

**The Filson Historical Society**

**T. P. Taylor and Co.  
Records, 1900-1990**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections.

Size of Collection:

1 cubic foot, 1 vol., 1 ovsz. folder

Location Number:

Mss./BB/T246

**T. P. Taylor and Co.  
Records, 1900-1990**

**Scope and Content Note**

The T.P. Taylor and Co., (Taylor Drug) Records document the history of this drug store chain in Louisville, Kentucky and in southern Indiana through newspaper clippings, publications, scrapbooks, ephemera, and a minor amount of business correspondence and documents. Ephemeral materials include promotional circulars and menus from the soda fountains located within the drugstores; family materials include trust and inheritance documents concerning the company and its inheritors, a draft registration card from World War I, ration cards from World War II, as well as an honorary diploma from the University of Louisville in 1948. Newspaper clippings within the collection document the openings of various stores throughout the Louisville area and Kentucky, events and activities concerning the presidents of Taylor Drug, and generally document the progression of the Taylor Drug Store chain, notably through the company newsletter, *Taylor Talk*.

***Separation Note:***

Photographs donated with the collection were transferred to The Filson Photograph Collection, and are available as the Taylor Drug Company Collection, 008PC18.2.

## **T. P. Taylor and Co. Records, 1900-1990**

### **Historical Note**

The Taylor Drug chain was founded in 1879 by Thomas Pickett Taylor (T. P. Taylor) of Louisville, Kentucky. Taylor purchased the store of A. Delime in the Portland section of Louisville and opened two additional stores downtown shortly thereafter. By 1903, the Taylor Drug chain had joined with a leading group of druggists to form the United Drug Company, or "Rexall." Both of Taylor's sons, Thomas Pickett Taylor, Jr. and Horace Taylor, became registered pharmacists and were working with their father by 1926. Stock at the early Taylor Drug stores consisted mostly of prescription drugs and patent medicine as well as cigars, liquor, and cosmetics. All of the Taylor Drug Stores contained soda fountains.

After T. P. Taylor's death in 1928, his sons inherited the business and sold the drug stores to the Whalen Drug Company of New York. During the Great Depression, Whalen went in to receivership and the Taylors regained four of the stores in lieu of back rent, as they still owned some of the buildings. In 1933, Horace entered politics and T. P. Taylor, Jr. became president of the company. His son Phillip joined the company in 1934, but was killed in action in World War II. In order to keep the chain within the family, T. P. Taylor, Jr. hired his son-in-law, William H. Harrison.

By 1953, when T. P. Taylor, Jr. died, the chain had grown to fifteen stores. Harrison became president and served in that capacity for twenty-five years. Under his leadership the chain grew from fifteen to forty-four stores in eight Kentucky cities and six Indiana communities. Harrison's son, William H. Harrison, Jr., became a pharmacist and senior Vice President and Director of Real Estate. In 1978, William H. Harrison, Sr. became chairman of the board and chief executive officer and the presidency went to Donald Patterson, the first company president not related to the Taylor family. In 1988, Taylor Drugs purchased the Otto Drug chain, overtaking the Walgreen Company as the largest drug-store chain in the Louisville area.

For many years Taylor Drug was known as the "home folks" drug store. The stores were among the first to offer discount prices to senior citizens, to use child-proof medicine bottle caps, and to offer "patient profile" records of all prescriptions ordered. Until the 1960s, all of the drug stores had soda fountains. In the 1970s, the soda fountains were removed and not built into new stores as the company followed the trend of self-service. The stock at the stores diversified over time to include prescription eyeglasses, picnic supplies, groceries, cosmetics and makeup, and a broader selection of what had previously been offered.

In the 1980s, with the emergence of managed health care and third-party control over pharmaceutical prices, profits on prescription medicine decreased and locally based chains such as Taylor Drugs could no longer compete as they had in the past. By 1996 the chain had shrunk to thirty-four stores and was sold to Rite-Aid.

**T.P. Taylor and Co.  
Records, 1900-1990**

**Folder List**

**Box 1:**

- Folder 1: Business Documents, 1914-1983
- Folder 2: Business Ephemera, 1953, 1979, undated. [*menus, programs, publications, advertisements Thomas P. Taylor, Jr. Death Tribute Book, prescription bag*]
- Folder 3: Taylor-Harrison Trust and Inheritance Documents and Correspondence, 1964-1969
- Folder 4: Taylor-Harrison Family Ephemera, 1918-1969 [*T. P. Taylor's University of Louisville diploma from 1948, ration cards, 1942; 1918 draft registration, family-related newsclippings*]
- Folder 5: Business and Pharmaceutical Circulars and Publications, 1908-1982
- Folder 6: Newspaper Clippings, 1905-1918
- Folder 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1922, 1928-1929
- Folder 8: Newspaper Clippings, 1932-1936
- Folder 9: Newspaper Clippings, 1948 [*death of W. B. Harrison, former Louisville mayor*]
- Folder 10: Newspaper Clippings, 1950-1956
- Folder 11: Newspaper Clippings, 1963, 1969
- Folder 12: Newspaper Clippings, 1977, 1979
- Folder 13: Newspaper Clippings, 1980, 1983, 1987-1988
- Folder 14: Newspaper Clippings, 1990
- Folder 15: Newspaper Clippings, undated
- Folder 16-17: Newspaper Clippings from Scrapbook, 1900-1980s
- Folder 18: Scrapbook on history of Taylor Drugs, 1976 (focuses on 1976; removed from binder)
- Folder 19: Miscellaneous, 1902-1988 [*pharmacy publications, Photostats of Courier-Journal (Oversized) pages, large hand-drawn card from staff, architectural plan for display/storefront dated 1937; ad for different locations of Taylor Drug Stores.*]
- Volume 20: *Taylor Talk* Scrapbook, circa 1950s-1960s [*compiled by an employee and his family, donated to company in 1984, includes employee newspaper (Taylor Talk) and corporate correspondence, newsclippings, photographs.*]

**T.P. Taylor and Co.  
Records, 1900-1990**

**Subject Headings**

Advertising – Kentucky.  
Business enterprises – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Chain stores – Kentucky.  
Drugstores – Kentucky.  
Harrison, William B. (William Benjamin), 1889-1948  
Harrison, William H. (William Heyward), 1913-1990  
Menus – Kentucky – Louisville.  
National Association of Chain Drug Stores (U.S.)  
Personnel management – Handbooks, manuals, etc.  
Pharmaceutical services – Kentucky.  
Pharmacists – Kentucky.  
Soda fountains – Kentucky.  
Stores, Retail – Kentucky.  
Taylor, T. P., Jr. (Thomas Pickett)  
*Taylor Talk*

## Mellon Survey

T.P. Taylor and Co.  
Records, 1900-1990

Approximately 1.5 cu. ft.

### **Title/Ownership:**

- **Excellent** – No restriction as to access or use.

### **Category 1: Subject Content Interest**

- **Rating: 5**
- The collection offers a substantial amount of newspaper clippings and advertisement material concerning the Taylor Drug Company throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also included in the collection are business documents and correspondence as well as legal documents concerning the business properties and inheritance and yearly profits. Other documents within the collection include employee orientation materials, promotion notices, and announcements.

### **Category 2: Subject Quality of Documentation**

- **Rating: 4**
- Newspaper clippings in this collection document the various openings and acquisitions of the Taylor Drug Company during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other documents, such as the business and legal correspondence and employee circulars provide documentation of the organization of the company from the internal perspective. Numerous advertisements run in various Louisville newspapers and in fliers document the various promotions run and give perspective on the increase in costs of various goods and services.

### **Category 3: Physical Arrangement**

- **Rating: 2**
- Some of the documents in the collection had been foldered but were not arranged. The bulk of the collection was stored together in boxes, with no particular order.

### **Category 4: Physical Condition**

- **Rating: 3**
- The collection is in good shape for the most part. However, some of the pages in the scrapbooks are torn and the documents have come unglued. Some of the older newspaper clippings are beginning to fall apart.

### **Category 5: Related Materials**

- **Rating: 4**
- Materials in this collection provide researchers with excellent insight into the early drugstore chain, its expansion and its changes over time. Promotional ads and business correspondence provide insight into the life of the business and measures taken to remain successful and profitable with the changing times.