

BUSINESS ARCHIVES: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

BY

CHRISTOPHER L. HIVES

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO, 1981

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARCHIVAL STUDIES

THE FACULTY OF ARTS

Administered by

School of Library, Archival and Information Studies

and

Department of History

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard:

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

MARCH 1985

© Christopher L. Hives

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of School of Library, Archival and Information Studies

The University of British Columbia  
1956 Main Mall  
Vancouver, Canada  
V6T 1Y3

Date March 25, 1985.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to identify the reasons why business archives have not been widely developed in North America and to suggest the changes which are necessary to correct the situation. Although this study addresses itself specifically to the experience of business archives, many of the issues it discusses can easily be related to other forms of corporate archives such as those, for example, of a municipality, university, labour union, or hospital. All corporate archives confront the common problem that the practical value of an archival programme must be clearly demonstrated. This usually involves justification based primarily on administrative rather than cultural criteria. Therefore, this study aims overall to place business archives within a broader discussion of the purposes which archives ought to serve in our community.

The underlying theme of this thesis is the need to formulate a more comprehensive view of the role of archives than has been evident in the past, one which is sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing and diverse requirements of modern society. This requires that the archivist accept a broader role than he accepted in the past, when he often served as a passive custodian patiently awaiting the arrival of "retired" documents.

An analysis of the development of business archives illustrates that a strictly historical criterion for maintaining records has met with only limited success in the corporate community. Rather than attempting to convince businessmen as to the cultural benefits (important as they are) to be derived from

the establishment of an archival programme, it might be more prudent to emphasize new potential services which could be rendered to the sponsoring agencies. In exploring this proposition the thesis first considers the elements influencing the historical growth of business archives and then suggests potential new areas into which corporate archivists might move. The study also discusses the ramifications of these changes for issues such as appraisal and access and, finally, identifies those factors which will be particularly important in determining the future success of business archives. In assuming such a broad approach to the study of corporate archives, the thesis raises some fundamental questions about the orientation of the archival profession and, as such, may contribute to the formulation of archival theory.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	v
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II	
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.....	9
CHAPTER III	
JUSTIFYING CORPORATE ARCHIVES.....	46
CHAPTER IV	
IMPLEMENTATION - ARCHIVES, RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.....	63
CHAPTER V	
APPRAISAL AND ACCESS.....	81
CHAPTER VI	
FUTURE PROSPECTS.....	106
CHAPTER VII	
CONCLUSION.....	120
APPENDIX I.....	128
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	133

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my appreciation to the following individuals who read various drafts of this thesis and offered some very helpful comments - Dr. F.H. Armstrong, Bryan Corbett, Vicky Williams, Bob Taylor-Vaisey, Garron Wells, Chris Norman and Dr. Richard Pollay. I am also indebted to my classmates, Diane Beattie, David Bullock, James Fraser, Glen Isaac, Robin Keirstead and Jan Rollins who, through numerous discussions over the past two years, helped me to formulate my ideas about archives. I would like to thank Angela Redish whose patience in reading and rereading the various drafts of this thesis contributed significantly to its final form. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Terry Eastwood and Hugh Taylor who challenged me to consider the subject of archives in something beyond its traditional confines.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1938, a young government archivist writing in the fourth issue of the American Archivist made the following observation.

The historian of the future who seeks to interpret our contemporary life without taking into account the shaping forces of modern business will but touch on the fringes of the subject. For more than a generation people have spoken of two capitals, Washington and Wall Street....We are careful to preserve the records of one capital, but we have sadly neglected the other.<sup>1</sup>

Although almost fifty years have passed since Oliver W. Holmes penned these remarks, the future of business archives remains uncertain. During this period the efforts to preserve the records of our business and economic past have met with varying degrees of success and, in the process, have raised a number of interesting issues, some shared by the archival community in general and others unique to the corporate world. The archivist who dares to tread in the business world, controlled as it is by the ever present "bottom line", is in many respects still like a pioneer, confronting novel situations and bounded only by his imagination.

\* \* \* \* \*

Increasingly, academics have come to appreciate the important role played by businessmen and entrepreneurs in the historical development of North America. In surveying the American experience, Harvard historian Ralph W. Hidy noted this

enhanced awareness.

We have developed a business civilization. No other single group in our society has been more influential in raising our standards of living, in setting the direction of our institutional and social changes, in affecting our national practices and international relations. Only by understanding what businessmen have done and their ways of doing it can we get a realistic appraisal of the broad history of the American people.<sup>2</sup>

Historian Roger Hall echoed this sentiment in observing that "Canada is a country which owes its existence more than most to the efforts of business firms."<sup>3</sup>

Although scholars have slowly come to recognize the potential value of historical business records, the same does not generally hold true for business executives. In studying the treatment accorded historical records by businesses early in this century one tends to witness a periodic "housecleaning" of all old documents which had fulfilled any functional or legal requirements. The ever-increasing volume of records associated with the transaction of business generally forced companies to store old material in whatever facilities could be secured (including attics, warehouses and basements), leaving the documents at the mercy of fire, mildew, vermin or equally unpleasant ravages. Viewed as liabilities, these dusty and musty records would be destroyed periodically to make room for more recent material. Such an approach made little allowance for the systematic identification or preservation of archival records. The gradual recognition of the importance of preserving permanently valuable records is basically a phenomenon of the latter half of the 20th century in North America, although it is still not yet a widely accepted postulate.



Unfortunately, the role of archival programmes within corporate organizations has been defined in very restricted terms which have often stifled necessary resource allocation. Justification of archives using cultural criteria has met with only limited success in the field. This is, however, not to suggest that the blame for this development should be shouldered primarily by businessmen. Instead the blame must be shared by historians and archivists. One spokesman attributed the inadequate preservation of corporate documentation to a variety of factors including:

...a persistent failure to appreciate the research significance of business records and company papers; the concern of existing businesses for confidentiality and discretion regarding access to certain materials and their desire that research have only positive public relations value; the cost and scarcity of the space and staff required for storage, analysis and the management of voluminous records, the large portion of which is either routine or duplicate.<sup>4</sup>

Also to this list can be added the failure of the archival profession to provide a product sufficiently flexible to serve the practical requirements of business.

In considering the growth of corporate archives over the past fifty years, one observes that many corporate archival programmes have been implemented during frantic searches for historical material necessary to complete a fiftieth or one-hundredth anniversary history. A typical instance is the Ford Motor Company which in 1953 set out to review its accomplishments over the past fifty years and "discovered its institutional memory was in bits and pieces physically diffused through hundreds of files, in dozens of locations."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the company moved quickly to establish a central

repository for the records of the company and those of its founder. Unfortunately, this approach has led to long-term neglect of important corporate documentation and its inadvertent destruction before coming under the care of the archives. In many cases, important records necessary to write the anniversary history had already been destroyed.

Interest in the records of business has been growing slowly in the past few decades. In 1980, The Directory of Business Archives in the United States and Canada reported 210 archival programmes of varying size and scope, 75% of which had been established after 1960.<sup>6</sup> These figures suggest that the situation of business archives is not totally bleak, as a sizable number of companies have recognized the value of archival programmes. As Harold Anderson has optimistically observed:

Business archives are coming of age as more and more companies reap the benefits of their most useful and inexpensive corporate assets. Time-worn documents, leather bound ledgers, long forgotten cartons of administrative files and faded photographs are being dusted off and integrated with computer printouts, magnetic tapes, microfilms and laser discs, to create information data bases potentially as powerful as any a corporation has at its disposal.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, there has not been widespread support for the idealized role of archives in the business world such as Anderson describes.

Although a fairly extensive literature on the subject of business archives exists, little of it is very penetrating. Two common themes are that archives have not enjoyed widespread acceptance in the corporate setting and that the establishment of more programmes would be highly desirable. Many articles

merely make a plea for greater promotion of business archives. While most articles generally address some of the benefits to be derived from corporate archives, they often fail to adequately consider their unique problems or to analyse the underlying issues. The literature has failed to discuss comprehensively the myriad potential functions which a business archives might fulfill, particularly through a close association with records and information management. Also, there has been too little emphasis placed on factors which distinguish business archives from other archives. Such considerations have important ramifications for determining the character of the entire profession in the future. For example, is it realistic to argue that business records should be preserved primarily to fulfill cultural criteria? If not, does the archivist who justifies his programme on the basis of administrative utility continue to share common goals with his counterpart in public institutions?

A discussion of the role of business archives contributes to a more comprehensive determination of the evolving flexibility of the profession. As will be argued, the position of the business archivist calls for something more than academic training in history. The traditional notion of the archivist as passive collector of documents from which to write history is particularly inappropriate for the business archivist. If one accepts this expanded perception of the role of archivists, there is little in existing articles which presents a broad overview of the place of business archives in society and the best means for implementing their establishment. A close study of the literature does, however, provide the opportunity for

some synthesis and re-examination of the underlying issues associated with corporate archives.

One of the major problems in any discussion of corporate archives is that of definition. Business archives are difficult to characterize because they vary significantly in staffing and volume of materials maintained. Programmes might be operated by a single, part-time employee or as many as ten full-time staff; collections may range from ten to many thousands of linear feet. In offering a comprehensive definition of an ideal operation, Douglas Bakken made this observation.

A true corporate archives is not simply an information operation, nor does it consist of records haphazardly solicited and maintained by a well-meaning, devoted and longtime employee. Nor is a corporate archives a department that saves every piece of paper the company created since its founding. It is neither a library that organizes material on an item-by-item system nor a records management program concerned about the destruction of records. A more appropriate description for a corporate archives is a department specifically charged with the systematic acquisition, preservation and servicing of corporate historical records and artifacts deemed to be of permanent value in documenting the company's founding and subsequent growth.<sup>8</sup>

This description aptly outlines some of the positive and negative factors which must be considered in the implementation of corporate archival programmes. Archivists would be well advised to consider these reflections as they endeavour to persuade businessmen to sponsor such in-house operations. The success of these private archives will determine the level of preservation of documentary history of business, which has played such a vital role in the development of North America.

This thesis is intended to address a number of important issues associated with North American business archives. It

reviews the general historical development of business archives and identifies some of the early trends in the field; considers the various functions which an active corporate programme could fulfill and the best means of implementation; the particular problems presented by appraisal and access and, finally, offers some thoughts about future courses of development. In fulfilling these expressed objectives, the thesis also contributes to an understanding of the relationship of business archives to the broader archival community. In its discussion of the historical development, justification, appraisal and access in business archives, this thesis stresses the advantages of a broader perspective for the role of archives and the need to develop a more flexible product to meet the requirements of an increasingly diverse audience.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Oliver W. Holmes, "The Evaluation and Preservation of Business Archives," American Archivist 1 (1938), p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>Wilbur G. Kurtz, "Business Archives in the Corporate Function," Records Management Quarterly 4 (1970), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Roger Hall, "Minding Our Business," Archivaria 3 (1976/77), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>T.H.B. Symons, To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies (Ottawa: Association of University and Colleges of Canada, 1975), p. 78.

<sup>5</sup>Henry E. Edmunds, "The Ford Motor Company Archives," American Archivist 15 (1952), p. 99.

<sup>6</sup>Linda Edgerly, "Business Archives Guidelines," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 286.

<sup>7</sup>Harold P. Anderson, "Business Archives: A Corporate Asset," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 264.

<sup>8</sup>Douglas A. Bakken, "Corporate Archives Today," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 281.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

A study of the evolution of business archives in North America reveals the emergence of two distinct methods of preservation in the first half of this century. The first involved the collection of business records in existing repositories while the second featured an attempt to persuade businesses to maintain their own archives. The participation of interested academics played an important role in establishing the direction for both of these approaches. Consequently, this chapter considers both the historical evolution of the treatment accorded to business records as well as the development of historical methodology. This approach is particularly useful in providing a better understanding of the evolving attitudes and practical considerations inherent in the preservation of business records in North America.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians in the United States and Canada expressed little interest in business and economic history, preferring instead to concentrate on political and constitutional subjects. In assessing the nature of this focus, R.A. Shiff suggested that historians of the period were "too European oriented with primary emphasis on soldiers, politicians and ecclesiastics."<sup>1</sup> The lack of interest in studying the lives and impact of North American businessmen and their enterprises led to a neglect of the sources and, as a result, much of the early documentation

disappeared and can never be replaced.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest commentators who turned their attention to the rise of business after the Civil War found the business practices of the era highly distasteful. They were the muckrakers who developed the notorious "robber baron" myth. In commenting on their impact, Allan Nevins offered this assessment.

Business was sordid and in part anti-social. It was natural that the attitude of the critics and mudrakers, especially as it was backed by reformers from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson onward, should be transferred to the minds of teachers and the pages of standard texts. The uglier passages in business history were emphasized, the brighter chapters forgotten. The fact that business morals, like political morals, were in a state of evolution upward was ignored.<sup>3</sup>

This negative attitude toward business was perpetuated by the increasing influence of the Marxist and socialist commentators who viewed capitalism as inherently evil. However, as historian O.E. Burnette has cautioned, one must remember that the "earliest historians of American business were political reformers, not objective scholars."<sup>4</sup> Among the earliest studies were Ida M. Tarbell's, The History of the Standard Oil Company (1904), Gustavus Myers' History of the Great American Fortunes (1907) and A History of Canadian Wealth (1914), Charles and Mary Beard's, The Rise of American Civilization (1927) and Matthew Josephson's, The Robber Barons (1934).

Allan Nevins has suggested that this negative, one-sided view of business was inevitable, given that there were few business records available for study during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In fact, availability of source material



may have been a moot point because until the rise of "university schools of business, or business administration, it was difficult to give would-be historians a specialized training, and even then they had no proper facilities."<sup>5</sup> In such circumstances, the unflattering view of business continued to be the norm.

One of the major factors hindering the development of objective business history was the lack of adequate documentation. "American corporate business grew to maturity behind a protective screen of closed books and locked files, thereby breeding a mutual distrust between itself and historical judgment."<sup>6</sup> Businesses rarely bothered to collect, sort and preserve their records often opting instead for destruction. This grew out of the tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which held that a man or a company's business was a matter of legitimate concern to that man or that company alone and there was little interest in opening records to the prying eyes of researchers.<sup>7</sup> Even those interested in writing business history without the muckraking disposition were handicapped by the lack of available records and many turned to secondary sources, including court records and reports of various government investigations. Historian Ralph Hower suggested that to "write the history of business from such sources is much like writing the history of marriage from the records of divorce courts. It yields part of the story - indeed an essential part, but one that gives little inkling of the whole truth."<sup>8</sup> This, in turn, perpetuated the negative, one-sided assessment of business.

Company officials were particularly concerned about the potential damage to the reputation of the firm which might result from historical research. The animosity which developed during the muckraking era had a lingering effect, as Allen Nevins observed.

Even when the president of the corporation was ready to give the historian access some director would raise an angry objection: "What good would it do to invite the historian in?" he would ask. "How can we be sure that he is not a wolf in sheep's clothing? - that he is not another Gustavus Myers masquerading as a Francis Parkman?....he may find out about those frauds on the government back in the 1890's - about that treasurer who was dismissed for embezzlement, although it was all hushed up - about those shady advertising practices! No! Be discreet! Let's keep our dirt to ourselves."

The tendency to either destroy company records or deny access both grew out of and perpetuated the negative view of business which emerged in the muckraking period.<sup>10</sup> Fear of injuring the corporate reputation prevented the generous access to materials necessary to produce an objective account of the contribution of early business enterprises. For these reasons, the unflattering view of emerging corporations continued to strongly influence attitudes in the early twentieth century.

Although a powerful force in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the muckraking approach to the study of business did not go unopposed. This period also witnessed the advent of objective business history and the development of associated resources particularly around a university whose name has become synonymous with the study of business. The idea of collecting business manuscripts for scholarly research began on a limited basis at Harvard University shortly after the turn of the century. Interest in preserving business records was further

enhanced by the foundation of the Harvard Business School in 1908 under the direction of Edwin F. Gay. In 1916, the library reported its first sizable acquisition when it obtained the business records of Samuel Slater who, by the time of his death in 1835, was generally regarded as the country's leading textile industrialist.<sup>11</sup>

Support and encouragement for the collection of business records was provided by the foundation of the Business Historical Society in 1925. The expressed mandate of the Society was to

...encourage and aid the study of the evolution of business in all periods and in all countries. Further, to formulate the results of such investigations and studies and publish them in such a form as may make them of service to the business community necessitates adequate tools for such investigations. This means the collection of all possible original records, data, etc. having to do with the beginning and progress of business, and the depositing of this material at some centre accessible to all. For these reasons the getting together of an adequate and comprehensive library of such data is essential to the purpose of the Society.<sup>12</sup>

Much of the enthusiasm generated by the Society was channelled into the collection and preservation of archival records. The preservation of business records was furthered two years later with the construction of the Baker Library whose main objective was to provide corporate documentation for research at the Harvard School of Business. It also served as the official repository for the business records collected by members of the Business Historical Society.

For a brief period the Baker Library acquired historical material from all over the country and there was some thought given to the concept of making it a national repository for

business records. However, upon recognizing the magnitude of a national project, such grandiose plans were judged to be impractical.

Sheer bulk of documentation, which had closed other doors to business records, soon swamped the facilities of an institution devoted exclusively to their collection. The Baker Library was soon forced to retreat to the more restricted field of the business records of New England, but its pioneering work conclusively demonstrated that the collection of business records for historical research was possible and worthwhile.<sup>13</sup>

In recognizing the need to specialize geographically in the early 1930s, the Baker Library decided to return a number of collections to their places of origin. Although many libraries accepted limited amounts of corporate records, it was becoming apparent that this could not be done on a large scale by public institutions.

Francis Blouin has pointed out that the efforts of both the Business Historical Society and the Baker Library coincided with the "first formal attempts to establish business history as a specialized field of historical research, as well as early attempts to define business administration as an academic and professional field of inquiry."<sup>14</sup> Through the efforts of individuals such as Edwin F. Gay, Norman Gras and Henrietta Larson based at Harvard University in the 1920s, the study of business history became increasingly refined and more objective in its outlook. In providing a brief description of the emerging field in 1944, Gras suggested:

Business history is not romance or scandal, propagandist expose or hero-worshipping. Ideally, it is an earnest attempt to learn and set down in an orderly fashion the facts and ideas that have underlain the organized plan of using capital and employing men in order to serve society's needs.<sup>15</sup>

The ability to produce the objective style of business history as advocated by Gras remained contingent upon the willingness of business to provide access to its records. The idea of collecting material in existing institutions was motivated in part by a desire to transfer the burden of cost of preservation away from business and, thus, removing one of the important barriers to academic research.

By the second half of the 1930s, it became apparent that the Baker model of collecting business records was not practical given the growing volume of material and this concept slowly gave way to an alternative view. Oliver Holmes observed that by 1938 companies were less enthusiastic about having their records removed from their offices because they might have need to make reference to them or, more importantly, the information therein contained could be used against them if open to public scrutiny.<sup>16</sup> This elicited a new response from the academic community as indicated by Holmes.

...the social and economic historians did not want to leave the ultimate preservation of valuable records to chance, nor did they want to wait forever for access....In this dilemma, knowing that they could not care for these bulky records, and that he could not get them if he could, the historian set about persuading the large companies to consider the value of their own records and make provisions accordingly for their care.<sup>17</sup>

This, then, represented the beginning of the corporate archives movement and the slow shift away from the idea of centralized collections of business records.

In pursuing this new approach to ensure the preservation of historical business records, Holmes suggested that the Business Historical Society's pamphlet by historian Ralph M. Hower, "The

Preservation of Business Records" (1937), should be widely distributed to businesses. Hower's pamphlet, aimed at educating businesses, libraries, historical societies and others interested in the preservation of business records, acknowledged that few of the records generated by corporations had long-term value. His interest centred on that material with permanent value which he believed to have important implications for three distinct groups -- business itself, historians and the general public.<sup>18</sup>

Because Hower approached the issue primarily from the historian's perspective, many of his comments and suggestions weighed heavily in favour of research requirements. Consequently, much of his rationalization for preserving corporate records was couched in such terms as these.

...if company records are systematically destroyed, the researchers will be obliged to rely on inadequate data, such as human recollections and source material from outside the company, which often yield an incomplete or misleading report. If, on the other hand, all firm records are preserved, without discrimination, the researcher will have to waste precious days and weeks digging through irrelevant material.<sup>19</sup>

One of Hower's recurring themes, the need to relate the objective story of business, reveals more than an interest in the history as an academic exercise and reflects something of the period in which he wrote. He was deeply affected by the prevailing tendency of business literature toward muckraking as well as the profound effect of the depression which left a lasting negative impression of the impact of business upon society. Hower's firm belief in the importance of preserving archival records from which to write accurate accounts of

business activities derived from what he perceived to be a very real threat to the prevailing order of society brought on by the recent depression.

Business must frankly face the fact that the public ultimately will decide whether private enterprise is to continue or is to be stifled in favour of some other economic system. If private enterprise is worth saving, business records will help us prove its usefulness. It is clear too that the public may, if it acts without information, ultimately destroy a valuable institution which has been painfully developed over hundreds of years and can be rebuilt only at great cost. It is, therefore, to the advantage of both the public and business that the historical records of business be preserved and studied.<sup>20</sup>

Hower's stated objective in selecting records for historical purposes was to "choose material which will yield accurate and reasonably complete information about every phase of the business - production, distribution, management, finances, personnel, accounting and plant."<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, Hower's criteria for appraisal were weak in two areas. First, he failed to define what material should be preserved and as a result it seemed that virtually everything should be retained. Secondly, because Hower focused on the individual firm, he valued operational records at the expense of the material which cast the company within a broader synthesis and reflected the place of the business in the overall economy and society in general.<sup>22</sup> Because these themes did not become prominent in business historiography until later, it is not suprising that Hower failed to anticipate them.

In assessing the contributions of the Business Historical Society which culminated in the sponsorship of Hower's pamphlet, Francis Blouin judges it to be a "model archival enterprise"

wherein scholars in the field met regularly with business executives, librarians, curators and together they worked both to define business history as a specific field of historical inquiry and to collect historical records and ensure their ability to researchers.<sup>23</sup>

Blouin lauds both the spirit of cooperation evident in the early development of the Society and the leadership exhibited by historians in attempting to preserve the records of business. While the idea of developing cooperation is sound and still worthy of pursuit, the leadership of historians in this quest, although commendable, was an important factor in the failure of this experiment. Understandably, historians continued to justify the preservation of corporate records for research purposes, and hence lobbied for access to materials from which they could write their histories. Like Hower, most historians believed that their work would represent a significant contribution to business. Although the preparation of unbiased histories would help to dispel the negative image of business as developed by muckrakers, it offered little else in concrete terms for the functioning of individual firms. While appealing to those businessmen predisposed to an interest in history, this approach held limited appeal and, consequently, the early cooperative spirit began to dissipate slowly.

This is not to suggest an inherent failure on the part of historians but rather to observe that the undertaking was doomed from the outset. The leadership role inevitably fell to historians because that profession was slowly awakening to the potential research value in corporate records. Businessmen were



unsuited to this task because they did not appreciate what functions old records could fulfill within the organization and often viewed them simply as liabilities. The archival profession was only in its infancy in the 1930s and among the small band of archivists few, with Holmes a notable exception, were interested in the problem of preserving business records. Despite the waning of the cooperative spirit of the Business Historical Society, historians continued to influence the direction and success of business archival programmes for many years to come.

In addition to supporting the formation of corporate archives and using Hower's pamphlet to convince businessmen of the importance of archival programmes, Holmes also recognized the need to preserve the records of defunct and small-scale operations. He advocated the idea of establishing co-operative central repositories focused by industry and geographical location. The archival records accumulated in this fashion would facilitate research into vast warehouses of knowledge if, he calculated, business was willing to finance the undertaking to the amount of five million dollars per year.<sup>24</sup>

Holmes recognized the problems hindering the preservation of business records and, in advancing his ideas about corporate archives, he hoped that swift action would be forthcoming. Although little gain was initially registered in the corporate community, the Society of American Archivists appointed Holmes and Henrietta Larson of the Business Historical Society to a Business Archives Committee in 1938. Holmes suggested a nine-point programme which included:

...the collection of information on archival work on business records and of data on trade and management

associations in their relation to record problems; the development of a means to prevent wanton destruction of business records; and the stimulation of interest on the part of business organizations and officials.<sup>25</sup>

The concept of corporate archives, first mooted by Holmes, received concrete expression in the 1940s. Fearing that records of permanent value were not being properly maintained, Harvey S. Firestone Jr. decided to implement an archival programme at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in 1943. The primary purpose for establishing the archives was to preserve the wartime production records which would provide valuable sources for future historians writing about the war effort of American business and industry.<sup>26</sup> An astute businessman, Firestone also recognized other potential benefits growing out of the archival programme.

In addition to a factual record of the growth and development of the company, Mr. Firestone Jr. wanted for reference an accurate account of the problems that had confronted the company and the methods used to solve them. This, he felt, would be helpful not only in conducting the daily affairs of business but also in charting its future course.<sup>27</sup>

Firestone thus perceived the archives as much more than a source for writing history. He considered it a potential corporate tool which, by reflecting the practices of the past, would be useful in formulating future policy. In 1943, his company secured the services of historian William Overman who became North America's first official corporate archivist.

In the 1940s, the problems presented by business records became particularly acute. Those who subscribed to the "collecting" tradition, as begun by the Business Historical Society some two decades earlier, had failed to develop adequate

appraisal criteria to reduce the volume of material under their care or provide adequate means of access to the information in their holdings. Arthur Cole has suggested that by this time some 140 libraries and historical societies were collecting economic and business manuscripts.<sup>28</sup>

Although the Business Historical Society, through its sponsorship of Ralph Hower's pamphlet, attempted to deal with the problems presented by modern business records, its efforts met with only limited success. In the 1940s, the interests of the Society's members focused increasingly on the development of business history as a field of study and moved away from the archival collection orientation which had dominated its early experience. In reflecting on this shift in interest, Blouin has suggested that initial successes were difficult to repeat.

The thrill of discovering eighteen- and nineteenth-century banking, textile and other business records quickly gave way to concern regarding the problems of dealing with the bulky late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century records. The Hower piece was designed to help archivists come to grips with the problem, but businesses were growing in size and complexity even as he wrote.<sup>29</sup>

The records of business were accumulating at unprecedented rates. In 1943, Carl McKenzie, a businessman by training and experience, observed that the ever-increasing volume of material threatened to retard the functioning of administrative and clerical staffs.<sup>30</sup> He cited two reasons for the changed condition of business records.

Two considerations have changed the attitude toward this question in the last decade: the larger size and complexity of the business unit and the paternalistic attitude of government sometimes over zealously active in the prevention of real or doubtful evils under the influence of new-era political ideas. Concomitant with this protective interest of government has come a

growing realization on the part of business itself that more systematic procedures are necessary to guard against future detrimental or burdensome developments.<sup>31</sup>

McKenzie advocated the need to develop systematic retention and preservation of corporate records based on the implementation of a classification scheme which would ensure the destruction of useless material.

As evidence of this growing concern on the part of both businessmen and historians, the editor of the Journal of Economic History requested Arthur H. Cole, librarian of the Harvard Business School and long-time member of the Business Historical Society, to write an article outlining the practical problems inherent in the preservation and accessibility of business records.<sup>32</sup> In his article, "The Accumulated Development of Unsolved Problems", Cole identified two distinct areas of concern presented by modern business manuscripts - "the bulk of physical quantity of recent business records, and the lack of [a] mechanism for equating scholars' demands with librarians' supplies."<sup>33</sup> By this Cole meant simply that historians, librarians and archivists had failed to adequately identify those records which would be most useful in the course of historical research.

In reviewing the alternative methods of treatment, Cole identified the two schools of thought on the subject.

The older one has been the search for or acceptance of gifts or deposits from business institutions by universities, historical societies, and the like. The other is of more recent development and consists of the endeavour to persuade business institutions to preserve their own material.<sup>34</sup>

Cole concluded that while it might be possible to house most

business records produced before 1890 in existing library and archival repositories, the sheer volume of modern materials rendered this option unworkable for all but a tiny fraction of modern records. He then considered other factors which militated against preservation in specific repositories. Emphasizing "internal elements of handling", Cole cited the extra space and staff to handle the material, lack of standards or recognized procedures for handling and setting up business records, and the high cost of storage versus the low frequency of use.<sup>35</sup>

Cole then turned his attention to the second solution which, first mooted by Oliver W. Holmes, suggested that business maintain their own archival records. Cole reviewed the development of the recently-implemented Clough-Cochran approach to preserving business records. Reacting to the limited success in encouraging businesses to maintain their own records, historians Shepard B. Clough and Thomas C. Cochran focused their efforts on the New York metropolitan area which contained "a greater volume of important records than any similar section of the United States."<sup>36</sup> In assessing the success of past attempts to preserve corporate documentation, they suggested that "together [they] barely ruffled the surface of the vastness of papers reposing in vaults, private libraries and storage warehouses."<sup>37</sup> It was their goal to "prevail upon business companies to introduce systematic methods for condensing, abstracting, and cataloguing such records as they possess with a view to make them available to both competent scholars and officers of particular companies."<sup>38</sup> Consequently, the 1940s witnessed one of the first organized and concerted efforts to

make business aware of the significance of its own records and the importance of their preservation in an orderly fashion.

Such an effort was indeed timely particularly in light of the tremendous growth in the production of records. Unfortunately, many records even when retained by the company were often stored in a manner which discouraged their use. Take for example the case of the economist who, when studying the effect of railroad rates on the production of grain in his state, requested access to the railroad company's records. At first the company attempted to dissuade him from his task but later reluctantly granted him permission. He was then driven to an old roundhouse at the outskirts of town where the records were stored.

Once inside the dark, unheated building, the economist found himself face to face with a vast collection of several thousand large wooden storage boxes containing literally some sixty million individual documents. The entire collection was poorly labelled and universally covered with a thick layer of coal dust. Although his ardour had visibly cooled, the researcher began his perusal of the first box. After hours of continuous labour he laid aside the last document of the first box. His white shirt was by now more than a "tattle-tale" grey, his face showed a smear of coal dust from under one eye to the lobe of the ear on the opposite side of his head. He had torn one leg of his trousers and left his thumb throbbing from being struck sharply by the hammer while prying off the lid of the box. In the four hours he had made but one note on the thick pad of research cards he had thoughtfully provided himself before coming to work. It read 'next time wear overalls'. That note must have been penned during the early part of his labours, however, for there was no next time.<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately, this scenario was all too common an occurrence in the early efforts to preserve the records of business.

In order to address such problems the New York Committee on Business Records was established in 1943 under the direction of

Clough of Columbia University and Cochran of New York University. The committee also included the deans and librarians of the business schools of Columbia and New York University, the directors of the New York Public Library and the New York Historical Society, the librarian of the Baker Business Library at Harvard, seven prominent businessmen and four professors from Columbia and New York University.<sup>40</sup>

The committee, which sought to educate companies about the importance of their old corporate records and to provide them practical assistance in developing a records programme, began by drawing up a list of corporate executives who might be interested in the business archives idea. These individuals were contacted, given a presentation by representatives of the committee, and then, if they showed any interest, they were provided with a questionnaire. The questions were kept to a minimum - just sufficient to provide some insight into the nature of the records involved. Some of the key questions included:

How are the records of your company organized and what periods of time do these records cover? What is the policy of the company concerning the disposal of records? Has the company plans for a history? Under what circumstances will the records be made available to qualified scholars? Would you welcome the advice of a professional business archivist or historian on the matter of your business records?<sup>41</sup>

Convinced that most companies had failed to come to terms with the problem of records accumulation and that too little control was exercised over the preservation of historically-significant material, Clough and Cochran proclaimed the need for a new breed of professional who would "help the officers in establishing wise records policies so that those manuscripts will be

preserved which contain information essential to the legal department, the business analyst, the historian, and supervise the classification, storage and day-to-day handling of the records."<sup>42</sup> Cochran suggested that the new professional, a business archivist or more properly a records manager, should be trained in business history and economics and should also understand library methods as well as record handling and storage problems.<sup>43</sup>

To promote the growth of the new profession, Columbia and New York University established a special internship programme in business archival training. The course description read as follows:

Training in the management of business manuscripts and business libraries is provided through lectures and internships. Students registering for this course must be prepared to devote at least three months of full time daily work to gaining practical experience in designated libraries and business companies. Students completing this course in addition to Business History 275-276 will be recommended as trained archivists. Registrants must complete the full course to receive credit.<sup>44</sup>

Acknowledging that some of the largest corporations already employed archivists or records managers, Cochran complained that none of these individuals, to his knowledge, had studied business history. He envisaged that this deficiency would be rectified as awareness of the programme spread with "companies creating such positions and filling them with young scholars who may write business history as well as manage the records."<sup>45</sup> This priority ascribed to the writing of business history (while at the same time alleviating the problem of storage for companies) reveals a rather limited view of the value of archives in a corporate setting and reflects the influence of



the academic background of those heading the programme. The objectives of the programme failed to stress the value of archives as a practical corporate tool so important in the founding of the Firestone archives.

This initial attempt to nurture interest in corporate archives was applauded by Cole. He viewed the emergence of business archivists, some itinerant and others sedentary, as an important step in establishing a comprehensive programme of business manuscript preservation in business archives.<sup>46</sup> Cole cautioned that while it might be possible to find individuals within companies to fill these proposed business archivist positions, it would be more advantageous to employ a professional, both from the company's perspective and that of the researcher. In assessing the advantages arising out of such a situation. He optimistically proposed:

Indeed, one may perhaps look upon the development of the new profession as especially significant in several relationships: the appreciation by the companies - at least the larger ones - of the importance of their own pasts, their desire to put the material in shape appropriate for the use of outside students, and their willingness to extend their efforts at good public relations to include writers of history.<sup>47</sup>

Blouin, in assessing the importance of Cole's article, has suggested that it represented a benchmark in attitudes towards the preservation of business manuscripts in three ways. First, it provided the initial summary statement of the twenty-year effort of the Business Historical Society to collect and preserve business records. But, by 1945, enthusiasm for the collection of business records and the like became "mired in the recognition that no practical solution to the appraisal problem

could be found and that truly adequate documentation could never be housed within the confines of academically oriented repositories."<sup>48</sup>

The second notable feature about Cole's article was that it had been solicited for the Journal of Economic History, and thus reflected a general concern for business records within the academic community amongst economic as well as business historians. As Blouin puts it:

The fusion of interest led to a broad-based scholarly constituency supporting efforts to preserve business records. In an era when historians focused on institutions, the business firm was recognized as a critically important power. Thus in writing the history of the economy from the institutional perspective, leading scholars could not help but be concerned about the condition of business records.<sup>49</sup>

Blouin's third criteria for judging the article as a benchmark was actually the reverse side of the second. The post-war period witnessed the rise of interventionist government which became preoccupied with the collection of statistics. This trend, combined with the rise of social science, allowed for the emergence of aggregate investigations using theoretical models, which replaced the former individual approach of focussing on specific institutional histories.<sup>50</sup> This, in turn, resulted in a split between the interests of the business and economic historians.

Thus, the strong coalition of interests that argued for resources (both financial and intellectual) to collect and preserve the records of U.S. business history began to break apart along disciplinary and methodological lines. Consequently, the post-war economic boom, much of which benefited U.S. corporations, led to an expansion the like of which no economy had ever seen. For the United States, this resulted in, among other things, megacorporations generating records of such bulk that, even if saved,

no scholar could grasp in the course of a lifetime.<sup>51</sup>

The declining organized interest on the part of academics had important consequences for the retention of business records although the full effects would not be felt until the 1950s.

Despite the example provided by Firestone and the enthusiasm generated by individuals such as Holmes, Cole and Cochrane, only a handful of companies such as Time, Inc., Armstrong Cork, INA, and Eastman Kodak established archival programs in the 1940s. David Smith has suggested that "businesses were not yet convinced of the wisdom of preserving their historically important files...there was only one area where some businesses were saving their history, and this was in the company museum."<sup>52</sup>

The latter part of the 1940s witnessed the emergence of a number of diverse, loosely-associated committees which united to form the National Records Management Council. The origin of this Council is interesting. In 1946, the Society of American Archivists established a Committee on Institutional and Business Archives to "embrace a somewhat larger field than its predecessors."<sup>53</sup> Emmett J. Leahy became chairman and served with Thomas Cochran and Robert A. Shiff. Cochran was also chairman of the Committee of Business Archives of the American Historical Association (A.H.A.) and, along with Leahy, also sat on the New York Committee on Business Records. Shiff was the director of the Naval Records Management Centre at Long Island. The preliminary task of the committee was to "effect a liason with similar committees representing other professional associations independently established."<sup>54</sup> One such organization was the

A.H.A. Committee on Business Records. Also formed in 1946, the committee included Cochran, W.D. Overman, Oliver W. Holmes, Lewis Atherton (University of Kentucky), Herbert O. Brayer (Colorado State Museum), Richard Overton (Northwestern University) and Cole.

The initial idea of forming a single council grew out of a special session of the A.H.A. in 1946. Devoted exclusively to a discussion of the management of business records, the session was attended by members of A.H.A.'s Committee on Business Records, S.A.A.'s Committee on Institutional and Business Archives, the Economic History Association's Committee on the Collection and Preservation of Business Records, the Special Libraries Association, the American Library Association and many other representatives of leading businesses and institutions. During this session the Economic History Association forwarded a motion to "establish a secretariat, probably in New York City, to serve as a clearing house for data on records management and the history of American business."<sup>55</sup> Emmett Leahy further proposed that the goals of the secretariat should be four-fold:

- (1) Sponsor advanced programs in records management;
- (2) encourage the fullest possible accessibility of business and institutional archives to scholars;
- (3) encourage the professional recording of the history of business and institutions;
- (4) sponsor and, if necessary, manage records centres in American cities for the storage and processing of business and institutional records.<sup>56</sup>

Those in attendance generally felt that the project would become self-supporting within three to five years through the fees collected for records management services, historical studies, and storage and processing of material in records

centres. A temporary committee was quickly established to draft a proposal which then went to the Executive Committee of the A.H.A. and received its endorsement. The American Historical Review applauded this effort as a "plan of far-reaching significance" designed to create an agency "to advise business concerns on the management of their records so that business archives will serve both business and history."<sup>57</sup>

Cochran and Cole formed an informal committee which secured the initial financial support for the programme from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1948. Cochran later credited the involvement of Cole as the single-most important factor in arranging the funding for the National Records Management Council.<sup>58</sup> The Council sought to ensure that the "valuable experience recorded in the essential core of modern records is preserved, the records preserved are in an accessible and usable form, and the experience there is organized, evaluated and interpreted."<sup>59</sup>

In the early 1950s, the Council published "Operation Time Capsule: A Technique to Preserve the Memory of Business" which demonstrated to companies how to deal effectively with the pressing problem of volume in their records while at the same time preserving the corporate memory. In describing the nature of the programme in 1956, R.A. Shiff stressed the need to eliminate the "needle-in-the-haystack character of modern records."<sup>60</sup> The programme transcended the basic need to extract the historically valuable records from the profusion of useless material and actually sought to provide some guidance in the documentation process. Shiff described the programme in the

following terms.

It attempts to fill in the gaps of the records now produced. Further it attempts to fill that very glaring gap in modern business records - the why and the wherefore. Our records tell us what was done, but they rarely tell us why or how. Obviously, the how and the why are the really significant part of the story for guiding future policy and somehow we must get these categories of information into the record. Time Capsule relies to a great extent on the documentation already in existence, but it also favours the creation of new records where obvious gaps exist.<sup>61</sup>

The Council succeeded so well in the selling of the concept of records management that by the 1950s its tax-exempt status was revoked as it became recognized as something more than a non-profit, academic-based organization seeking to ensure the preservation of business records primarily for research purposes. Its provision of records management services became increasingly popular with businessmen by demonstrating how to save money by reducing the volume of materials retained. This change in orientation was of little interest to the scholars on the Board who resigned. Eventually, the staff of the Council was reorganized into a commercial company called Noremco.<sup>62</sup> The interest in preserving historical records waned as the records management aspect of the old Council assumed a life of its own.<sup>63</sup> Hereafter, the impetus for the foundation of archival programmes lost the organized lobby of historians who had spearheaded the efforts for over twenty-five years. This occurred for a number of reasons including changes in research interests combined with years of discouragement culminating in business's embrace of records management which yielded tangible financial returns. This shift in emphasis tended to result in the destruction of most of the material not explicitly required

to be retained by law, with little consideration for the preservation of historical documentation.

The 1950s witnessed a slight renewal of interest in corporate archives as Texaco, Ford Motor Company, Sears Roebuck, New York Life Insurance, Eli Lilly, Proctor and Gamble, Bank of America and Coca Cola all established archival programmes. However, a 1958 survey revealed that fewer than 12 large companies had hired professional archivists.<sup>64</sup> In the following decade "business archives went into the doldrums" as only four new repositories were created.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps this may be blamed on the prevailing social atmosphere of the 1960s when unrest, particularly amongst the younger generation, produced an anti-establishment attitude which tended to view big business as a social evil. Under such circumstances, it is little wonder that few business archives were created as corporations sought to maintain a low profile. The decade so depressed interest in business archives that, in 1966, the Society of American Archivists disbanded its Business Archives Committee which had existed since 1938.

According to archivist David Smith, the publication of the "Directory of Business Archives" by the Society of American Archivists in 1969, "signalled the birth of a new era in corporate archives."<sup>66</sup> Of the questionnaires distributed to some 700 businesses throughout the United States, 113 reported some form of archival preservation, "even if it consisted of only one file drawer in the office of the secretary to the chairman of the board."<sup>67</sup> Smith attributed the resurgence of interest in historical records to a variety of factors which included a

growing nostalgia craze, large numbers of unemployed history graduates who were able to convince businessmen of the need for archives, the approaching U.S. bicentennial which renewed general interest in history, upcoming anniversaries for which corporations planned to publish their histories, and the increasing number of lawsuits brought against companies which required easy access to historical documentation.<sup>68</sup>

In her explanation of this renewed interest, Linda Edgerly has suggested an expanding awareness since the 1960s of the role of business in contemporary society has prompted North American business to retain documentation beyond that strictly required by law. Edgerly added:

Records that could be used to reconstruct the process and circumstances of decision making and the mutually dependent relationship of business and society assumed new importance. Records management and vital records programmes, many of which were formed during the 1940s and 1950s, could not satisfy this new requirement.<sup>69</sup>

Increasingly, archival programmes became recognized as potential sources of corporate information.

The 1970s witnesses a flood of new archival programs which included Walt Disney, International Harvester, Anheuser-Busch, Corning Glass Works, Weyerhaeuser, Wells Fargo Bank, Deere and Co., Gerber Products, Los Angeles Times, and Atlantic Richfield. During this single decade the number of corporate archives doubled while the ranks of business archivists quadrupled. Although still a rare breed, they were "no longer in danger of extinction which had been a real possibility" in the 1960s.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1970s, the SAA reinstated the Business Archives Committee, which was soon superseded by a professional affinity group. The Society sponsored numerous workshops on establishing



corporate archives and also published a useful manual in Edie Hedlin's Business Archives: An Introduction (1978). This was followed by Karen Benedicts's A Select Bibliography on Business Archives and Records Management (1981). By 1980, SAA's directory of business archives listed over 200 archives and 60 corporate archivists. In surveying the course of historical development to 1981 David Smith cautioned that archivists must not become complacent as a result of recent successes and that they must continue to struggle even within their own institutions to ensure the preservation of their archival programs.<sup>71</sup>

Business archives in Canada have not shared the success of their American counterparts. The 1950s witnessed no archival programmes operating in this country. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that corporate archives, largely located within the major financial institutions and a few utilities, began to appear (see Appendix I). A number of reasons might be advanced for the retarded development. Companies in Canada are smaller and lack the resources of the huge corporations in the United States. Many of the largest companies in this country are American subsidiaries and often archival programmes have been established in the head office rather than within the branch operations. Another explanation is that business history did not enjoy the same popularity in Canada as in the United States and, consequently, there was not the same early impetus for the preservation of business records.

As with the American experience, Canadian historians of the late nineteenth century focused their attention on political and constitutional matters. There was very little scholarly interest

in the records of business until well into the current century. Even when Canadian historians turned their attention to economic considerations beginning in the 1920s, the interest did not centre on the study of individual firms or industries. Rather it involved the development of a broad conceptual framework by Harold A. Innis known as the "staple" thesis. Innis attempted to explain Canada's unique development by studying the impact of a succession of staple exports, including furs, fish and minerals upon an evolving nation and its institutions. This thematic construct, which dominated Canadian historiography for many decades, tended to redirect interest which might otherwise have studied the impact of businesses on the deveopment of the country. In addition, no academic institutions specializing in business history, comparable to the Harvard School of Business, appeared in Canada, thus restricting the necessary training for the field.

The first book devoted to a study of business history in Canada did not appear until 1972. In his introduction, David S. Macmillan lamented that Canada had not shared in the developing interest in the field which had grown over the last twenty-five years in the United States, Germany, France, Britain and Australia.

It is suprising that Canada, a country which owes more than most to private enterprise and initiative, there should have been a comparative neglect of business and entrepreneurial history....The study, if not in its infancy here, is still at the stage where it is not yet accepted as part of the formal range of fields for investigations in the Universities and schools....<sup>72</sup>

More than a decade later, a second book on the subject appeared but little has changed as business history has not yet become an

a recognized field of study in Canada and there are not journals or conferences dedicated to its systematic study.<sup>73</sup> As Tom Traves has observed,

A decade ago, the first and last of two Canadian collections of essays explicitly identified with the field were published, but their impact was marginal. Yet, paradoxically, over the last ten years our knowledge of the Canadian business system has increased immensely.<sup>74</sup>

Although business history has been slow to develop in Canada, there was an attempt in the 1960s to preserve business records quite reminiscent of the efforts of the Business Historical Society in the 1920s and 1930s.

In May, 1968, the Business Archives Council of Canada was established "to encourage the preservation of historical business records and to promote the study of business history."<sup>75</sup> The Council was directed by a national board of seventeen members drawn largely from the academic community. Designed as a forum for promoting discussion between businessmen and historians, the Council sought to coordinate the collection of business records in designated regional repositories and the establishment of in-house archival programmes. In the early 1970s, John Archer explained the aims of the Council.

The Business Archives Council of Canada, as it is presently constructed, seeks to apply the American concept of specialized repositories for business records. To this American concept the Council would apply the British device of a voluntary, self-supporting organization with a head office, to act as a co-ordinating agency. The head office would carry on correspondence and negotiations at a national level; the regional depositories would carry on the practical work of deposit, processing and use.<sup>76</sup>

The primary goal of the Council involved the collection of business records. Unfortunately, the movement "failed to expand

its membership or to attract significant sponsorship" and ceased operations in 1973.<sup>77</sup> The efforts of the Council suffered from the same problems which plagued the Business Historical Society earlier in the century. Businessmen were not convinced of the wisdom of preserving corporate records from which to write history because they saw few tangible benefits for themselves. In addition, there was not widespread recognition of the merits of studying business history even amongst academics. These factors might help to explain the rather slow development of business archives in Canada during this period.

\* \* \* \* \*

This century began with little interest in the writing of business and economic history in North America. The topic was first addressed by social reformers with an underlying bias against changes in the economy at the expense of social reform. These muckrakers portrayed business in negative terms and made companies very apprehensive about opening records to researchers for fear that the corporate image might be irreparably damaged. During this early period a wall of distrust grew up between businessmen and researchers.

In the 1920s, a more objective approach to the study of business history based at Harvard University emerged. Many of its early practioners also participated in the Business Historical Society which provided the major impetus for the collection of manuscripts into the 1940s. By that time the problems inherent in the collection of manuscripts, primarily

their bulk, had become all too evident. As a result, this idea of collecting material in existing repositories slowly gave way to the corporate archives movement.

This idea, first enunciated by Oliver W. Holmes in 1938, suggested that businesses be convinced to maintain their own archives. This movement, which like its predecessor was spearheaded by historians, experienced some success particularly through the Clough-Cochran experiment based in New York City. Unfortunately, the input of the scholarly community began to wane in the 1940s as economic and business historians began to drift apart both intellectually and methodologically. The formation of the National Records Management Council was the final organized attempt for scholars to participate in a project to both demonstrate the usefulness of business records and the means for their systematic control. This represented a unique experiment in combining the resources for historical scholarship as well as the practical application of records management principles.

The emergence of Noremco in the 1950s witnessed the disappearance of the scholarly component which had lobbied for the retention of historical records from which to write histories. This left the more marketable services of records management whose apparent advantages outweighed the potential benefits growing out of historical studies. After the disappearance of the organized academic input, there was little co-ordinated effort to encourage the establishment of business archives. This, then, has been the intellectual backdrop against which the development of business archives has emerged.

This experience has demonstrated that it is not sufficient to attempt to convince businesses to establish archives strictly for the purpose of historical study. It also suggests that the encouragement for the formation of business archives should not be left to businessmen and historians but should instead fall to the archival community. Indeed, it will become incumbent on the archivist to go into the business community to convince corporate executives of the potential values of archival programmes. The basis upon which the archivist may argue his/her case forms the nucleus of the following chapter.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>R.A. Shiff, "The Archivist's Role in Records Management," American Archivist 19 (1956), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>John H. Archer, "Business Records: The Canadian Scene," in Canadian Business History, ed. D.S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 285.

<sup>3</sup>Allan Nevins, "Business and the Historians," in Allan Nevins on History, ed. Ray Allen Billington (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons Ltd., 1975), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>O. Lawrence Burnette, Beneath the Footnote (Wisconsin: State Historical Society, 1969), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup>Nevins, "Business and the Historians," p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>Burnette, Beneath the Footnote, p. 104.

<sup>7</sup>Gerald T. White, "The Business Historian and His Sources," American Archivist 30 (1967), p. 20.

<sup>8</sup>Ralph M. Hower, "The Preservation of Business Records," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 11 (1937), p. 38.

<sup>9</sup>Nevins, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup>The image of business as perpetuated by the muckrakers was extremely slow to dissipate. In addressing the issue in 1943, Stanley Pargellis suggested that the unflattering conception of business continued to be shaped by a small group of negative historical commentators. This had important implications for the public perception of business. Pargellis characterized this perception as follows:

Business today, as for the last 75 years, is guided by but one motive, which is not, save indirectly, the public welfare; business exercises now, as it did then, a disproportionate and sinister influence on courts and government officials; business is still wasteful, immoral, corrupt and vicious and scheming, and the common man needs protection against its ways or it will stand, as it has always stood in the path of the plain people.

Stanley Pargellis, "The Judgment of History on American Business," Newcomen Addresses (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup>Arnold Wells, "Samuel Slater: Father of Our Factory System," in Edward C. Bursh, Donald T. Clark and Ralph W. Hidy (eds), The World of Business (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1962), p. 1086.

<sup>12</sup>"Our Primary Purpose," Bulletin of the Business

Historical Society 1 (1926), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Burnette, p. 124.

<sup>14</sup>Francis X. Blouin, "An Agenda For the Appraisal of Business Records," in Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 62.

<sup>15</sup>N.S.B. Gras, "Are You Writing a Business History?," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 28 (1944), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Oliver W. Holmes, "Some Reflections on Business Archives in the United States," American Archivist 17 (1954), p. 300.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Hower, "The Preservation of Business Records," p. 37.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Blouin, "Appraisal of Business Records," p. 63.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Holmes, "The Evaluation and Preservation of Business Archives," p. 183.

<sup>25</sup>"News Notes," American Archivist 2 (1939), p. 57.

<sup>26</sup>Julia N. Eulenberg, "The Corporate Archives," in Taking Control of Your Office Records: A Manager's Guide, ed. Katherine Aschner (New York: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1983), p. 184.

<sup>27</sup>William Overman, "The Firestone Archives and Library," American Archivist 16 (1953), p. 307.

<sup>28</sup>Arthur H. Cole, "The Accumulated Development of Unsolved Problems," Journal of Economic History 5 (1945), p. 46.

<sup>29</sup>Blouin, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup>Carl H. McKenzie, "An Experiment in the Retention and Preservation of Corporate Records," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 27 (1943), p. 4.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>"Business Manuscripts: A Pressing Problem," Journal of Economic History 5 (1945), p. 43.



<sup>33</sup>Cole, "Unsolved Problems," p. 44.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-9.

<sup>36</sup>Thomas C. Cochran, "New York City Business Records: A Plan For Their Preservation," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 18 (1944), p. 59.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>39</sup>Herbert O. Brayer, "I've Been Working On the Railroad," American Archivist 7 (1944), pp. 117-18.

<sup>40</sup>Thomas C. Cochran, "New York Committee On Business Records," Journal of Economic History 5 (1945), p. 60.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas C. Cochran, "Plans For Internship In Business Archival Work," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 20 (1946), p. 95.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-6.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>46</sup>Cole, "Unsolved Problems," p. 55.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Blouin, p. 66.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>David R. Smith, "A Historical Look At Business Archives," American Archivist 45 (1982). p. 275.

<sup>53</sup>E.J. Leahy, "Report of the Committee on Institution and Business Archives," American Archivist 11 (1948), p. 62.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>"Historical News," American Historical Review 53 (1947), p. 680.

<sup>58</sup>Thomas C. Cochran, "Arthur Harrison Cole: 1889-1974," Business History Review 49 (1975), p. 2.

<sup>59</sup>"National Records Management Council," American Archivist 9 (1948), p. 382.

<sup>60</sup>Shiff, "The Archivist's Role in Records Management," p. 119.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Cochran, "Arthur Cole," p. 2.

<sup>63</sup>Richmond D. Williams, "Business Archives in the United States," in Papers of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Business History Conference, ed. Paul Uselding (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1979), p. 42.

<sup>64</sup>David R. Smith, "Historical Look At Business Archives," p. 275.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Robert W. Lovett, "The Status of Business Archives," American Archivist 32 (1969), p. 248.

<sup>68</sup>Smith, p. 275.

<sup>69</sup>Linda Edgerly, "Business Archives Guidelines," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 269.

<sup>70</sup>Smith, p. 275.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 276-77.

<sup>72</sup>David S. Macmillan, Canadian Business History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), pp. 1-2.

<sup>73</sup>During the summer of 1984, the first Canadian Business History Conference was held at Trent University. It remains to be seen if this will become an annual event.

<sup>74</sup>Tom Traves, Essays in Canadian Business History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), p. 5.

<sup>75</sup>Susan Riley, "Archivists Escalate the War on Paper," Records Management Quarterly 3 (1969), p. 29.

<sup>76</sup>John H. Archer, "Business Records: The Canadian Scene," in Canadian Business History, ed. David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 297.

<sup>77</sup>Peter E. Rider, "Business Archives Notes," Archivaria 1  
(1975/76), p. 94.

## CHAPTER III

## JUSTIFYING CORPORATE ARCHIVES

In his 1982 article entitled, "Dusting Off the Cobwebs", George Smith succinctly expresses the greatest challenge confronting the modern archivist when he began by stating that "business archives are a hard sell."<sup>1</sup> In analysing the cause of this situation, F.L. Sward identified what he regarded as the outdated traditional concept of the archivist "operating solely in the dark and dusty environs of some remote, museum-like structure, sorting through old pieces of paper at a leisurely pace and little concerned about the present."<sup>2</sup> This tendency to stereotype the activities of the archivist raises some important questions about the value of archival programmes within a corporate setting and requires the rethinking of the position of the archivist and the services which he offers. This chapter briefly considers the potential applications of archival practice to current business operations.

As has been suggested earlier, the records of business have been an invaluable source for economic and social history. However, one must question whether this is an adequate basis upon which to convince business managers to spend the requisite time and money to preserve the cultural heritage buried in the corporate records. Experience has indicated that the answer to this question is almost always 'no' as Smith indicates.

It is not enough to make claims for the value of history, or for the enduring value to society of well-preserved business records. It is a matter, really, of

formulating historical problems and developing historical products and services that bear on the current concerns of business management.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the archivist with designs on moving into the corporate world must think beyond the traditional applications of his trade and consider those particular services which might appeal to business. To do so the archivist must turn his attention to the task of making the operation of his archives relevant to the needs of business today.

This idea may be difficult to implement given that the "typical firm is ahistorical in temperament, possessed as it is with a marginal focus on contemporary problems and strategies for the future."<sup>4</sup> This is, in fact, the greatest obstacle for business archivists as their success is "contingent upon providing utilitarian value to an inhouse clientele unfamiliar with the notion of using the past to make current decisions and plans for the future."<sup>5</sup> To succeed in business archivists must overcome the outmoded notion that archival programmes should be limited to historical functions and they should endeavour to develop a broader perspective in the service of the sponsoring agency. In stressing the need for such a change, R. W. Ferrier argues that the archivist

...assumes a much closer identification with, and incidentally, a more responsible position in, the administrative hierarchy, and a greater participation in the activities of his organization than has previously been accepted. Archivists have previously played a rather passive part in the affairs of firms. This is no longer desirable or feasible; they have a definite contribution to make and they must be given the responsibility and opportunity to make that possible and effective.<sup>6</sup>

This requires that the archivist look beyond the traditional role which cast him as a passive collector of old documents from

which to write history and that he begin to formulate ways in which his services might be applied to various operations within the organization. In assuming a more active role, it might be useful for the business archivist to think in terms of marketing strategies.

Historically, the term marketing has been associated with business firms engaged in "hard sell" tactics to convince people to buy their products. More recently, however, there has been a growing shift away from "selling, influencing and persuading, to the concept of sensitively serving and satisfying human needs."<sup>7</sup> This reorientation, consumer- rather than product-centered, has given rise to a broader notion of marketing beyond its traditional applications in the business world. Increasingly extended to non-profit organizations, the concept has given rise to a sizable literature.<sup>8</sup> The business archivist might be well advised to consider implementing some of these marketing strategies, as briefly outlined below, in his quest to provide a practical service to the company in which he is employed.

It is not sufficient that an archivist publicize the establishment of his corporate programme and wait for representatives of the various departments to avail themselves of his services. This is not likely to occur. Instead, it is incumbent upon the archivist to identify those potential uses to which the resources of his archives might be put and proceed to convince the various departments of his plans. To accomplish this, the archivist must fully appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of his collection, identify the numerous potential markets within the organization, have a clear conception of the

functions of the various departments and, finally, he must package and alter his product to meet the particular requirements of the potential users. The archivist must also consider that the pricing of his product is an important factor in this undertaking. Pricing does not refer to costs in normal monetary terms but instead may be measured in the length of time required to retrieve the necessary information. John Curtis and Stephan Abram, in another context, suggested that "value added in the information age is created through access to information more than the information itself."<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the business archivist must think in terms of making information available in the minimum amount of time.

A final and key element in approaching the corporate archives from a marketing standpoint is the need to maintain communication links with the various departments to respond to their needs and to monitor changes in those requirements brought about by corporate reorganizations. In establishing feedback systems, the archivist would be able to redirect his focus and adapt his product accordingly. Failure to be sufficiently responsive to an ever-changing environment might prove fatal to an inflexible archival programme.

An important factor in the success of a corporate archival programme involves the ability to measure the value of a service which has, historically, been considered largely intangible. While some have suggested keeping an accurate count of inquiries, a more appropriate response might be to consider the value of the archives in terms of improving user productivity. This would be a measurement "of how, and to what extent, the

actions of others are made more productive or their decisions more successful."<sup>10</sup> In this manner, one need not argue for the intrinsic value of a corporate archives but rather demonstrate how the collective information may be utilized for practical purposes.

The corporate archivist should not restrict himself to the collection of the company's historical records from which future histories might be prepared. Instead, as earlier suggested by George Smith, he must be willing to assume an active role in the development of "historical products and services that bear on the current concerns of business management."<sup>11</sup> Although it is difficult to discuss applications of this marketing concept in general terms, it is possible to consider some potential uses of archival resources.

Corporate archival programmes have enjoyed a wide variety of users. In discussing the extent of this utilization, Edgerly observes that corporate archives

...serve sophisticated and varied publics including chairmen, chief executive officers of companies, as well as attorneys, economists, systems analysts, production experts, scientists and others interested in industrial research, marketing and advertising specialists, stockholders, scholars and journalists.<sup>12</sup>

This list is interesting in demonstrating that historians constitute only one of many publics to which the resources of the business archives may be directed. In general terms, the archivist may participate in policy formation, legal matters, advertising campaigns, public relations, employee orientation, historical studies, and assorted sundry activities.

By exploiting the information maintained in the corporate archives, business executives can determine how problems were



dealt with in the past thus enhancing the quality of current decisions. In this task the archivist might be called upon to search through the appropriate committee minutes or personal correspondence of high-ranking officials to determine not only the past decisions but also the background input which led up to those decisions. As George Smith assesses the the situtation,

...what ultimately gives managers confidence in their decisions is their accumulated knowledge of the way things work - their experience. Out of their own sense of the past managers necessarily formulate visions of the future.<sup>13</sup>

In a similar fashion, H.L. White notes that while it was once possible to pass on the necessary knowledge and experience by word of mouth, it is no longer possible for the senior executive to do so because he "needs actual evidence of how things were done, what problems were faced and how they were overcome."<sup>14</sup> The archivist stands in a position to assume an active role in the formation of corporate policy. In discussing this issue, Jane Nokes of The Bank of Nova Scotia, argues that "archivists can review policy over a long period of time, or study executive speeches through the years to help make a case before a government body, or interpret personnel or marketing changes...."<sup>15</sup>

The corporate archivist may also be required to provide documentation of patents, articles of incorporation, records of mergers and other material for the legal department. David Smith has indicated that the Walt Disney Archives has been called upon numerous times to provide evidence of the company's previous usage of characters and trademarks which other individuals either knowingly or unknowingly violated.<sup>16</sup> Other major

corporate archives have also saved their companies a great deal of money by providing documentary evidence in legal cases involving trademark litigation. Edie Hedlin observes that the corporate archives can play an important role in substantial legal cases (for example, class action suits or combines investigations) brought against a company.

Huge sums are at stake, often in the hundreds of millions and it behooves the corporation to provide itself with the best legal services available. But obtaining these services requires a huge expenditure, and expenditures cut into profits. Therefore, whenever the archivist can locate information that would otherwise require research by expensive legal counsel, it is performing a service in two ways. In-house research cuts down on legal costs, and archival staff members tend to locate more information more quickly than someone who is unfamiliar with company records.<sup>17</sup>

In legal matters, the benefits accruing from an archival programme may be tangible and measureable in a cost/benefit analysis based on the cost of searching for information in the absence of such a programme.

The advertising department may also benefit from the holdings of a corporate archives. One classic example is the case of the Ford Motor Archives which preserved a letter from the gangster Clyde Barrow sent to the company in 1934. Extolling the virtues of Ford's V-8, Barrow indicated that he stole one whenever possible. Barrow's testimony later formed the basis for a Ford advertising campaign.<sup>18</sup> In a more general vein, R.W. Pollay, professor of marketing and business history at the University of British Columbia, argues that archival material could be very useful to companies on a daily basis.

Records which allow for the easy identification of previous marketing strategies and tactics can serve a number of functions for the account executive or creative teams working on a client's account. They

serve as an excellent source of material to rapidly brief a new member of the account team. They permit a long-term continuity of marketing strategy as opposed to changes in direction with every change in personnel. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, they allow for the accumulation of knowledge about the product, its consumers and its promotions, thereby permitting advertising efforts to become increasingly effective.<sup>19</sup>

In proposing the broad categories of material to be retained to attain these goals, Pollay cites "legal and other formal records, documents showing client relations, campaign development and execution, items showing technology, publicity correspondence and ephemera."<sup>20</sup>

The corporate archives may also serve as a useful tool in promoting better public relations "in order to communicate a meaningful image of the corporation to its key publics".<sup>21</sup> Wells Fargo, for instance, emphasizes its ties with the old West and the pony express. In this manner, the company has been able to "present an image of a reputation for reliability and service."<sup>22</sup> Other corporate archives, after implementing satisfactory access policies, have permitted members of the public to undertake research in the companies designated archival records. This contributes to a greater sense of understanding between the company and the general public and, in the process, may help to soften the impact of the negative image of business which remain from the muckraking years.<sup>23</sup> The participation of the archival staff in the preparation of displays featuring memorabilia and artifacts relating to the history of the company would increase public awareness and understanding of the firm's historical evolution.

In considering the relationship of public relations and the

development of the Coca Cola Archives, Linda Matthews offers the following observations

...the archives helps to promote a good public image by making items of memorabilia available to film companies, to merchandizing firms for special promotions, and to authors writing about collectible items, and it serves as a display centre to portray and dramatize the history of the company's business. In this way the archivist functions as a public relations representative, and the good public image of the company often depends upon his effectiveness in handling his records and his responsiveness to public interest in Coca Cola.<sup>24</sup>

Matthew's latter point is particularly interesting and suggests that the role of the archivist ought to go beyond merely providing documentation as he should become an active participant in the process of its use. By thoroughly understanding the corporate information contained in his archives, he may be able to suggest certain directions for those representatives from the advertising and public relations departments.

An archival programme could also play an important role in employee orientation. This occurs at Walt Disney where great emphasis is placed on tradition, image, and the character of the organization. All new employees are sent to the archives to participate in an orientation programme where they learn about the history and development of the organization, are made aware of the company's past, and come to appreciate its historical accomplishments.<sup>25</sup> The knowledge of the historical evolution of a company enhances the ability of the employees to understand current circumstances and also appreciate future developments. In this vein, David Clutterback suggests that although the effects of both archives and museums are largely intangible,

they do provide "a sense of job security that comes from knowing the organization has a long and successful history."<sup>26</sup>

Archival programmes can also provide a unifying force, particularly within large organizations. Because the archivist interacts with with all levels of the operation in fulfilling his mandate to acquire the permanently valuable records which chronicle the activities of the entire organization, he provides a focal point to integrate the diverse activities of a large corporation. In providing an overview of the company, the archives promotes a greater sense of understanding and unity. In this manner, the archives might become a factor contributing to the development of corporate culture.

Simply defined, corporate culture is "a set of values and beliefs shared by people working in an organization. It represents employee's collective judgments about the future based on past corporate rewards and punishments, heroes, villians, myths, successes and failures."<sup>27</sup> A clearly defined corporate culture can have a positive effect upon employees as they have a better understanding of their position within the corporation and the jobs which must be performed. In organizations with weak corporate cultures, employees may lack security and confidence in the jobs and waste time figuring out exactly what they should be doing. "Organizations characterized by weak corporate cultures do not provide an environment condusive to change and adaptation. Different parts of the company may be working at cross purposes; employees worry more about politics than getting the job done."<sup>28</sup> The archivist, in the course of his dealings with all departments within the

company can help to promote the dissemination of information throughout the organization.

Indeed the archival records acquired may possess an intrinsic value beyond their obvious informational usefulness to the company. As a recent study of Canadian archives put it,

...individual documents, valuable for their signatures or philatelic interest, documents bearing on certain historical events, old photographs, historical maps and similar special items are frequently an integral part of the administrative record. These have considerable financial value....As well, the total accumulation of records bearing on an organization or community can have a marketable value.<sup>29</sup>

In this sense it is possible to compare archival material with art collections and other similar corporate assets.

The resources of the archives might be used for something as simple as providing historical photographs and brief articles for a company's annual report. Usually consisting of an income statement and balance sheet, the annual report also reviews other areas of progress over the past year primarily for the benefit of the stockholders although reports often circulate to employees and the general public.<sup>30</sup> One article has suggested that annual reports have become increasingly noted for "their pictorial excellence and general readability, in contrast with their solid statistical nature in former years" which has come from an increasing recognition of the public relations value of these publications.<sup>31</sup> In that the annual report provides the information upon which many readers form their impressions about the character of the company, many firms could benefit from the inclusion of a limited number of historical photographs and/or articles. This would not only provide an interesting change from the necessary statistical information but would also yield a

sense of the company's history, its pride in past achievements, and convey a feeling of stability. The use of historical material might be particularly appropriate in the commemoration of special events including corporate anniversaries, significant acquisitions, or important retirements.

More broadly, an obvious advantage of implementing an archival programme is to provide the documentation necessary to produce objective histories in the future. Merely retaining the records is not sufficient to write accurate history. Permanently valuable material must be acquired, thoughtfully arranged, and carefully indexed by professional archivists to provide the greatest possible access to this important source of corporate information. It is necessary at this juncture to stress the advantages to be gained from an objective history rather than "puffery" which chronicles only the positive aspects of the company's past. In presenting a history which details mistakes as well as successes and is enriched with anecdotal material the "public can sympathize with a company composed of real people making wise and foolish decisions, being forced to deal with adversity, and sometimes succeeding by chance."<sup>32</sup>

The production of an objective history may also prove to be a useful corporate tool. This harkens back to an earlier point that executives may be able to learn from the past in order to better assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Historian Arthur M. Johnson has indicated that companies which produce biased histories for their positive public relations value are actually taking a greater risk "than those who see the potential of an objective analysis and are willing to preserve

the records to make it possible."<sup>33</sup> He suggested that the former approach has some important implications.

First, the businessmen of the former class deny themselves an invaluable opportunity to learn from the past. Second, by implication, they maintain that more is to be gained from success stories than from the analysis of failures or reverses, although the opposite is frequently true.<sup>34</sup>

Consequently, it is important that the archivist persuade the business community of the importance and utility of preserving and learning from the records of both past successes and failures.

In surveying recent trends in the preparation of corporate histories, Ronald Alsop notes that resistance to withholding the negative aspects of past experience for fear of injuring the business reputation may be weakening slightly.

Companies may not be eager to air their dirty laundry, but a growing number say that a thorough, unembellished account is more useful to them than a puffy one. They say that they appreciate the value of a scholarly history as a marketing and planning tool, as an aid in training new managers and as a way to learn more about why important strategic decisions were made.<sup>35</sup>

Archivists must, however, guard against attempts to destroy the archival records after the publication of the corporate history. They must convince business executives of the utility of retaining these documents to meet the challenge posed by different requirements and applications in the future.

The foregoing discussion has stressed the need to develop a broader perspective regarding the potential functions of an archival programme within a corporate setting. It is no longer advisable to attempt to convince business executives to retain records simply to write history, a rationale often offered in



the first half of the century. Archivists must lay aside the outmoded traditional notions of the passive custodian awaiting the arrival of old documents. Instead, they must be willing to adopt a dynamic and active role within the company. This will involve "frequent interaction with all levels of the organization, visible demonstrations of what the archives can do for the company and showing the appreciation of the public for services provided."<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the archivist must utilize his knowledge of archival theory and practice, imagination, and business sense to integrate the activities of the archival programme into the daily operations of the business. The position should not be entrusted to a long-time employee with an interest in the history of the company. To do so would greatly reduce the potential role of the archives within the corporate setting. This task should be left to a professional archivist with a firm understanding of both basic archival principles and the requirements of the users. This is, perhaps, the most important of all archival functions, for without effective and efficient access to the archival material, the value of an archival programme is greatly diminished.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>George Smith, "Dusting Off the Cobwebs: Turning the Business Archives Into A Managerial Tool," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 289. At the time of this article Smith was president of Winthrop Group Inc., "an association of consultants and scholars committed to the analysis of the problems of contemporary organizations," (p. 287).

<sup>2</sup>F.L. Sward, "Business Records Management," American Archivist 29 (1966), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, "Dusting Off the Cobwebs,," p. 288.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Pollay, "Maintaining An Archives for the History of Advertising," Special Libraries 69 (1978), p. 145.

<sup>5</sup>Deborah S. Gardner, "Commentary II," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 295.

<sup>6</sup>R.W. Ferrier, "The Archivist in Business," Business Archives 37 (1972), p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Philip Kotler and Sidney J. Levy, "Broadening the Concept of Marketing," in Marketing in Non-Profit Organizations, ed. Patrick J. Montana (New York: AMACOM, 1978), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Three representative examples of this literature include, Christopher H. Lovelock, ed., Readings in Non-Profit Marketing, (1978); Philip Kotler, Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations, (1975); Patrick J. Montana, ed., Marketing in Non-Profit Organizations, (1978).

<sup>9</sup>John Curtis and Stephan Abram, "Special and Corporate Libraries Planning for Survival and Success," Canadian Library Journal 40 (August 1983), p. 227.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Smith, p. 289.

<sup>12</sup>Linda Edgerly, "Business Archives Guidelines," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 269.

<sup>13</sup>George Smith and Laurence E. Steadman, "Present Value of Corporate History," Harvard Business Review 59 (1981), p. 164. In their article, Smith and Steadman emphasize the importance of employing company historians as a tool of management which would serve a variety of purposes including, recounting past experience of adaptations, as a diagnostic tool and as a means of recalling great moments from the past to motivate employees. Tapping a company's history reveals an accumulated method of doing things which allows managers to "see the present as part of a process rather than as a collection of accidental happenings," (p. 164).

<sup>14</sup>H.L. White, "Preserving the Past is Good Business," Bulletin of the Business Archives Council of Australia Vol. 1 No. 5 (N.D.), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Doug Fetherling, "Thanks For the Memories," Canadian Business (October 1981), p. 129.

<sup>16</sup>David R. Smith, "A Mouse is Born," College and Research Libraries 39 (1978), p. 493.

<sup>17</sup>Edie Hedlin, "Access: The Company vs The Scholar," Georgia Archive 7 (Spring 1979), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Douglas A. Bakken, "Corporate Archives Today," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 283.

<sup>19</sup>Pollay, "Maintaining An Archives,," p. 149.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. pp. 150-51.

<sup>21</sup>Richard Eells, "The Corporate Image in Public Relations," in Issues in Business and Society, ed. William T. Greenwood (Boston: Houghton Mufflin Co., 1964), p. 107.

<sup>22</sup>Margaret Price, "Corporate Historians: A Rare But Growing Breed," Industry Week (March 23, 1981), p. 87.

<sup>23</sup>In a recent book, Douglas Dickson observes that business over the years has failed to adequately meet the challenges posed by public relations. In the past companies, suspicious of the motivation of the public, have either resorted to secrecy to repress information about operations or have tried to "whitewash" their actions by manipulating public opinion and using public relations to obscure the facts and cover up their mistakes. Dickson argues that companies should instead be engaged in candidly relating their experiences and gradually building up the respect and trust of the public which would then be able to withstand any future crisis. Douglas Dickson, ed., Business and Its Publics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984).

<sup>24</sup>Linda M. Matthews, "The Archives of the Coca Cola Company," Records Management Quarterly 9 (1975), p. 10.

<sup>25</sup>David Smith, "A Mouse is Born,," p. 494.

<sup>26</sup>David Clutterback, "Turning the Relics of the Past Into Today's Assets," International Management 32 (November 1977), p. 65.

<sup>27</sup>Miriam A. Drake, "Information and Corporate Cultures," Special Libraries 75 (October 1984), p. 263.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>29</sup>"Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada by the Consultative Group

on Canadian Archives,,," (Ottawa: SSHRCC, 1980), pp. 7-8. Hereafter cited as "The Wilson Report".

<sup>30</sup>Encyclopedic Dictionary of Systems and Procedures (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 31.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Enid Hart Douglas, "Corporate History - Why?," The Public Historian 3 (1981), pp. 77-8.

<sup>33</sup>Arthur M. Johnson, "Identification of Business Records For Permanent Preservation," American Archivist 24 (1961), p. 331. There are many articles which have addressed the issue of utilizing business history as a corporate tool. Some of these listed in the bibliography include; Britchford, "Business Use of Business History," (1970); Broehl, "Should Your Company Publish Its History?," (1954); Douglas, "Corporate History - Why?," (1981); Eulenberg, "The Corporate Archives: Management Tool and Historical Resource," (1984); Foreman, "History Inside Business," (1981); Gambi, "Going Public," (1983); Price, "Corporate Historians: A Rare But Growing Breed," (1981); Smith and Steadman, "Present Value of Corporate History," (1981) and Smith, "Dusting Off the Cobwebs," (1982).

<sup>34</sup>Johnson, "Identification of Business Records,,," p. 331.

<sup>35</sup>Ronald Alsop, "Historians Discover the Pitfalls of Doing the Story of a Firm," Wall Street Journal (December 27, 1983), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup>Christian Norman, "Business Archives and Business History," History and Social Science Teacher (December 1983), p. 92.

## CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION - ARCHIVES, RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND  
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The preceding chapter dealt briefly with some of the potential applications of archival resources primarily in terms of justifying corporate archives based on the utilization of historical records to enhance modern business functions. This chapter suggests two further themes important in making archives more efficient and relevant in the corporate setting. First, the archives would benefit from a close association with the records management programme. This provides an opportunity to ensure the systematic flow of permanently valuable records to the archives at the time of disposition. The second theme considers the possibility of the archivist's participation in the flow of corporate information in which the traditional barriers between historical and current records could be broken down. In this manner, the archivist might assume a significant position in managing corporate information which would replace his limited traditional role of caring for only historical records. The adoption of such an approach would both enhance the position of the archivist within the corporate setting and also provide greater access to the information required by an increasingly diverse group of users.

Most observers agree that the operation of archives can greatly benefit from a close association with records management programmes. Designed to schedule the systematic disposition of

all documentation, records management offers the archivist an opportunity to identify permanently valuable records early in the life cycle and provide for their eventual transfer to the archives. In this manner, the haphazard growth of the archives would be eliminated. Unfortunately, such cooperation may be difficult to achieve as the archival and records management professions have developed as separate and unique fields since the 1950s; the former concerned with historical documents and the latter with the management of current records. To understand the present situation, it might be useful to briefly review this historical development and to reflect on the prospects and potential of future cooperation.

Within a decade of its founding in 1934 as the United States governmental repository, the National Archives had virtually filled its available storage space so great was the accumulation of records designated for archival care. The growing volume of material, much of which had been designated as having long-term value, prompted the formation of a records administration programme in 1946 which was designed to "assist in developing throughout the Government principles and practices in the filing, collection and segregation of records that would facilitate the disposal or transfer to the National Archives as they became non-current."<sup>1</sup> At this time the archivists who turned their attention to the administration of current records did not consider themselves to be creating a new profession.<sup>2</sup>

There was only limited concern expressed over this seemingly new direction for archivists. Irving P. Shiller, writing in the American Archivist, complained that the archival

profession was "moving away from the fundamental objectives because of the excessive influence of management specialists who have become increasingly involved in records work, particularly since World War II...."<sup>3</sup> While acknowledging the benefits to be gained in adopting such a focus, Shiller criticized what he considered an unfortunate development.

Among archivists the cost has been the abandonment of the tradition of scholarship and research, destruction of historiography, and the renunciation of broad intellectual comprehension of the records....Now it appears sufficient to house records safely, to mechanize reference service on the documents, and to keep storage and maintenance costs down to a minimum by means of wholesale destruction.<sup>4</sup>

Although Shiller claimed to speak for many others in the profession, there is little evidence that his concern was widely shared.

A noticable rift between the two approaches began to develop after 1950 with the passage of the Federal Records Act which established a records management staff separate from the archival function under the auspices of the National Archives and Records Services. In 1950, National Archivist W.C. Grover pointed out the growing differences between the two professions by emphasizing the evolving specialization.

...each has basically different emphasis and requires different qualifications...academic qualifications in history and the social sciences are essential for an archivist, if he is to develop subject matter competence in the area of documentation....management outlook and experience are essential to the records management specialist if he is to develop as a member of the management team. In a word, the whole field of dealing with records has progressed sufficiently to demand a certain amount of specialization.<sup>5</sup>

Like government records, those of business also required attention. Technological advances which significantly increased

the capacity to produce records had not been accompanied by a method of administrative control. As a result, routinely generated documents began to accumulate at unprecedented rates. Initially business responded by securing storage space for non-current records, and, as available facilities filled, a periodic purge of materials occurred. In this unregularized disposal of records, some businessmen learned that although very old some of this material had a permanent value which had not been considered. The records management profession which had emerged out of the government's attempts to solve its own problems, also provided a practical approach to the problems of managing corporate records.

The records management profession offered a systematic method of controlling records, reduced costs and improved efficiency. In commenting on some of the advantages offered to business, F.L. Sward observed:

The records manager can show the businessman how to reduce the costs of creating records by forms control, correspondence and report control, and similar techniques. He can reduce the cost by improving filing systems, by moving records from expensive file equipment to an inexpensive storage center and by selecting records for early destruction instead of letting them pile up indefinitely.<sup>6</sup>

To accomplish these goals, records managers established retention and disposal schedules which allowed for the systematic destruction of all those records which had fulfilled legal and administrative criteria.

This increasing specialization was certainly reflected in the efforts of the National Records Management Council which attempted to convince business of both the need to maintain archives as a source for historical research and to adopt



records management techniques as a method for controlling the output of records. Spearheaded by academics, this undertaking failed to convince business adequately of the benefits of preserving historic material. The records management component of the programme, however, became very popular with the business community. Although not improving access to the information contained within the ever-increasing volume of documents, records managers did demonstrate significant cost-saving measures by destroying many of the routine records which had fulfilled their operational functions and were not required to be kept by law. This gave rise to a clear distinction between records management and archives and secured the ascendancy of the former in the business world based on efficiency over the less tangible returns of the latter. Therefore, with interest in implementing archival programmes in decline, the academic support for the Council gave way, leaving in its place Noremco, a commercial company dedicated to providing records management services.

This, then, illustrates the manner in which the two professions developed and began to diverge particularly in the 1950s. As time passed, the two became increasingly distinct and the realm of each more clearly defined. The crystalizing of these perceptions gave rise to the stereotyping of the functions of each which tended to influence their relative value in the business community. In his characterization of the rather narrow definition of the goals of the two professions, Gerald F. Brown suggested:

The archivist serves the needs of the scholar, the historian and posterity whereas the records manager

serves the needs of a business which is usually profit motivated and which is interested in the information which contributes to or protects that profit or goals of the organization.<sup>7</sup>

Superficially, it appeared that the goals of the archivist would conflict with those of the records manager. This tendency to delineate clearly the seemingly exclusive parameters of the two professions has been unfortunate.

One of the most important aspects of an archival programme is that when combined with records management as an integral part of the management of the information life cycle, it provides a very effective method of identifying and preserving permanently valuable corporate material. The two processes are, in reality, part of a single organic system of information management and enjoy something of a symbiotic relationship. The combination of records management techniques with an archival programme has important ramifications for both the quality and the quantity of material which flows to the archives. Consequently, the split which developed between the two professions has been detrimental to the growth of corporate archives as companies opted for the tangible returns of records management programmes. The division which has developed between the two professions may, however, be at least partly blamed on the inability of archivists to develop adequate appraisal criteria to alleviate the mounting problems posed by the exponential growth of records. This in large part resulted from their narrow view of the archival profession and the insistence on utilizing historical criteria to justify their positions. This trend toward the differentiation of the two professions appears to be one that might beneficially be reversed in the

future in the interest of promoting more comprehensive control over corporate records.

The enunciation of the need for cooperation is not new and can, in fact, be traced back to the 1950s at the very time when the two professions first began to drift apart. Morris Radoff stated that "we do not share common interests, we have only one interest; namely the guardianship of records" and suggested that unnecessary and artificial specialities were being created to deal with documents at various stages of their life history.<sup>8</sup> R.A. Shiff, president of the National Records Management Council in 1955, observed that the functions of the two were closely related and perhaps even interchangeable particularly in dealing with business records.

There are some who contend that because the archivist serves the scholar and the records manager serves the administrator, the two functions require different disciplines and therefore cannot be fulfilled by the same person. We do not believe that this is uniformly true. Certainly, if it is true, then most of the business world will remain outside the sphere of archival influence. Few companies, if any, can reasonably maintain two separate positions, one for the archivist and one for a records manager. If we are going to have a general archival and records management consciousness in business it must be in conjunction with the ability of the archivist or records manager to serve the combined need.<sup>9</sup>

Shiff thus believed that there need not be a division between the developing professions. Unfortunately, the insights of these individuals failed to sway the dominant thought of the day and the two professions continued to develop independently. However, with the passage of time, their observations ring very true.

The archivist, by participating in the development of retention and disposal schedules, helps to guarantee the early identification and preservation of a company's permanently

valuable records as well as their systematic transfer to the archives at the time of disposition. Archival input into this process, which has long been the sole concern of records managers, is very necessary given that only 1-5% of all corporate records produced actually have archival value. This leaves little margin for error in their selection and preservation. Early identification of this small core of material also allows for the destruction of all non-essential records.

The role of the archivist in the records management process to develop an integrated information management system is important in controlling the whole life of the records from the creation of the document to its ultimate disposition - either destruction or archival preservation. This role requires that the archivist become actively involved in information management. As Marcel Caya has suggested, this archival intervention has important ramifications.

Instead of being confined ... to the reception of those records which are sent to the archives, the archivist-records manager can intervene in the designation, the selection and preservation of all the records of permanent value without having to wait passively for them to become obsolete or risking outright disposal by a careless administrator. The increasing involvement of the archivist in records management means he no longer has to act as fireman waiting for calls to save old records, but rather that he can develop more systematic plans of transfer of valuable records to permanent storage.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, archivists, particularly in a corporate setting, should strive to overcome the artificial barriers which have been placed between archives and records management. There is no reason why individuals with archival training cannot become the coordinators of combined programmes. One might even suggest that

the archivist stands in a more advantageous position than the records manager to control such an integrated programme governing all corporate records.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly necessary to ensure the identification and preservation of records with historical importance which the records manager might not fully appreciate.

This need for archivists to become increasingly integrated in the management of information has been addressed by Hugh Taylor who has advanced a number of thought-provoking observations.<sup>12</sup> In discussing the development of what he termed the "historical shunt", Taylor has suggested that archivists became increasingly devoted to the service of historians and scholarship after the French Revolution during the rise of scientific history. Prior to this time the role of the archivist had been substantially different as the "keeping of records was always regarded strictly as an administrative function: archives were kept for kings, property owners and then, increasingly for European states, to protect rights or document decisions, not to allow for the writing of history."<sup>13</sup>

This partnership with historians had important ramifications as over the years the keepers of the record or archivists became increasingly detached from the bureaucracy which produced the records. Such a re-orientation caused archivists to lose much of the contextual information about the records (including the conditions which gave rise to the creation of the documents and their subsequent impact on the functioning of the organization) and also reduced the data available for decision making. In Taylor's view, the decreasing

access to information "had important effects on policy formation and the whole bureaucratic structure."<sup>14</sup> He stressed the need for current archivists to increasingly concern themselves with the provision of access to the information contained in both active and dormant records for the service of his organization.

Taylor is optimistic that the advent of automation will provide the archivist with the opportunity to re-enter the mainstream of record keeping and escape the "historical shunt" which has limited his overall effectiveness. In assuming a greater role in corporate information management, the archivist should be allowed input into the creation of documents to guarantee that "they are designed not only to serve immediate administrative ends, but also administrative/historical research for policy planning and development."<sup>15</sup> To accomplish this effectively, the archivist must be perceived as something more than a historian. Taylor has proposed that

...we should increasingly encourage our major institutions in the private sector to make use of the archivist not just as a resident historian and custodian of the historical records, but as one versed in the whole nature of documentation and its implications, capable of supervising archives and records management, forms analysis (which is a modern concept of diplomatic) and information management generally....<sup>16</sup>

In short, Taylor has articulated the need for archivists to become "overarching information specialists with archival emphasis."<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Taylor also argued that the break between the "current" and "archival" records has been simply a fiction of the historical method and that such a division should be ignored when considering the information available to the bureaucratic

organization. He cited a "pressing need by government and the public alike for more effective retrieval and for archival training which recognizes this continuum and which could provide information specialists of appropriate calibre to work both in departments and in archives."<sup>18</sup>

Increasingly, the object of the archivist should become the maximization of access to all corporate information for a variety of user groups. To do so requires that the archivist work closely with those departments creating and using the various records. The success of the archivist in this role might have important implications for the future when, many predict, fundamental organizational structures may be transformed through the effective diffusion and utilization of corporate information. Miriam Drake sees a radically altered future in this regard.

The corporate structure of the future will not be the pyramid of today. The structure is likely to be flatter and contain fewer layers. Work will be performed in smaller, more autonomous units. Information technology will provide the means for linking these smaller units with each other and with the corporate staff...Electronic mail and easy retrieval of information will make it easier for people to bypass the hierarchy, both up and down....<sup>19</sup>

It is into such a future that the archivist is able to step if he is prepared to lay aside outmoded notions of archives which have limited past contributions. His willingness to participate in the diffusion of corporate information will provide him with a significant role within the organization and guarantee that he will be better able to maximize the use of information for a variety of user groups.

Much of the preceeding discussion has focused upon the

importance of drawing the archivist closer into the milieu of records, and more particularly, information management. Perhaps the management of corporate information is the single-most important skill which the archivist might be able to offer to the corporate world. The discussion of the justification or "selling points" for archives has suggested that the business archives is different from that of its public counterpart. Because the corporate archivist is called upon to demonstrate the practical value of the programme to the organization, intangible cultural criteria carry little weight. Implicit in this discussion is the suggestion that traditional training of archivists in historical methodology may not be entirely relevant in a corporate setting.

In advocating this expanded role which would see the archivist become an increasingly important element in the management of corporate information, it might be useful to recall the ageless advice of Illinois State Archivist, Margaret Cross Norton. As early as 1929, she enunciated the need to emphasize the position of archivist as promoting administrative efficiency and only secondarily serving the needs of historians.<sup>20</sup> Her views fit comfortably between the classical theories as developed by Hilary Jenkinson and Theodore Schellenberg. Jenkinson stressed that while the archivist would require some knowledge of history and he may be interested in it personally, "...the Archivist is not and ought not to be an Historian."<sup>21</sup> He stressed the need to delineate the archival and historical professions. In Jenkinson's view, the archivist served as a passive curator for the records entrusted into his



care for the use of the "person or persons responsible for the transaction and their legitimate successors" who alone would be responsible for the appraisal and destruction of material.<sup>22</sup>

Theodore Schellenberg, however, argued that archives must be preserved for reasons other than those for which they were created or accumulated.<sup>23</sup> For him, records ought to be retained based on cultural criterion or research value rather than administrative reference. Unlike Jenkinson, who viewed the role of the archivist as a passive curator of documents, Schellenberg proposed that the archivist understand and participate in the selection and destruction of records because of his broad perspective from which to appraise material.

In her ideas, Norton expressed elements of each of these theories. Like Jenkinson, she believed that archives should be primarily preserved for the practical use of the administrative body which created them. However, she was not so categorically opposed to historical research and, in fact, argued that the best interest of historians would be served in the future if the information in the records was preserved as an administrative tool.<sup>24</sup> She sought not to discourage the use of governmental records by historians, but rather to emphasize the practical and tangible administrative aspects of archival programmes over the less obvious returns from historical studies. Norton agreed with Schellenberg's suggestion that the archivist play an active role in the management of records by providing a broader perspective to the appraisal process. She disagreed with his premise, however, that records should be maintained primarily for historical research rather than administrative uses. Although

circulating for over fifty years, Norton's ideas have not yet been widely accepted in the archival profession, which has tended to perpetuate a rather limited notion of archives based on traditional ties with history.

In their study of the relationship of archives, history and public administration, Andrew Raymond and James O'Toole pointed out that the archival profession has suffered because of a failure to emphasize its administrative role in order to escape the problems associated with a close identification with history.<sup>25</sup> In their view:

It is ironic that the history profession, which has done so much to initiate and advance the cause of archives in America may at the same time have unwittingly contributed to a misunderstanding of the primary functions of archives. Archivists themselves have not yet succeeded in clarifying the misunderstanding. The historical and archival professions have become confused in spite of the developments that have separated them.<sup>26</sup>

Although recognizing the importance of historians as one of the primary user groups, as well as their important contributions to archival development, Raymond and O'Toole advocated the differentiation of the two professions and the portrayal of archives as something more than tool for historical research.<sup>27</sup>

Hugh Taylor also made clear that archivists should endeavour to escape from the "historical shunt" which has long restricted the potential functions of archival programmes. The ability to expand the scope of the archivist beyond simply preserving records from which to write histories is particularly crucial in the corporate setting. Past experience has demonstrated that such an approach has held limited appeal for the business community. Archives must be established as a

recognized business activity, serving the needs of modern corporations. A transition from the handmaidens of history to the management of corporate information might provide the best means of fulfilling such a goal. Archivists of the future should also understand more about the context and condition which gave rise to the creation of records as well as the subsequent impact on the operation or structure of the organization. This again returns to Norton's assertion that one must provide a solid administrative basis upon which to justify archival programmes.

This proposed transformation does not suggest a significant reaction against the historical profession or the historical roots of archival development. Rather it is simply a case of determining how best to ensure the preservation of business records. For the archivist to assume a broader role, it will be necessary to provide him with something more than an academic training in history. While history remains a very valuable background study for archivists, they might benefit from further training in records and information management, automation and business practices. The position would still require that the archivist understand the value and significance of history either through a personal background in the field or by seeking the advice of professionals. As Jenkinson suggested, however, a distinction must be made between the archival and historical professions.

The requirements of researchers should not be ignored in formulating future courses for archival development. Ironically, while many historians are concerned about any trend which would see archivists move into information management, such a

transition would provide more information for all users, including historians. This, however, raises future concerns about the issue of access to corporate records which has long bedevilled historians. Likewise, movement away from purely historical criterion will have important ramifications for the appraisal of records. Both of these issues will require the critical consideration of archivists in the future.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Phillip C. Brooks, "Current Aspects of Records Administration," American Archivist 6 (1943), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Evans, "Archivists and Records Managers: Variations On A Theme," American Archivist 30 (1967), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Irving P. Shiller, "The Archival Profession in Eclipse," American Archivist 11 (1948), p. 227.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 229-30.

<sup>5</sup>Evans, "Archivists and Records Managers," p. 51.

<sup>6</sup>F.L. Sward, "Business Records Management," American Archivist 29 (1966), p. 70.

<sup>7</sup>Gerald F. Brown, "The Archivist and the Records Manager: A Records Manager's Viewpoint," Records Management Quarterly 5 (1971), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>Morris Radoff. "What Should Bind Us Together?," American Archivist 19 (1956), pp. 4-5.

<sup>9</sup>Robert A. Shiff, "The Archivist's Role in Records Management," American Archivist 19 (1956), p. 111.

<sup>10</sup>Marcel Caya, "Why Worry About the Present When the Past is Our Business!?", (Paper Presented at the Business History Conference, Trent University, 25 May 1984), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Two Canadian examples of this arrangement occur at Petro-Canada and Imperial Oil where archivists, Bryan Corbett and Robert Taylor-Vaisey respectively, manage integrated records management/archival programmes.

<sup>12</sup>Hugh Taylor, "Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s," Archivaria 18 (Summer 1984).

<sup>13</sup>Caya, "Why Worry About the Present!?", p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Taylor, "Information Ecology," p. 28.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>19</sup>Miriam Drake, "Information and Corporate Cultures," Special Libraries 75 (October 1984), p. 265.

<sup>20</sup>Margaret Cross Norton, Norton on Archives, ed. Thorton W. Mitchell (Chicago: SAA, 1979), pp. 4-5.

<sup>21</sup>Hilary Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration (London: Percy, Lund and Co., 1965), p. 123.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>23</sup>Theodore Schellenberg, The Management of Archives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 28.

<sup>24</sup>Norton, Norton On Archives.

<sup>25</sup>Andrew Raymond and James O'Toole, "Up From the Basement: Archives, History and Public Administration," Georgia Archive 1 (1978).

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

## CHAPTER V

## APPRAISAL AND ACCESS

In addition to the obvious difficulties in attempting to justify the idea of archives in the business world and the development of a broader notion of the potential roles of corporate programmes, the archivist must also consider the specific problems of what records should be preserved and for whose use? As indicated at the outset of this thesis, archivists should consider expanding their traditionally limited historical focus to serve a wider audience and become a recognized business activity. Such a shift would have important ramifications for the issues of appraisal and access in the corporate setting. If archivists begin to serve the needs of a wider audience, is historical criteria a viable basis solely upon which to appraise corporate records? If not, how should the archivist approach the problem and to whom might he turn for input into the process? This will become an increasingly critical problem if the archivist becomes involved in the management of current information. In operating private archives, companies are able to close their records to outside researchers, which they have generally done in the past. This issue, however, requires some reconsideration as the benefits to be derived from granting access to company records must be carefully weighed against the potential damage to the firm's reputation which might ensue. Both of these issues, appraisal and access, are particularly important if the archivist has designs on assuming a more

effective position in the future.

Although a difficult subject with which to deal in a limited discussion, the issue of appraisal is a vital concern for virtually all corporate archivists. How does one decide what fraction of the total corporate records produced is worthy of archival preservation? This issue of appraisal, which is rendered increasingly complex with the tremendous growth of businesses in this century is not unique to business for government archives share similar problems.

In the period following the Civil War, and more particularly after the turn of the century, North America experienced an explosion in the production of records with the rise of modern bureaucratic organizations. This phenomenon, observable both in government and business, was made possible through the introduction of technological advances such as the typewriter, mimeograph and interleaved carbons. In commenting on the rise in the production of government records for various periods, T.R. Schellenberg cited the following figures:<sup>1</sup>

Establishment of the Federal Government to the Civil War.....100,000 cu.ft.

Civil War to World War I.....1,500,000 cu.ft.

World War I to the Depression.....3,500,000 cu.ft.

Decade of the 1930s.....10,000,000 cu.ft.

The rapid growth in the volume of records resulted from fundamental changes in the government and the basic industrial fabric of the economy. The small craftsmen of the nineteenth century were superseded by the mechanized factories, mass production and mass distribution.<sup>2</sup> The emergence of the huge



vertically-integrated business firms so well documented in Alfred Chandler's The Visible Hand <sup>3</sup> had important ramifications for the production of records. Just as the ideas of Frederick Taylor revolutionized the factory system so too did they fundamentally change clerical positions.<sup>4</sup> In discussing the evolving situation within the government, Margaret Cross Norton noted:

The number of functions to be performed and the rapidly growing number of employees made it increasingly difficult for executives to keep track of what was going on in their offices. Just as the manufacturers hit upon the idea of the assembly line as a means of dividing mechanical processes to the point where more people could do more with less supervision, so administrators turned increasingly to the use of forms and multiple copies of documents as a means of dividing and at the same time controlling the work of their subordinates.<sup>5</sup>

This increasing tendency toward specialization, generated a demand for more paper to facilitate the orderly flow of information within the bureaucracy. Companies quickly came to realize that this presented a problem. While investigating some of the old records from Standard Oil in the United States, an employee found a 1922 memo from the office of the Corporate Secretary which lamented that "the problem of the Company's old records has become a pressing one due to the rapid accumulation and storage space required."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately no system of control accompanied the tremendous growth of records during this initial period.

With the rising interest in the use and collection of business records beginning in the 1920s, there was little attention paid to the need to develop appraisal criteria. This situation was certainly understandable given that the archival

profession was then only in its infancy and because most of the collecting effort focussed on nineteenth century operations possesing limited records. Before the advent of the vertically-integrated corporations, decades of "recorded transfers filled not more than two or three volumes."<sup>7</sup> However, as interest slowly shifted to the records of twentieth century firms, it quickly became apparent that the increasing volume of records made their collection in existing repositories impossible.

The first author to advocate action to offset the increasing bulk inherent in business records was Hower.<sup>8</sup> He argued that most records should be preserved in order to reflect "accurate and reasonably complete information about every phase of the business...."<sup>9</sup> Shortly, thereafter, those historians and archivists interested in the preservation of corporate material realized the impracticality of collecting records in existing repositories and turned their attention to the task of convincing businesses to maintain their own records.

In his approach to appraisal, Cole conceded that selective preservation of business records would be necessary and that only a small percentage of the mountain of business records could be actually retained.<sup>10</sup> In the final analysis, however, Cole contributed very little concrete criteria for appraisal, offering instead only vague questions for future development.

On what basis shall the collections of documents proceed and with what objectives in their several regions shall future apostles of activity by companies lay their campaigns? Is there no way by which the guild of economic and business historians can block out a minimum scheme and set up some central body with several objectives; first, to ascertain what portion of this scheme is already accomplished or in the way of fulfillment; thereafter to act as a clearing house of information upon current activities; and perhaps to

give advice - if and when asked - upon the problems that now confront libraries and historical societies and that may well perplex local missionary groups in subsequent years. Such a committee could likewise be charged with the development of plans in the whole area of business manuscript collection and preservation.<sup>11</sup>

Implicit in Cole's discussion was the notion that the appraisal criteria should somehow be based upon the requirements of business and economic historians. Even the comprehensive system devised by Clough and Cochran to combat the increasing volume of records was predicated on the premise that the first priority of the archivist would be the writing of history.

Such an orientation invariably caused problems in the quest to develop appraisal criteria. In his article, Cole suggested that the users of business manuscripts never made their needs clear nor had they faced up to the reality that not all of the records could be retained for their studies.<sup>12</sup> To emphasize his contention, he cited the example of J.G. Hamilton who, in his discussion of appraisal criteria as it related to the study of social history, observed that while not all the records ever produced could be preserved permanently, virtually all documentation had the potential to be vitally important.<sup>13</sup> In providing something less than explicit appraisal criteria, Hamilton concluded:

Every despised and neglected document has possibilities. Everyone of them may have the quality, the content, that will make it for some earnest scholar after truth, if not a Rosetta stone; if not a headstone of the corner, at least part of the material which under a master's hand, becomes a complete structure.<sup>14</sup>

This early rationale of establishing appraisal criteria based primarily on the requirements of historians was flawed. Too

often scholars failed to clearly outline what material they found most useful and dreaded the thought of throwing out anything which might be potentially useful in the future. For these reasons, as well as the rapid historiographic changes in the fields of both business and economic history, it became exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to formulate adequate appraisal criteria to curb the increasing bulk in business records.

This inability to establish practical appraisal criteria had important ramifications as records managers usurped the position of the archivists in the business community. Records managers showed business how to reduce the bulk problem and save storage space based on utilitarian and functional criteria. Useless records were destroyed and semi-active material moved to inexpensive storage facilities. Francis Blouin observes that corporate appraisal decisions were influenced by two factors, "(1) the climate of litigation in modern U.S. society, and; (2) federal and state regulation."<sup>15</sup> He added that because fear of litigation has perhaps been a greater inducement to destroy rather than preserve records, the only real external influence was the complex tangle of state and federal regulations which controlled both the creation and preservation of corporate documentation.<sup>16</sup> Where the records of business have been preserved, in the absence of an archival programme, there has been little consideration of the intangible historical importance of the material as records managers increasingly focused upon the legal requirements governing the preservation of corporate records.

During the ascendancy of employing legal criteria for records appraisal, there has been little discernable shift in the position of those seeking to use historical criteria to develop appraisal policies. Most scholars accept the notion that selective preservation is essential. For instance, historian Peter Mathias believes that, even if the space and resources were available to preserve all business material, the bulk involved would render it unusable to the business historian. He added that, "all the actual constraints do not make total preservation an option for the archivist in any case: the alternative to selective preservation is total destruction, not total preservation."<sup>17</sup> Despite this realization, however, many historians and archivists have approached the collection of business records based primarily on the preservation of that material which would be of the greatest use to business and economic historians in the exercise of their trade. Articles written with the assumption that historians are the chief clients of business archives offer limited information to the development of appraisal criteria beyond what materials should be retained from which to write history.<sup>18</sup>

Just as in the earlier period when appraisal based primarily upon historical criteria was not considered practical, so it has remained. We still suffer from the same weaknesses as researchers fail to define their needs, historiographic trends continually change the requirement of scholars and the criteria for preservation remains rather vague. In a statement very reminiscent of that which Cole complained about some thirty years earlier, D.L. Lewis warned archivists to be very careful

about what they chose to throw out.

Often a document, standing by itself, seems irrelevant and useless; but frequently, as most historians can attest, a single piece of paper, when placed beside other information can fill a gap as much as a stray piece of jigsaw puzzle enables one to complete a part of the puzzle itself.<sup>19</sup>

Lewis also pointed out whimsically another reason for integrating the historian in the appraisal process.

Most historians, natural born string savers, can not bear to see potentially useful documents cast aside, and many of them have extra roomy attics. It could be that, by asking a historian for help, the archivist will not - to paraphrase a familiar expression - be losing an accession but gaining a private archives.<sup>20</sup>

Reducing the discussion of the appraisal process to such parody has contributed little to the formulation of a general policy for business records.

The tendency to stress historical criteria in appraising business records has resulted in an emphasis on the functional records which reflects the end-product of bureaucratic activity. Typically, a listing of those records which the historian would find most interesting might include:

Minute Books

Executive Correspondence and Personal Papers

Legal Records (Incorporations and Mergers)

Operating Records

Ledgers and Journals

Photographs, Films and Slides

Organizational Charts

Annual Reports

Oral History

Press Clippings

## Company Publications

Unfortunately, this view, based on external research requirements has tended to be too narrow and to provide only limited assistance in developing a general appraisal criteria for corporate archives. Consequently, the formation of appraisal criteria should depend solely on neither historical needs nor legal dictates but rather move toward the development of a more comprehensive outlook.

Francis Blouin is one of the first archivists to identify the need to transcend the traditional approaches which focused on the types of records which should be preserved and consider instead a methodological framework within which the appraisal process should take place. In a 1979 article, Blouin reviewed Alfred Chandler's The Visible Hand and considered the impact of the rise of the vertically-integrated industry in North America upon both the production and use of business records.<sup>21</sup> He proposed looking closely at the function of records as a guide to their appraisal.

In order to understand the character of organizational super-structures that have evolved into large corporate and government bureaucracies, the functions served by records will become as important as the descriptive information in the records themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Blouin moves us away from the appraisal of the records themselves and considered instead what they revealed about the structure of the corporation and the decision-making process therein.

In a similar fashion, Frank Burke, in a discussion of archival theory argues that archivists ought to look beyond just capturing information about what happened and endeavour to

acquire records for understanding why organizations function in the way they do.<sup>23</sup> By concentrating on the material which accurately represents the decision-making process archivists are best able to minimize the impact of "our interpretive actions" on the needs of future researchers.<sup>24</sup> In advocating the archivist's increasing involvement in the study of the decision-making process in a corporate body, he poses the following questions and observations.

At what levels are decisions really made; and by what process? How does that process affect what records will be kept to document the policy development of the corporate body? Are we so imbued with the archival standard of keeping the records of the board of trustees, the president, the executive secretary, and the divisional offices, that we are retaining the chaff while throwing out the wheat? There are some studies taking place among management organizations, one hears, that look into such problems; but do not archivists even realize that the problems are also theirs, if they are to fulfill an obligation to the future to retain records representing a reasonably exact facsimile of today's society.<sup>25</sup>

Michael Lutzker also stresses that the effective appraisal of the tremendous quantity of records being created requires "some general framework of analysis, that can be used to guide our judgment."<sup>26</sup> He proposed that archivists utilize Max Weber's classical analysis of bureaucratic structure in order to assist them in understanding the dynamics of the organizational hierarchy within which the creation of the record occurs. In considering Weber's emphasis on the rational aspects of bureaucracy, including structure, rules and precedents, Lutzker stressed the need to understand the administrative processes as essential in assessing the importance of records produced within particular organizations.<sup>27</sup> This cognisance and understanding of the bureaucratic operations and functions, in turn, provides a



clearer insight into the documentary records produced and plays an important role in the appraisal process.

In what has perhaps been the most comprehensive study of the appraisal of business records thus far, Blouin outlines a set of five elements necessary to deal with the issue. These include, "(1) an understanding of the structure of modern firms; (2) an understanding of the relationship between structure and records generated; (3) an appreciation of the breadth of historical research; (4) a revival of a coalition of interests; and, (5) an appreciation of appraisal as an intellectual process."<sup>28</sup>

As Blouin, Burke and Lutzker propose, an indepth knowledge of the structure of the individual organization is fundamental to understanding the records generated by business firms. In much the same way as Blouin uses Alfred Chandler's model of the vertically-integrated corporation, further studies of modern firms are necessary to develop other structural models. Also archivists ought to be aware of the relationship between the bureaucratic structure and the records generated in order to understand how record keeping affected organizational structure and, conversely, how that structure influenced the records produced.<sup>29</sup> In this regard, Blouin encouraged archivists to become more involved on two separate levels. In the microapproach, he suggested that archivists undertake and publish case studies based on actual appraisals of business records.<sup>30</sup> This approach, focused on the records of an individual corporation, could then develop an extensive literature which would aid others in developing appraisal

criteria. The second, or macroapproach, encourages archivists to become better acquainted with the current environment affecting record keeping (for example, statutory requirements and broader study of current retention practices).<sup>31</sup>

Blouin added an appreciation of the breadth of historical research to his list of elements necessary to develop an appraisal process. It is important to be aware of historiographic trends in research, not so much as the sole guiding concept of records appraisal, but rather as a secondary source of guidance as to what material may be of long term value. Knowledge of new trends in history might yield new ideas about the ways in which the archives' historical data may be employed to serve the needs of the company. Also, a broad knowledge of history helps to place the individual company within a larger framework which might include the position of the company in the industry or perhaps its role in regional or even national development. To assess the position of the company within this larger context and to identify those records which reflect this role, the archivist must have a sense of history which transcends the knowledge of the individual firm. In the past archivists have not exploited available historical knowledge in the appraisal process.

Another important element in Blouin's formula is the revival of coalition of interests which existed at the height of the interest of the Business Historical Society.

In order to ensure appraisal decisions mindful of history in the long run, rather than of legal and administrative concerns in the short run, a strong coalition will have to again emerge....For the appraisal of the corporate record, such a coalition will have to be identified and strengthened in order

to provide the environment necessary for the undertaking of major studies of corporate structures and records.<sup>32</sup>

Blouin reasoned that a strong coalition of executives, historians and archivists such as that which emerged in the 1920s would be necessary to provide the proper climate within which to impose new concepts involving the appraisal of records. Unfortunately, this degree of cooperation, although highly desirable, might be difficult to achieve as witnessed by the experience of the ill-fated Business Archives Council of Canada.

Finally, Blouin stressed the need to recognize appraisal as an intellectual issue.

Appraisal requires well-researched frameworks of analysis and must include an understanding of process, institutional structures, models of communication, and the nature and functions of records in a modern society. It poses intellectual questions because appraisal problems require analysis on a large and complex scale.<sup>33</sup>

Just as the structure of businesses has become more complex so too have the records they produce. Any appraisal criteria developed must reflect this process.

The question of appraisal is extremely important to the business archivist as he is called upon to determine what small percentage of the mountains of corporate documentation produced is worth permanent preservation. The growing complexity of corporate structures has also rendered the process of appraisal more complex. Consequently, it is necessary to move away from the standard checklist of corporate records which should be preserved and to implement a more comprehensive approach which includes knowledge of the organizational structure, its relationship to the production of records and an understanding

of history. In this task, the archivist might benefit by seeking input from both corporate employees and outside researchers; the former experienced in the current use and significance of the records and the latter knowledgeable about the long-term value of the documents. This transition is extremely important given the multifarious functions which, as earlier indicated, the archival programme can provide to the corporation. In building upon the insights provided by Burke, Lutzker and Blouin, archivists can apply a more flexible approach to the establishment of effective appraisal criteria. This is an important consideration in capturing significant information in an age when the flow of that information becomes more "fluid" and the nature of the record less rigid.

The other perplexing problem associated with the development of business archives and with which the archivist must be prepared to deal with is the question of access. To whom should access be granted and on what basis should archival material be made available to researchers? The growth of private corporate archives presents particular problems, for unlike government-funded institutions, the taxpayer is not at liberty to demand access.<sup>34</sup> Generally speaking, the prevailing tendency within the business community over the years has been to close corporate records to public scrutiny.<sup>35</sup>

Restricted access to business records is not a new phenomenon. In fact, one particular example can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Concerned about the need to better manage and ensure the safety of their records, the directors of the East India Company adopted the following policy, whereby:

...the safe custody of records became a primary duty of the seniormost officials of every department of the company; (b) only the members of the different boards and their secretaries concerned had access to departmental records; (c) authenticated copies of records could not be had by any official of less rank than the president of each board, and such copies could be taken away only for the official use of the company in India or abroad; (d) no records or copies of records could thereafter be taken away, sold or otherwise disposed of from the departmental archives...<sup>36</sup>

This early programme, which limited access to corporate records even to company personnel, ultimately resulted in one of the finest continuous series of historical records in the world.

In much the same way, modern business has often sought to restrict access to its records. One of the major reasons for wholesale restrictions on corporate material is the persistent opinion of business executives that "outsiders are likely to find out valuable trade secrets or company 'skeletons' in the old files...."<sup>37</sup> This sensitivity, which generally "springs from fears of both competitive and personal exposure,"<sup>38</sup> is very much a carryover from the muckraking era.

In numerous situations, the business archivist must ask to whom he owes allegiance - the researching public or his corporate employer. He may conclude that because the company signs his paycheck he should restrict the use of all corporate material for fear that researchers might purposely or inadvertently uncover information potentially harmful to the company and, consequently, pose a direct threat to the continued support of the archival programme. However, to adopt such a conservative attitude is "tantamount to locking the records in the safe."<sup>39</sup> In such cases, the question of devising an access policy has in effect been avoided, and the value of research in

the records of the company and society alike is consequently forsaken. Such an attitude raises a number of important issues as indicated by Ann VanCamp.

The situation can lead to innumerable problems, and criticisms from outside researchers can often result in one-sided negative reporting. The archivist is in the unenviable position of trying to discern "good" scholars from "bad," ones. An even greater problem can come from within the company when the archivist is without guidelines or precedents in deciding whether or not an employee from one department can use the records from another department.<sup>40</sup>

The latter point raises another interesting issue. The question of access is not restricted to outside researchers but is also a matter of internal corporate policy.

One must consider whether the basic premise of limited or non-existent access policies actually serve the best interests of the organization. Terry Eastwood has argued that such a policy actually has the opposite effect in that it "only fuels suspicion between business and researchers [and] because of this suspicion the business community's impact on society is not recognized as it should be."<sup>41</sup> In numerous cases, companies have opted to destroy sensitive records rather than risk having them exposed to public scrutiny and perhaps giving rise to a variety of legal entanglements or at least injuring the reputation of the company. Eastwood concluded his remarks by arguing that "the irresponsible destruction of records is likely to be more harmful than possession of revealing documents might be."<sup>42</sup> In addressing the reluctance of companies to grant access for fear of exposing past mistakes, Douglas Bakken made the following observations.

As far as mistakes and their feared disclosure is concerned, history frequently evidences that what come

to be called "mistakes" are decisions made in terms of the best data available at the time, and only from the standpoint of hindsight can they be called "mistakes". Further, there is little doubt in my mind that American business has suffered more public misunderstanding and misrepresentation as a result of a publicity-motivated appearance of infallibility than it could ever suffer as a result of public awareness of honest mistakes.<sup>43</sup>

It seems clear, then, that a strict policy of no access to outsiders is ultimately short-sighted.

Far from constituting a potential liability to the company, the use of corporate records by outside researchers might yield unexpected, positive returns for the firm. Business is a vital component of society. Its opponents have, in ignorance, often misconstrued its activities. It is, however, preferable to demonstrate through an honest preservation of documentation the true circumstances of a company's activities than to leave the matter open to conjecture. As early as 1938, Ralph Hower argued that regardless of their personal disposition toward history, businessmen should "aid and encourage impartial research in the history of business."<sup>44</sup> In rationalizing his position, Hower offered this explanation.

Otherwise an accurate account of business history cannot be written, and in its place there will be an incomplete and inaccurate story which will do more harm than good. Much of the recent hostility towards private enterprise has arisen because the public has been told the mistakes and misdeeds of business, and there has been no one to supply corrective data on the other side. The publicity material prepared by business fails to help because it is obviously biased and frequently inaccurate. The public must have the facts as they appear to independent scholars, and that means that business, in its own selfish interest, must make its records available for research.<sup>45</sup>

If corporate executives truly believe that their companies constitute a form of corporate citizen living up to societal

expectations, they have everything to gain and little to lose from presenting an accurate picture of themselves to society. Likewise, society gains by being able to engage in informed dialogue with a full understanding of the context which shaped modern business.

To accomplish this goal the archivist, in conjunction with company executives, must develop a clearly defined programme governing access to archival material. Ann VanCamp has suggested that such a policy should

...clearly outline authority and procedures for governing access to records, a policy that is equitable for all concerned users, and one that protects the archives while at the same time making the company comfortable about archives. And most of all the policy should be easy to administer.<sup>46</sup>

In adopting a clearly defined access policy it is possible to provide access while restricting use of material which the company feels might be potentially damaging. This can be achieved in three distinct ways - "by controlling who can gain access to the records, by controlling what records may be accessed, and by controlling the ability to quote or otherwise publicize the information obtained from the records."<sup>47</sup> By isolating and restricting that material which the company feels would be damaging, the archivist may thus be able to open other materials for the use of researchers.

An important component of any access policy must be the inclusion of information about closed or restricted material. To be most effective it must contain "clear descriptions of restrictions, time limits on restrictions, processes for determining restrictions and a statement regarding lines of administrative authority."<sup>48</sup> For instance, if the restrictions



are established by the creating departments in consultation with the archivist, then the policy ought to reflect this. It should also indicate the avenues for appeal to seek special permission to use the restricted material. This methodical approach is necessary so that the access policy is not viewed as an arbitrary or random application of unnecessary restrictions on archival materials. Also, those records designated as closed because of their sensitive nature, should be periodically reviewed to determine if the original concerns of the company officials might have been mitigated by time. If after reviewing this material, the archivist feels it no longer needs to be restricted, he should approach the corporate executives with his recommendations and then seek written permission.<sup>49</sup>

As a precaution to protect the reputation of the company the archivist might consider the imposition of some restrictions on the researchers right to quote or otherwise use the information collected from the archives. Richard Pollay has pointed out that "terms and conditions of usage of the information can be written into a 'request for access' which, when signed by the user and the firm, becomes a contract whose violation can be easily prosecuted."<sup>50</sup> Although there is some question as to how "easily" the researcher might be prosecuted, such stipulations in access agreements are likely to deter misuse of the material gathered from the archives. The archivist may also request that he be allowed to preview any material prior to publication to ensure that the facts are correct and that the actions of the company have not been misrepresented.

In seeking to provide access to his archival holdings, the

archivist should also remain cognizant of the wishes of the creating departments within the company as the formulation of a sound access policy will have important ramifications for other archival functions. Principal among these would be determining the success of the archival acquisition programme. Edie Hedlin has indicated that "in order to acquire those holdings that are potentially the most useful, namely those reflecting decision-making processes, the archivist must have the trust of company officials."<sup>51</sup> To accomplish this, the archivist should consider the impact of his access policy upon the formulation of a cooperative and trusting relationship between the archives and the rest of the company. Those sending their records to the archives may be hesitant to include the most sensitive records if they feel that too liberal an access policy has been implemented.

This question of access is not unique to business archives as virtually all repositories contain some restricted material. However, the issue is more pronounced in corporate archives because as a private archives they are free to establish whatever rules governing access they deem appropriate. Consequently, the corporate archivist might find himself facing something of a dilemma in formulating a sound access policy. Ideally, archivists should attempt to establish as liberal a policy as possible. To do so, they must convince businessmen of the value of and prestige to be derived from outside research. This also requires that the archivists have a complete and comprehensive understanding of the material placed under their care. The quest to promote access to outside users must not,

however, be pursued at the expense of the company's reputation. In considering the broader implications, one might suggest that if companies suffer adverse publicity after establishing an archival programme, similar projects proposed in other companies would certainly be jeopardized.

In the final analysis, the archivist must consider the fundamental goals of the corporate archives. First, and foremost, is the preservation of the permanently valuable business records primarily for the internal use of the corporation. It therefore follows that if the archivist fails to convince the company of the benefits to be derived from adopting a liberal access policy, the point should not be pressed to a confrontation. In her approach to the problem, Edie Hedlin takes a long-term view.

There are higher priorities that should concern the business archivist. He must proceed on the premise that the identification, accession and preservation of historically valuable material now is of greater importance than the availability of any given set of material to any given individual. It is better to have a closed company archives now, than to have no archives at all.<sup>52</sup>

Business archivists should endeavour to promote as much access to corporate information without knowingly injuring the company's image or allowing use of material which might affect the firm's competitive position in the marketplace. Archivists must also maintain lines of communications with outside researchers in order to monitor changing research interests and to keep that community informed as to the conditions under which the archival programmes operate. Such an open and frank relationship might help to dissipate some of the mistrust which

has grown up between business and researchers as Marcel Caya has observed.

Academic historians have always maintained a suspicious attitude toward institutional archives of any type. Because they either consider them a tool of administration or refuse to acknowledge their potential for historical research, they have not, as a general rule, actively lobbied for their establishment as a bona fide department of administration.<sup>53</sup>

Consequently, archivists should benefit from engaging in an expanded dialogue with those interested in utilizing the records of business. This would include convincing researchers that establishing archives based primarily on administrative criteria would also serve in their best interests in the long run.

At the same time, archivists must work to educate business executives as to the benefits arising from providing access to corporate records. Companies should not attempt to "gloss over" or ignore past indiscretions as overlooked or misrepresented facts have a way of coming to the public's attention and history provides an opportunity to portray them accurately. Increasing access to business records promotes a greater sense of understanding of the vital role played by business in the development of society. It is necessary to overcome traditional trepidation about negative publicity for, as David Finn stresses, "business leaders must accept the fact that free, vigorous, constructive criticism helps improve the course of human enterprise."<sup>54</sup> Studies by outside researchers might provide useful administrative tools to contribute to a greater understanding of the internal operation of the company. Placing past experience within a broader context would certainly promote an enhanced appreciation of present conditions.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>T.R. Schellenberg, The Management of Archives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Blouin, "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review," American Archivist 42 (1979), p. 315.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred Chandler, The Visible Hand: The Management Revolution in American Business (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977).

<sup>4</sup>For an excellent discussion of the changes in the clerical profession and the growing role of the office in Canadian business see Graham S. Lowe, "The Administrative Revolution in the Canadian Office: An Overview". Lowe argues that as the office became the administrative centre of the economy, unsystematic, ad hoc office procedures gave way to comprehensive administrative systems designed to promote an orderly flow of information (p. 128). See also James W. Oberly, "The Information Revolution in Historical Perspective," Records Management Quarterly 16 (1982).

<sup>5</sup>Margaret Cross Norton, Norton On Archives, ed., Thorton W. Mitchell (Chicago: SAA, 1975), pp. 71-2.

<sup>6</sup>Rae Leaper, "Records Centers: What's in the Box," Records Management Quarterly 18 (April 1984), p. 312.

<sup>7</sup>Blouin, "A New Perspective," p. 312.

<sup>8</sup>Ralph M. Hower, "The Preservation of Business Records," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 11 (1937).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur H. Cole, "The Accumulated Development of Unsolved Problems," Journal of Economic History 5 (1945), p. 44.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>J.G. de Roulhac, "On the Importance of Unimportant Documents," The Library Quarterly 12 (1942), p. 518.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Francis Blouin, "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records," in Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in An Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984), p. 69.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>17</sup>Peter Mathias, "What Do We Want? What Do We Need? A Business Historian Speaks to Business Archivists," Business Archives 42 (November 1976), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Representative of this position from the enclosed bibliography include; Jack King, "Collecting Business Records," (1964); D. L. Lewis, "Appraisal Criteria for Retention and Disposal of Business Records," (1969); W.H. Chaloner, "Business Records as a Source of Economic History," (1948/49); Robert Lovett, "The Appraisal of Older Business Records," (1952).

<sup>19</sup>D.L. Lewis, "Appraisal Criteria for Retention and Disposal of Business Records," American Archivist 32 (1969), p. 22.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>21</sup>Blouin, "A New Perspective".

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>23</sup>Frank Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," AA 44 (1981), p. 43.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>26</sup>Michael A. Lutzker, "Max Weber and the Analysis of Modern Bureaucratic Organization: Notes Towards a Theory of Appraisal," American Archivist 45 (1982), p. 119.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>28</sup>Blouin, "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records," p. 71.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>34</sup>Marion Orgain, "Starting a Company Archives," Records Management Quarterly 8 (1974), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>Richmond D. Williams, "Business Archives in the United States," in Papers of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Business History Conference, ed. Paul Uselding (Urbana: Univeristy of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 41.

<sup>36</sup>M.L. Ahulwalia, "A Significant Order on Records

Management," American Archivist 24 (1961), p. 87.

<sup>37</sup>Maynard Britchford, "The Relationship of Records Management to Activities in the Field of History," Business History Review 46 (1972), p. 228.

<sup>38</sup>Richard M. Pollay, "Maintaining Archives for the History of Advertising," Special Libraries 69 (1978), p. 153.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>40</sup>Ann VanCamp, "Access Policies for Corporate Archives," American Archivist 45 (1982), 296.

<sup>41</sup>Betsy Matthews, "Rescuing Records to Make Corporate Archives," En Route (May 1983), p. 68.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Douglas A. Bakken, "Archives and American Business," Brewer's Digest (May 1983), p. 40.

<sup>44</sup>Hower, "The Preservation of Business Records," p. 40.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>VanCamp, "Access Policies," p. 298.

<sup>47</sup>Pollay, "Maintaining Archives," p. 152.

<sup>48</sup>VanCamp, p. 297.

<sup>49</sup>Karen White, "Establishing A Business Archives," Records Management Quarterly 15 (1981), p. 16.

<sup>50</sup>Pollay, p. 153.

<sup>51</sup>Edie Hedlin, "Access: The Company vs The Scholar," Georgia Archive 7 (Spring 1979), p. 6.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Marcel Caya, "Why Worry About the Present When the Past is Our Business!?", (Paper presented at the Business History Conference, Trent University, 25 May 1984), p. 13.

<sup>54</sup>David Finn, "The Price of Corporate Vanity," in Douglas N. Dickson (ed) Business and Its Publics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984), p. 104.

## CHAPTER VI

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

While the prospects for the establishment of business archives have improved somewhat in recent years, future development will depend on two factors. The first, and by far the most important, involves the success of archivists in persuading corporate executives of the importance and utility of establishing in-house programmes. An archives which can demonstrate innovative, tangible contributions to the operation of a company increases the prospects for future survival. The second factor is the government's recognition of the vital role played by business in the shaping of modern society and its willingness to participate in ensuring the preservation of corporate documentation. Governmental participation could take the form of tax incentives and other inducements, or legislation which would require the retention of archival business records by law.

Under the prevailing conditions, businesses occasionally turn over their historical records to public or university archives. This not only relieves the company of the costs incurred in preserving these records but can also prove to be quite lucrative. A Canadian company donating its records to a government archives "can deduct 100% of the assessed value from its federal income tax over a limited period of two years, and about 20% of the value if it donates the collection to another recognized institution." This paper stressed earlier, however,



that any attempt to systematically collect corporate records in existing public or private institutions is not feasible given the space and staff limitations currently confronting archival repositories. Unfortunately, government taxation policy has not been extended to include in-house archival programmes.

In suggesting that government participation in the preservation of business records in this country is inadequate, one need look no further than the treatment accorded to crown corporations. Currently, the Public Archives of Canada exerts no control over the records produced by this country's crown corporations. In treating these organizations as private businesses, the initiative to seek out advice and guidance for the preservation of their records has remained on a strictly voluntary basis. John H. Archer, in assessing this situation in 1972, questioned the wisdom of such an approach.

...one wonders whether voluntary arrangements with federal crown or public corporations are good enough. Crown corporations are every whit as 'public' as are the records of a department of government. Should the safekeeping of these records, then, depend upon the interest evinced by executive officers and the tactful diplomacy of the Dominion Archivist? If there is any validity to the proposition that a private business making its 'living' in Canada owes to its host the safekeeping of its records for scholarly research, then surely there is the strongest case for ensuring that the public records of public or crown corporations come under adequate controls to prevent wanton destruction.<sup>2</sup>

The government, although expressing some concern for the preservation of business records, has thus far only encouraged existing companies to deposit their records in existing repositories. However, there has been little parallel support for establishing in-house programmes. Believing that records

should remain with their creating agencies, the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives (1980) recommended that the government, working through the Public Archives of Canada, should provide consulting expertise to companies interested in establishing archives and that a tax incentive be included as further encouragement. The Group made the following proposal.

...to the extent that a business archives is serving the public, that portion of the annual cost of operating the archives should be seen for tax purposes, as a gift to the public. Any archives has both an administrative role within the organization and a public, cultural or research role. The latter might be appraised periodically by an outside committee of archivists, and the corporation would be able to deduct that portion of the archives' operating costs as it would be a gift to the Crown.<sup>3</sup>

Such a suggestion again raises the spectre of the problems associated with access policies and the role of the archivist in their formation. Despite the attendant difficulties, this alternative is certainly preferable to any suggestion that business records be collected by existing repositories.

A second alternative to the in-house programme would be to follow the example provided in Denmark where, beginning in the 1940s, a private business archives called Erhvervarkivet was established in Aarhus. Eventually taken over by the state and tax-supported, the repository collects industrial and business records from all over Denmark and is administered by a board of seven members including the national archivist and representatives of business and the universities.<sup>4</sup> While the institution is publicly-supported, funds to promote historical research are solicited from private sources.

Richard Berner addressed the issue of government intervention in the preservation of corporate records in a 1974

article. In briefly outlining the rise of business and the impact of government regulations on business activity after World War II, Berner observed that business "became more political, less purely economic in its behaviour."<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, the most important corporate records have tended "also to be the most politically sensitive", and, the more subject a firm is to regulation, "the less likely will its most vital papers survive."<sup>6</sup> Reflecting on historical trends and potential future developments, Berner pessimistically observed that even when archives had been established, access to that material has been very limited.

Our best hope is that only when the past of a firm no longer seems to bear on the present will a firm be comfortable about opening its records for normal scholarly research. But will the records of archival value survive that time span if voluntarism continues as inducement for archival retention? It is doubtful. And what, indeed, is the impact on values we like to associate with those of a democratic society? Amongst the most vocal exponents of these values are businessmen themselves. Yet, ironically, as business becomes increasingly political and "public" in its impact, the more secretive and arbitrary it must become - or so it seems.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, Berner proposed that the larger firms be compelled through legislation to establish in-house programmes or to deposit their archival records in federally regulated business records centres. Operation of these regional archives/records centres would be financed on a cost-sharing basis by the participating firms and the cost written off as a business expense if the businesses allowed reasonable access to outside researchers.<sup>8</sup>

This notion of establishing cooperative repositories for business records is not novel and can, in fact, be traced back

to Oliver W. Holmes' 1938 article.<sup>9</sup> He proposed that business firms "establish and support cooperatively central repositories in recognized industrial regions for business records from that region."<sup>10</sup> In suggesting that business voluntarily tax themselves to finance these operations, Holmes also envisaged these repositories as a place in which to maintain the records of defunct firms. In outlining his plan, Holmes observed that:

The benefits from research in these storehouses of experience might not be direct but they would be real in time....There are individuals in the business world who, if they wished to do so, have the power to guarantee an endowment sufficient to preserve generations of business experience, and with it much political, social and cultural history for the future.<sup>11</sup>

Holmes added that if such programmes failed to operate on a voluntary basis, "society, acting through its governmental representatives will almost certainly step in...."<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, the potential impact of governmental participation in preserving corporate records, either through legislation or tax incentives, would be significant. First, as part of a basic agreement with companies, the government would gain some measure of control over archival records. This might lessen the tendency of business to terminate archival programmes and destroy records following a change in corporate management. A second condition of government support would include provision of greater access to corporate records. In return for tax breaks, companies would be required to negotiate terms of access to their holdings with due consideration for the need to protect sensitive corporate information. The whole concept of increasing government involvement in the preservation of business records is based on the premise that the importance of this material to

the overall development of society may be adequately demonstrated. Any attempt to convince the government of the significance of such an undertaking will require the coordinated lobbying efforts of archivists, businessmen, and historians. Consequently, it will be necessary to establish channels of open and frank dialogue between these groups.

Even while archivists move increasingly into information management, it will be important to maintain lines of communication with historians. No matter how far archivists move away from their traditional roots, they and historians will continue to enjoy a symbiotic relationship; the former providing the resources from which to write history, and the latter contributing expertise to the appraisal process and helping to draw attention to the importance of corporate documentation. Unfortunately, such cooperation may be difficult to obtain. A 1982 questionnaire produced by the Archives Committee of the Canadian Historical Association revealed that only 11% of the respondents reported using business archives.<sup>13</sup> This figure ranked sixth out of six, finishing ahead of only a "miscellaneous" division. It is unclear whether this low percentage reflects general lack of interest in using business records or is rather a function of the current inaccessibility of the material. The same survey indicated that business history ranked as the most neglected field based on the number of respondents drawing attention to the need for action.<sup>14</sup> These figures imply that there is much work to be carried out in this area in Canada.

Francis Blouin has usefully suggested that it would be

desirable to strive to recapture the cooperative spirit evident in the early development of the Business Historical Society which sought to link the interests of businessmen, historians and archivists.<sup>15</sup> For this to happen archivists, rather than historians will likely have to assume the leading role in the promotion of business archives. They are better able to design and maintain archival programmes that go beyond the preparation of corporate histories. While emphasizing the utility of an archival programme in administrative terms, archivists should also attempt to provide access to corporate records for historians whenever possible. In this way, archivists might be able to strengthen their bonds with historians and come to depend on their participation in record appraisal and future attempts to secure government incentives for corporate archival programmes.

While the idea of government involvement in the preservation of business archives is important and would constitute a significant factor in determining the quality and quantity of records preserved, archivists cannot afford to sit idly by awaiting this development. In the interim, archivists must take the initiative. It is for this reason that archivists must demonstrate how archival programmes can fulfill administrative functions within the modern business firm. By broadening the basis upon which an archives might be justified, the archivist increases his chances of securing funding to operate an in-house programme. While this alternative might be proposed for larger companies, smaller firms may suggest that they lack the resources for similar operations. These companies

might consider placing their records in special regional repositories modelled on the Danish example. Cooperatively-sponsored regional repositories as described by Holmes might be established. As an example of this option, a forestry archives might be built in British Columbia which would preserve the records of a number of companies and perhaps labour unions involved in the industry. As in the manner of private records centres, the participating organizations would contribute funds based on the amount of materials stored and the services required.

Another alternative for companies unable or unwilling to establish an in-house programme is the possibility of entering into a cost-sharing arrangement with an existing repository. In commenting on some of the advantages to be offered by university archives in this respect, N. C. Burkel made the following observations.

They are widely dispersed geographically, making possible regional collections. They have faculty and staff expertise necessary for developing an acquisition strategy and for appraising technical records. They have the monographic literature, scholarly journals, and government documents to complement archival sources. They have the business, economics and graduate programs that provide research topics.<sup>16</sup>

Such an option would be particularly attractive to small businesses as a number of firms could pool their resources and share the cost of the extra space and staff required at an existing archives. In addition, the proximity of the business records to the university community would provide the company with an inexpensive source of research after establishing agreeable terms governing access. One of the main disadvantages

of this option is that archival records are physically removed from the creating organization and may cause some delays in reference and retrieval of information. In addition, the amount of time that an archivist can devote to other matters, such as participation in the development of records and information management systems, will be reduced.

Regardless of the organization of the programme, whether an in-house archives, a cooperative regional operation or a cost-sharing arrangement with an existing repository, it is essential that the task of caring for the material be left to a professional archivist. In many cases, the position of archivist has been entrusted to a long-time employee with an interest in history who, although well-meaning and conscientious, lacks the skills to fully exploit the potential archival resources, which reduces the general effectiveness of the programme. In order to provide access to the corporate information contained in the records, the archivist must devise a comprehensive system for arranging, describing and indexing the material. These tasks are better left to the professional archivist with a firm understanding of both basic archival principles as well as the requirements of users. This is perhaps the most important of all functions for without effective and efficient access to corporate information, the value of the archival programme would be greatly diminished.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a subtle change of attitude within the business community of which the archivist should be aware. Business leaders are beginning to acknowledge that mistakes were made in



the past, proving only that companies were guided by individuals with human failings. The shift away from repressing all material that fails to portray the company in anything but the best possible light is increasingly evident in recent corporate histories which chronicle the bad times as well as the good. In these publications, the author is often solely responsible for the interpretations and the company only ensures the accuracy of the facts.<sup>17</sup>

The attitude of historians has also changed markedly from the biased accounts offered by the muckrakers as John Archer has observed.

A developing sense of maturity permits company presidents to admit that excesses took place and that mistakes were made. Dark areas have occurred in business history, but the historian is not seeking evidence of a shocker for the sake of shocking. He is interested in the whole story in the whole context.<sup>18</sup>

Archivists must be willing to continue to build upon and exploit these moderating attitudes. Corporate archivists stand in an ideal position to help integrate the worlds of the businessman and the scholar. In encouraging outside access to business records, archivists can help to nurture a sense of "historical accountability" which contributes to companies' role as good corporate citizens.

It must be remembered that the historical component of corporate archives, while very important, represents only one aspect of the potential role of the archivist. His first priority must remain a demonstration of the ways in which an archival programme might contribute to the administrative requirements of a company. While perhaps capitalizing on the approach of an important company anniversary and the enhanced

sense of historicity which surrounds it to establish an archival programme, the archivist must move quickly to broaden his base of support within the company.

One of the primary factors in encouraging a broader idea of the role of corporate archives involves the development of an adequate pool of articles on the subject. Until very recently, the literature about business archives has tended to reflect a rather limited orientation. Archivists have suggested the desirability of establishing more archival programmes and historians have extolled the virtues of researching in corporate documentation and indicated what records they consider to be of the most importance. Neither of these attitudes have detailed the tangible benefits sufficiently to induce businessmen to establish archives on a broad scale. Fortunately, the focus of writers has begun to expand of late to include a more comprehensive examination of the ways in which archival programmes could be successfully integrated into the corporate world. The publication of a recent issue of American Archivist, devoted exclusively to the subject of corporate archives is a particularly encouraging sign of this shift.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, recent articles by Francis Blouin, which reflect upon the need to develop new appraisal criteria for business records, have also heralded a changing perspective.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, one element still conspicuous by its absence is the case study. A review of the literature reveals little information concerning real experiences within individual companies. Too often, articles have addressed the issue only in broad terms. It might be suggested that archivists concentrate

on chronicling both successes and failures in attempting to establish and maintain corporate archival programmes. Such an exchange of information would be invaluable to those in a variety of corporate settings who confront problems of a similar nature. In a related vein, archivists might also seek to publish more articles in business publications where corporate executives would be able to read about the various functions which archives have served in other firms. In this way it might be possible to develop a higher profile for archives in the business community and help to dispel outmoded notions about their limited uses. In the future, the encouragement of a case study approach and a growing emphasis on publishing in journals which reach businessmen could have important ramifications for the future of business archives.

The multitude of intangibles involved make it difficult to accurately assess the future prospects for business archives. One factor, however, remains abundantly clear - archivists must take the lead in promoting corporate archival programmes. The archivist must be willing to adopt an active role in developing archives into a recognized business activity within the corporate community to encourage the fullest possible utilization of its records.

Although business archives may indeed be considered a "hard sell", the imaginative influence and the perseverance of the archivist in developing broader applications of his services will certainly yield benefits in the long-run and, as a by-product, will ensure the preservation of that part of our cultural heritage embedded in the records of business.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Doug Fetherling, "Thanks for the Memories," Canadian Business (October 1980), p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>John Archer, "Business Records: The Canadian Scene" in Canadian Business History, ed. D.S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 291.

<sup>3</sup>Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, "Business Archives," in Canadian Archives: A Report to the SSHRCC (Ottawa: SSHRCC, 1980), pp. 92-93.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph W. Ernst, "The Business Archivist: Problems and Perspectives," Business History Review 44 (1970), p. 538.

<sup>5</sup>Richard C. Berner, "Business Archives in Perspective," Journal of Forest History 18 (1974), p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>9</sup>Oliver W. Holmes, "The Evaluation and Preservation of Business Archives," American Archivist 1 (1938).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>13</sup>Canadian Historical Association, Newsletter 9 (Autumn 1983), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Francis Blouin, "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records," in Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984), p. 75.

<sup>16</sup>N.C. Burkel, "Business Archives in a University Setting: Status and Prospects," College and Research Libraries 41 (1980), pp. 227-28.

<sup>17</sup>Examples of this more open relationship between company and author occur in two recent corporate histories - Donald McKay, Empire of Wood: The Macmillan Bloedel Story (1982) and Earle Gray, Wildcatters: The Story of Pacific Petroleum and Westcoast Transmission (1982).

<sup>18</sup>Archer, "Business Records," p. 290.

<sup>19</sup>American Archivist 45 (1982).

<sup>20</sup>Blouin, "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review" and "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records".

## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSION

This study of corporate archives in North America has argued that while business has played a significant role in the development of society, attempts to preserve its records have met with only limited success. The emergence of the current situation may be blamed on a number of factors including the lingering effects of the negative historical accounts published early in this century by muckrakers, the growing tendency of business to view the increasing accumulation of records as a liability, and the failure of archivists to justify their programmes as more than a source to facilitate the writing of history. Evidence has demonstrated that this historical approach has held only limited appeal. Consequently, it has been argued that in the future the corporate archivist must become something more than a passive curator awaiting the arrival of "retired" documentation which no longer fulfills legal or administrative requirements. He must also be willing and able to participate in records and information management. In other words, the corporate archivist should endeavour to escape from the "historical shunt" which, as both Norton and Taylor have warned, has drastically limited the effectiveness and resources of archival programmes. Increasingly, archivists must adopt a broader notion of the potential functions of archives within a corporate setting.

If archivists accept as one of their primary

responsibilities the obligation to preserve the records of past business enterprises in North America, then they must formulate ideas as to how this might be most effectively accomplished. Given the tremendous volume of corporate material produced annually, publicly-sponsored institutions are ill-equipped to carry out the massive collection programmes necessary to achieve this objective. The obvious alternative involves the establishment of in-house archival programmes, particularly within the larger corporations.

The proposal to encourage in-house operations is certainly not new. It first surfaced in the late 1930s and more prevelantly in the 1940s as the folly of attempting to collect the rapidly increasing records of business was recognized. Early efforts to preserve business archives were based on a desire to accumulate records from which objective business history could be written which, it was reasoned by academic historians, would constitute sufficient grounds upon which to justify the cost of maintaining the records. Unfortunately, this approach lacked broad appeal. Businesses experiencing the increasingly stifling effect of an inundation of records often opted for the tangible returns offered by records management which held out the promise of systematic control based on legal and functional criteria. As a result, the development of corporate archives has lacked an identifiable focus since the 1950s. Although achieving limited success, business archives are often still viewed as little more than "window dressing" rather than as a recognized business activity and as such are susceptible to closure as an unnecessary frill.

This thesis has suggested a need to return to the "Nortonian" idea of archives which emphasizes the administrative qualities of archival programmes over the requirements of outside researchers. This is particularly necessary in the corporate setting where great significance is placed on tangible returns and there is often little recognition of the importance of cultural concerns. In order to make archives more attractive to business, archivists must adopt a broader perspective of the services that they might offer and think in terms of how their resources could be utilized in the daily operations of the company. This transition from a passive, history-based operation to an integrated, recognized business activity does not require that the archivist becomes a records manager whose sole goal is cost efficiency. Instead, the archivist's goal is to instil a rounded concern for efficient management of current and semi-current records and the preservation of adequate archival documentation with which to understand the company's growth and development - for the firm's own sake and for the benefit of society at large.

To advocate such an orientation is not to suggest a severing of traditional ties with the historical community. The good archivist will always be concerned with history. It is essential to maintain an open dialogue with historians to add their input into the appraisal process, for they keep up with the latest historiographical trends and can also reflect upon the long-term research value of corporate records. In turn, archivists should endeavour to provide access to corporate material for qualified outside researchers whenever possible.



Although it has been a sensitive issue in the past, allowing access to company records would have important benefits. It would nurture a sense of corporate "historical accountability" and, in turn, contribute to a greater understanding between business and the public. In addition, scholarly research might prove to be a very effective method of organizing information locked within the company's old records which can then be used as an administrative tool. While research is useful in a number of ways, the archivist should not attempt to provide access at any cost. It is important for the archivist to establish as his first priority the preservation of the corporate records and to avoid anything which might jeopardize this objective.

The archivist should opt to emphasize the administrative functions over historical research because the former is more likely to appeal to businessmen. Past experience has indicated that exclusive reliance on history as justification for archives has met with only limited success in the business world. One of the new areas into which archivists should increasingly move is the development of "information policy" which, as Marilyn Gell has suggested, involves a complex set of inter-related issues "concerned with the creation, production, collection, management, distribution and retrieval of information."<sup>1</sup> The proposed movement of corporate archivists toward increased concern with administrative functions and participation in corporate information appears to be the only practical method of ensuring the preservation of the permanently valuable records of business. Success in appealing to these criteria in the future would have important ramifications for facilitating the spread

of specialized, decentralized institutional archives in hospitals, unions, municipalities, universities and businesses. Indeed, the necessity of demonstrating the tangible returns from archival programmes may become increasingly important for the whole archival community and may, in the process, produce a better archivist.

The suggested shift in focus away from the strictly historical approach towards a broader perspective might also be worthy of study for the general archival community. Consideration of this reorientation within a broader context is timely because the profession as a whole is currently caught up in an on-going debate as to whether archivists should move increasingly into the information field or rather restore their traditional humanistic ties with historians. As illustrated by the experience of business archives, it is now time to stand back and reassess the position of the archival profession and to develop a strategy for future development. Archivists should not soften in their resolve to adopt, as their fundamental objective, the preservation of permanently valuable records which reflect an accurate account of our society. The question then becomes how this might be done most effectively. Such a question reflects the necessity of expanding the purview of the archivist of the future and not limiting him to the traditional role of the passive collector.

In the debate about the future course of archival development which has crystalized into two, seemingly mutually-exclusive camps, the archival community would be well advised to incorporate elements of each into a broader theory of archives.

In this endeavour it might be particularly useful to build upon the foundations laid by Hugh Taylor,<sup>2</sup> Michael Lutzker,<sup>3</sup> Frank Burke,<sup>4</sup> and Francis Blouin,<sup>5</sup> all of whom believe that the development of archival theory should be based upon a closer examination of the structure and dynamics of bureaucratic organizations as well as the subsequent impact on the records produced.

In reflecting on the possibility of adding another dimension to the expertise of future archivists, Michael Lutzker posed the following questions:

Can he or she be the appropriate person to suggest how bureaucratic conflict might be mediated, how institutional goals might be clarified, indeed in what ways a dysfunctioning structure might be improved? Is it fantasy to suggest that the archivist might eventually occupy such an enhanced role, one not now incorporated in training manuals?<sup>6</sup>

New vistas are opening up into which archivists can step if they are willing. Some will continue to complain that any suggestion of a shift in focus away from the historical community will spell an end to the archival profession. However, if the archivist is willing to take action to explore new directions and become responsive to changing requirements, they will be able to move into the future under their own terms. Failure to adopt a sufficiently broad perspective could well result in the decline of the archival profession for, in any evolutionary process, inability to adapt to changing conditions results in eventual extinction. Consequently, archivists in general should endeavour to escape from the "historical shunt", which has long limited their role, and become more responsive to the needs of the future to build upon the experiences of the

past.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Marilyn K. Gell, "Socio-Political Impact of Information Technology," Special Libraries 72 (April 1981), p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh Taylor, "Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s," Archivaria 18 (Summer 1984).

<sup>3</sup>Michael Lutzker, "Max Weber and the Analysis of Modern Bureaucratic Organization: Notes Towards a Theory of Appraisal," American Archivist 45 (1982).

<sup>4</sup>Frank G. Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Training in the United States," American Archivist (1981).

<sup>5</sup>Francis Blouin, "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records," in Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance, ed. Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984).

<sup>6</sup>Lutzker, p. 130.

## APPENDIX I

CANADIAN BUSINESS ARCHIVES QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was not intended to capture comprehensive information detailing all forms of corporate archival programmes in Canada as that would have required a massive mailing to hundreds of firms. Instead, the questionnaire was designed to reveal something of the character of those corporate archives known to be operating in this country. Consequently, questionnaires were mailed to companies listed in the Directory of Canadian Archives (1981) and the Directory of Business Archives in the United States and Canada (1980).

(\* Not all respondents filled out all the sections of the questionnaire and, as a result, figures do not always balance.)

Names of Respondents :

Air Canada  
Alcan Aluminum  
Bank of Canada  
Bank of Montreal  
B.C. Telephone Company  
Canadian National  
Canadian Opera Company  
Hydro Quebec  
Labatt's Brewing Company Ltd.  
London Life Insurance Company  
Ontario Hydro  
The Royal Bank of Canada  
Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada  
Toronto Dominion Bank

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Total number of respondents.....15  
 Total number completing survey.....11

### Origins of Programmes

Decades in which archival programmes established.

1950s.....0  
 1960s.....1  
 1970s.....6  
 1980s.....0

### Records

Total volume of holdings in linear feet.

>100.....1  
 100-500.....3  
 500-1,000.....0  
 1,000-2,000.....1  
 2,000-3,000.....2  
 3,000-4,000.....1

Repositories reporting holdings other than paper.

Film/Tape/Video.....6  
 Photographs/Slides.....6  
 Artifacts.....3  
 Memorabilia.....2  
 Discs.....1  
 Advertising Posters.....1  
 Plans.....1  
 Clippings.....1  
 Microfilm.....1

Archives reporting use of automation.

Yes.....2  
 No.....5  
 Limited Use/Under Study.....3

Companies collecting private papers relating to company.

Yes.....9  
 No.....1

Staffing

Companies reporting from 1 to 6 full-time employees.

1.....	5
2.....	0
3.....	2
4.....	0
5.....	0
6.....	1

(Seven institutions reported one part-time employee.)

Titles of those working in the archives.

Archivist.....	7
Clerk.....	6
Assistant Archivist.....	3
Project Assistant.....	1
Photograph Archivist.....	1
Archives Technician.....	1
Film Library Coordinator.....	1
Library Clerk.....	3

BUDGET

Total budget for the last fiscal year.

>\$10,000.....	1
\$10,000-100,000.....	0
\$100,000-200,000.....	1
\$200,000-300,000.....	2
Budget incorporated into department.....	2

CORPORATE ORGANIZATION

To whom does the head of the archival programme report?

Corporate Secretary.....	3
V.P. Administration.....	1
G.M. Public Affairs and Advertising.....	1
Dir. of Publicity and Public Relations.....	1
V.P. Public Affairs.....	1
Manager - Purchasing Services.....	1
Chief Economist.....	1
Manager - Corporate Services.....	1

Does your company have a records management programme?

Yes.....	10
No.....	2



If so, it is its operation integrated with the archives?

Yes.....3

No.....7

Companies report archival input into the preparation of retention schedules.

Yes.....7

No.....3

Does your company maintain a library?

Yes.....9

No.....1

### ACCESS TO RECORDS

Most companies reported allowing employees access to records to satisfy work requirements.

Departments which represented the greatest internal users of the archives.

Public Affairs.....5

Senior Management.....4

Public Relations.....3

Marketing.....3

Legal.....2

Operations.....2

Policy Department.....1

Actuarial.....1

Human Resources.....1

Engineering.....1

Companies allowing access to archives for outside researchers.

(Most companies reported that they would allow access to non-restricted material at the discretion of the archivist.)

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Number of square feet allocated to the archives.

>100.....	1	
100-1,000.....	1	
1,000-2,000.....	4	
2,000-3,000.....	2	
3,000-4,000.....	1	
4,000+.....	1	(7,000)

Number of days per week the archives is open

5.....	7
3.....	2
Not open on a regular basis.....	1

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Mandate broader than purely archival function (ie. library or museum component.)

Yes.....	7
No.....	3

(Tended to have museum components)

Have archival records been used in the preparation of a company history?

Yes.....	10
No.....	0

Professional memberships held by staff.

Association of Canadian Archivists.....	6
Society of American Archivists.....	4
Toronto Area Archives Group.....	3
Ontario Historical Society.....	2
A.R.M.A.....	2
Assoc. des Archivistes du Quebec.....	2
Canadian Historical Association.....	1
Canadian Library Association.....	1
Theatre Library Association.....	1
Special Libraries Association.....	1

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahluwalia, M.L. "A Significant Order on Records Management." American Archivist 24 (1961): 85-87.

Alsop, Ronald. "Historians Discover the Pitfalls of Doing the Story of a Firm." Wall Street Journal (December 27, 1983): 1,6.

Anderson, Harold P. "Business Archives: A Corporate Asset." American Archivist 45 (1982): 264-66.

Andreassen, John L. "Canadian National Railway Records." Business History Review 39 (1965): 115-19.

Archer, John H. "Archival Facilities in Universities in Canada." Records Management Quarterly 3 (January 1969): 14-17.

Archer, John H. "Business Records: The Canadian Scene." In Canadian Business History, edited by D.S. Macmillan. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

Armstrong, Frederick H. "Canadian Business History: Approaches and Publications to 1970." In Canadian Business History, edited by D.S. Macmillan. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

Atherton, Lewis E. "The Cataloguing and Use of Western Mercantile Records." Library Quarterly 8 (1938): 189-99.

Bakken, Douglas A. "Archives and American Business." Brewers Digest (May 1973): 40-45.

Bakken, Douglas A. "Corporate Archives Today." American Archivist 45 (1982): 279-86.

Barrett, James E. "Acquisition in Industrial Archives." American Archivist 24 (1961): 333-36.

Baughman, James. "Practical Cooperation Between Records Managers and Business Historians." Records Management Journal 3 (Summer 1965): 2-4.

Benedict, Karen M. A Select Bibliography on Business Archives and Records Management. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1981.

Benedict, Karen M. "Business Archives Literature." American Archivist 45 (1982): 312-13.

Berner, Richard C. "Business Archives in Perspective." Journal of Forest History 18 (1974): 32-34.

Bissonnette, Andre, Andre Freniere and Murielle Doyle-Freniere. "New Concepts in Archives Management." Records Management

Quarterly 9 (1975): 18-20.

Blouin, Francis X. "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review." American Archivist 42 (1979): 312-20.

Blouin, Francis X. "An Agenda for the Appraisal of Business Records." In Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in An Age of Abundance, edited by Nancy E. Peace. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984.

Boer, D. "Business Archives in Automated Information Retrieval Systems." Archivum 18 (1968): 191-98.

Bolino, August C. "The Businessman and Business History." In Readings in United States Economic and Business History, edited by Ross M. Robertson and James L. Pate.. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966.

Bonfield, Lynn A. and Karen Lewis. "The American Brass Company: A Case Study of the Disposition of Business Records." American Archivist 45 (1982): 323-26.

Brayer, Herbert O. "I've Been Working on the Railroad." American Archivist 7 (1944): 115-127.

Brichford, Maynard. "A University Archivist Looks At Business Archives." In Papers of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Business History Conference, edited by Fred Bateman and James D. Forest. Indiana: Bureau of Business Research, 1968.

Brichford, Maynard. "Business Use of Business History." Records Management Quarterly 4 (October 1970): 14-16.

Brichford, Maynard. "The Relationship of Records Management Activities to the Field of History." Business History Review 46 (1972): 220-32.

Broehl, Wayne G. "Should Your Company Publish Its History?." Management Review 43 (1954): 831-33.

Brooks, Philip C. "Current Aspects of Records Administration: Variations on a Theme." American Archivist 30 (1967).

Brown, Gerald F. "The Archivist and the Records Manager: A Record Manager's Point of View." Records Management Quarterly 5 (1971): 21-22.

Buchanan, John. "The Western Electric Historical Library." American Archivist 29 (1966): 55-59.

Burckel, N.C. "Business Archives in a University Setting: Status and Prospects." College and Research Libraries 41 (1980): 227-34.

Burke, Frank G. "The Future Course of Archival Training in the United States." American Archivist 44 (1981): 40-46.

Burnette, O. Lawrence. Beneath the Footnote. Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1969.

Bursh, Edward C, Donald T. Clark and Ralph W. Hidy, eds. The World of Business. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1962.

"Business Archives." American Archivist 10 (1947): 204-207.

"Business Sits For Its Portrait." Business Week 1431 (February 2, 1957): 129-38.

Caya, Marcel. "Why Worry About the Present When the Past is Our Business!?" Paper presented at the Business History Conference, Trent University, 25 May 1984.

Chaloner, W.H. "Business Records As A Source of Economic History With Special Reference to Their Selective Preservation in Libraries." Journal of Documentation 4 (1948/49): 5-13.

Chandler, Alfred D. The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business. Cambridge: Balknap Press, 1977.

Charman, Derek. "Archives and Records Management -- An Interface?." Journal of the Society of Archivists 6 (April 1981): 423-27.

Clark, Thomas D. "The Archives of Small Business." American Archivists 12 (1949): 27-35.

Clutterbuck, David. "Turning the Relics of the Past Into Today's Assets." International Management 32 (November 1977): 61-65.

Cochran, Thomas C. "Arthur Harrison Cole, 1889-1974." Business History Review 49 (1975): 1-5.

Cochran, Thomas C. "New York City Business Records: A Plan For Their Preservation." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 18 (February 1944): 59-62.

Cochran, Thomas C. "New York Committee on Business Records." Journal of Economic History 5 (1945): 60-64.

Cochran, Thomas C. "Plans For Internship in Business Archival Work." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 20 (June 1946): 95-96.

Cole, Arthur H. "Business Manuscripts: Collecting, Handling and Cataloguing." Library Quarterly 8 (1938): 93-114.

Cole, Arthur H. "The Accumulated Development of Unsolved Problems." Journal of Economic History 5 (1945): 43-59.

- Consultative Group on Canadian Archives. "Business Archives." in Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Ottawa: SSHRC, 1980.
- Curtis, John and Stephen Abram. "Special and Corporate Libraries: Planning for Survival and Success." Canadian Library Journal 40 (August 1983): 225-28.
- Cushman, Helen Baker. "The Modern Business Archivist." American Archivist 33 (1970): 19-24.
- Darling, Robert H. "The Relationship Between Archivists and Records Managers." American Archivist 22 (April 1959): 211-15.
- Davidson, Helen L. "A Tentative Survey of Business Archives." American Archivist 24 (1961): 323-27.
- Davidson, Helen L. "Operating a Business Archives Department." The Office 88 (October 1978): 121.
- Davidson, Helen L. "Selling Management on Business Archives." Records Management Quarterly 3 (July 1969): 15-19.
- Davidson, Helen L. "The Indispensability of Business Archives." American Archivist 30 (1967): 593-97.
- Delgado, David J. "The Archivist and Public Relations." American Archivist 30 (1967): 557-564.
- DePuy, LeRoy. "Archivists and Records Managers - A Partnership." American Archivist 23 (1960): 49-55.
- Dickson, Douglas N., ed. Business and Its Public. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984.
- Douglas, Enid Hart. "Corporate History - Why?." The Public Historian 3 (1981): 75-80.
- Drake, Miriam. "Information and Corporate Culture." Special Libraries 75 (October 1984): 263-69.
- Edgerly, Linda. "Business Archives Guidelines." American Archivist 45 (1982): 267-69.
- Edmunds, Henry E. "The Ford Motor Company Archives." American Archivist 15 (1952): 99-104.
- Edwards, Nina L. "The Stevens Mill Records - Triumph Over Chaos." American Archivist 26 (1963): 59-62.
- Eells, Richard. "The Corporate Image in Public Relations." In Issues in Business and Society, edited by William T. Greenwood. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964.
- Ernst, Joseph W. "The Business Archivist: Problems and

- Perspectives." Business History Review 44 (1970): 536-46.
- Ernst, Joseph W. "Ut Omnes Unum Sint - The Rockefeller Archives." American Archivist 29 (1966): 61-67.
- Eulenberg, Julia Niebuhr. "The Corporate Archives." In Taking Control of Your Office Records: A Manager's Guide, edited by Katherine Aschner. New York: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1983.
- Eulenberg, Julia Niebuhr. "The Corporate Archives: Management Tool and Historical Resource." The Public Historian 6 (Winter 1984): 21-38.
- Evans, Frank. "Archivists and Records Managers: Variations on a Theme." American Archivist (1967): 45-58.
- Evans, Frank. "Modern Concepts of Archives Administration." Unesco Bulletin for Libraries 24 (1970): 242-47.
- Farr, A.P. "Are Your Historical Records Worth A Centennial Project?" Office Administration 12 (December 1966): 11-13.
- Ferrier, R.W. "The Archivist in Business." Business Archives 37 (1972): 17-22.
- Fetherling, Doug. "Thanks for the Memories." Canadian Business (October 1980): 129-33.
- Fishbein, Myer H. "Business Archives." In Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, edited by Allen Kent and Harold Lanoeour. Vol. 3. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1977.
- Foreman, Richard. "History Inside Business." The Public Historian 3 (1981): 41-61.
- Gambi, Vincent. "Going Public." Canadian Business 56 (March 1983): 74-79.
- Gamel, Faye. "Are Your Association's Archives Hiding in the Attic?" Association Management 29 (June 1977): 64-71.
- Gardner, Deborah S. "Commentary II." American Archivist 45 (1982): 293-95.
- Gell, Marilyn K. "Socio-Political Impact of Information Technology." Special Libraries 72 (April 1981): 97-102.
- Gibb, George S. "Exploiting the Business Records Collection." American Archivist 24 (1961): 339-40.
- Graham, Stanley K. "Processing and Using Records in A Business Archives." Special Libraries 46 (November 1955): 379-82.
- Gras, N.S.B. "Are You Writing a Business History?" Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 28 (October 1944): 73-110.

- Gras, N.S.B. and Henrietta M. Larson. Casebook in American Business History. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1939.
- Gray, William and John Andreassen. "Records, Archives and Administration: A Survey of the Canadian Business Community." Records Management Quarterly 3 (January 1969): 18.
- Green, Edwin. "Business History, Management Education and Business Archives." Business History 39 (December 1973): 16-21.
- Hale, Betty. "Pictures in Your Company's Archives." Special Libraries 56 (1965): 41.
- Hall, Roger. "Minding Our Own Business." Archivaria 3 (1976/77): 73-78.
- Hamilton, J.G. de Roulhac. "On the Importance of Unimportant Documents." The Library Quarterly 12 (1942): 511-18.
- Heacock, Walter J. "Business Archives and Museum Development." American Archivist 29 (1966): 49-54.
- Hedlin, Edie. Business Archives: An Introduction. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1978.
- Hedlin, Edie. "Access: The Company vs. The Scholar." Georgia Archive 7 (Spring 1979): 1-8.
- Hidy, Ralph W. "Business History: A Bibliographical Essay." In Recent Developments in the Study of Business and Economic History, edited by Robert Gallman. Greenwich: JAI Press, 1977.
- Hidy, Ralph. "Business Archives: Introductory Remarks." American Archivist 29 (1966): 33-36.
- "Historical News." American Historical Review 53 (October 1947): 180.
- Holmes, Oliver W. "Some Reflections on Business Archives in the United States." American Archivist 17 (1954): 291-304.
- Holmes, Oliver W. "The Evaluation and Preservation of Business Archives." American Archivist 1 (1938): 171-85.
- Hower, Ralph M. "Problems and Opportunities in the Field of Business History." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 25 (1941): 17-26.
- Hower, Ralph M. "The Preservation of Business Records." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 11 (1937): 37-61.
- Hughes, Helen. "Business History or the History of Business?."



Business Archives and History 3 (1963): 1-1.

- Iben, Icko. "Commercial and Industrial Archives in Denmark." American Archivist 29 (1966): 75-81.
- Jackson, Paul T. "Keep Your Archives in a Public Service Library." Administrative Management 34 (October 1973): 55-57.
- Jarvis, Rupert C. "Business Records and the Archivist." Aslib Proceedings 9 (1957): 164-76.
- Jenkinson, Hilary. A Manual of Archive Administration. London: Percy Lund and Co., Ltd., 1965.
- Johnson, Arthur M. "Identification of Business Records for Permanent Preservation." American Archivist 24 (1961): 329-32.
- Kesner, Richard M. "Automated Records and Techniques in Business Archives: A Survey Report." American Archivist 46 (1983): 92-5.
- Kesner, Richard M. "Microcomputer Archives and Records Management Systems: Guidelines for Future Development." American Archivist 45 (1982): 299-311.
- King, Jack. "Collecting Business Records." American Archivist 27 (1964): 387-90.
- Kurtz, Wilbur George. "Business Archives in the Corporate Function." Records Management Quarterly 4 (1970): 5-11.
- Larson, Henrietta M. "Availability of Records for Research in the History of Large Business Concerns." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 22 (1939): 12-21
- Leahy, E.J. "Report of the Committee on Institution and Business Archives." American Archivist 11 (1948): 62-64.
- Leaper, Rae. "Records Centres: What's in the Box?." Records Management Quarterly 18 (April 1984): 34-38.
- Lennes, Greg. "International Harvester Archives." Illinois Libraries 63 (April 1981): 289-91.
- Levstik, Frank L. "Establishing an Archival Program." Administration Management 41 (March 1980): 44-45.
- Levy, Robert. "Inside Industry's Archives." Dunn's Review 117 (May 1981): 72-74.
- Lewellyn, Michael V. "The Yellowed Square of Paper: The Archival Appraisal of Accounting Records." Georgia Archive 7 (Fall 1979): 23-31.

- Lewis, D.L. "Appraisal Criteria for Retention and Disposal of Business Records." American Archivist 32 (1969): 21-24.
- Lightwood, Martha. "Corporation Documents -- Sources of Business History." Special Libraries 57 (1966): 336-37.
- Lovett, Robert W. "A Brief Account of the Collecting of Business Records at Harvard University." Bulletin of the Business Archives Council of Australia Vol. 1 No. 9 (N.D.): 84-86.
- Lovett, Robert W. "Business Records in Libraries." American Archivist 20 (1957): 253-61.
- Lovett, Robert W. "Looking Around." Harvard Business Review 29 (March 1951): 127-39.
- Lovett, Robert W. "Some Changes in the Handling of Business Records at Baker Library." American Archivist 19 (1956): 39-44.
- Lovett, Robert W. "The Appraisal of Older Business Records." American Archivist 15 (1952): 231-39.
- Lovett, Robert W. "The Librarian, the Historian and Business Archives." Records Management Quarterly 2 (April 1968): 9-1.
- Lovett, Robert W. "The Status of Business Archives." American Archivist 32 (1969): 247-50.
- Lowe, Graham S. "The Administrative Revolution in the Canadian Office: An Overview." In Essays in Canadian Business History, edited by Tom Traves. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984.
- Lutzker, Michael A. "Max Weber and the Analysis of Modern Bureaucratic Organization: Notes Towards a Theory of Appraisal." American Archivist 45 (1982): 119-30.
- Lytle, Richard H. "The Relationship Between Archives and Records Management: An Archivist's View." Records Management Quarterly 2 (April 1968): 5-8.
- Lytle, Richard. "Ethics of Information Management." Records Management Quarterly 4 (October 1970): 5-8.
- Macmillan, David S. "Business Archives: A Survey of Developments in Great Britain, the United States and in Australia." In Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson, edited by Albert E.J. Hollaender. Sussex: Moore and Tillyer Ltd., 1962.
- Mathias, Peter. "What do we want? What do we Need? A Business Historian Speaks to the Business Archivist." Business Archives 42 (November 1976): 7-14.
- Matthews, Betsy. "Rescuing Records to Make Corporate Archives."

En Route (May 1983): 38-40, 68, 70.

Matthews, Linda M. "The Archives of the Coca-Cola Company." Records Management Quarterly 9 (July 1975): 9-12.

McKenzie, Carl H. "An Experiment in the Retention and Preservation of Corporate Records." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 27 (February 1943): 1-23.

McLellan, Peter M. "The Boeing Archival Program." American Archivist 29 (1968): 37-42.

Mitchell, Thornton W. "The State of Records Management." American Archivist 24 (1961): 259-67.

Mooney, Philip F. "Commentary II." American Archivist 45 (1982): 291-92.

"National Records Management Council." American Archivist 9 (1948): 382-83.

Nevins, Allan. "Business and the Historian." In Allan Nevins on History, edited by Ray Allen Billington. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons Ltd., 1975.

"News Notes." American Archivist 2 (1939): 183.

Norman, Christian. "Business Archives and Business History." History and Social Science Teacher (December 1983): 91-99.

Norton, Margaret Cross. Norton on Archives. Edited by Thornton W. Mitchell. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1979.

Oberly, James W. "The Information Revolution in Historical Perspective." Records Management Quarterly 16 (October 1982): 5-8.

Orgain, Marion. "Starting a Company Archives." Records Management Quarterly 8 (1974): 9-10.

Orr, Leonard H. "Why Business Got A Bad Name." Business and Society 19 (Fall 1976): 10-27.

"Our Primary Purpose." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 1 (1926): 1-2.

Osborn, Andrew D. "The Lessons of the United States Experience in Collecting Business Archives." Bulletin of the Business Archives Council of Australia Vol, 68, 70.1 No.8 (N.D.): 1-10.

Overman, William. "The Firestone Archives and Library." American Archivist 16 (1953): 305-309.

Overman, William. "The Pendulum Swings." American Archivist 22 (1959): 3-10.

- Overton, Richard C. "Can the Records Manager Help the Business Historian?" Business History Review 29 (September 1955): 211-17.
- Pargellis, Stanley. "The Corporation and the Historian." Journal of Economic History (December 1944): 29-39.
- Pargellis, Stanley. "The Judgment of History on American Business." Newcomen Addresses. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943.
- Paterson, Thomas G. "Historians, Businessmen and Research." Business Horizons 14 (August 1971): 31-4.
- Payne, Peter L. "British Business History: A Personal Survey." Business History Conference Papers (1978): 90-98.
- Polden, Kenneth A. "The Role of Records Management in Archives Administration." Library Association of Australia Papers (August 1965): 493-504.
- Pollay, Richard W. "Maintaining Archives for the History of Advertising." Special Libraries 69 (1978): 145-154.
- Porter, Glenn. "Recent Trends in Canadian Business and Economic History." Business History Review 47 (1973): 141-57.
- Price, Margaret. "Corporate Historians: A Rare But Growing Breed." Industry Week (March 23, 1981): 87-90.
- Radoff, Morris. "What Should Bind Us Together." American Archivist 19 (1956): 3-9.
- Raymond, Andrew and James O'Toole. "Up From the Basement: Archives, History and Public Administration." Georgia Archive 1 (Fall 1978): 18-32.
- Ricks, Artel. "Records Management as an Archival Function." Records Management Quarterly 11 (April 1977): 12-18.
- Rider, Peter E. "Business Archives Notes." Archivaria 1 (1975/76): 93-94.
- Ridge, Allan D. "Records Management: The Archival Perspective." Records Management Quarterly 9 (January 1975): 11-15.
- Riley, Susan. "Archivists Escalate the War on Paper." Records Management Quarterly 3 (July 1969): 29-30.
- Riley, Thomas W. and John G. Adorjan. "Company History - A By-Product of Good Records Management." Records Management Quarterly 15 (October 1981): 5-8.
- Rumer, Thomas A. "Corporate History and the Records Manager." Records Management Quarterly 18 (October 1984): 12-16.

- Sable, Etienne. "Safeguarding of Business Records in Europe." American Archivist 18 (1955): 31-45.
- Saretzky, Gary D. "North American Business Archives: Results of a Survey." American Archivist 40 (1977): 413-19.
- Saretzky, Gary D. "Oral History in American Business Archives." American Archivist 44 (1981): 353-55.
- Schellenberg, T.R. The Management of Archives. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Schiller, Irving P. "A Program For the Management of Business Records." Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 21 (1947): 44-48.
- Schultz, Charles R. "Archives in Business and Industry: Identification, Preservation and Use." Records Management Quarterly 15 (January 1981): 5-8.
- Shiff, Robert A. "The Archivist's Role in Records Management." American Archivist 19 (1956): 111-20.
- Shiff, Robert A. and Arthur Barcan. "The New Science of Records Management." Harvard Business Review 32 (September/October 1954): 54-62.
- Shiller, Irving P. "The Archival Profession in Eclipse." American Archivist 11 (1948): 227-33.
- Simmons, Joseph M. "Business Records in the Company Archives." Special Libraries 59 (1968): 20-23.
- Simmons, Joseph M. "How to Get Rid of Paper." Time 83 (January 3, 1964): 62.
- Simpson, Mildred. "Photographs in a Business Setting: Atlantic Richfield Company." American Archivist 45 (1982): 315-22.
- Sinclair, Bruce. "Museum Artifacts in Company Archives." American Archivist 24 (1961): 337-38.
- Smith, David R. "A Historical Look at Business Archives." American Archivist 45 (1982): 273-78.
- Smith, David R. "A Mouse is Born." College and Research Libraries 39 (1978): 492-94.
- Smith, David R. "It All Started With A Mouse - The Walt Disney Archives." California Librarian 33 (1972): 23-28.
- Smith, George and Laurence E. Steadman. "Present Value of Corporate History." Harvard Business Review 59 (Nov/Dec. 1981): 164-73.
- Smith, George. "Dusting Off the Cobwebs: Turning the Business

- Archives into a Managerial Tool." American Archivist 45 (1982): 287-90.
- Society of American Archivists. Directory of Business Archives in the United States and Canada. Chicago: SAA, 1981.
- Society of American Archivists. "Guidelines for Business Archives." American Archivist 42 (1982): 270-72.
- Steck, Larry and Francis Blouin. "Hannah Lay and Company: Sampling the Records of a Century of Lumbering in Michigan." American Archivist 39 (1976): 15-20.
- Stegh, Leslie. "Deere Company Archives and Records Services." Illinois Libraries 63 (March 1981): 276-79.
- Stephens, Bill. "History Housed: Sophisticated New Archives Opens Window on Arco's Past." Arco Spark 19 (October 1981).
- Sward, F.L. "Business Records Management." American Archivist 29 (1966): 69-74.
- Symons, T.H.B. "Archives and Canadian Studies." In To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975.
- Taylor, Hugh. "Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s." Archivaria 18 (Summer 1984): 25-37.
- Teresko, John. "Should You Keep An Archives?." Industry Week 188 (March 1976): 36-39.
- Van Camp, Anne. "Access Policies for Corporate Archives." American Archivist 45 (1982): 296-98.
- Weaver, Barbara N. and Wiley L. Bishop. The Corporate Memory. Florida: Robert E. Krieger Pub. Co., 1981.
- White, Gerald T. "The Business Historian and His Sources." American Archivist 30 (1967): 19-31.
- White, H.L. "Preserving the Past is Good Business." Bulletin of the Business Archives Council of Australia Vol. 1 No. 5 (N.D.): 1-11.
- White, Karen. "Establishing a Business Archives." Records Management Quarterly 15 (1981): 10-12.
- Wik, Reynold M. "Adventures in Business Records: The Vanishing Archives." American Archivist 14 (1951): 195-200.
- Williams, Richmond D. "Business Archives in the United States." In Papers of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Business History Conference, edited by Paul Uselding. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1979.

Wilson, Alan. "Problems and Traditions of Business History: Past Examples and Canadian Prospects." In Canadian Business History, edited by D.S. Macmillan. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1972.

Wilson, O.G. "Bank of America's Archival Program." American Archivist 29 (1966): 43-48.