Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, is a private corporation whose primary business has been the buying, handling, and selling of tobacco throughout the world. The headquarters are located in Danville, Virginia.

The firm has a long and proud heritage. Richard H. Dibrell, a tobacco commission merchant since 1844, opened a thriving business in Richmond, Virginia, in the 1850's. The burning of the Confederate capital--and with it a Dibrell warehouse--in April of 1865 must have convinced Dibrell to relocate a part of his operations, for in 1873 he sent his two sons, Alphonso and Richard Louis, as leaf tobacco brokers to Danville, where the two brothers established the Dibrell Brothers partnership. Their early business was strictly an order business, which meant that the brothers bought tobacco from farmers on warehouse floors and then redried and packed the leaf into hogsheads before shipment to the ordering customer. The partnership did business throughout the year, since the tobacco market then ran from October 15 until the following summer.

Danville was a logical location for the new firm. Nestled in the center of the southside Virginia tobacco belt, the city was shortly to become the largest loose-leaf market in the world. The city also was linked to Richmond by the Richmond and Danville Railroad (later a part of the Southern Railway system), and cheap labor was abundant there. Too,
Danville was poised to become a leader in the New South with the formation only ten years later of Dan River Mills.

The two brothers worked tirelessly. While Alphonso bought tobacco on the Danville market, the younger Richard Louis concentrated on Madison, North Carolina, where he purchased tobacco for shipment down the Dan River by bateau to Danville and thence to the customer by railroad. Yet since most of the firm's early business was in the Midwest, Richard Louis Dibrell traveled there to secure orders from such firms as Spence Brothers & Company of Cincinnati, Finzer Brothers of Louisville, Christian Peper Tobacco Company of St. Louis, Adams Tobacco Company of Milwaukee, J. G. Butler and Son of St. Louis, Catlin Tobacco Company of St. Louis, Spaulding and Merrick of Chicago, Hodge Tobacco Company of Henderson, Kentucky, and Liggett and Myers of St. Louis, the world's largest plug manufacturer. In fact, so heavily did Richard Louis Dibrell concentrate on the Midwest that his son, Louis N. Dibrell, was born in Boonville, Missouri. An expansion into Canada added as customers D. Ritchie and Company of Montreal and A. W. Smith of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The increase in customers required an increase in operations, and Dibrell Brothers established branches in Henderson, North Carolina, under William Walker, a Dibrell brother-in-law, and in Durham, North Carolina, under T. H. Martin. The two branches were Dibrell Brothers & Company in Durham and Dibrell
and Walker in Henderson.

After the death of Alphonso Dibrell in the early 1890's, Richard Louis Dibrell decided to expand his business to Great Britain. His first trip abroad yielded orders from tobacco manufacturer J. and T. Hodge of Glasgow, as well as fertile contacts with future customers Godfrey Phillips, Ltd., F. and J. Smith, and Lambert and Butler. Future Dibrell president Colonel Alexander Berkeley Carrington would note with pride in 1933 that Richard Louis Dibrell's business in Great Britain represented "the first direct connection [by Americans] with English manufacturers in buying leaf tobacco on direct order in this country."

Meanwhile, in 1878, Alexander Berkeley Carrington came from Charlotte County to Danville to join his uncle's tobacco firm, P. C. Venable and Company, of which he soon became a partner. After the death of Alphonso Dibrell, Richard Louis Dibrell offered Carrington a partnership in Dibrell Brothers. Carrington would accept and would continue as a Dibrell partner until ca. 1902 when he would leave the firm to manage the Leaf Department of the Bright Tobacco Districts of the American Tobacco Company. This decade of the 1890's which saw the partnership of R. L. Dibrell and Berkeley Carrington was a profitable one for Dibrell Brothers. Richard Louis Dibrell expanded the firm's foreign operations by locating markets in northern Europe in Norway, Sweden, and Belgium, and in China and Japan in Shanghai and Tokyo, respectively. Major
purchasers of Dibrell leaf included Henry Windelincz in Antwerp and Conrad Langgaard in Oslo.

In 1902 when joining the American Tobacco Company, Carrington sold his interest in Dibrell Brothers to H. M. Victor who, preferring banking to tobacco, left the firm in 1904. Richard Louis Dibrell then brought into the firm as a partner Herbert Lee Boatwright, who had been one of the principals in the Danville tobacco firm of Schoolfield, Boatwright, and Company. Then on August 29, 1904, Dibrell Brothers was incorporated as Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, with Richard Louis Dibrell being elected president and H. L. Boatwright, vice president and secretary-treasurer. Directors were, in addition to Dibrell and Boatwright, J. M. Edmunds, W. T. Paxton and W. C. Wooding. Capitalization stood at $50,000 in 500 shares. The following year, 1905, the American Tobacco Company attempted to move Carrington to New York, a move he found distasteful. Dibrell Brothers, Inc., responded by increasing its capitalization to $75,000 and offering to sell 225 shares valued at $22,500 to the experienced Carrington. The latter accepted, and Boatwright turned over the vice presidency to him.

Carrington was pleased to be re-joining this prosperous firm. Dividends for the first fiscal year (August 29, 1904- August 1, 1905) were 44.6 percent, or $33,476. Carrington was also pleased to complete the formation of the famous Dibrell Brothers triumvirate whose families would exert influence in
the company to the present day. Richard Louis Dibrell "embodied the far-thinking, adventurous spirit who could recognize potential markets and customers...." He continually "stressed the importance of travel, a policy which was to continue throughout the history of the company." Colonel Carrington was "the expert on the financial side of the business. His shrewd business sense and dynamic leadership aided the company in its growth and prosperity." Herbert L. Boatwright "was an instinctive judge of tobacco and was in charge of all leaf purchases, determining what to buy, when to buy it, and what price to pay."

Not only did the three families manage the company but they owned it as well. For example, of the 5000 shares of stock in Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, in 1918-1919, Richard Louis Dibrell owned ca. 25.96 percent, Colonel Carrington owned ca. 24.60 percent, and H. L. Boatwright owned 25.08 percent. Of the 2,000 shares of Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, two years earlier (1916-1917), the Dibrell family owned ca. 31.45 percent, the Carrington family owned ca. 31.55 percent, and the Boatwright family owned 31.55 percent. The remaining 5.45 percent was owned by treasurer W. C. Wooding, factory superintendent Howard W. Kympton, and accountant W. C. Heard.

The triumvirate also continued what Richard Louis Dibrell had foreseen as the two secrets of the company's success: "extensive travel to find new tobacco markets and customers,
and timely acquisition of smaller subsidiary companies." Subsidiaries were essential, since the high cost of transportation made it unfeasible for Dibrell Brothers to purchase tobacco in the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee for shipment to, and handling in, Virginia before re-shipment to customers. Accordingly, in 1900 Dibrell Brothers purchased a controlling interest in what in 1906 became the E. V. Webb & Company in Kinston, North Carolina. In 1904 Dibrell Brothers moved into Wilson, North Carolina, through an affiliate that eventually became Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, Wilson, North Carolina, and finally in 1915 the Wilson Tobacco Company. In 1909 Dibrell Brothers entered Durham, North Carolina, through the Venable Tobacco Company. In 1911 the C. W. Walters Company was added to the Dibrell empire to do business in South Boston, Virginia, and later Mullins, South Carolina. And in 1913 the Rocky Mount and Greenville, North Carolina, tobacco markets were tapped with the purchase of a controlling interest in the G. R. Garrett Company and the E. B. Ficklen Company, respectively. By July of 1935, a proud Dibrell Brothers president Colonel Carrington was able to report to stockholders the following corporate structure of fifteen subsidiaries, affiliates or branches:

Wilson, North Carolina--Wilson Tobacco Company--
W. J. King, President
Rocky Mount, North Carolina--G. R. Garrett Company--
C. D. Noell, President
Greenville, North Carolina--E. B. Ficklen Tobacco Company--James S. Ficklen, President
Kinston, North Carolina--E. V. Webb & Company--
W. C. Wooding, President
Washington, North Carolina--Washington Tobacco Company--
B. C. Homes, President
Douglas, Georgia--Douglas Tobacco Company--
W. R. Lawrence, President
Whiteville, North Carolina--Whiteville Tobacco Company--
J. G. Boatwright, President
Mullins, South Carolina--C. W. Walters Company--
J. J. Walters, President
Durham, North Carolina--Venable Tobacco Company--
C. W. Toms, Jr., President
South Boston, Virginia--C. W. Walters Company--
J. J. Walters, President
Lexington, Kentucky--Kentucky-Burley Tobacco Company--
W. R. Lawrence, President
Clarksville, Tennessee--Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated--
W. B. Cousins, Manager
Winston-Salem, North Carolina--Piedmont Leaf Tobacco
Company--C. T. Joyce, President
Henderson, North Carolina--Henderson Tobacco Company--
A. T. McNeny, President
Danville, Virginia--A. D. Keen Tobacco Company--
A. D. Keen, President

Operations at these branches, subsidiaries, and
affiliates enjoyed mixed success, and Dibrell Brothers was
quick to divest itself of unprofitable companies. In 1916 the
Rucker-Penn Company of Winston-Salem, whose stock Dibrell
Brothers had purchased in 1913, posted a loss for the year of
over $1700, which prompted Dibrell Brothers to divest itself
of the Rucker-Penn stock. Burley operations in Kentucky were
not always profitable, and in 1937 Dibrell Brothers liquidated
the unprofitable Kentucky-Burley Tobacco Company in Lexington
and formed the Kentucky Tobacco Company in more modern and
spacious facilities in the more promising Hopkinsville area.
More typical of the subsidiaries, though, was the G. R.
Garrett Company, which in 1917 posted profits of 162.9 percent
of capital (almost $49,000).
The other secret of the company's success--extensive travel to locate new tobacco markets and customers--was broadened in the 1920's to include a heavy emphasis upon overseas travel. The London office of Dibrell Brothers under H. M. Hilton had been opened as early as 1911, but an expansion into Asia began in earnest in 1922 when Colonel Sydney W. Minor, the Dibrell Brothers vice president and treasurer, visited Shanghai. The first sizeable shipment of tobacco to Shanghai followed in October of 1925. In 1926 George D. Happer took over the Shanghai office with instructions to capture the Shanghai market of 110 tobacco manufacturers. Happer evidently was successful; Dibrell Brothers shipped 6,000 hogsheads to China from its 1927 crop, against a total of 1330 hogsheads to Europe. In January 1927, Dibrell Brothers opened an office in Antwerp, Belgium, under K. G. Hedberg, and the first Dibrell shipment to Antwerp was made in November of 1927.

Expansion into South America accompanied the expansion into Asia and Europe in the 1920's. Dibrell Brothers already did a small amount of business in the Argentine under agent W. D. Cone. Further expansion came from trips to Columbia, Peru, and Argentina by Morton Riddle. In 1928 Dibrell Brothers opened a New York office under Frank H. Brown to handle the Latin America market.

These expansions paid off handsomely. The volume of business increased from over 65 million pounds of tobacco in
1919 to almost 93 million pounds of tobacco by 1931. Moreover, the 1918 figure for Dibrell Brothers of $500,000 in common stock and $500,000 in preferred stock increased in 1931 to $1,100,000 in common stock, $1,000,000 in preferred stock, and over $1,000,000 in surplus and retained earnings.

The dramatic expansion of the 1920's occurred under the direction of Berkeley Carrington, who became president at the death of Richard Louis Dibrell on January 12, 1920. R. L. Dibrell had been a catalyst for progress in the local community, and the community mourned his passing. Sixty-four years of age at his death, Dibrell had been born in Richmond on September 19, 1855, the third son of Richard H. and Mary Lee Dibrell and the grandson and grand nephew, respectively, of tobacconists Edwin Dibrell and Watson Dibrell. The State of Virginia had had no more zealous a supporter of the Good Roads Movement than Danville's Richard Louis Dibrell, who realized that the South's future lay in adequate transportation and who even had spent a part of his own private fortune to construct farm-to-market roads. He also had been a Danville philanthropist after the example of Andrew Carnegie; Dibrell had donated the land for the construction of the Hilltop Sanitarium for the tuberculous in Danville. He had been a Mason (Roman Eagle Lodge, Knights Templar, and shriner) and had served on the board of stewards of Mount Vernon Methodist Church where he was a founding member.
After Dibrell's death, Herbert L. Boatwright moved into the vice presidency as Colonel Carrington moved into the presidency. Louis N. Dibrell, son of R. L., became secretary, while W. C. Wooding, who had entered the firm in 1904 with Boatwright, became treasurer. By 1931 new men had also been elevated to positions of responsibility: Sydney W. Minor as vice president and treasurer (Wooding was now a vice president); A. B. Carrington, Jr., as secretary; John G. Boatwright as assistant secretary; and W. C. Heard as assistant treasurer. Louis N. Dibrell had entered the firm in 1907; W. C. Heard, in 1912; John G. Boatwright, in 1916; A. B. Carrington, Jr., in 1919; and Sydney W. Minor, in 1920. Minor, incidentally, had been a North Carolina lawyer, banker and war hero who was widely spoken of as a potential candidate for governor of the state in 1920 and who escaped to Virginia so that he could remain in private life.

The Great Depression, which befell America in 1929 and which nearly bankrupted American business, was a time of relative prosperity for Dibrell Brothers. Prosperity is evident in the earnings per share which the firm reported. From 1929 - 1938, earnings per share exceeded $30.00 in every year except 1930, 1931 and 1932, when they were $20.83, $16.41 and $17.71, respectively. Expansion kept pace with prosperity. In 1935 after four years of tobacco purchases in Canada, Dibrell Brothers purchased a controlling interest in the Leamington Tobacco Sales Corporation in Ontario. In 1934
Dibrell Brothers established a branch office in Manila, The Philippines, under L. V. Casteleyn. Expansion was possible in the 1930's because Dibrell Brothers kept dividends to a modest but acceptable level, reduced costs by cutting executive salaries, and increased the firm's retained earnings. By July 1935, a proud President Carrington listed five overseas offices to complement the fifteen domestic subsidiaries:

- Shanghai, China -- George Happer
- Antwerp, Belgium -- K. G. Hedberg
- Manila, The Philippines -- L. V. Casteleyn
- New York City (for South America) -- Frank H. Brown

In addition to the overseas offices, Dibrell Brothers boasted sales agents throughout the world who sold tobacco for Dibrell Brothers on commission. In 1934 in the depths of the Great Depression, Dibrell Brothers' operations had capital and surplus of $6 million, owed nothing, and purchased about 136 million pounds of tobacco costing $17.5 million. Total processing capacity for the operations was 200 million pounds annually.

Dibrell Brothers' best customers in the early 1930's reflect the emphasis on Europe and the Far East. Customers purchasing over 1 million pounds of tobacco a year from Dibrell Brothers included the English firms of Godfrey Phillips, Ltd., and Gallaher, Ltd., Japan's Japanese Monopoly,
the Chinese firms of Hwa Ching and Nanyang, Java's Tabacofina, and the Belgium Congo's Tabacongo. Lesser purchases of between one-half to 1 million pounds were made by thirteen firms: five in Europe in England, Italy, and Eire; one in Canada; two in China; one in Thailand; two in Columbia and Uruguay; one in Egypt; and one in Korea.

These overseas markets offered fascinating human-interest stories in addition to profits. Many of Dibrell's customers in Africa, for example, were up-river trading posts which did a brisk business in "Africans"-tobaccos of extra length and good body which were cured on the stalk. Dibrell would ship its "Africans" to African seaports and then upriver to the trading posts which retailed the "Africans" by the bundle to natives. Each native would carry his bundle under his arm and would pull off a plug for chewing as he went about his daily business.

Also in the 1930's, the larger domestic cigarette manufacturers began to do substantial business with Dibrell Brothers. Prior to 1930, only P. Lorillard among the domestic manufacturers gave Dibrell much business. Then in the early 1930's, American Tobacco Company found a ready market for its new roll-your-own Bull Durham brand, and Dibrell Brothers was called upon to supply American with much of the low grade tobacco required for the new product.

Tragedy struck the firm in the mid-1930's when on January 23, 1935 and January 26, 1936, respectively, Herbert L.
Boatwright and Colonel Berkeley Carrington died. Both men had been positive contributors to locality, state and nation. Boatwright had been born on September 12, 1862, in Buckingham County, Virginia, the son of Dr. John G. Boatwright and Pattie Pendleton Boatwright, who had relocated with their son to Danville in 1865. Young H. L. Boatwright had started his career in tobacco as a warehouse worker and had moved into business as a dealer with George Hughes and then Schoolfield, Boatwright and Company.

Boatwright's accomplishments were many. He served as a president of the Danville Tobacco Association, a pillar in the Danville Chamber of Commerce, a member of the board of trustees of Averett College and the University of Richmond, a pioneer in Danville's Y.M.C.A. movement, a chairman of the Danville Democratic Committee, a Mason (Grand Master of the Roman Eagle Lodge and a shriner), and chairman of the board of deacons of the First Baptist Church. On December 12, 1889, he had married Mary E. Vaughan of Halifax County and by her had fathered six children: Edgar V. Boatwright, John Guerrant Boatwright; Mrs. Harold Williamson of New York; Mrs. Robert Sanford of Evanston, Illinois; Mrs. Witcher Dudley of Richmond; and Lee Boatwright of Baltimore.

Even more monumental was Alexander Berkeley Carrington, who had been born in Prince Edward County on January 27, 1862, the son of the Reverend Alexander Broadnax Carrington and Emma Cabell Carrington. At sixteen years of age he had relocated
to Danville where he had apprenticed in the tobacco business with his uncle Paul C. Venable before joining the Danville tobacco dealers Pace and Talbott. Carrington had been active civically. He had been a devout Presbyterian who served as chairman of the board of deacons at First Presbyterian Church where Carrington's generous contributions had helped to construct the present sanctuary to which the church moved in 1912 from its original Jefferson Street location. He had been a director of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, president of the Masonic [Temple] Building Corporation, chairman of the board of the Hughes Memorial Home, member of the board of trustees of Hampden-Sydney College, and chairman of the board of First National Bank. Additionally, he had served as a member and president of the Tobacco Association of the United States, a Mason (past Master of Morotock Lodge, Knights Templar, and shriner), and a charter member of the Kiwanis Club of Danville. On November 11, 1891, he had married Mary Taylor of Danville and by her had fathered A. B. Carrington, Jr., Charles Venable Carrington, and Mrs. Charles Bidgood. He had earned the title "Colonel" from his service on the staff of Virginia governor Andrew Jackson Montague.

Carrington has been perhaps the most forceful and dynamic leader in the history of Dibrell Brothers. An editorial in the newspaper that announced his death was entitled:

"The Man Who Got Things Done." The editorial said in part:

The indefatiguable service which Colonel Carrington gave to his community will long be spoken of in
Danville....Danville owes him a great deal both for his broad public spirit translated into terms of personal service as well as for the private giving of his means. Acute community problems had a way of gravitating to him for a solution and if a campaign was planned and recognized as being exceptionally difficult it was usually "The Colonel" who was asked to meet the crisis with his leadership.

With the passing of Carrington and Boatwright, a second generation of founding family members stepped forward to provide leadership. The position of chairman of the board was created in 1936 and Louis N. Dibrell named to it. A. B. Carrington, Jr., became president and held that position until his election as chairman of board in 1951 at the retirement of Louis N. Dibrell. John G. Boatwright was made vice president in 1936 and president in 1951.

The second generation would make civic contributions almost as lasting as those of the founders. Louis N. Dibrell was born on July 13, 1885, the son of Richard L. Dibrell and Ida Nelson Dibrell. He later married Louise Glass Dibrell and fathered Louis N. Dibrell, Jr., Mrs. L. S. Ficklen, and James Fuller Dibrell. He was graduated from Cornell University after attending Danville Military Institute and Randolph-Macon College. He joined Dibrell Brothers in 1915.

Before his death on October 9, 1956, Louis Dibrell was active in the life of Danville, having led the effort in 1930 to save the Randolph-Macon Institute in Danville and convert it into Stratford (junior) College over whose board of trustees he often presided. He also served as chairman of the
board of Security Bank and Trust Company and president of radio station WBTM, the Danville Tobacco Association, the Danville Chamber of Commerce, and the Danville Rotary Club. Additionally, he was a member of the board of stewards of Mount Vernon Methodist Church.

Alexander Berkeley Carrington, Jr., was born in Danville on January 26, 1895. After receiving his education at the Danville School for Boys, Hampden-Sydney College (B.A., 1915), and the University of Virginia (M.A., 1917), he served in the American Expeditionary Force in France from 1917-1919 as captain of artillery. After the war he joined Dibrell Brothers where he served as factory foreman (1919-1922), buyer (1922-1927), supervisor (1927-1932), assistant secretary (1932-1935), vice president (1935-1936), president (1936-1951), chairman of the board (1951-1968), and chairman emeritus (1968-1974). Carrington served as a director of Dan River Mills for over forty years, a trustee for Hampden-Sydney College, Stratford College, the Memorial Hospital of Danville, and First Presbyterian Church, chairman of the board of Danville's American National Bank and the Mutual Savings and Loan Association, and president of the Leaf Tobacco Exporters Association and the Tobacco Association of the United States. He would die on July 20, 1974.

Louis Dibrell and A. B. Carrington, Jr., took over Dibrell Brothers as the clouds of war were beginning to loom over Europe and the Far East. In fact, the outbreak of the
war in 1939 began a six-year period of mixed prosperity for Dibrell Brothers. For example, the disruption of trade in 1939-1940 among the belligerents gave Dibrell Brothers in the neutral United States one of its best years in Europe, which was reflected by earnings per share for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1940 of $33.01. As early as 1938, President Carrington had foreseen the future problems with Japan and had recommended that Dibrell Brothers do business in that area on a cash basis only, which by 1940 had been accomplished. However, in 1942, Dibrell Brothers had to write off over $21,000 in uncollectable debts in Nazi-controlled Latvia, Lithuania, and Holland. Dibrell Brothers that year also lost markets in the Japanese controlled Far East, all of which resulted in puny earnings per share of $14.03 and $21.76 for the fiscal years ending June 30 of 1941 and 1942, respectively. In fact, these were the leanest earnings for any years between 1929 and 1972, with the exception of the years in the Great Depression of 1930-1932 and 1939. Business rebounded as the Allies advanced in 1943, 1944, and 1945, with Dibrell Brothers posting very respectable earnings per share for those years (ending June 30) of $32.63, $27.97, and $39.55, respectively.

Despite the handsome wartime profits, wartime controls were a headache. Government regulations controlled tobacco (and every other kind of) prices, profits, and sales. Each year, in fact, Dibrell Brothers was assigned a total volume
of pounds of tobacco it could purchase and an average price it could pay on the warehouse floor. Unfortunately, warehouses where the buying occurred found ways to evade the regulations, and warehousemen who were not bribed with cash or whiskey by the buyers could force buyers to accept undesirable tobacco.

Counterbalancing the headaches caused by the controls and evasions was the windfall which buyers like Dibrell Brothers received when the domestic manufacturers used up their own allocations of tobacco and had to negotiate with Dibrell Brothers for a part of the latter's allocation. The American Tobacco Company had long done business with Dibrell Brothers, and so Dibrell made sure that the American had sufficient leaf before making any tobacco available to the other manufacturers.

The period immediately following World War II brought unparalleled opportunities but also unparalleled hazards. Improved air transportation made trips abroad easier. On the other hand the European economies lay in such shambles that future Dibrell Brothers President Charles A. Carr recalls that "those of us who were travelling [from 1946-1951] spent about as much time trying to find ways to sell U. S. tobacco in other than U. S. currency as we did in trying to sell the tobacco itself--probably even more so." Dibrell Brothers had to accept pounds sterling and even bartered goods in return for Dibrell tobacco. The China market re-opened in 1946, only
to close again in 1949 when the Communists took over and the U. S. Government imposed a ban on trade. As a result, Dibrell Brothers relocated its headquarters in the Far East to Manila. The Java and Uruguay markets came back with a bang before internal dissension, which in Uruguay resulted in the creation of a socialistic state with private property nationalized, closed them down again. Norway, Germany and Holland offered promise after the reconstruction of these war-torn areas. In Holland, for example, Dibrell Brothers and Universal Leaf Tobacco Company almost cornered the market. By 1952 Dibrell Brothers had customers in forty-five separate countries. Postwar earnings per share were a whopping $48.64, $85.22 and $71.50 for the fiscal years ending June 30 of 1946, 1947 and 1948, respectively. Earnings per share for 1949, 1950 and 1951 were also impressive, amounting to, when one considers stock splits or the equivalent, approximately $35.00, $55.00 and $60.00 per share of stock at the 1948 level.

In the 1950's, personnel changes reshuffled the old leadership and brought new faces into the chain of command. In 1951 Louis N. Dibrell retired, A. B. Carrington, Jr., became chairman of the board, and John G. Boatwright became president. Eight years later in 1959, Charles A. "Buck" Carr replaced Boatwright as president, the first president from outside the three founding families. This change represented the end of control by the three founding families and the beginning of control by the entire board of directors.
The new leadership in the 1950's presided over dramatic changes. In 1958 the corporation invested in Dibrell Brothers of Africa (pvt.) Ltd., of Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, and the Tobacco Export Corporation of Africa (pvt.) Ltd. Rhodesian operations were successful until the U. S. Government banned American trade there in 1967. In 1972 Dibrell Brothers had to write off its Rhodesian investments which amounted to almost half a million dollars. In the mid-1950's, sales efforts overseas paid dividends as the Austrian Monopoly and companies in Jordan were added to the list of traditional customers (Burrrus, Reemtsma, Cinta, Crescent, Douwe Egberts, Gallaher, the Japanese Monopoly, and manufacturers in England and The Philippines).

At home the late 1950's were years of challenge. From 1956-1962, the spread of plant disease in the tobacco belt led farmers to begin planting disease-resistant but relatively tasteless strains of tobacco that were not suitable for export. Since Dibrell's livelihood was threatened, its lobbyists successfully persuaded the U. S. Department of Agriculture to have the obnoxious strains outlawed.

Consolidation, modernization, and diversification were the triple themes of the 1960's. Dibrell Brothers installed advanced tipping and threshing equipment in order to accommodate customers' requests that tobacco now be shipped in strips and not in leaf. Dibrell Brothers liquidated the marginally profitable Washington Tobacco Company, and in 1969

In fact, the year 1967 was one of the most significant years in the corporation's history. The building earlier of the Carolina Leaf plant in Greenville had taught lessons to Dibrell Brothers that bore fruit in 1967 when Dibrell built its own modern processing plant in Ringgold near Danville. Boasting a per-day capacity of 950,000 pounds of tobacco, the plant employed state-of-the-art automation and achieved quality control unsurpassed in the industry. Also in 1967 came the diversification of Dibrell Brothers with the purchase of Richmond Cedar Works which manufactured ice cream freezers and which was relocated from Richmond to Danville in 1970 in order to provide off-season jobs for Dibrell Brothers tobacco workers. Diversification continued in 1969 when Dibrell Brothers formed American Interiors and entered the home
lighting field. These efforts at diversification were financed by a $5 million long-term loan in 1970. Later in 1967 President Carr began to make plans for his own succession, and in 1968 the board of directors accepted his recommendation to make him chairman of the board and Richard B. Bridgforth president of the corporation and Carr's eventual successor in 1972 when Carr reached the age of retirement.

Dibrell Brothers had every reason for optimism as it approached the 1970's. Earnings per share for the fiscal years ending June 30 for 1965-1969 were the best for any years since 1948. The corporation's lean corporate structure with the unprofitable subsidiaries merged or liquidated appeared as follows:

Carolina Leaf Tobacco Company of Greenville, North Carolina
Dibrell-Burford, Incorporated, of Bowling Green, Kentucky
C. W. Walters Company of South Boston, Virginia
Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Company of Winston-Salem, North Carolina
The Henderson Tobacco Company of Henderson, North Carolina
American Interiors (with Richmond Cedar Works) of Danville
Dibrell Brothers of Canada in Leamington, Ontario
Dibrell-Carolina Far Eastern Corporation in The Philippines
Dibrell Brothers of Africa (Pvt.) Ltd. of Southern Rhodesia
Dibrell Brothers, Incorporated, of Danville
In addition, Dibrell Brothers salesmen were traveling over 100,000 miles a year. And finally, the existence of enlightened leadership guaranteed that strides forward in future decades would equal the accomplishments of the past.
CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, AND PROVENANCE
The Dibrell Brothers, Inc. archives consist of 135 boxes and approximately 380 bound volumes dating from 1875 to 1991, with most of the material dated between 1904 and 1970. There are few documents extant in Record Group 1, Executive Records—Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, and President—and so the history of major decisions must be gleaned from documents in other record groups. Among these are minutes and appendices to the minutes of the board of directors and stockholders meetings (RG 6/1/7); forms filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, particularly form 10-K (RG 6/2/2); typescript histories of the company written by former presidents Col. A. Berkeley Carrington in 1933 and 1934, A. B. Carrington, Jr. in 1937; and Charles A. Carr in 1976 (RG 1/1) and histories from 1972 and 1973 in RG 19/1; scrapbooks and clippings from magazines and newspapers, particularly obituaries, in RG 19/2 and RG 19/3, which contain biographical information on key figures in the corporation; annual audits (RG 8/1/2); and organizational handbooks containing information regarding capital structure, management, personnel and stockholders of Dibrell Brothers, Inc. and its subsidiaries (RG 6/7/1).

For the business historian, numerous general and detailed ledgers and journals dating from 1897 to 1970 are in RG 8/1/5 and more detailed sales and billing records are in RG 11/4. Numerous records of affiliates and subsidiaries, both foreign and domestic, can be found in RG 18. Minutes of board of
Directors and stockholders meetings exist for many of these companies as do financial statements, particularly annual audits. Among these are records for some of the earliest subsidiaries, including E. B. Ficklen Co., Venable Tobacco Co., Wilson Tobacco Co., E. V. Webb & Co., G. R. Garrett, Inc., Washington Tobacco Co., Henderson Tobacco Co., C. W. Walters Co., Whiteville Tobacco Co., Carolina Leaf Tobacco Co. and Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Co. Numerous records dating from 1900 to 1985 of the Richmond Cedar Works Manufacturing Corporation can be found in RG 18/1/20. These records include financial statements, minutes, photographs and memorabilia. Among these records are files regarding planning and background for diversification of Dibrell Brothers, Inc. in the late 1960's. Records for other subsidiaries include American Interiors, Inc., Lila Moore Keen Studios and Dunning Industries.

Records for foreign affiliates and subsidiaries exist for Dibrell Brothers, Inc.'s Shanghai operations from 1925 until 1947 (RG 18/2/1), for their Canadian operations based in Leamington, Ontario from 1931 to 1978 (RG 18/2/3) and for their African operations from 1957 until 1985 (RG 18/2/4).

Publications, photographs and memorabilia complete the collection in RG 19. Included are various typescript histories of the company, publications and newsclippings regarding Dibrell Brothers, Inc., scrapbooks, numerous
photographs of individuals and the physical plant, and advertisements.

**Organization**

Record groups were established based on Dibrell Brothers, Inc.'s record retention schedule compiled by Mrs. Darrell Hawkins and on an inventory of all papers to which we were given access. Papers within each record group have been arranged chronologically.

**Provenance**

Dibrell Brothers, Inc. archives are solely owned by Dibrell Brothers, Inc., 512 Bridge St., Danville, Virginia, and permission for access to the archives is granted by Mr. Claude B. Owen, Jr., Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, or Mr. John Hunnicutt, Vice President - Administration and Secretary.