

The Importance of Corporate Archives to Economic and Business History: A Case Study



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1 – ABSTRACT: This poster examines the changes of interests along the existence of Corporate Archives in History - from the beginning of the 20th century until today. The outcome for Economic History comprehension is directly related to archival programs in corporations; such changes had involved not just the concept of Corporate Archives but also the corporation's role, the archivist's competences, the historian's thoughts as well as the various fields of History research. The timeline below shows some facts, uses, contexts and situations, through which emerges the important relationship between History – General, Economic or Business – and Corporate Archives. Historiography allows one to identify the periods of the "Muckraking literature", the Biographies, the Public and Academic History and the Corporate Culture.

1880: Social Darwinism
1890: End of 19th century:
movement from
entrepreneurship to
second-generation
management

trepreneurship to Theodore Roosevelt cond-generation 1990: Future for the Great American blitcher d'History of the andard Ol Company", by An Tarbell lished Upton Sinclair's Society of the United

"Equitable Life Assurance
Society of the United
States"
1909: The Harvard Business
School's visiting committee
called for "a systematic
and serious attempt to
collect unprinted
documents relating to

916: The library of Harvard College acquired the records of the Slater textile mills, the archive's first well-documented accession

124(?): Formed the Business
Historical Society
1926-1935: Published the
detailed pamphlet "The
Preservation of Business
Records", written by Ralph
Hower
1927: Charles and Many's Beard's

1927: First U.S. business history course at the Harvard Business School Business School business information - 1927: The opening of Baker Library Sectoral Trade Commiss Securities and Exchange 1929 post: Welfare State and

Commission, National
Labor Relations Board

1934: Matthew Josephson's "The
Robber Barons"

1935: Federal Power Act

1935: Public Utility Holding
Company Act

1938: Natural Gas Act 1939-1945: World War II 1940: "Rockfeller: the Heroic Age of American Enterprise", by Alan Nevins

of American Enterprise", by Alan Nevins : Business History Foundation (BHF) arvey Dow Gibson: An 1962: "Strategies and Struc toolography" by Alfred Chandler gorgaphy of a Bank: the cory of Bank of America", ritten by Marquis James, Watson" by Thomas Marva Belden Anna Park Marva Belden Marva Marva

ught in the Business Motors", written by i imunity" Chairman of the Boar shed "The Equitable Alfred P. Sloan Ir. 1974: "Corporate Power and 1976: Stuart Ewen's "Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture" 1977: "The Life of John E. Rovensky: Banker and Industrialist", by Donald L. Kemmerer

Industrialist", by Donald L Kemmerer 1977: "The Visible Hand: the Managerial Revolution in American Business" by Alfred D. Chandler Jr., professor at Harvard University

University 198
SSAA's workshops on the creation and operation of

80: Directory of Business Archives in the United States and Canada was updating (3rd ed.)

updating (3" ed.)

11: "Who's Poisoning America:

Corporate Polluters and
their Victims in the

Chemical Age", written by
Nader Brownstein and
Richards

27: Terepora Deal and Allina

Kennedy popularized the term "corporate culture" 983: Business Archives Section of the SAA – number and state of business archives

GENERAL / ECONOMIC / BUSINESS HISTORY; HISTORIOGRAPHY; CORPORATE ARCHIVES

2 - JUSTIFICATION: Holding a proactive attitude to build knowledge from Corporate Archives, can possibly present several arguments in favor of it. The main problems for corporations are legal consequences or bad image caused by critical point of views, as a result of outside researchers having accessto archives. At the same time, historians must demonstrate that their methods involve greater questions which are related to technology, economic development, social concerns or the historical capitalism. All of this is part of Science's discussion: in an academic vision, the field of Business History has helped to see society through the "economy's lens" and the study of corporations turned into very important works of historians and other researchers within the Social Science community. Beyond the historical understanding of how important this relationship is, Corporate Archives encompasses definitions, strategies and sources for other fields of research, such as marketing or management.











3 – METHODOLOGY: As a case study, Cargill Incorporated is a model to be examined and analyzed in a specific historic context. That is about the concurrent development of the agribusiness with the changes in agrarian structures, during the 20th Century, particularly, in the 1960s and 1970s. In the field of Economic History, the research is supported by a comparative method, used to explain those changes in Brazil and Mexico, countries where Cargill Incorporated was based on – and still is. The keyword is agroindustry; from History to Archives, from Archives to Records, these are the first steps taken towards corporations' records types in make sense as historical sources.



4 - RESULTS: the identification and access to the Business History's historical sources are directly related to archival programs in corporations; which have amongst other procedures, appraisal and preservation of its records. "Corporation records as sources of research" such as a hypothetical function in a records schedule, can provide a variety of investigations, historic or not; otherwise, archivists know that respect for the principle of provenance is indispensable; the filling system is made according to the activities that produced the files. All of these procedures require a deep knowledge about the institution. The example below is only a "fictional schedule", limited to the case study's scope to demonstrate partially, some aspects of the relation between corporation's records and the historical sources.

FUNCTION	RECORD TYPE	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	SOURCE OF RESEARCH
Publicizing	House Magazines	Published sporadically for the benefit of employers	Permanent	Company policies and employee benefits; photographs.
Publicizing	Official Bulletin	Published internally to staff and branch system	Permanent	Company policies and employee benefits; photographs.
Operational	Minutes of meetings	Short notes detailing the proceedings of a meeting	Permanent	Includes critical events, problems and their resolutions.
Operational	Annual Reports and Statements	Published as a general overview or main points	Permanent	Summarizes the outlines of the firm's history.
Communication	Executive Correspondence	Personal and eventual, among operators	Permanent	Includes critical events, problems and their resolutions.
Communication	Memoranda	Personal, in general for internal and eventual communication	Permanent	Includes critical events, problems and their resolutions.
Human Resources	Capacitating Plans / Courses	In general, related with equipments acquisition and business expansion	Permanent	Modernization, mechanization, technological improvement. Photographs.
Human Resources	Campaigns for Prevention of Accidents Health or Environment	Regular or eventual, according to legal obligations	Permanent	Points the business infrastructure and the affairs / tasks of the firm or social concerns. Photographs.
Human Resources	Programs for Childhood	Turned towards employers' children or low-income children	Permanent	Points the business infrastructure and the affairs / tasks of the firm or social concerns. Photographs.
Assets and Patrimony	Inventories	Formal regular account to registering and control of the former and updated firm's wealth	Permanent	Development of Estate, Technological Improvement, modernization.
Assets and Patrimony	Blue Prints, Building Projects	Process of infrastructure expansion	Permanent	Development of Estate, Technological Improvement, modernization.
Financial and Budgetary	Balance Sheets	Formal regular account to registering and control, regularly, the capital movement , in detail.	Permanent	Analysis of statistics data and time series, indentifying real economic cycles.
Financial and Budgetary	Profit and Loss Statements	Formal regular account to registering and control, regularly, the capital movement , in detail.	Permanent	Analysis of statistics data and time series, indentifying real economic cycles.
Financial and Budgetary	Budgetary Plan, Spending Plan	Formal regular account to project, regularly, the future capital movement , in detail.	Permanent	Analysis of statistics data to do linear regressions, verifying economic projections.





