Corporate Archives and History: Making the Past Work

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glossy-paged book features two projects from each state and the District of Columbia, using beautiful color photographs and succinct, readable text to explain the who, why, and how much of each restoration. For many sites, the authors' current photographs are supplemented with historic black-and-white images. Most projects are on the National Register of Historic Places, and all have been restored since 1980. A surprising diversity of properties and restoration motives is represented. Not only is the elegant but predictable Georgian mansion included, so is a Wyoming “tipple,” a Nebraska soddy, and the 1933 Alaskan steamboat, Nenana. Not only did the National Park Service oversee some of the restorations, so did small-town mayors, church congregations, and descendant family members.

The authors call their book America Restored rather than America Preserved to emphasize the vitality of each project. Indeed, many returned a vacant building to service in its original or an adaptive use. In Iowa, for example, smart business sense caused Sioux City executives of Aalfs Manufacturing to rethink a move to a million-dollar, but non-descript, industrial park building. At half the price, restoration of the 1890 stone Aalfs factory made almost everybody happy. Surely less pleased were the displaced “skid-row gospel missions and junk shops” cleared from the area by the city. Despite the light-handed treatment of the occasional negative impact of such projects, America Restored is an eye-opener for those who think preservation is only for historical societies restoring only handsome buildings. It adds a good, albeit brief, state-by-state overview of diverse and successful recent restorations, and it does so beautifully.

REVIEWED BY LESLIE J. STEGH, DEERE & COMPANY ARCHIVES

Corporate Archives and History is part of the National Council of Public History Series published by Krieger. It is divided into four parts, with sections written by business archivists. Part one, “Getting Started: Recent Case Studies on the Development of Business Archives,” describes developments at some corporations. Part two, “Managing the Corporate Memory,” includes topics relating to oral history, access policies, arrangement and description, and the impact of automation on corporate memory. Part three, “The Corporate Archivist: Professional Concerns in a Changing Environment,” includes sections relating to credentials for corporate archivists, internships, and the relationship between archives management and records management.
Part four, "The Usable Past," discusses the present value of corporate history, how organizations can put the past to work, and why companies cannot afford to ignore the past. The book also includes appendices: National Council on Public History Ethical Guidelines; A Code of Ethics for Archivists; Code of Ethics for Certified Records Managers; and a list of addresses of professional organizations.

This book will be of value to anyone interested in corporate archives or given the responsibility for establishing one. Iowa certainly has many businesses that ought to have archival programs. Of broader appeal are articles dealing with issues that apply to archival organizations in general: oral history, access, arrangement and description, and disaster recovery, for example. Readers seeking further information can examine archival journals, especially *American Archivist* (Society of American Archivists) and *Archival Issues* (Midwest Archives Conference). The Business Archives Section of the Society of American Archivists is active and publishes a newsletter. *Managing Business Archives*, by Alison Turton (British Archives Council) is a longer book giving a perspective from the United Kingdom. Of special value is *A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on Business Archives and Records Management*, by Karen M. Benedict (Society of American Archivists).
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