

BUSINESS ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

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Published twice a year, the Business Archives Newsletter is sent to each member of the Business Archives Section of the Society of American Archivists. For further information, please contact the editor, Colleen Wickey, Beckman Center for the History of Chemistry, 215 S. 34th St., Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 898-1541.

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FEATURES

Dialogue

by Claudette John, CIGNA Corporation

Oral History As Part Of A Corporate Archives Program

In the Spring issue of the Business Archives Newsletter "Dialogue" addressed the importance of oral history as a tool for documenting 20th century history. I discussed the advantages of making the program part of the Archive's responsibility, and the necessity of confronting legal concerns in the planning stages. This column presents two questions, followed by my own admittedly subjective answers, for your consideration and discussion.

Is it necessary to transcribe all interviews? I know of one major oral history program--not corporate--which transcribes only a small percentage of its interviews. To date we have transcribed all oral histories, but we are still working on the priority interviews. When those are completed, we may very well reassess that policy. Since I consider the tape the primary document in oral history, transcription is really a matter of choice. My major concern is for preservation. Paper is definitely a more stable medium than audio tape, and since we use the oral histories mainly as sources of information and perspective on business, the transcripts are the more convenient form. I can think of numerous instances where you might not transcribe, linguistic studies, for example, or folklore. Are

there legal issues or legitimate practical concerns that make it advisable to transcribe interviews? Is it advisable to transcribe what might be quoted in a publication? I would certainly evaluate those possibilities before changing our current procedure.

Should I edit the transcript? Yes, if you want the interviewee to review and approve it. And I believe that every interviewee should have an opportunity to review his transcript for accuracy. Transcribers do make mistakes. The tape may not be clear, or the transcriber may simply misunderstand what is said. There may be an obvious error in fact--an incorrect name, date or place. Innocent, straight-forward errors should be corrected in the transcript. Clarifications and additional information may be included as footnotes.

Acceptable spoken and written English differ greatly--sometimes, I think, to the point of being almost two different languages. It is often necessary to do some judicious editing so a person who is articulate on tape "sounds" that way in print. Of far greater importance is editing for clarity. The speaker's voice carries the listener through long, complicated, often convoluted sentences where inflection, emphasis and repetition flag the important elements of the narrative and make it easy to follow. Transcribe that verbatim, punctuate it liberally with "uhms" and "ahhs," season it with occasional mid-stream changes in tense or number, and you have a maze that requires substantial effort for the reader to master. But on the tape it all sounds fine, informal and like normal conversation--because it is.

Having said that I edit transcripts when it is necessary to do so, I should go on to say that it must be done very carefully. You don't want to lose the unique characteristics of the interviewee's speech and personality. You can prune excess verbiage and rearrange phrases so that the order is suitable to written English, but do retain repetition or unusual syntax for emphasis, clarity and insight. If sentence fragments and punctuation present problems, as they do in some transcriptions, you may find an acceptable model in printed dialogue or good journal interviews. Literary elegance is not a legitimate reason to edit business oral history transcripts. Clarity is. Edit as much as necessary, but as little as possible. The tape, after all, is the primary record. And that remains unchanged.

In the spring newsletter "Dialogue" will continue with part 3 of "Oral History As Part of A Corporate Archives Program." The topic will be interviewing--techniques, questions, etc. If you have questions or comments on this column or wish to contribute in advance to the discussion of interviewing, please address the author of this article (Philadelphia, PA 19103), (215) 523-3293, or the Business Archives Newsletter editor.

Article On Records Destruction Provokes Response

A recent Wall Street Journal article (9/2/87), on the destruction of files by U.S. companies, has stirred archivists to heated response. The article, by staff reporter Michael Allen, takes the position that U.S. companies today are destroying more documents than ever before, primarily to avoid litigation. Other reasons given for extensive document destruction are to cut back on paper-storage costs, to make it easier to retrieve information that is really needed, and to maintain privacy.

The article makes several qualifying points: 1) selective destruction of sensitive documents is not the answer--rather, whole classes of files, except those required by law or needed for business, must be regularly eliminated; 2) a records management program must include safeguards to halt destruction of material as soon as the company is presented with a lawsuit or is advised of a government investigation; 3) as important as teaching companies which documents to destroy is teaching them which ones never to create in the first place.

In "From the Chair" (p. 5), Phil Mooney lists the members of the archival community who responded by writing to the editor of the Journal. A summary of these responses includes the following points:

*The article is an oversimplification of responses to complex sets of questions.

*The article paints an unbalanced picture, based on selective sources, and may lead readers to hasty and unwise disposal actions.

*Many businesses (more than 200 in the U.S. today) maintain archival and records management programs quite different from those that Allen describes, which routinely preserve records having historical and business significance.

*Archival materials can be useful to the public relations, human resources, research and development, marketing, publication, financial, strategic planning and legal functions of a corporation.

*A successful archival program allows records to be preserved in their organizational context, guaranteeing documentation of the decision-making process in its totality, rather than in isolated individuality.

*Organizational files allow corporations to defend their patent, trademark, contractual and property rights and to negate product liability claims.

*Corporate archives can act as a unique information data bank available for business purposes.

*Besides records retention and preservation, corporate archives perform the functions of maintenance and retrieval of vital and proprietary records (e.g., minutes of board of directors).

*Destruction of all records not required to be kept risks losing valuable business information, as well as documents that can be employed for the corporation's own purposes such as

litigation support.

*Finally, the article smacks of cynicism. Instead of encouraging ethical practices, it provides advice on how to get away with illegal activities by destroying the evidence.

Selecting An Archival Consultant

For some time there has been an interest on the part of Newsletter editors (present and past) in doing an article on archival consulting. A fair number of our colleagues in the Section function as consultants, either exclusively or in combination with other employment. After discussion with several Business Archives Section members, a preliminary list of consultants has emerged, which appears below.

The following points should be made about this list: its appearance in the Newsletter does not constitute an endorsement of any archival consultant's services, but is intended for informational purposes only; the list contains names of Section members only; we invite and encourage readers who know of other consultants within the Section to send their names to the editor so that we may publish an expanded list in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Consultants

Howard Applegate	Phyllis Klein
Karen Benedict	Nancy Merz
Linda Edgerly	Valerie Metzler
Julia Eulenberg	Ann Newhall
Carla Freeman	Rosemary Palmer
Edie Hedlin	John Shideler
Gregory Hunter	

Resources for selecting a consultant include the following: SAA Guidelines, available from the Office of the Executive Director; a list of suggested criteria for consultants, compiled by a group of business archivists, independent of SAA--contact Phil Mooney; the publication "Selecting An Archivist," published by the Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York and MARAC (available from the Archivists Roundtable c/o Ellen Sowchek, Pace University Archives, Pace Plaza--Rm. T1519, New York, NY 10038).

SECTION NEWS

From The Chair

As usual, the agenda at our annual business meeting at the SAA convention was crowded, but I think this is a compliment to both the quality and quantity of work that our Section undertakes. Projects like the Directory update, the advocacy brochure on corporate archives and the guidelines for depositing records are well on their way to completion at this writing.

Additionally, several members of our group have been working with the National Council on Public History on a grant proposal to produce a published guide and data base to corporate archives, while others have been participating in the ongoing Hagley programs that focus on corporate history (see p. 7).

Interest in corporate archives has resulted in the development of program sessions at the annual meetings of two historical organizations. The National Council on Public History has scheduled a session on this subject for its March meeting in Denver, and the American Association for State and Local History is also developing a session relating to the use of corporate artifacts for its annual meeting.

At the time of our meeting in New York, an unfortunate article appeared in the Wall Street Journal relating to the destruction of corporate records (see p. 3). Acting on the strongly expressed views of the Section, I drafted a letter to the Journal, co-signed by President Sue Holbert, expressing professional concerns over the article's content. Donn Neal, SAA's Executive Director, Gary Saretzky, and Linda Edgerly also sent letters expressing concerns about the article. On September 25, the Neal and Saretzky letters were published in the Journal along with those of other concerned readers.

In recent weeks, another Wall Street Journal reporter has contacted several business archivists regarding the impact that mergers and acquisitions have had on corporate archives programs. It is likely that a finished piece will appear soon.

Because of significant corporate retrenchment, the J. Walter Thompson Archives has closed, and its holdings have been donated to Duke University. Archivist Cynthia Swank is living in Philadelphia and can be reached at 106 W. Tulpehocken St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

During the Section meeting, some interest was expressed in the formation of a long range planning group. We hope to begin work on this project early next year and to have some preliminary report available in Atlanta.

The one budget request I have in my file relates to the reprinting of the Business Archives Guidelines for distribution by the Section. If anyone has thoughts or suggestions for other budget requests, please let me know.

Please let Jane Nokes, of Scotiabank, or I know of any projects or issues you wish the Section to consider. Our group has been a very vibrant section, but it will only remain so with your continued participation and involvement.

Phil Mooney, Co-Chair
The Coca-Cola Company
P.O. Drawer 1734
Atlanta, GA 30301, (404) 676-3491

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The CORTLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY holds photographic, print, and archival collections in business and technological history. Three main areas are covered: the Brockway Truck, Wickwire manufactures, and the drilling equipment developed by James Suggett. Contact Rachel Savage or Mary Ann Kane, 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045.

ARROW COMPANY HOLDS EXHIBIT. For almost a quarter of a century, beginning in 1907, one advertising image more than any other captured the imagination of the American public, and THE ARROW MAN: COLLAR CITY CHIC (Russell Sage College Gallery, Schacht Fine Arts Center, Troy, NY, September 1-October 11, 1987) provided a fascinating study of this phenomenon.

Viewers traced the development of this male ideal through period advertisements, window signs, car cards and posters created by the American illustrator, J. C. Leyendecker (1874-1951). This material was supplemented by cartoons, poems, sheet music and other items inspired by the Arrow Man's popularity.

In addition, the exhibit offered an overview of the history of Troy's collar industry from the invention of the detachable collar in the late 1820s to the demise of the industry in the 1930s with catalogs, collars, photographs, prints and other memorabilia recalling the pioneers, entrepreneurs and workers.

The exhibit was made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. All materials in the exhibit were from the Arrow Company Archives.

The Archives of THOMAS J. LIPTON, INC. was asked to set up a display room at the two regional sales meetings in 1986 and again at the national sales meeting in 1987. The 1987 meeting featured "Thirty-Five Years of Continuous Sales Growth," with a time line of company highlights from incorporation in 1915 to the present.

Many sales representatives turned out to be fellow collectors of Lipton memorabilia, with impressive collections of their own. The result of shared enthusiasm was the creation of the "Friends of the Lipton Archives."

The Friends group sends out a quarterly newsletter encouraging the exchange of information and memorabilia. The newsletter also serves the purpose of letting people know what items are missing from the archival collections. In return, the Archives supplies reproductions of old advertising and photographs to regional offices for various purposes, and is available to answer historical questions.

For further information about the Lipton Archives, the Friends of the Lipton Archives, or the newsletter, contact Edythe Masten, Thomas J. Lipton, Inc., 800 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, (201) 894-7645.

On Monday, October 5, 1987, the CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY sponsored a one-day conference on "History and the Corporation." Archivists, attorneys, corporate officers, historians, librarians, and records managers attended and participated in the day's events.

Featured speakers were Harold Anderson, vice president and manager of the History Department of Wells Fargo Bank; Henry Hanson, CEO of Chiefton Enterprises, Inc.; Louis Galambos, professor of history at Johns Hopkins University; Robert Lewis, AT&T Division Manager; Thomas Huertas, vice president of Citibank; Susan Landis, records management consultant; and George David Smith, president of the Winthrop Group, Inc.

Topics included the risks and benefits of history in the corporation, and the professional and ethical issues raised by writing history for a corporate client, with examples drawn from the organizations represented by the speakers.

For more information about the conference or upcoming events at the Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society, contact Elizabeth Gray Kogen, Executive Administrator, P.O. Box 3630, Wilmington, DE 19807, (302) 658-2400.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

The Handbook of American Business History, David O. Whitten, ed. Published by Greenwood Press. A three-volume (projected) guide to bibliography in American business history. Recognized scholars have been invited to contribute narrative and bibliographic essays combined with bibliographic checklists.

Volume I, Manufacturing: ESIC 20 - 39.9 will be published in 1988. Volume II, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Construction, Transportation, Public Utilities, Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, is scheduled for publication in 1989, to be followed in 1990 by Volume III, Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Services.

Prospective contributors should contact the editor at the Department of Economics, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-3501, (205) 826-4528.

The Business History Newsletter (ISSN 0260-5171) is a British publication which appears twice a year (April and

October) and gives news from the world of business archives and business history in England. Interested persons should contact Duncan Ross, editor, Business History Unit, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, England.

A recent issue of Advertising Age (8/20/87) is devoted to celebrating the 150 years of PROCTOR & GAMBLE CO. history. An article about the company's archives, and its archivist Ed Rider, appears on page 42 of that issue. The article contains a fascinating look at the development of the Proctor & Gamble Co. archives, begun in 1950, and includes an anecdote about how Mr. Rider acquired four 1905 Lenox Soap wooden window displays, still in their original boxes.

The archives at KRAFT, INC. is featured in Public History News, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer 1987), pp. 1, 6. Written by former Archives Manager, Laurie Cadigan, the article describes how and why the Kraft Archives was formed in 1983, how it operates today, and the role it plays in corporate activities.

BUSINESS ARCHIVES SECTION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 3, 1987
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS CONFERENCE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

1. PROCEDURAL INTRODUCTION

Phillip Mooney, Chair, reviewed the S.A.A. budgeting cycle and its impact on the Section's planning.

Fran Blouin, Council liaison for Business Archives Section, outlined Council's position vis a vis the Section. Victoria Walch, incoming Council liaison, emphasized that Council is enthusiastic about the Section's work and wants to be as supportive as possible.

Guidelines for S.A.A. Sections, adapted by S.A.A. Council June 8, 1983 and revised up to June 6, 1987 were distributed.

II Minutes of the 1986 annual meeting were distributed to the membership with the October 1986 Newsletter.

III Old Business

A. Membership

64 members in attendance at the annual meeting.

B. Directory of Business Archives in the U.S. & Canada-Update(1987)

Draft document, compiled by Steven Wheeler (New York Stock Exchange Inc.), Annamarie Sandecki (Richmondtown Restoration/SIHS) and Edward Rider (Procter & Gamble Co.) was distributed; additional copies are available from the Chair. Volunteers were requested for telephone follow-up and index preparation. Gary Saretzky and Anne Millbrooke volunteered. An October 1, 1987 cut-off date for revisions was agreed upon, after which the Update will be forwarded to S.A.A. for publication.

C. Publications

1. Brochure

Laurie Cadigan reported that a grant of \$7,500 has been received from the Kraft Foundation to support the publication of an advocacy piece to be distributed (free) to business archives and potential sponsors. A print run of 5000 copies is projected, with publication for 1988. Laurie Cadigan will undertake the writing of the brochure and will serve as liaison for the project with the Kraft Foundation. The brochure project has appeared in the Minutes of previous Section annual meetings as the update to Edie Hedlin's brochure.

The project proposal was submitted through S.A.A. Executive Director to the Kraft Foundation and the brochure will be submitted to the S.A.A. Publications Management Board. Interested members were invited to meet with Laurie Cadigan to formulate a production plan and schedule following the September 5, 1987 Section Open House.

III.

C.2. Bibliography Update

Karen Benedict reported that the S.A.A. Publications Management Board has approved the project to compile all updates in one publication as of September 2, 1987. The Bibliography will be available by S.A.A.'s 1988 Annual conference.

D. Newsletter

Discussion re. S.A.A. Guidelines for Section Newsletters (see I above). Editor Colleen Wickey noted that her parent organization underwrites production and mailing costs for the Section Newsletter.

E. Guidelines for depositing corporate records

Cynthia Swank (J.Walter Thompson Co.) distributed the final draft of "Choosing the Right Repository". Discussion centred on publication and distribution. It was agreed that the Chair will send the draft to other sections for comment and then will approach the Publications Management Board. It was suggested that the guidelines be distributed at the same time as the advocacy piece. (see III C 1. above).

F. National Council on Public History

Laurie Cadigan reported that the possible business records guide project discussed under Item IV G at the 1986 Section annual meeting and in the July 1987 Newsletter is in the discussion phase. It is unlikely to be a joint S.A.A.-N.C.P.H. project; rather it may be an N.C.P.H. project with support/advice by business archivists.

G. ICA Business Archives Committee

Anne Van Camp reported on ICA activities, including the English Business Archives Council publication "Company Archives", which might serve as a model for the N.C.P.H. guide project. The ICA Business Archives Committee is drafting an advocacy brochure, which relates to IIIC above. The ICA Business Archives Committee is interested in creating a Section (see July '87 Newsletter p.16) on Economic and Social Archives. The possible meeting of the ICA Business Archives Committee in New York in 1989 requires a working group to assist Anne Van Camp in organizing/arranging.

IV New Business

A. C.G.A.P.- See Oct. 1986 Minutes for proposed joint C.G.A.P.-
Business Archives section projects.

B. Program- Suggestions for 1988 Program Committee *

Laurie Cadigan, as a member of the 1988 Program Committee,
reported on the Committee deliberations and solicited suggestions
from the membership.

C. Smithsonian Advertising Archives Project
See July 1987 Newsletter p.5

D. Election Procedures

Ed Rider recommended that the mail-in ballot be repeated next
year. Advantages were discussed. Ed Rider suggested that the
immediate past two Chair serve as the Nominating Committee.
Agreed.

E. Election of New Vice-Chair/Chair Elect

In response to the resignation of incoming Chair Laurie Cadigan,
Vice-Chair Jane Nokes will assume the Chair January 1, 1988 until
which time Philip Mooney will continue to serve. It was agreed
that this will allow an orderly transition.

V. Announcement

A. S.A.A. Headquarters

Arlene Schneider, Equitable Life Assurance Society of U.S.,
agreed to be the section's contact person for referrals from
S.A.A. H.Q. It was agreed that a list of referrals be maintained
for Section use. Linda Edgerly proposed the reprinting of
"Business Archives Guidelines" as part of the information package
sent out to referrals; this was agreed and will be added to the
Section budget proposal.

B. Business History Conference, Hagley Foundation

Elizabeth Kagen announced the Oct. 5, 1987 Conference (see July
1987 Newsletter p.7)

C. Long-Range Planning

Out of C.G.A.P. urging, S.A.A. is undertaking strategic planning.
In response to this and to the need for the Section to take a
more pro-active role with regard to outreach, the Chair and Linda
Edgerly have proposed to Council a long-range planning project
for the Section. Discussion supported this initiative to
implement outreach, to support and enhance corporate archives
programs and to involve more Section members in goal-oriented
programming. Benefactors of the project will be:-

- Corporate Sector
- Business Archives Section
- Individual Members.

The decision was taken to propose that Council appoint a Task Force, to include members of the Business Archives Section and others. The Chair will direct a working group to draft the proposal and will contact S.A.A. Executive Director Donn Neal to inform him that the process is underway. A statement on progress made will appear in the Nov. 1987 Newsletter.

V. D. Wall Street Journal Article

"U.S. Companies Pay Increasing Attention To Destroying Files"
Sept. 2, 1987.

Discussion centred on the need to respond to the misinformation contained in the article. It was decided that letters to the editor would be sent from the Chair & S.A.A. President as well as from individual members and corporate executives. Copies of the Chair & S.A.A. President's letter will be sent out to Section members by Anne Millbrooke.

E. American Advertising Museum, Portland, Oregon

A slide and video presentation by the Executive Director of the Museum introduced members to the design and operation of the Museum and the scope of its collections.

- Notes
1. Items marked with an asterisk (*) were carried over to the Sept. 5, 1987 Section Open House for discussion.
 2. Linda Edgerly and Tim Ericson (S.A.A. Office) are devising a follow-up survey with participants in business archives workshops. A questionnaire re. educational needs, current jobs and how the workshop relates to jobs will be drafted for the approximately 200 participants.