE63h7gsczLridQRAYU8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=h-WZU\\_HyFaTNsQTK44BI&ved=0CC4Q6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22roanoke%20drug%20company%22%20virginia&f=true](http://books.google.com/books?id=UJjP_T4h3_AC&pg=PA148&lpg=PA148&dq=%22roanoke+drug+company%22+virginia&source=bl&ots=TeyBXk86KC&sig=JRqBiqrpE63h7gsczLridQRAYU8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=h-WZU_HyFaTNsQTK44BI&ved=0CC4Q6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22roanoke%20drug%20company%22%20virginia&f=true)

**Scope and Content:**

- The collection makes up 1 record storage box and 1 small storage box.
- The numerous articles in this collection are typical 8.5"x11" typed memos, newspaper clippings, 8"x10" black and white photos, 11"x14" stock ledger books, a hardcover book containing meeting minutes, small office directory booklets, and other random artifacts like toiletry travel kits.
- The majority of the collection ranges from approximately 1916 through the early 1960s.

**Container List:****Box 1 of 2**

- Folder 1- Bowles-Robertson meeting memos
- Folder 2- "Debits and Credits" accountant newsletters from 1949-1952
- Folder 3- black and white group photos from 1959 and 1965, names of employees written on the back of photos
- Folder 4- Roanoke Drug Co. insurance policy
- Folder 5- interoffice memos, dispersed through 1934 through 1964
- Folder 6- McKesson and Robbins employee report from 1942
- Folder 7- miscellaneous ephemera from various drug companies
- Folder 8- newspaper articles on related drug companies
- Folder 9- office directories from 1914-1937
- Folder 10- office directories from 1939-1948
- Folder 11- Ohio State Pharmaceutical Association Meeting book from 1893
- Folder 12- Stocks Issued book
- Folder 13- Bowles-Robertson stock ledger book
- Folder 14- Roanoke Drug Co. stock ledger book

**Box 2 of 2**

- Tawn Lightweights Travel Kit - contains travel sized toiletries
- Tawn Shaving set – contains shaving implements
- Mennen's Centennial Collection Aftershave, celebrating 100 years from 1878-1978
- Tawn Ladies Travel Kit – holds travel sized toiletries