

The Value of Corporate History

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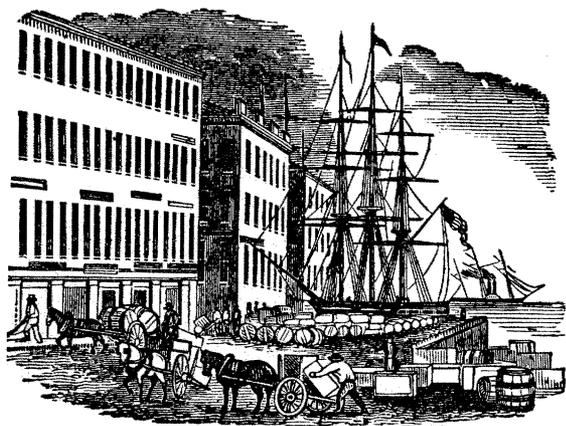
THE VALUE OF CORPORATE HISTORY

by George David Smith and
Laurence E. Steadman

PLANNING THE CORPORATION'S FUTURE SHOULD INVOLVE A CAREFUL LOOK AT ITS PAST

Corporations, like individuals, have more than skeletons in their closets. They have accumulated ways of doing things. And, like individuals, corporations may benefit from the old ways of doing things but may also become unable to adapt during periods of change. At these times, managers can look at the history of an organization to find ways it adapted in the past.

A history is also useful as a diagnostic tool and as a way of calling up great moments from the past to motivate employees in the present. A company's history contains its heritage and traditions, which managers need to understand if they are to see the present as part of a process rather than as a collection of accidental happenings. Perceiving a company in this way can enhance a manager's ability to plan for the future. Managers need to learn how to develop historical resources and how to put them to use.



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Rather than sophisticated planning systems and guidelines, 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. But frequently executives have to consider the experience of the organization, in which their own histories are limited. A more systematic and rigorous approach to the past is crucial if they are to achieve a sense of the corporate past greater than their own peculiar memories of it.

A history of the company is an important though generally unexploited corporate resource. It can have many values extending well beyond the celebratory function of the conventional publicity brochure or anniversary souvenir.

Many company histories, however, are self-serving and uncritical. Most managers that we interviewed regard the histories that their companies have commissioned as amusing but not very useful. They see them as full of apocryphal anecdotes, burdened with pointless routine and detail, or too focused on some particular event to be of value. As H. Peers Brewer, a corporate planning vice president at Manufacturers Hanover Bank and an ardent reader of history, argues: most internally generated histories are "too superficial, too low in thematic content, and too low in their levels of abstraction" to be either useful to managers or trusted by historians.

Most company histories deal with the contents of a corporation's past, rather than with its essence. They should concentrate on the dynamic accumulation of past events and decisions that has abiding significance for the present and the future.

As part of a ten-year planning effort, for example, Citicorp treated its corporate character and long-term success not as static givens but as a historical process. It correctly recognized that the present is a moment in the past's

trajectory into the future. Corporate history can be a way of thinking about the company, a way of comprehending why the present is what it is and what might be possible for the future.

Thinking historically about the company does not, however, necessarily result in a company's developing scholarly histories like Citicorp's. We studied several corporations to determine what types of historical investigation are the most useful and legitimate for a company's purposes. Although we mainly investigated large corporations, much of what we discuss applies to smaller companies of more limited resources as well. Once managers recognize the value of the corporate past, they can enhance their ability to diagnose problems, reassess policy, measure performance, and even direct change.

Coping with change

A little more than a decade ago, a large and successful technology-based company found itself at a strategic crossroad. Since World War II, the company had employed a decentralized management structure and a strategy of product diversification. It had increasingly relied on debt financing. By the late 1960s, for internal as well as environmental reasons, these characteristics had become dysfunctional. Unprofitable lines of business had developed, and the technological heart of the business exerted too little influence.

The company's top managers engaged a business historian to help them understand some of the long-term strategic and structural issues they would face correcting the trends of decentralization and diversification. One of the historian's more important tasks was to develop a corporatewide educational program to acquaint managers with the need for change.

The managers read cases on the company's history replete with stories of changing strategies, organizational innovations, and various management styles. The program presented data on the company's long-term financial policies, research and development, manu-

facturing output, and sales. The historian took care to distinguish the abiding from the transient characteristics of the business.

Managers learned that the organizational forms and management styles with which they had become familiar and comfortable were really impermanent and had, to a great extent, outlived their usefulness. They were reminded that decisions and structures are not absolute but adjust to changing circumstances. In the company's own pre-World War I corporate organization, they found an instructive analogy for the impending new order.

Business historians undertake several important jobs: first, to understand a company's history in great detail; second, to convey this history to present-day managers; and finally, to act as agents of change. For these functions the historian's training as scholar and teacher is essential. By stretching managers' awareness of the company beyond their immediate experiences, the historian enhances their ability to direct and cope with change.

History as a diagnostic tool

Managers at every level of the corporation, from the boardroom to the shop floor, have a need for a history of the company that is larger than their own experience. Indeed, an innovative manufacturer of consumer goods facing a serious labor relations problem in an extremely important plant made one of the most powerful managerial applications of historical thinking we have found. Founded fifteen years earlier as a "model environment" for its workers, the plant had (after strong beginnings) suffered serious problems in morale, in relations between superiors and subordinates, and in productivity. According to one company executive, everyone remembered that in the 1960s the plant was well oiled and its employees ambitious and productive. "The intent was good, the structures were good, morale was high — but it went bad." By 1975 no one knew why.

An internal adviser quickly noticed that a certain potent wistfulness crept

into people's voices when they spoke about the plant's early years. Suspecting that people were succumbing to the good-old-days syndrome, he thought he should get the facts about what really happened to demythologize the nostalgia. A social scientist who had no ax to grind was hired to construct a history of the plant.

Having little documentary evidence to work with, the social scientist used interviews with all the employees — sometimes singly, sometimes in groups. To thoroughly reconstruct the past and to establish a precise chronology of events, he anchored the employees' accounts on the measurable and verifiable evolution of the plant's technology and its changing output volume. In consultation with the plant's management and hourly employees, he developed an objective account: a common history that was more than the sum of the particular memories of the people who had lived it.

The history revealed that during the years when the company was rapidly upgrading the technology, no one noticed incipient problems in operations. As the plant grew from a small, experimental, collegial shop into a larger, more routinized, hierarchical bureaucracy, it required a different kind of management. As new executives attempted to manage the new standardization and demands for heightened productivity, they made decisions that unwittingly violated hourly employees' long-held work habits and expectations about decision-making processes, standards of conduct, tasks, and relationships among employees on the plant floor.

While management failed to recognize the ways in which it had gradually undermined employee trust and expectations, the hourly employees neither realized the sources of outside pressures on management nor understood them (although they indirectly experienced them). For instance, when division heads pushed for tighter controls to sustain successful operations, hourly employees couldn't see that increasing interdepartmental competi-

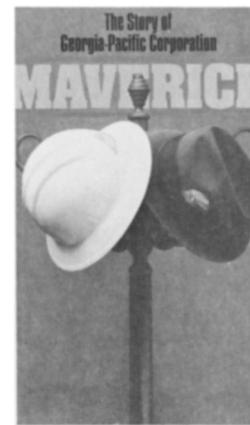
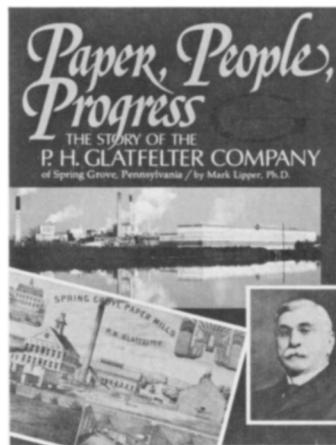
tion for corporate resources induced the controls.

Eventually it became obvious that the organization and its products had grown old together. As its initial products reached the end of their life cycle, the plant had to compete with newer facilities making new-generation goods. When the plant shifted its operations toward more diverse industrial and commercial applications which required more stringent tolerances and shorter production runs, managers had to adapt existing technology. And as able and ambitious employees transferred to newer operations, it became increasingly difficult for plant managers to hold down unit costs. At the same time, they had little control over product or capital decisions.

Things were so bad that a new plant manager even encountered problems getting labor and management to sit at the same table. When he finally succeeded, they began by studying the corporate history. Learning the plant's common history had a liberating effect on the employees. They began to understand management's problems and to gain a better sense of the economic and organizational realities of the company. Managers, in turn, began to see how employee trust had eroded, and they acknowledged the legitimacy of the employees' sense that their expectations and rights had somehow been violated.

Instead of pointing fingers at each other, people began to ask the basic question, "What happened?" After discussing answers, the parties agreed to work on solutions to their common problems. As a result, labor-management relations have vastly improved, information flows more easily from the top down, and employees more readily respond to work-related requests.

Using the original technology with some modifications, the plant is now a very strong generator of income, producing some of the highest-margin products of the company overall. And (according to one internal account) instead of seeing the plant as a dying organization, people now see it as a testing ground for new ideas and an exporter of talent to the rest of the corporation. A detailed case study of



the plant's past has become required reading for new employees. According to one company executive, the understanding the company gained from the experience is being applied to a new overseas operation.

The current plant manager, an employee of the company for over a decade, contents that charting the plant's history gives people a sense of what has happened in "real time" — an experience of the company larger than their own participation in it or perceptions of it. Those involved thus came to understand the significance of events they had lived through, whose underlying meaning they had not sensed at the time.

History as analogy

While every organization develops its own peculiar history and culture, different organizations often face similar problems. The learning achieved by one is frequently transferable to another. The people in the foregoing example took this to heart, and benefits continue to accrue.

This transferability is, of course, the whole point of teaching business cases: many are often like short histories. But while we all acknowledge the value of business cases in an academic setting (where they become kinds of parables of instruction), not so many see that cases can also serve managers as episodes to illuminate organizational processes.

Corporate histories, especially histories of older companies with continuity in a single industry, often contain analogues to contemporary concerns that can illuminate durable truths and reveal lost lessons about the fundamental nature and operations of particular industries. History, of course, never repeats itself exactly, and it is dangerous to rely uncritically on the past to predict the future. Even so, lessons

are there to be learned. Sometimes a history's relevance lies in pointing out the irrelevant. Sometimes finding out why and how watershed decisions were made reveals not only their latent significance or comparative value but also their pertinence to the present.

One company developed a marketing policy very early in its life for reasons that made eminent sense at the time. Over the years the policy assumed an inviolable stature as "the way we do business." On the ground that something inherent in the business demanded continuation of the status quo, managers defensively dismissed challenges to the policy from within the company as well as from customers.

A consideration of the historical context of the original decision revealed that it had been made under conditions — financial, legal, and technological — that no longer existed. The question then shifted to its proper place: not "Did the policy work in the past?" but "Is it relevant now and will it be useful later?"

History as heritage

Resurgent interest in corporate cultures has led sociologists, anthropologists, and other students of organizational behavior to serious study of the role traditions play in the life of a company. Every company, even a new one, has a heritage and a body of tradition. If the company's heritage is the whole of its discoverable history, then we can define tradition as the selective transmission of that heritage. In other words, tradition can be thought of as the company's surface memory — the folklore, ritual, and symbols that represent the company's sense of its origins, purpose, and identity over time. Company tradition is passed on formally through orientation programs, written histories, tangible symbols, and poli-

cies. It is also informally transmitted through stories and routines people accept as standard. All traditions are embedded in the past but alive in the present. For this reason, their history is vital.

As it does in all cultures, tradition plays an important role in maintaining culture. But corporate cultures are more circumscribed, more easily altered, more manageable than the cultures of society. Managers, moreover, have long been aware of the motivational benefits of corporate tradition. In a study of the oral tradition at Hewlett-Packard (a company only a generation old), an authority on corporate folklore explains how the retelling of a story about the "Nine-Day Fortnight" has become an informal but powerful vehicle for boosting employee morale.¹

Ten years ago Hewlett-Packard avoided a mass layoff during an industrywide financial crisis by having everyone work only nine of every ten days and take a 10 percent cut in pay. This episode has become a tale which old-timers tell to ensure newcomers that Hewlett-Packard takes care of its own. Moreover, the attitude the story reflects is now the basis for management's actions during hard times. In an industry short on skilled and experienced people, employee loyalty is one of Hewlett-Packard's prized assets.

But traditions that maintain the status quo can become liabilities when changing times demand new approaches. For example, the historical benevolence of one major retailer toward its work force has evolved in ways that constrain the company's ability to compete. Too often it has retained indifferent workers while insufficiently distinguishing outstanding performers from the pack. According to one report, this traditional paternalism, rooted in an early company manifesto, may have cut into the company's profitability and ability to com-

pete against energetic newcomers in its field.²

Understanding how corporate paternalism evolved at this retailer versus how it evolved at Hewlett-Packard might reveal ways in which companies can either build or hurt employee effectiveness.

Times of great change or devastating crisis also call traditions and longstanding habits into question. When corporate traditions are challenged, managers can consult the company's heritage, ask questions, and relate newly discovered or long-forgotten events to contemporary concerns.

The discipline of thinking historically

In the cases we've studied, historical thinking was not undertaken in the detached removes of the university library or the scholar's study. It took place in the active life of the business, where managers applied it to practical problems in which they had a real and current stake.

In thinking historically, however, managers should follow *some* formal rules. History is, after all, a discipline and — like economics, psychology, or physics — has its own approaches, methodologies, and constraints. While professional historians concern themselves routinely with methodology as they strive to perfect their craft, we'll simply note a few key attributes of historical thinking that the manager should bear in mind. Studying history entails the ability to:

1. See and explain the flow of events as a process over time, not just a sequence of isolated happenings.
2. Approach the past with a sense of surprise — that is, regard events and decisions as uncertain and thus recapture them unaffected by their real outcomes.
3. Treat any part of the past on its own terms and in ways that would have been comprehensible to people of that period. (Our natural tendency is to distort the past by reading it in light of our own experiences, ideas, and values.)
4. Understand particular historical problems or episodes in their contempo-

rary social, intellectual, political, and economic contexts.

In order to discriminate between good and bad historical data, it is especially important for managers studying corporate history to have a strong knowledge of contexts. Moreover, the available records may be scarce or idiosyncratic and the most relevant reasons for decisions may not have been recorded at all. Indeed, recreating the past is often a matter of intelligently plugging the gaps with well-reasoned historical judgment.

Importance of memory

Historical judgment cannot be applied in a vacuum. Because memory is crucial, the preservation and management of the corporate memory are among the truly important (though often neglected) tasks of the modern corporation.

Every organization has a memory, even if it is little more than the body of anecdotes illustrating something about corporate life that is passed from one generation to the next. Even bureaucratic forms, simple routines of work, standards of dress and protocol, or styles and arrangements of furniture convey impressions of the past, the corporate culture, and the company's identity and purpose.

The best support for the corporate memory remains a well-preserved and easily retrieved record of events and decisions. Some corporations have undermined their ability to make sound decisions through careless destruction of critical records or simply inattention to old data. As Earl F. Cheit, dean of the school of business at Berkeley, recently noted: it is "ironic . . . that at a time when all American institutions are becoming sensitive to the need to think beyond the short run, the very store of knowledge that could contribute most to the development of a longer-term point of view is being weakened."³ The tendencies toward mergers, acquisitions, and appointments of outside top managers and directors, plus greater reliance on oral

¹See *Dun's Review*, June 1980, p. 96. A working paper by Alan B. Wilkins, "Organizational Stories as Symbols Which Control the Organization," June 1980, provides extended discussion of corporate folklore at Hewlett-Packard.

²See *Business Week*, October 27, 1980, p. 148.

³"How Quickly We Forget," *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, November 23, 1980.

communication, have all contributed to a weakening of corporate memory.

Compounding the problem are the "records management" programs that destroy records rather than discriminately preserve them. In their fear of increasing the risk of litigation, some managements have carried the spirit of records destruction to ludicrous extremes.

One large company cited for anti-trust violations many years ago found that, during the course of the trial, its position was unexpectedly attacked on the basis of what it had regarded as an insignificant internal memorandum. The corporate response was to defend itself against future legal assaults by taking no minutes of high-level organization meetings.

The result was isolation and confusion. The company did not destroy merely its history of 50, 20, or 2 years past; it destroyed its formal remembrance of yesterday. Managers quickly discovered they could not remember what had been agreed to or why or who had taken what positions on an issue. They lost their ability to reconstruct decisions, all for the sake of obviating unpredictable legal hassles.

Fortunately, many organizations are now systematically preserving significant records in the belief that the benefits outweigh the risks. Wells Fargo, Foremost-McKesson, Chase Manhattan Bank, AT&T, and the New York Stock Exchange are developing sophisticated, high-level archival programs. Wells Fargo, for instance, has a department of history staffed by professional historians, archivists, and curators.

Others, such as International Harvester, General Motors, Ford, Coca-Cola, and the Bank of America, already have splendid archives. Ironically, however, managers rarely tap archives for practical business applications. The problem, as one public relations executive told us, lies in getting top-level support to take what people ordinarily think of as "just a collection of dusty documents" and turn them into a "living resource."

Creating a living archive is not simply a case of preserving important economic, financial, and legal records or of enshrining formal statements of

policy, strategy, and public relations. Correspondence, memoranda, recorded interviews, and even informal notes that might shed light on the decision-making processes of the organization must be available for study and analysis.

Peter Drucker has suggested four areas in which managing for the future requires careful assessment of the past: capital appropriations, personnel decisions, innovation, and analysis of strategies. Archives should be geared to the historical evaluation of the company's management and its ability to move from problems to decisions to desired outcomes.⁴

Applications & wider significance

Historical thinking can enhance some concrete corporate tasks (see the *Exhibit*). These tasks range from public relations to corporate planning and include market research, legal support, and personnel.

The development of good corporate history has importance for historians as well. Lying at the heart of our technological, social, and economic development, the corporation has become a central institution of contemporary society. Well-researched historical cases would not only broaden the base for business scholarship but also inform public policy. Policy is sometimes weak in historical understanding of the private corporation, its dynamics, and its long-term relationship to and impact on society.

At Citibank, historians look forward to preparing historically based arguments about the ways government controls have succeeded or failed in their industry. According to Harvard's Thomas McCraw, an expert on the history of regulation, business executives and regulators have a long way to go in sorting out successful from unsuccessful patterns of business regulation. Rhetoric too often substitutes for understanding.

Thus, at one level, good corporate history contains meaning through which the manager can relate his own experience and values to the larger

⁴Peter Drucker, *Managing in Turbulent Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 68-71.

life of the company. At another level, it relates the company's long-term role to the larger life of society.

Preserving the corporate memory

The story is told that when David Rockefeller was preparing for a trip to China, he asked an assistant to go to the Chase Manhattan archives to find out something about the bank's early dealings in the Far East. When the assistant reported back that there *were* no archives, Rockefeller was astonished. An archival program was promptly begun.

When senior management decides to take stock of the company's historical resources, the first thing to consider is the potentially high value-added uses of the company history. The range of possible benefits is suggested by the following summary:

At Citibank the payoffs are seen as related to the process of corporate planning.

At Consolidated Edison management succession is being aided by a history of the recent period to provide a context for decision making.

At Wells Fargo, which operates in an industry with relatively undifferentiated product offerings or service offerings, the corporate history is a powerful marketing and advertising tool that gives the bank a distinctive character.

At Hewlett-Packard the history has been a vehicle for sustaining employee morale.

At AT&T historical research illuminates organizational issues.

At General Motors the company's history is used to support programs in management education.

At the New York Stock Exchange the corporate history underwrites strong university and public relations programs.

Elsewhere, professional historical research serves as an aid to corporate litigation, policy reviews, and even (as we discussed) labor-management relations.

Whatever applications the company's history may have, identifying and articulating them is the first step in making the company's historical resources coherent. To do this, management needs to ask the following questions:

What is the state of our corporate

memory? What records-management policies pertain to it? When did our historical resources and our policies governing them last undergo executive review?

What has been written about the company? By whom? What is the general quality of such work? Does the public history of the company contain serious distortions or omissions?

Does the company have a strong connection with the historical profession? What policies govern the response to legitimate scholarly interest in the company?

Have historical accounts been published in such corporate publications as annual reports, house organs, and publicity pamphlets? How reliable or useful are these accounts?

What historical records or resources do the company's various departments require? How, for example, is historical research for legal purposes conducted?

Does the company have within it or connected to it experts who can organize, tap, and use the company's historical resources? Does the company have a professional archivist or (in smaller companies) professional archival advice? Does it maintain relations with professional historians who know how to find, assemble, and interpret historical data or train others to do these things at a parahistorical level?

Because archival organizations and methodology and the contextual problems of dealing with the often scrappy remains of the past are complex and specialized, the last question is especially important.

Managers also need to consider how to preserve high-quality data for use in the future. While corporations have mastered recording of quantitative processes, such as financial reporting and accounting, they find it hard to maintain good records on the processes of management and decision making. Because the electronic age makes it possible to write instantly erasable memos, it is doubly important to have someone on board who thinks about how important problems, events, deliberations, and decisions can be preserved in the corporate memory.

Many companies are undertaking oral interviews with significant people,

Corporate applications of historical research			
Exhibit	Focus	Purpose	
	Corporate planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies of the fundamental strategic and structural development of the company • Case studies of corporate successes and failures suggesting effective and ineffective courses of past action and their determinants • Studies of specific past policies, strategies, or decisions to determine their relevance in current contexts • Studies of the causes and evolution of specific contemporary problems • Studies of the abiding and transient features of the corporate culture 	To help avoid irrelevant or misguided trajectories into the future, ensures that assumptions about the past and present are correctly based
	Management development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house publications or programs for acculturation of new employees • Case studies for management training programs • Resource materials for diagnosing organizational ills and for reorienting managers in times of change 	To provide managers with an experience and knowledge of the company larger than their own
	Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes for advertising • Development and maintenance of corporate and brand images • Analysis of historical market entry into and exit from target communities 	To help differentiate the company from its competitors, to authenticate advertising, and to support market planning efforts
	Legal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemblies of primary resources for legal research • Determinations of facts in support of legal claims, positions, or briefs • Briefings for attorneys as to the underlying social, political, and economic reasons for past events and decisions together with their specific causes and consequences. Especially valuable for antitrust or regulatory proceedings in which historical patterns and relationships loom large 	To supplement the specialized legal resources of the company with expertise in either more general or more historically arcane research problems
	Public affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections of relevant histories or historical data for company officials responsible for dealing with outside agencies and stakeholders (e.g. regulatory bodies, lawmakers, special interest groups) 	To provide background and contexts for company policy and behavior to enable more informed public policy
	Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniversary publications • Annual reports • Publicity pamphlets • Corporate histories • Exhibits • Resources for scholars, museums, historical societies, and so forth 	To enhance public understanding of the company and the business
	Archival development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-indexed and accessible records concerning key aspects of the corporate history — major events, decisions, policies, strategies, and financial and operating data 	To support all of the above

conducted by an expert who asks focused and probing questions. Perhaps more important, however, is the development of ongoing methods of recording and preserving important facts. Historians can help here.

And, finally, the company could develop programs that use a well-researched history. Some useful questions managers can ask are:

How does the company communicate its history to new employees? What is the historical content of training programs or ongoing management seminars?

Would it be useful for the company to have ongoing public relations activities based on its history? Should the company create a museum or open a

library? Should the company create ties to universities, museums, historical societies, or other community agencies that might have an interest in its history?

When major policy changes are debated at the senior level, does the history of existing policy inform that debate? Should histories of policies be prepared for ready access?

Should histories of company strategies and other decisions be developed to assess the past performance of the corporation in qualitative as well as quantitative terms?

Should histories of the company's experience with social and government pressures be prepared to aid responses to public policy debates?

Once a company takes the three basic steps toward making its history useful — establishing the high value-added uses of the company history, identifying and rationalizing its historical resources for current and future use, and developing specific programs and studies — it will find that it has acquired a powerful managerial tool. While we do not imagine that our own enthusiasm alone will convince skeptics or convert ahistorical managers, we can at least suggest that executives take a preliminary look at their corporate histories in terms of costs and benefits. If they do this seriously and conscientiously, they can assess both. We are confident they will find that the benefits dominate. □

COMPANY HISTORY IN THE FOREST INDUSTRIES: A Checklist of Selected Firms

Compiled by the editors of JFH

Boise Cascade Corp. , Boise, ID	"25 Years of Growth," Boise Cascade Quarterly (Feb. 1982); summary history	Corporate archives; oral history program; some records of predecessor firms at Idaho State Historical Society, Boise
British Columbia Forest Products , Vancouver, BC	Sue Baptie, First Growth: The Story of British Columbia Forest Products Limited (Vancouver: BCFP, 1975)	Corporate archives
Brooks-Scanlon , Bend, OR (now part of Diamond International)		Corporate archives housed at Curtis Archives, Seattle
Champion International Corp. , Stamford, CT	"To Build a Company — The Roots of Champion," The Champion Magazine , no. 8 (1981); whole issue devoted to company history	Corporate archives
Chesapeake Corp. of Virginia , West Point, VA	A. T. Dill, Chesapeake, Pioneer Papermaker: A History of the Company and Its Community (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968); second volume in planning stage	Corporate archives
Crown Zellerbach Corp. , San Francisco, CA	Zellerbach, the House of Paper (San Francisco: privately printed, 1927); It's a Beginning: Crown Zellerbach's First One Hundred Years (San Francisco, 1970)	Corporate archives
Diamond International Corp. , New York, NY	William Franklin Fleming, America's Match King, Ohio Columbus Barber, 1841-1920 (Barberton, Ohio: Barberton Historical Society, 1981), founder of Diamond Match Co.; The Past Is Prologue: Diamond International Corporation's First One Hundred Years, 1881-1981 (New York: Diamond, 1981); other commemorative and regional histories	Some Diamond Match records at the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia
Federal Paper Board Co. , Montvale, NJ	John R. Kennedy, No Room for Discouragement: The Story of Federal Paper Board Company (New York: Newcomen Society, 1966)	
Georgia-Pacific Corp. , Portland, OR (Atlanta, GA, 1982)	John R. Ross, Maverick: The Story of Georgia-Pacific (Portland: G-P, 1980)	Corporate archives (moving to Atlanta in 1982); Georgia Pacific Historical Museum, Portland
P. H. Glatfelter Co. , Spring Grove, PA	Mark Lipper, Paper, People, Progress: The Story of P. H. Glatfelter Company (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980)	
Great Northern Nekoosa Corp. , Stamford, CT	John E. McLeod, The Northern: The Way I Remember (Millinocket, Maine: Great Northern Paper, 1982)	Some records of Great Northern Paper at the University of Maine at Orono
Hammermill Paper Co. , Erie, PA	Hammermill: An Industry Pioneer with Ongoing Pride in Quality and Innovation (Erie: Hammermill, 1981); Donald S. Leslie, The Story of Hammermill Paper Company (New York: Newcomen Society, 1964); new history in preparation	Corporate archives

International Paper Co., New York, NY	International Paper Company after Fifty Years, 1898-1948 (New York: IP, 1948)	
ITT-Rayonier, Stamford, CT	unpublished scholarly study	Corporate archives
Kimberly-Clark Corp., Neenah, WI	articles in a 1972 issue of Cooperation summarize a century of company history; Four Men and a Machine, Commemorating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary . . . (Neenah: Kimberly-Clark, 1947)	Corporate archives
Laird, Norton Co., Seattle, WA	Fred W. Kohlmeyer, Timber Roots: The Laird, Norton Story, 1855-1905 (Winona, Minnesota: Winona County Historical Society, 1972)	Records, 1855-1905, at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul
Louisiana-Pacific Corp., Portland, OR	history in planning stage	Corporate archives
MacMillan Bloedel, Vancouver, BC	J. V. Clyne, 'What's Past Is Prologue': The History of MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River, Limited (New York: Newcomen Society, 1965); forthcoming history by Donald MacKay	Corporate archives
Masonite Corp., Chicago, IL	John M. Coates, Masonite Corporation: The First Fifty Years, 1925-1975 (Chicago: Masonite, 1975); John H. Moore, "William H. Mason, Southern Industrialist," Journal of Southern History (May 1961)	Corporate archives
Mead Corp., Dayton, OH	In Quiet Ways: George H. Mead, the Man and the Company (Dayton: Mead, 1970)	
Medford Corp., Medford, OR	Jeffrey M. LaLande, Medford Corporation: A History of an Oregon Logging and Lumber Company (Medford: Medford Corp., 1979)	Corporate archives
Menasha Corp., Neenah, WI	Mowry Smith, Jr., and Giles Clark, One Third Crew, One Third Boat, One Third Luck: The Menasha Corporation (Menasha Wooden Ware Company) Story, 1849-1974 (Neenah, Wisconsin: Menasha Corp., 1974)	Records, 1857-1946, at Oshkosh Area Research Center of State Historical Society of Wisconsin; other records at Elisha D. Smith Public Library, Menasha
Murray Pacific Corp., Tacoma, WA	Margaret Elley Felt, The Enterprising Mister Murray (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1978)	
Pope & Talbot, Portland, OR	Edwin T. Coman, Jr., and Helen M. Gibbs, Time, Tide, and Timber: A Century of Pope & Talbot (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1949); revised edition published by the company in Portland in 1978	Corporate archives at Port Gamble Historical Museum, Port Gamble, Washington; older records at University of Washington, Seattle
Potlatch Corp., San Francisco, CA	Richard B. Madden, 'Tree Farmers and Wood Converters': The Story of Potlatch Corporation (New York: Newcomen Society, 1975; several journal articles)	
St. Regis Paper Co., New York, NY	Eleanor Amigo and Mark Neuffer, Beyond the Adirondacks: The Story of St. Regis Paper Company (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980)	Corporate archives at Watertown, New York
Scott Paper Co., Philadelphia, PA	Ten-part article in Scott World (January-December 1979) covers company history since 1879; Paper and Scott Paper Company (Chester, Pennsylvania: Scott, 1956); A History of S. D. Warren Company, 1854-1954 (Westbrook, Maine: Warren, 1954), now a division of Scott	Corporate archives
Simpson Timber Co., Seattle, WA	Robert E. Ficken, Lumber and Politics: The Career of Mark E. Reed (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979); Stewart H. Holbrook, Green Commonwealth: A Narrative of the Past and a Look at the Future of One Forest Products Community, 1895-1945 (Seattle: Simpson Logging Co., 1945)	Corporate archives housed at Curtis Archives, Seattle
Union Camp Corp., Wayne, NJ	Sixty Years of Progress (Franklin, Virginia: Camp Manufacturing Co., 1948)	
Westvaco Corp., New York, NY	Fifty Years of Paper Making (New York: West Virginia Pulp and Paper Co., 1937); unpublished study available for internal use	Corporate archives; some records of West Virginia Pulp and Paper Co. at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
Weyerhaeuser Co., Tacoma, WA	Ralph Hidy, Frank E. Hill, and Allan Nevins, Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story (New York: Macmillan, 1963); published regional histories; other histories in preparation; George H. Weyerhaeuser, 'Forests for the Future': The Weyerhaeuser Story (New York: Newcomen Society, 1981)	Weyerhaeuser Company Archives; oral history program
Wickes Companies, San Diego, CA	George Bush, The Wide World of Wickes: An Unusual Story of an Unusual Growth Company (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976)	Corporate archives
Willamette Industries, Portland, OR	Cathy Baldwin, Making the Most of the Best: Willamette Industries' Seventy-Five Years (Portland: Willamette, 1982)	Corporate archives