

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.

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DEADLINE

The deadline for the next Newsletter is Friday, December 8, 1989. Send items to Colleen Wickey Mason, Smithsonian Institution, National Air and Space Museum, Room 3551, Washington, DC 20560.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Motherhood and the vagaries of mail systems notwithstanding, the Section Chair can report that as of now the business of the Section is on track and moving toward St. Louis. In fact, looking beyond to Seattle (1990), I have discussed with Joan Schwartz, member of the 1990 Program Committee, ideas for a session or sessions relating to business archives, incorporating presentations by Australian business archivists. I'd like to hear Section members' ideas on what I think could be a productive and very exciting opportunity to share expertise not only with our Australian counterparts but with our SAA colleagues (note the announcement at the Section's 1988 Annual Meeting that SAA has requested that the business archives perspective be better represented throughout the Society).

Directory of Business Archives. Steve Wheeler has forwarded the directory to me on floppy disk. My Administrative Officer will produce the letter-quality, camera-ready copy which Susan Grigg, Chair, Editorial Board, has informed me that she requires.

Long-Range Planning. Members will be aware that a planning memorandum was prepared by a Section Subcommittee in June 1988, as reported by Phil Mooney at the 1988 SAA Annual Meeting. Further, SAA Council has approved the CGAP proposal of three-year plans for all SAA units. This new reporting system will go into effect after the 1989 Annual Meeting, with the first three-year plan due on January 1, 1990 to cover the period September 1990-August 1993.

Preparation of the Section's plan will be discussed in detail at the St. Louis meeting. In order to make our discussion as directed as possible, members are requested to do the following between now and October:

1. Familiarize yourself with CGAP's report An Action Agenda for the Archival Profession: Institutionalizing the Planning Process (August 1988). Copies of the report are available from the SAA office.

2. Identify a specific project. Estimate the amount of resources (person-hours and dollar amounts) needed to complete the project.

Ideally, when we meet, we can work quickly through our various project ideas and draw up an implementation schedule. I hope the membership shares my enthusiasm for the planning process and will take this opportunity to engage in the pre-meeting thinking which will improve the quality of the Section's plan.

Updates. Updates on the NCPH proposal to NEH to produce a published guide and on-line databases to business collections (Karen Benedict), on the Kraft advocacy brochure (Laurie Cadigan Peterson), on the pre-conference workshop program (Phil Mooney), and on the business archives workshop follow-up survey (Linda Edgerly) will be presented at the Section's Annual Meeting. Members involved in these projects are requested to contact the Chair prior to the end of August.

Of Note. Anne Van Camp has written me regarding sponsorship of a meeting of the ICA Committee on Business Archives in NYC from September 25-28, 1989. Sponsors willing to host dinners and tours for the Committee should contact Anne.

Happy Summer! Meet you in St. Louis!

Jane Nokes

* * *

DIALOGUEOral History as Part of a Corporate Archives Program:Interviewing

Claudette John, CIGNA Corporation

In this, the fourth column on corporate oral history, I want to discuss interviewing techniques, to suggest how communication may be established between the interviewer and the interviewee. Most of what I have to say is my opinion and is based on my own experience. It is drawn as much from what I consider to be my failures as it is from my successes.

Much has been written about interviewing styles, and I suspect far more has been said. Advice ranges all the way from "Confront the interviewee; follow up aggressively; be nasty, if necessary," to "Be an exceptionally good listener/recorder; don't interfere; don't attempt to guide the session." Needless to say, in a corporate setting, consistently going for the jugular could cost you your program. More important is the fact that creating an atmosphere of antagonism will interfere with the easy flow of information and insight that is the essence of good oral history. On the other hand, while the opposite extreme might be useful in some circumstances, most business people are far more comfortable if the historian structures and guides the session. And the results usually will be more suitable for business uses as well as for research by scholars of business.

Should the interviewer be aggressive, or adopt a persona, or make outrageous statements to illicit particularly revealing responses? You will, of course, develop a style that is effective for you, appropriate for the program, and ethical. The only concrete answer I can give to that question is based on my own experience. Be honest with yourself and be honest with the interviewee. Your goal as an oral historian is not so much to get answers as to enable the interviewee to communicate fully with his or her future audience. You do that by allowing him to communicate with you in depth and on several levels. Establish a rapport with your subject. Look at him. Even though you must watch the tape, monitor sound levels and, perhaps, check your notes from time to time, keep eye contact as much as possible.

There is, without doubt, much more to establishing rapport than eye contact. You must be genuinely interested in what the interviewee has to say. The depth of that interest is revealed as much by the quality of your preparatory research as by your manner during the interview. There is no substitute for sincerity. Understanding on a personal as well as an intellectual level is crucial. In fact, there are times when nothing less than empathy will suffice; maybe we should measure

an oral historian's EQ--empathy quotient. My guess is that journalists, as a group, can use a far greater variety of interviewing techniques successfully than oral historians.

Does this mean that I have chosen not to ask the "tough" questions? No. I save them until later in the interview, or series, when the interviewee has become more comfortable with me and with the process. If I ask a tough question and don't get an answer, I may follow up by restating it. If that doesn't work or the answer seems not to be complete, I may broach the subject again from a different direction--and again, and again. Often I get additional information each time. I may drop the question until the next interview to let the interviewee think about it or come to terms with it. Some interviewees will come back to the question themselves, without prompting. Most of these "delayed" answers appear to be honest and fairly straightforward. If a response seems to be overly rationalized, just keep the interviewee talking around the subject; the truth--from his perspective--is likely to emerge. Certainly there are ways to check the accuracy of a statement: archival records, other interviews, internal consistency, etc.

Sometimes humor will bring forth an answer:

Me: Why were you made senior vice president of the ...
Group operations:

He: I had training in ...; I had experience in ..., and I suggested ... as a new product.

Me: Were there any other reasons?

He: No.

Me: Mr. [the CEO] had no other reason that you are aware of?

He: (Innocently) I don't think so.

Me: Oh, (smiling) I heard you were sent over there with a whip and a chair to tame them, to bring them into the corporate fold.

He laughed and admitted that, to some extent, that was true and proceeded to tell me the whole story.

This column is obviously a very subjective one. I hope it will inspire (or incite) some of you to share the benefits of your interviewing experience through "Dialogue." In the next issue of the Business Archives Newsletter, I would like to feature your comments on "Interviewing" and to discuss interview questions. I plan to use a couple of my own more successful questions and some from other oral historians who are doing business-related interviews. I especially want to include questions used by readers of this newsletter. Please send your favorite questions to me or to the editor. Remember, I'll identify you in the column unless you ask me not to. Write to Claudette John, CIGNA Corporation Archives, 1600 Arch St.,

Philadelphia, PA 19103 or to the editor of this newsletter before Thanksgiving. I hope to see you all at the SAA Annual Meeting in St. Louis this fall.

RECENTLY FORMED CORPORATE ARCHIVES

Pendleton Woolen Mills. Did your dad ever wear a Pendleton shirt or have you warmed yourself at a football game under a Pendleton lap robe? If so, you may be interested to know that Pendleton Woolen Mills of Portland, Oregon is taking steps to organize its archival resources and preserve its product history.

Pendleton is one of the woolen manufacturing companies whose roots extend back to the early years of what would become a thriving industry in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. (This area's climate and natural resources have lent themselves to the growing and manufacture of wool since the second half of the 19th century.) Among those counted as industry founders in the region was Thomas Kay, an English immigrant who, at the age of 25, became the manager of the Brownsville Woolen Mills. He went on to establish the Thos. Kay Woolen Mill Company in 1889 and to train his children, including his daughter Fannie, in his business. Today it is Fannie's descendants who carry on the manufacture of woolen piece goods, men's and women's apparel, and blankets at Pendleton Woolen Mills.

Following four months of planning by Linda Edgerly, Consulting Archivist, an archival program began operation at Pendleton Woolen Mills in Portland, Oregon in March 1989. Winthrop Group Project Archivist, G. Michael Harrell, is processing the core collection.

Society for Savings. Society for Savings, the first mutual savings bank in Connecticut, has a new archives. In operation since 1819, Society for Savings operates 37 branches throughout Connecticut and is one of New England's largest savings banks.

Society's new archivist is Lucy G. Sinagulia, who retired from the company in November of 1987 as Administrative Assistant to the President. She would appreciate hearing from other corporate archivists. Contact her at Society for Savings, 31 Pratt Street, P.O. Box 2200, Hartford, CT 06145-2200, (203) 727-5008.

Universal City Studios, Inc. Universal City Studios, Inc., Hollywood, California, is undertaking an archives feasibility study to determine what the company, a subsidiary of MCA, Inc., should do concerning its documentation and memorabilia. The

study is being done by Winthrop Group's Archives & Information Services Division. Information can be obtained by calling Linda Edgerly at (212) 865-6181.

Lazard Freres & Co. Foreign investment in the United States certainly is not a new phenomenon. Long before the Japanese and Saudis, the French were investing capital in the development of this nation's resources and industries. Reflecting that involvement are the records of Lazard Freres & Co. of New York City. Deborah Shea, Associate Consulting Archivist with the Winthrop Group, is managing a project to organize and process a collection of the firm's documentary material dating from 1871 to 1949. For more information phone Deborah at (212) 865-6181 or (617) 497-0777.

HAGLEY SPONSORS SPRING SEMINAR SERIES

The Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society, at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, DE, recently finished a series of four spring seminars which focused on corporate culture. The seminars were held in the Hagley Library on Friday, February 10, March 10, April 14, and May 12. The seminars were free and open to the public.

The 1989 series analyzed corporate culture from theoretical, historical, and practical perspectives. It considered what corporate culture is and how this concept may contribute to understanding both business history and contemporary business. The sessions also considered how corporate cultures are created, transmitted, expressed, tested, and how they change, or fail to change, over time.

For information about publications which may be forthcoming, contact Patrick Nolan, Executive Administrator, Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society, Hagley Museum and Library, P.O. Box 3630, Wilmington, DE 19807, (302) 658-2400.

HAGLEY FELLOWSHIPS, 1990-1991

The Hagley Museum and Library announces the availability of fellowships for 1990-1991.

ADVANCED RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, support independent study in Hagley's fields of interest at its Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society. Scholars working in the humanities or in those aspects of the

social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches are encouraged to apply. Fellowships are offered for six to twelve months' work with a maximum stipend of \$27,500.

These fellowships are restricted to individuals pursuing advanced research; awards will not be made to degree candidates or to persons seeking support for work leading to a degree. Completed applications must be received by February 15, 1990; awards will be announced by April 1, 1990.

DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS, in support of doctoral work in the topical fields of Hagley's research and collecting interests: business, industrial, and economic history, and the history of science and technology. No more than two fellowships, with a maximum stipend of \$13,500, will be offered to applicants from any university in the United States or abroad. The fellow must demonstrate the pertinence of Hagley's collections to the dissertation topic, spend nine to twelve months in residence at Hagley, and take part in Center programs. Completed applications must be received by February 15, 1990; awards will be announced by April 1, 1990.

GRANTS-IN-AID are also offered for the calendar year 1990. These grants support short term (two to eight weeks) research in Hagley's imprint, manuscript, pictorial, and artifact collections. They are available to both degree candidates and advanced scholars. Applications will be accepted throughout the year; awards in 1990 will not exceed \$1000 per month of study.

HAGLEY-WINTERTHUR FELLOWSHIPS IN ARTS AND INDUSTRIES are a cooperative program of short-term fellowships for scholars interested in the historical and cultural relationships between economic life and the arts, including design, architecture, crafts, and the fine arts. Jointly funded by Hagley and Winterthur, they support two to eight weeks research at both institutions. Applications will be accepted throughout the year; awards in 1990 will not exceed \$1000 per month of study.

For additional information, contact Patrick Nolan at the above address.

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVES

The NEA Newsletter for April 1989 (Vol. 16, no. 2) features articles about several long-established New England companies:

David E. Horn, archivist for the BOSTON EDISON COMPANY, discusses the distinction between archives and records, and traces the uses of (and management of) both in Boston Edison, a company which was formed in 1886 as the Edison Electric

illuminating Company of Boston. Horn makes the point that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between current records and non-current archives because some of Boston Edison's records which date from the 1890s and might rightly be considered archives are actually still in use today. Boston Edison's records (and archives) are frequently used in hearings before the Department of Public Utilities and in lawsuits.

Horn discusses the major activities the company has undertaken in its long history and the kinds of records such activities have generated: rights and permits, records associated with the construction of power plants, accounting and engineering records, and records of nuclear power plants, for example. The company's centennial in 1986 created an increased interest in and awareness of archival materials. At this time, approximately 80 cubic feet of material, dated 1886-1945, was transferred to the Special Collections Department of Baker Library at the Harvard Business School.

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THE NEW ENGLAND, a life insurance and financial services company chartered in 1835, houses the The New England's Historical Collection in its corporate library. The Historical Collection consists of company archives, artifacts from a former company Museum Room, and a small quantity of rare books which have to do with the history of life insurance. The archives began as a library staff activity designed to meet the company's information needs. A 150th anniversary of the company's charter in 1985 was the occasion for formalizing the archives; a professional archivist was hired in 1986. Currently, the Historical Collection includes 803 linear feet of archival records, the bulk of which date from 1844 to 1975.

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A viable archives has reappeared at AETNA LIFE & CASUALTY (Hartford, CT), after a hiatus of more than three years. In 1985, supervision of the archives by a professional ceased due to a reallocation of personnel and budgetary resources. This move came three years after employing an archivist to develop the archives and publicize its usefulness.

Already too-busy corporate librarians were asked to administer the archives and answer reference questions. The librarians faced the dilemma of either turning away historical reference questions or attempting to answer them--in spite of their best efforts--with the risk of erroneous or incomplete information. Historical information requests plummeted 90% in four years from their 1983 peak.

In late 1987, the breakdown of the archives function

reached the attention of a divisional president. Dismayed at the situation, he made several phone calls, corporate red tape was cut, and by February 1989, the former archivist had been rehired. The rehire was particularly significant because it came at a time when a number of positions were undergoing review and possible elimination.

A year later, the AETna Archives hums along. Important accessions flow in, reference requests for 1987 topped the 1983 mark, a small but adequate budget allows for routine processing plus encapsulation and photo conservation projects, and a tired but functional personal computer makes automation a reality. Ironically, the archives is better off now than before the loss of professional staff three years ago.

AETna's experience is a case study that should be considered whenever any archives--business or otherwise--is facing the axe. For more information, contact Leith Johnson, AETna, 5112, 151 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT 06156 or call (203) 273-0774.

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THE MITRE CORPORATION is an independent, not-for-profit, systems engineering firm engaged in scientific and technical activities for the public benefit under contract to various government agencies. It was established in 1958 by MIT and the Air Force as an outgrowth of Lincoln Laboratory. The current workforce is approximately 6,000 people located worldwide.

The Corporate Archives was organized in 1963 to preserve material of historical value to the corporation. This charge is fulfilled by detailing MITRE's origin, purpose, and accomplishments. The Archives, a component of records management, is located at the corporate headquarters in Bedford, MA. It contains more than 1,300 cubic feet of material.

The collections are varied in form, with paper being the largest medium. Increasingly, machine readable formats are being deposited; these collections include over 200 motion picture films, 28,000 photographic negatives, 30,000 microfiche, and 105 audio/video tapes. All collections are stored in controlled environment vaults. Ultra violet light, humidity, and temperature are controlled within narrow limits. Because of varied storage requirements, paper is housed separate from other formats. Currently, Archives' Machine Readable Records share a newly designed vault with the Records Center. Both of the storage facilities are protected by an intrusion alarm and a halon fire suppression system.

The Archives researches 175 requests for information per year. The Whirlwind Computer and SAGE Air Defense collections contain the most frequently requested material. Although access

to The MITRE Corporation Archives is restricted to MITRE personnel, special requests from outside researchers are considered. In the past year, research material has been provided to the Smithsonian Institution, Johnson Presidential Library, Digital Corporation, MIT, and numerous historians and lawyers. For more information contact David W. Baldwin, Corporate Archivist, The MITRE Corp., Burlington Rd., Bedford, MA 01730.

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If you would like to feature your archives in the Business Archives Newsletter, please send a profile to the editor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rosalie Schwartz is conducting a study of the Cuban tourist industry in the 1920s. She is seeking information from anyone who might know the location of the corporate papers for the Bowman Biltmore Hotel Corporation (incorporated in New York in 1924), the Ward Steamship Company, the Munson Steamship Company, the Flagler Railroad Company, or the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Steamship Company. Contact Ms. Schwartz at San Diego State University, Department of History, College of Arts and Letters, San Diego, CA 92182-0380, (619) 594-5262.

The Glennan-Webb-Seamans Project for Research in Space History is conducting an Aerospace Industry History Workshop, to be held at the Smithsonian Institution November 13-15, 1989. The primary purpose of the workshop is to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of aerospace corporations about the preservation of corporate records. The workshop will feature three panel discussions with participants from archives and industry, along with two keynote addresses. For more information, contact Colleen Wickey Mason, Department of Space History, National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 357-2828.

Dr. Jeffrey L. Sturchio has accepted the position of Corporate Archivist at Merck & Co., Inc., in Rahway, NJ. Prior to accepting his new responsibilities, Dr. Sturchio was Associate Director of the Beckman Center for History of Chemistry in Philadelphia and Corporate Historian at AT&T in Warren, NJ. Contact Dr. Sturchio at Merck & Co., Inc., P.O. Box 2000, Rahway, NJ 07065-0900, (201) 594-4375.

The Flemish Association for Industrial Archaeology is engaged in a struggle with the government of Belgium to save the Limburg coal mines, an important part of the industrial heritage

of northeastern Flanders, from destruction. Buildings and equipment will be destroyed to make way for tourist attractions. Adriaan Linters, chairman of the FAIA, asks for the support of colleagues in the U.S. and Canada who are interested in the preservation of industrial history. For more information, contact Adriaan Linters, Chairman, Flemish Association for Industrial Archaeology, Box 30, P.O. Maria Hendrikaplein, B-9000, Gent-12, Belgium.

PUBLICATIONS

The April 1989 issue of Moonbeams, a publication of the P & G Sales Organization at Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio, features the Procter & Gamble Archives. The article, "Then, Now and Tomorrow," emphasizes the valuable business applications of the P & G archival collections. These include management development and training, trademark protection, litigation support, and packaging design documentation and research. A generous selection of illustrations in four-color grace the article, front and back covers show items from the collections, and Ed Rider, Corporate Archivist, is pictured three times!

Still another Wall Street Journal article focuses on corporate archives, providing further examples of their benefits. In "Companies Plumb the Past to Protect the Present," (WSJ, Monday, 1/16/89), Ellen Nickenzie Lawson cites once-in-a-lifetime discoveries of documents worth millions of dollars which have been made in corporate archives; the money-saving role an archives can play in executive searches by providing corporations with already-collected and analyzed information on previous searches; and the benefits of having an archives when a company is in sales and acquisitions negotiations.

Bruemmer, Bruce H., and Hochheiser, Sheldon. The High-Technology Company: A Historical Research and Archival Guide. Minneapolis: Charles Babbage Institute, 1989. "... presents a generic description of industrial activity in the high-technology environment, and introduces a probe technique for obtaining general historical and documentary information about these companies." [From the Introduction, p. 1.] High-technology industries include aerospace, biological, chemical, communications, computing, electronics, medical equipment, pharmaceutical, and test equipment.

Flamm, Kenneth. Creating the Computer. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1988. A survey of the U.S. computer industry, its technology, the role of the federal government, and

competition from Europe and Japan.

Simmons, W. W. Inside IBM: The Watson Years, A Personal Memoir. Bryn Mawr, PA: Dorrance, 1988. An account of the author's personal history in IBM sales and product planning.

Smith, George David. From Monopoly to Competition: The Transformation of Alcoa, 1888-1986. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

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