



ArchivesSpace

Peoples Drug Collection

An inventory of Peoples Drug Collection at DC Public Library

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 24, 2021.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC

peoples.archive@dc.gov

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Summary Information

Repository:	People's Archive, MLK Library
Creator:	Peoples Drug Stores, inc.
Title:	Peoples Drug Collection
ID:	127
Date [inclusive]:	1907-1989
Physical Description:	0.25 Linear feet
Physical Description:	1 Boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

Peoples Drug was founded in 1905 by Malcolm G. Gibbs (1877-1944) in Alexandria, Virginia. Shortly after, Gibbs went into business with a broker named Howard W. Silsby, and opened the first District location at 824 7th Street, NW. By 1909, Peoples Drug outgrew its small storefront, and moved to a spacious multi-storied building at the intersection of 7th and K Streets, NW, situated on the southeast corner of Mount Vernon Square. As described in The Washington Post, the new store was perceived as innovative for its wide variety of goods offered, as a "department drug store in which the stock ranges from the simplest drug compounds to teas, coffees, and the rarest of perfumes." In 1912, Peoples Drug opened its second location at 7th and E Streets, NW. Two more stores were added four years later, including at 7th and M Streets NW, and at 14th and U Streets, NW. After this success, Peoples Drug took over the W. S. Thompson Drugstore at 15th and G Streets, NW. Thompson's was perceived as a more sophisticated establishment than Peoples Drug, advertising itself as the "pharmacy of the Presidents," as it served the staff and workers of the White House. It took several years for the two businesses to work out their professional differences. In 1922, Peoples Drug began opening stores in the city's wealthier neighborhoods. More stores would be added at a steady rate for subsequent decades. Like other retailers, Gibbs pursued furnishing his stores with hyper-kinetic advertisements. When the new Peoples Drug store at 13th and F Streets, NW opened in 1927, it was electrified with over two miles of wiring. The external signs consisted of raised opal letters with flashing amber borders, composed of 225 individual light bulbs, improving its visibility in the process. By 1970, Peoples Drug had over 252 stores operating in the District, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina,

Florida, New York, and New Jersey. That year there were 5,500 employees, with sales of \$220 million and profits of \$1.87 million. By 1975, Peoples Drug had grown to 500 stores. Later in the year, the chain was purchased by the Toledo, Ohio based Lane Drug. The new company retained the Peoples Drug name, and included Lane Drug, Schuman Drug, Dynamic Druv, Health Mart, Reed Drug, and Lee Drug. Lane Drug president Sheldon W. "Bud" Fantle (1923-1996) took over the presidency of the Peoples Drug chain and focused on improving its merchandising, and general customer service policies. After decades of success, Peoples Drug began to experience changes during the late 1970s. Founder Malcolm Gibbs died in 1944, and, while continuing to expand, the chain lost its dynamism. Large grocery retail chains such as Giant and Safeway had discovered that they could absorb patrons of other drugstore businesses by opening their own pharmacies. In 1974, Lane Drug Corporation, gained a controlling share of Peoples Drug's stock, and within a year Fantle moved to Washington to become chairman and chief executive of Peoples Drug. In 1984, Imasco, Ltd., a Canadian firm, acquired the company only to see its profitability plummet over the next three years. In 1987, Fantle left the company and soon took over its ailing competitor, Dart Drug. That same year, the New York-based Melville Corporation acquired Peoples Drug. Melville was a large retail holding company that also owned the 811-store, CVS drugstore chain. The new owners kept the company's name for several years. In 1989, after a survey showed that most people would not object to a change, the 89-year-old brand name was ultimately replaced by the corporate name, "CVS". Note: Much of the research conducted for the composing of this biographical note and organizational history drew from the Peoples Drug entry in Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peoples_Drug

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence, newsletters, programs and invitations, certificates, reports, newspaper clippings, payroll and receipts, printed materials, and miscellaneous materials.

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Arrangement

Processed without series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW
Washington, DC
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Revision Description

Revised to be more evergreen. 2020-10-19

Custodial History

There is no Deed of Gift or associated paperwork with this collection. The provenance is unknown.

Processing Information

Basic archival procedures were used at the time of processing.

Conditions Governing Use

No known restrictions.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Organizational Records
- Correspondence
- Ephemera
- Drugstores

Collection Inventory

Series 1

Title/Description	Instances	
"American Druggist", 1989	Box 1	Folder 1
Correspondence, 1911	Box 1	Folder 2
Equitable Life Assurance Society Certificates, Undated	Box 1	Folder 3
Newsletter, 1941	Box 1	Folder 4
Payroll and Receipts, 1925	Box 1	Folder 5
"People's People" Newsletter, 1955	Box 1	Folder 6
Photographs, Undated	Box 1	Folder 7
Programs/Invitations, 1924-1955	Box 1	Folder 8
Stockholder's Meeting, 1907	Box 1	Folder 9
Miscellaneous, 1923-1950	Box 1	Folder 10
Clippings, 1908-1969	Box 1	Folder 11

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