FINAL REPORT

ON THE

PENN CENTRAL RAILROAD APPRAISAL PROJECT

April 1, 1984 - October 15, 1986

Submitted by:

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January 30, 1987
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Introduction:

The Penn Central Railroad project which began on April 1, 1984 was designed in order to appraise and divide the 360,000 linear foot archives of the Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroads. From the beginning, we realized that we were confronting the largest business archive to ever be subjected to systematic appraisal. When we applied to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for funding we did so for two reasons: (1) The Penn Central Records were one of the most important surviving business archives and significant portions were threatened with imminent destruction, and (2) We believed that for an appraisal project of this magnitude would make important contributions to archival theory and practice, particularly since all previous appraisal efforts of this kind had been confined to the public sector.

Given the scale of the project we realized at an early date that this was going to have to be a cooperative venture since no single repository could make a commitment to accession the anticipated 8,000-10,000 feet of records with permanent historical value. The past two and a half years confirmed many of our initial impressions; it required a full-time commitment from a three-person team to complete the appraisal effort.

The report that follows describes the project and relates it to the existing archival literature. It is divided into four
major sections: the first describes the state of the records at the beginning of the project, the second discusses the work team and work plan, the third analyzes our appraisal methodology, and the fourth the disposition of the records.
PART I
The Companies:

The primary company represented in the archive was the Pennsylvania Railroad Company (1846-1968). The PRR was the largest U.S. railroad in terms of assets and traffic from about 1875 onward. Beginning as a trunk route from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh over the Allegheny Mountains, it expanded into an 11,000 mile system stretching from Long Island to Washington, Norfolk, Cincinnati and Louisville on the South, St. Louis and Chicago on the West, and Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit and Mackinaw City on the North. Most of this growth took place in the 1860s and 70s. The Pennsylvania system embraced over 800 separate corporations, the oldest of which, the proprietors of the Passaic and Hackensack River Bridges dates back to 1793. No more than 250 of these companies were active at any one time. In addition to rail lines, they included canals, turnpikes, express companies, trollies, ferries, bridge companies (all held as adjuncts or for franchise rights), real estate, office buildings and coal companies, and beginning in the 1920s, truck and bus lines.

In 1968, the PRR merged with the New York Central Railroad Company (1853-1968), a generally similar system that grew in the same fashion out of a competing trunk line between Albany and Buffalo. The New York Central System (11,200 miles) covered the same territory in the Midwest, but in the East extended no further south than central Pennsylvania, with lines to Montreal, Ottawa and Hamilton, Ontario on the North. It also acquired a
direct line from Albany to Boston in 1900.

The 1968 merger created the Penn Central Transportation Company (1968-78). As a condition of the merger the company was also required to absorb the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company (1872-1968) as of December 31, 1968. The New Haven, whose predecessors included America's first railroad, the Quincy Railroad of 1826, had achieved a near monopoly of rail transportation in Southern New England, but it was by then bankrupt with no hope of solvency. Infighting between former New York Central and PRR managers exacerbated the problems of an industry that had long been losing business to planes and highways. The company was unable to achieve any of the projected benefits of the merger, and on June 21, 1970, America's largest corporate merger to date ended in America's largest corporate bankruptcy.

Because of Penn Central's importance to the economy of the Northeast, the Federal Government was forced to assume an active role in the reorganization. Long distance passenger service was assumed by the federal National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTRAK) on May 1, 1971. Congress also created the United States Railway Association in 1973 to engineer a reorganization of Penn Central that would protect the public interest.

The result was the creation of the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) April 1, 1976 to take over the viable portions of Penn Central and five smaller bankrupt northeastern rail lines: the Central Railroad of New Jersey, the Erie
Lackawanna, the Lehigh & Hudson River, the Lehigh Valley and the Reading. Marginal lines remained the property of the bankrupt companies. Some were sold or leased to local businessmen who conducted operations on a reduced, non-union basis, others were brought by state departments of transportation to preserve rights of way, and still others were abandoned and sold as general real estate. Conrail also sold the Northeast Corridor mainline to AMTRAK outright, and in 1983 all local passenger lines and equipment were sold to state-supported commuter authorities. The Canadian lines were sold to Canadian rail companies.

Conrail proceeded to rehabilitate and rationalize its plant and operations with federal funds (15,600 route miles vs. 20,530 for Penn Central and 26,400 for all pre-Conrail companies), and returned to profitability in the early 1980s. It is currently being returned to the private sector.

Penn Central was reorganized as the Penn Central Corporation in 1978. It retained a large portion of the non-rail properties and investments and has since become a general holding company with subsidiaries in energy, electronics, equipment manufacture, and real estate. Most of the shells of former rail subsidiaries have been liquidated and the property remaining from rail operations is being sold off.

The Records Warehouses:

As can be surmised from the preceding section, the records reflect a gradual accumulation up to 1976. After that, former
Penn Central records were divided among Penn Central, Conrail, Amtrak, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Metro-North Railroad Company, New Jersey Transit Rail Division, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), and a few smaller lines. At the same time, some of the records from the five other bankrupts were mingled with ex-Penn Central records at Conrail while others stayed with the bankruptcy trustees.

Conrail maintains a central records storage warehouse with a capacity of 340,000 cubic feet at Merion Avenue in West Philadelphia. It was created by the Pennsylvania Railroad from a former ball bearing factory ca. 1925 to replace a smaller facility in Broad Street Station and outlying depositories in Pittsburgh and Sunbury, Pennsylvania, and Logansport, Indiana. The Broad Street facility utilized vaults under the station tracks while the corporate headquarters occupied a tower over the waiting rooms. The track area was swept by fire in 1923, resulting in the loss of 12,000 cubic feet of records from fire and water damage.

Because of long term occupancy, the PRR records were relatively undisturbed. As the junior merger partner, the New York Central's offices were largely shut down and only a small percentage of its records retained. In contrast to the tradition-conscious PRR, the New York Central was taken over by and outsider, Robert Young, in 1954 and subsequent managements were conspicuously anti-traditional. A modern records management
system disposed of most older departmental files and most of what survived was destroyed when the New York office was closed in the late 1970's.

After its reorganization, the Penn Central Corporation created a new records center with a capacity of over 40,000 cubic feet in a loft building at 401 North Broad Street in Philadelphia. Into it were moved a portion of the railroad records (mostly corporate records) from Merion Avenue, and other offices around the system, as well as records generated by its new business. Many of these records were selected solely for their value in the tax and legal proceedings arising from the bankruptcy and transfer to Conrail, a rather narrow focus. Penn Central also collected some (but not all) records of the Lehigh Valley and Ann Arbor Railroads in which it had a majority interest, but which were operated independently.

Some records of its New Haven (primarily those subsidiaries still active in the 1968-76 period) were also taken by Penn Central, while some engineering and real estate records went to Conrail. The bulk of the New Haven records remained with the trustees at their office at 54 Meadow Street, New Haven, and were deposited at Mystic Seaport and the University of Connecticut at Storrs.

Records held in outlying offices had suffered more heavily in the post-1968 period as sites changed ownership and the number of field offices was cut back with shrinking trackage. Most remote sites were systematically cleaned out between 1977 and 1983, but
an examination of the records destruction sheets proved that on the whole, most of this material was low level, and the important records were preserved in Philadelphia.

We visited two other sites in Philadelphia, Pier B, Port Richmond (since demolished), where a large number of published county atlases from the Erie Lackawanna had been turned into moldy pulp by exposure to the elements, and 30th Street Station, where the remaining records were very low level operating forms. We also visited the offices in Detroit station which had been occupied continuously since about 1915 by the Michigan Central, a unit of the New York Central System. The many valuable old records which scholars remember being stored there in the 1950s had long since disappeared without a trace. While large volumes of records remained, they were either very recent or of very low quality. Since the other remote sites had suffered even greater disruption, we concluded that further searches in such places would be expensive and non-productive.

Accordingly, we concentrated our efforts in Philadelphia. Unless otherwise noted, all references following will refer to the Pennsylvania Railroad portion of the archive as most of the observations and appraisal strategies are applicable to it alone. The New York Central portion and fragmentary records will be treated separately in the Appendix. The method of storage presented a number of obstacles to the appraisal team. At Merion Avenue records were forwarded by individual departments and described on a G-56 form. (General Office Department form No.
56), which keyed into a G-57 form which served as the package label. Most records were wrapped in brown paper tied with twine rather than being boxed. Package size varied from 1/10 cubic foot to 2 cubic feet, making any accurate estimation of volume impossible short of stacking up the records and measuring them. The G-56 forms were not filled out with any degree of uniformity and ranged from exact item inventories to total misidentification. We soon concluded it would be necessary to inspect everything from certain departments.

The records had been sent to Merion Avenue piecemeal often representing the annual winnowing of file cabinets. Successive volumes of the same subject file might thus be found in four or five widely separated packages. Files were identified on the G-56 with the title of the department that sent the records to storage, which was frequently not the department that actually created them. Misfiles and unreturned borrowings from other departments were common. Occasionally, packages had been inadvertently destroyed. Elsewhere, fragments of series that should have been destroyed escaped because they had been misshelved.

At 401 North Broad Street, the records were stored in standard records boxes; but they had been extensively jumbled during repacking without regard to series. Control was maintained by a computer inventory, but again the level of detail varied widely. There were also many misidentifications and omissions. We were also obliged to preserve the companies' box
or package numbers as an interim control until we obtained custody and could prepare final inventories.

As a result, we had to perform a great deal more "processing" work than we had anticipated. Although members of the steering committee showed some concern, over the time required, it proved essential to restore some series in order to intelligently appraise them. In some cases we discovered gaps and had to search diligently for missing items. Generally, we reserved this treatment for the most important series.

It also soon became clear that all the executive correspondence series were extremely heterogeneous, reflecting a wide mix of substantive, support and housekeeping functions; discussions of important phenomena (e.g., brake design) balanced by notices of hundreds of routine occurrences (e.g. brake failures); not to mention data circulated as general information. Such series could only be effectively appraised at the file level. Furthermore, the portion of such series having permanent value varied widely, the average being about 15%. To escape the expense of shipping many tons of worthless paper, we elected to segregate and box the portion to be retained as we worked through each series. This was to be a rough first cut, with more careful, secondary appraisal to be done as part of the processing phase.

As a result, the archive was reduced to about 8,700 cubic feet. The overall retention rate for the entire body of records was about 2.5%. While scheduled destruction and accidental
losses over the years prevent an accurate computation of the PRR's total record output, a crude estimate would be that only 1% to 2% had any long-term value. This agrees with Greg Bradsher's finding of 1.39% for the National Archives and Douglas Bakker's figure of 1% to 3% for a sample of corporate archives.¹
PART II
The Work Team:

The project was supervised by a steering committee consisting of one representative of each depository and chaired by the Project Director. The appraisal team consisted of an Appraisal Archivist, an Assistant Appraisal Archivist and a Stack Assistant/Clerk.

The steering committee met two times a year to discuss general policy matters, and review the progress of negotiations with the companies and of the work of the appraisal team. Both the Project Director and Appraisal Archivist submitted preliminary information in the form of meeting agendas, followed by more thorough presentations at the meetings themselves. The committee would then discuss and approve the recommendations of the Appraisal Archivist and Project Director or suggest alternate courses of action. Normally, decisions were reached by consensus during the course of the discussions. In the few instances of disagreement, policy was set by majority vote of the committee.

The Project Director handled all work connected with the administration of the grant and all negotiations with the senior representatives of the companies. He also supervised the work of the appraisal team and coordinated the flow of information between the Appraisal Archivist and the committee members.

The Appraisal Archivist set the plan of work, wrote the series descriptions and appraisal guidelines and communicated the same to the Project Director by means of series data sheets, quarterly reports and weekly telephone discussions. He also
handled routine relations with the companies, submitting
descriptions of those records deemed historically valuable to
corporate officers for review and release and directing the
paperwork necessary to remove the records into the custody of the
depositories.

The Assistant Appraisal Archivist assisted with examining the
records and formulating appraisal criteria and decisions, and in
separating those series that were reduced by special selection.
He was also responsible for supervising the shipping and handling
of records from the shelves to the work area and to the
depositories.

The Stack Assistant/Clerks were students alternating
semesters of work and study, or recent graduates. They worked
under the Assistant Archivist in moving records within the
warehouse and under the Appraisal Archivist in performing the
typing, copying, and other clerical work. They also assisted
both archivists in collating those series that had to be
reassembled and prepared inventories where needed to compare
microfilm and hard copy.

The size and composition of the staff was generally
satisfactory. In appraising large series, the work was handled
on practically an assembly-line basis with the Stack Assistant
feeding packages to and from the archivists for them to appraise
and sort. With smaller series and miscellaneous items and during
the set-up phase for each group (identifying which packages were
to be pulled and whether the series was complete) it was
occasionally difficult to keep the Stack Assistant fully employed. The large amount of internal paperwork, multiple copying of data sheets, etc., filled this time to a great extent, but had this work not been present, there would have been serious efficiency problems. If future projects of this type are undertaken, it would be worth considering giving the third person more responsibility, particularly with the aim of getting someone who could do simple appraisal tasks and who could stay on for the duration of the project, so that accumulated skills would not be lost. However, the necessary higher wage would probably offset any gain in productivity.

Nearly one third of total project work time went into preparing, copying and circulating the paperwork necessary for informing the steering committee, submitting descriptions to the companies for review and release of the records and in readying the records for shipment. This can be attributed to the fact that we were dealing with two, and sometimes four separate corporations with claims to the same records as well as eight depositories.

Relations with the Penn Central Corporation and Conrail:

Some of the difficulties we had in appraising and dividing The Penn Central Archive were exacerbated by the problems we encountered when dealing with the records management and legal department staffs of both The Penn Central Corporation and Conrail. At the beginning our project was enthusiastically
endorsed by the CEO's of both companies, Stanley Crane for Conrail and A. V. Martinelli of Penn Central. We were promised full staff cooperation, a holding area and the authority to take title to all records that we appraised as having historical value. However, as with all bureaucracies orders from the top are not always carried out on the departmental level. At Merion Avenue it turned out that Conrail could only offer us a 500 linear foot holding area which meant that we were under constant pressure to move records out of the warehouse as quickly as possible. This often made it impossible to appraise certain series in light of the material found in other parts of the collection. The Conrail holding area was always a source of tension between us and the company's records management staff. The people who worked in the warehouse were very suspicious of us - some of the men felt that we were taking their jobs away from them and every time we pulled a box off the shelf were violating their contract with management. In fact, early on in the project, a grievance was filed against us which as far as we know is still pending. On the other hand, the records management staff at Penn Central was very supportive of our project. They provided us with a more than adequate holding area and in fact we often stored Conrail records at the Penn Central warehouse. However, the legal department at Penn Central presented us with a whole series of problems.

As one would expect the final agreements with both Penn Central and Conrail had to be negotiated with the Legal
Departments. In the Project Director's experience, most corporate legal departments do not view historical records as a corporate or cultural asset but rather as a source of potential liabilities in some future anti-trust or workmen's compensation case. The Penn Central and Conrail lawyers insisted that they review all records on a subseries basis. Each data sheet had to be submitted for approval and this turned out to be an extremely time-consuming process.

As things turned out we were allowed to accession about 96% of the records that we requested. Current I.C.C. regulations require Conrail to retain certain engineering and real estate records to document all property and existing structures. Records of this type also had to be turned over to Amtrak and the commuter authorities when they inherited former Penn Central properties, resulting in a dispersal of certain series. To partially compensate for this loss, a small number of files deemed to have the highest historical value were copied for the project. Penn Central was no longer bound by I.C.C., regulations but decided to keep certain tax files and the records of the Clearfield Bituminous Coal Corporation, since an active real estate subsidiary still controls these coal lands.

Work Schedule:

The first three months of the project (April-June, 1984) were devoted to a survey of the surviving records and background research. We examined the shelves and all of the inventories of
records held in the Merion Avenue and North Broad Street storage facilities plus all the documentation of records destruction between 1977 and 1984.

From this we determined that there were about 40 to 60,000 cubic feet of records worth examining in detail of which about 8,000 to 10,000 would merit permanent retention. The remaining 300,000 cubic feet were primarily low-level accounting paper held on short-term retention with rapid turnover or post-1968 records considered still active. We also determined that most outlying offices had been drastically rearranged between 1977 and 1984, and that most pre-1968 records held there had been destroyed. With few exceptions, most of the material in outlying offices was relatively low level and most material of value had been brought into one of the Philadelphia records centers.

Having ascertained that the task was within our means to accomplish and that the surviving material was of high quality, we commenced the appraisal at Merion Avenue. Ideally, we had decided to work through the departments in the order of their place in the hierarchy and in the order of their research value.

The facts turned out to be more complicated. Since the greater part of the Merion Avenue warehouse is unheated in winter, we were forced to suspend work there from January to March. We were also forced to adapt our schedule to Conrail's ongoing program of review and destruction of old records. When a record group was ordered destroyed, whatever its place in the hierarchy, we were obliged to handle it so the shelves could be
cleared in an expeditious manner. Since Conrail's program was scheduled according to where records were shelved in the warehouse, this posed a few problems. It also proved easier to balance those groups which required careful appraisal with groups that could be written off with cursory examination in order to keep the flow of data sheets near constant. Within these constraints, however, every effort was made to handle the most valuable groups first.

Negotiating the contracts presented another problem which has only very recently been solved. Given the fact that our project was not a high priority item with the lawyers from Conrail and Penn Central it took several years to extract contracts from the corporations. The Conrail contracts were signed in mid-1986 and all records were shipped from the Merion Avenue warehouse. The Penn Central Contracts took even longer to negotiate. In 1985 and 1986 Hagley, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Bentley Library, and the New Jersey State archives signed their agreements and acquired the records scheduled for their respective repositories. The four other contracts were approved by Penn Central last month. The records covered by them probably will not be moved out until the Spring.

Consultants:

We also commissioned two special reports, one from Steven Usselman now at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and one from Duane P. Swanson of the Minnesota Historical Society.
Dr. Usselman who had recently completed his dissertation "Running the Machine: The Management of Technological Innovation on American Railroads, 1860-1910", briefed the steering committee on the specific research potential of the Penn Central archive. He had used a small portion of the PRR Archive and had already worked with most of the other large railroad archives open to the public. For his report, he examined the Reading Archives at the Hagley Museum and Library, the Burlington and the Illinois Central at the Newbury Library, the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific at the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Lackawanna at Syracuse University, as well a speaking to the archivists who had appraised and arranged them.

He noted that there was little substantive duplication between the PRR and these other companies. The Reading and Lackawanna were eastern roads but highly involved in the specialized anthracite coal trade, while the PRR was an all-purpose trunk line. The other companies are all western roads, so there was a strong geographic complementarity. The Reading, Illinois Central, and Burlington records were primarily from the nineteenth century, while the PRR's are primarily from the twentieth. The departmental mix also varied considerably among companies. Study convinced us of the many unique aspects of the PRR archive. He also commented favorably on our preliminary survey and agreed that the appraisal process was adequately addressing the needs of potential researchers.

Duane Swanson, had participated in the 1976-77 rail records
survey, and spoke on the scope of the Northern Pacific/Great Northern archive and the process by which it was appraised and deposited at the historical society. As a result, we realized that the two projects were not really comparable. The western roads were land grant railroads and actively promoted settlement, the PRR operated in a highly developed region and its history was very different. Duane Swanson's presentation also revealed that the Minnesota Historical Society had not produced comprehensive appraisal guidelines of the sort we believed were necessary. The state had purchased a large new storage facility which eliminated much of the pressure to be more selective, and Mr. Swanson admitted in retrospect that they had probably taken too much. The major article that had appeared on the work also reflected this somewhat uncritical approach. Mr. Swanson reported that actual use of account books was heaviest for periods when a firm was engaged in actual construction, which seemed to support the analysis made by our appraisal team. He seconded our decision to adhere to more severe appraisal guidelines.

Minnesota's negotiations with its corporate donor were also significantly different. There was only a single depository and a single donor. Burlington Northern was extremely profitable at the time thanks to its long haul traffic and substantial non-rail assets; while Conrail was in the throes of reorganization and Penn Central was actively dissociating itself from its old railroad image. Their records were also not threatened by the schedule requirements of a corporate records disposal program.
In short, while he could offer some general criticism and advice, we were left to our own resources in the matter of specifics. In general, our own experience in appraising and arranging the archives of the Reading Railroad and other large business archives at Hagley turned out to be the best preparation for tackling the Penn Central archives.

We also enlisted the services of John H. White, Jr., Curator of Transportation at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution as a consultant. Mr. White provided us with many helpful opinions on file selection when dealing with the technical records of the Test Department. He also seconded our opinion that first hand examination of the material is essential and that simple file titles may be misleading.

In all other matters we found that there was sufficient expertise and range of perspective among the members of the steering committee and the appraisal team.

Outreach:

We also took several opportunities during the course of the project to publicize our work and solicit comment from the archival community at large. The appraisal archivist presented a paper in the form of a preliminary report at the Spring, 1985 session of MARAC at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A similar presentation before a seminar of staff and visiting research fellows at the Hagley Museum and Library followed a few months later. He also spent parts of July and August, 1986 as a fellow
in the Bentley Historical Library's Program for the Study of Modern Archives, where he further researched some of the theoretical implications of his work summarized elsewhere in the report. He benefited from the comments of other fellows, staff and lecturers, notably David Bearman, Greg Bradsher, Frank Boles, Fran Blouin, Richard Cox, Judith Endleman, Avra Michaelson, Helen Samuels, and William Wallach. Project personnel organized a separate session at the SAA's Chicago meeting in August, 1986, with the Project Director speaking on problems associated with dividing the archive and the appraisal archivist on appraisal theory and method. We expect to publish a revised version of these papers in the near future.

The Data Sheet:

Record descriptions and evaluations were entered on a 22-field data sheet. Data elements were designed to describe the basic characteristics of each record group, series, and subseries and to document the appraisal process. It became the primary means of informing the steering committee of the work of the appraisal team. The data sheets became the basic project document on which we logged dates of corporate approval or disapproval, disposition and shipment. Conrail data sheets were backed up with file copies of G-56s, while Penn Central entered all records released onto a separate computer-generated inventory.
A total of 1154 data sheets were prepared for the records at Merion Avenue, while 443 covered the records at Penn Central. Large parallel series such as subsidiary minute books, I.C.C. reports and account books were covered by simple listings.

The data sheet included both standard appraisal criteria like provenance, evidential/informational value and series/subseries relationships, summary content analysis and a determination of research value. It was however a rather crude statement and was not intended to replace the more thorough descriptions to be generated during processing.

In practice, we soon found the narrative elements to be the most important. In fact, we frequently required far more space than the data sheet allowed. Eventually we found it more sensible to circulate periodic reports containing a general description of the departments and their records series, and outlining the appraisal strategy. This would be followed by runs of data sheets limited to specifics of each record unit.

It is also possible that a more complicated data sheet could be designed. A section listing potential classes of users would be a minimal, logical addition. However, one can quickly reach a point where more time is required to describe the appraisal process than to perform it.
PART III
Appraisal Procedures:

The greatest problem posed by the Penn Central archives was not its size but its complexity. The company had nearly 2,000 predecessor and subsidiary firms, of which about 1,500 left records in series running from 1/8 in. to 5,000 feet. It spanned 193 years in parts of nineteen states and one Canadian province. The Pennsylvania Railroad alone had over fifteen major departments, most with several subunits and bureaus, as well as a maximum of sixty geographical divisions on four hierarchical levels. The boundaries and names of both regions and departments were constantly shifting. The material ranged in scope from the president's correspondence with the likes of Theodore Roosevelt and J. P. Morgan to the reports of hapless Sgt. Kemp, the scourge of vagrants and light-fingered schoolboys on the Panhandle Division in rural Ohio.

Our problems were therefore quite different from the two other large appraisal projects of recent years, which dealt with large runs of relatively homogeneous case files. Few of the record series were amenable to sophisticated statistical sampling techniques; and nearly all were appraised by special selection based on subject content. Methodologically, we hewed fairly closely to standard archival practice. When it came to particulars, however, we repeatedly confronted the fact that definitions and
concepts derived from experience in the public archives did not translate into the private sector very well.

Typically, our appraisal involved organizational/functional analysis, content analysis and user analysis.

A. Organizational Analysis:

One of the most striking differences between big business and public bodies is the two-fold nature of its organization. Since this fact has never been treated in the archival literature, we became aware of the full extent of its implications only gradually. It is therefore worth spelling them out in some detail.

The legal entity is the corporation itself, chartered by a state government. Corporate charters and general corporation laws are designed primarily to ensure a certain level of public accountability in return for grants of special powers like limited liability or the right of eminent domain. They also attempt to promote a democratic framework within the company, with directors acting as the elected representatives of the stockholders.

Of course, successful market behavior and efficient operation cannot be legislated. Consequently, power usually gravitates to full-time professional managers who organize themselves into ever more elaborate management structures. These managerial organizations have no legal standing other than being authorized by the board of directors, and the lower echelons were usually organized on an ad hoc basis by individual department heads.
The distribution of power between the "corporation" and the "organization" varies both among firms and over time. A large firm usually requires a large number of corporate charters which may be managed by one or more "organizations." The property of one corporation usually cannot be managed by the organization of another without a legal instrument like an operating lease or direct, 100% stock control. Where this is not possible, a typical response is to maintain several "organizations" each staffed by the same individuals. For example, the president, secretary, treasurer, comptroller, general manager, etc. of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company proper usually held corresponding titles with most of the other corporate components of the PRR system. The crux of this relationship is the distinction between ownership and management, and each side generates distinctive records. "Corporate" records exist in parallel series for each corporation: charters, stockholders' and directors' minutes, account books, stock and bond records, etc. As a legal entity, each corporation must make regulatory and tax returns and its books must be capable of being independently audited. Corporate records stay with each corporation through its life span and pass to those that inherit its rights and privileges at its demise. They also have as their primary focus the issues of "ownership": legal rights and obligations, proof of compliance
with charters, addition and subtraction of assets and profit and loss. Since the corporation is the only legal entity, it is corporate records whose retention is mandated by law. However, since corporate records deal with only a narrow range of issues, their historical research value is severely circumscribed.

Records of "the Organization" reflect the firm's departmental structure, which is distinct from its corporate structure. They describe the management of all the firms' activities with all the depth that the corporate records lack. They are less likely to be subject to legal retention requirements. The result can be seen by contrasting the research value of the New York Central archive, which consists almost exclusively of corporate records, with that of the Pennsylvania archive, which is rich in "managerial" records as well.

A firm's corporate structure can be expressed as a corporate history chart showing predecessor, successor and subsidiary companies, or as a corporate "family tree." The organizational structure is expressed in organization charts, organization manuals, official orders and appointment notices. The first revolves around legal obligations of ownership, inheritance, and contracts; the second around lines of authority which are arbitrary creations. Because of its ongoing legal implications, the corporate structure is usually well documented; yesterday's organizational structure may become as obsolete and forgotten as yesterday's fashions.
In order to properly appraise the archive, we created two data files, one for corporate and one for organizational units. The former was a relatively simple undertaking, as several partial corporate histories were readily available. The organizational structure was a far different matter. The only complete set of manuals was hidden among unrelated publications and was not discovered until the project was three-quarters completed. Cross checking with other sources revealed that the manuals covered only positions authorized by the board of directors and were not accurate in all particulars. We failed to find any comprehensive source of information for the many specialized bureaus that existed within departments.

Old employees' memories were not an adequate source of information, being either anecdotal or limited to their specific tasks. The only reliable source turned out to be the records themselves. Unfortunately, the information was distributed so randomly that it could only be retrieved by the kind of detailed examination typical of arrangement and description.

However, it was not necessary to understand all the nuances of organizational change to understand the major functions performed by the departments. An officer's position could be deduced from the box labels and file folders. All of the more important file series were stamped with the title of their
creators. Title elements like "Director", "Manager", "Superintendent" and "Agent" were good indicators of relevant rank as were the prefixes "General" or "Chief."

Functions could also be deduced since they appeared as elements in titles... "Finance", "Motive Power", "Transportation", "Auditor", "Counsel", etc. The broad characteristics of each function could be easily grasped by anyone familiar with business in general and railroads in particular or by reference to textbooks.

The mix of primary, tangential, and "housekeeping" activities had to be established by actual examination of the records. All three were present in varying percentages in all executive correspondence series. Fortunately around the turn of the century, the PRR and other railroads had worked with the Library Bureau to develop a standard Dewey-decimal system for railroad correspondence; which was in general use by about 1920 in all but the accounting and legal departments. Where this filing system was used, the numerical mix of the files was a good index of functional mix. For instance, the Motive Power Department files clustered in the 400's and 500's which denoted construction and operation of equipment. Routine activities like applications for industrial sidings (349.1) could also be easily identified.
Primary activities naturally received the highest appraisal rating. Tangential activities were appraised on the basis of "degree of relatedness" and informational values. Where the records of the office responsible for the tangential activity were no longer extant, relevant records from other departments were given a higher rating.

Our work suggests that archivists could use more information on the workings of actual organizations, either as prototypes or case studies. David Bearman and Richard Lytle's concept of "poly-hierarchies" seemed to be one step in this direction. However, this does not imply chaos. The specifics of labor and technical processes are a powerful constraint upon the organizations that supervise and direct them.

We found that on the PRR these basic departmental functions persisted unchanged. New departments were created by subdividing older functions as they became too extensive to be managed by the same officers, as when the Real Estate Department was created by uniting functions previously performed by Engineering (property maps and surveys) and Law (deeds), or dividing "Transportation" into "Freight" and "Passengers." New officers were also created to meet the demands of new technologies such as automatic signals, electric traction, containerization, and computers.
Within these broad categories, however, specific titles varied for largely cosmetic reasons. Whether a person was called a "Director", "Manager", "Chief", or "Superintendent" was largely a measure of established usage, individual seniority, and the internal pecking order. Vice presidencies were frequently awarded for length of service or as emeritus positions before retirement.

At the upper levels of the organization, duties tended more and more to be assigned on the basis of individual expertise, seniority, and whether an officer was being groomed for the presidency. As a consequence, the mix of functional departments reporting to top managers can change substantially with each death or retirement.

Usually, there is some measure of continuity in the resulting files, but it has to be uncovered on a case-by-case basis. Files may also be divided among successor offices creating difficult provenance problems.

We also noted that the direct relationship between function and record type decreases as one moves upward. Ordinary employees perform repetitive tasks and fill out standard forms: waybills, vouchers, journal entries, train sheets, etc. Near the top functions become extremely generalized: "directing", "managing", "deciding", "coordinating", etc. and the typical forms of communication: the business letter, the report, and the memorandum may be used to express matters of great or little import.
B. Content Analysis:

Perhaps the most important aspect of content analysis was the duplication of information. Between the introduction of carbon paper and the copying machine, most businesses created and filed one or more carbon copies in anticipation of future needs. The typical business correspondence series may contain up to 20% exact duplicates. In most instances, however, these duplicates were so finely interfiled that it would not be economically feasible to cull them. There was also considerable redundancy of internal publications and reports.

Partial duplication of information is a much more delicate problem. Business activity is primarily cooperative between superior and subordinates and among functional departments. For example, in a railroad rate application before the I.C.C., the proceedings would be coordinated by an officer of the Law Department. The president would determine overall policy and present an official statement at the hearing in his capacity as "head of state." Officers of the Transportation and Traffic Departments would prepare statements and produce documents from their files on operating costs and customer service. Draftsman in the Engineering Department would prepare the maps and charts to be presented as exhibits.
In a large construction project, the pattern of cooperation would be slightly different. The Law Department would prepare deeds and contracts, and the Engineering Department would prepare the design, draw up maps and plans, and supervise the construction process. Property maps and deeds would be filed with the Real Estate Department and building plans, specifications, and contracts with the Engineering Department. The Transportation Department would provide input during the design phase and take over operation and maintenance once construction was completed. The Accounting Department would record and classify expenditures, while the treasurer would make the actual payments to the contractors.

The result will be a certain redundancy among the records of each department, but each will have a unique mix and emphasis. This represents an evidential value that should be preserved. It also means that no one office's files contain the complete story of any complex project. A more concrete example may suffice. During World War II the railroads imported large numbers of Mexicans to take the place of men drafted into the armed forces. Some worked on maintenance of equipment in the Motive Power Department and others on track work under the Chief Engineer. The files of each contain the same general material such as government
directives but only the specifics (such as numbers employed) pertinent to that department. A complete understanding of the event requires both sets of files.

For the same reason, there will be a redundancy between corporate archives and those of regulatory agencies. Some series will be exact duplicates as with any form regularly filed with a government agency. Regulatory or judicial case files will contain substantial duplication of briefs, testimony and exhibits, but they also contain unique private correspondence related to the case. Some series of this type were considered to be of sufficient importance to warrant retention even though duplicates exist at the National Archives. At the other extreme, annual returns to state agencies were generally inferior or exact duplicates of federal returns or contained no information not available in the published tabulations.

From Dr. Usselman's report, we also concluded that the information in the PRR records were not significantly duplicated in other railroad archives. Rather, because of different chronological and geographical emphasis, they complemented them in important ways.

The same could be said of the information on railroads held by state and federal agencies. The overlap was not that large among the more significant series. As mentioned above, certain
groups: Annual Reports to the I.C.C., I.C.C. valuation histories and the records of specific important congressional, judicial and regulatory proceedings were considered important enough to warrant duplication in the PRR archive. In part, this obviated the need to ascertain whether each item was in fact available to researchers in the public archives. Post-1920's documents are still in the custody of the I.C.C., and there is no guarantee that the cases in question will eventually be scheduled for permanent retention by NARA. At the other extreme, we had every reason to believe that the many thousands of routine deeds for small pieces of real estate were duplicated in county registries.

We also considered the relationship between manuscript and printed sources. Since railroads have long been a highly visible and highly regulated industry, the amount of information in print is great. How did this narrow the need to preserve manuscript sources? Our first conclusion was to create a stage model for selection. Print coverage first becomes truly satisfactory between 1868 and 1875 with the establishment of a truly national trade journal, Railroad Gazette, now Railway Age, Poor's Manual of statistics for investors, the Official Guide of nationwide schedules and advertising, annual returns to state authorities,
and the publications of trade and professional organizations like the Master Car Builder's Association, or the Society of Railroad Accounting Officers. The creation of the Interstate Commission in 1887 completes this progression with systematic federal recordkeeping. However, as the industry began to suffer reverses after World War I, some types of coverage also contracted. Company annual reports lose their thoroughness starting in the late 1950's.

We therefore decided to retain nearly all materials up to 1850 and a very high percentage up to 1875. Progressively smaller proportions could be saved for the 1875-90 and post-1890 periods, depending on the nature of the information available in printed sources. Since the bulk of the surviving material dates from the twentieth century, and abundant if uneven outside sources of information exist, it seemed obvious that the retention of primary manuscript sources could only be justified for their ability to give the "inside story", on processes, events, objects, or people of some significance.

C. User Analysis;

The question of clientele was complicated by the fact that eight separate depositories were involved. A large measure of the debate and disagreement among members of the steering committee
could be traced to differences in institutional mission and user profile. While some variation to suit local interests was understandable, we had to maintain a level of uniformity in the application of appraisal criteria and always remain conscious of the body of records as a whole. There is a point at which excessive concern with narrow clientele interest undermines the unity of an archive. On the other hand, no institution will expend resources maintaining records that its clients do not use, and the tension between these two principles is a constant fact of archival life.

The entire project arose from just such a situation. The records under discussion were being destroyed because they were judged to be of minimal use to Conrail administrators. On the other hand, to name but one example, the vast majority of contracts and deeds needed to prove the current legal rights of a company have little long term historical value. Such records were left with the companies.

On the basis of Hagley's experience with other corporate donors, we foresee limited administrative use in researching elements of corporate history and in background research for litigation. The Company's consent to release the records was based on the specific understanding that they were to be used for historical research on the history of the company and the railroad industry.
On our analysis, the records were of greatest value to the many subspecies of historians.

While we do not anticipate a new corporate history of the Pennsylvania Railroad will be written in the near future, we believe that business, economic, technological, urban, labor and social historians will find the archive a unique primary source, a view sustained by many requests for information received during the course of the project. Business historians will want to use the Pennsylvania Railroad's minutes, board files and executive correspondence in order to analyze the history of "America's first modern corporation." As Steven Usselman pointed out at our November 1984 steering committee meeting, the records of the Pennsylvania Railroad provided an excellent means of examining the role of research and development in a non-science based industry. Technological historians will certainly want to study the records on dieselization, containerization, electrification, scientific testing methods, the diffusion of safety appliances (air brake, signals, automatic coupler), steel cars, and the large construction projects (Pennsylvania Station and the Hudson River Tubes). The records documenting the period of the railroad's long decline, from the passage of the Transportation Act of 1920 to the formation of Conrail, form the largest portion of the archive and should attract a good deal of
scholarly interest. The impact of competition from the bus and trucking industries as well as the railroad's response to the New Deal, welfare capitalism, and World War II is well documented in the records. During these years the industrial designer, Raymond Lowey, and Ivy Lee, the father of the modern public relations, were hired by the PRR as consultants and the records documenting their work should be of considerable interest to historians of industrial design, advertising and public relations. The records of the Personnel Department, Relief Department and the Wage Bureau are extraordinarily complete and trace the process by which the railroad was unionized. These records which include grievance, arbitration and pension files document the work process and the lives of individual railroad workers. We also considered the records' value to industrial archaeologists, museum curators, and historical agency personnel who generally work outside the academic setting and who may produce reports, exhibits, restorations or films rather than books and articles.

By the same process, we decided early on that we could not meet all the demands of what Philip Bauer called "antiquarian or genealogical delving."
In the case of genealogists, the companies were never under any obligation to preserve information for genealogical purposes, and although they regularly provided plans and data to modellers, there is no indication that they answered genealogical requests. Such material as remains is not arranged in a manner conducive to genealogical searches, is not useful for proving lines of descent, and adds little or nothing to the information available in the census and other sources routinely used by genealogists.

In the case of model builders, the official equipment drawings had been acquired by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission independently before the start of the project. Much of the other relevant information has found its way into that community over the last thirty years, where it freely circulates. Other series deemed to be of interest exclusively to modellers and train buffs were usually routed to PHMC.

However, most series that might be of interest to buffs could also be put to more sophisticated uses and the latter had to take precedence. We decided to consider only amateur research directed toward publication as opposed to undirected curiosity. A quick survey of amateur rail buff and local history literature revealed a small number of genre's that could reasonably be provided for.13
Some Existing Conceptual Models and Their Limitations:

Although they form the core of the appraisal process, these three types of analysis are not altogether sufficient. Specifically, the appraiser needs some group of concepts that can unite the methods of analysis into a whole establish the relative importance of specific functions, information and users.

The established conceptual model for appraisal has been the evidential-informational model of Theodore Schellenberg, although it has been rightly criticized from a number of perspectives by Boles and Young, Susan Steinwall, JoAnne Yates, and Dale Mayer and we must add our voices to that chorus.¹⁴ In its pure form, its usefulness is limited to the domain of the public records, where it mirrors the natural division between the governors and the governed "not to mention the much more limited perspective of the Federal Records Disposal Act of 1943." Its shortcomings for business records became obvious. In our society, most public bodies are concerned with making and enforcing rules and with allocating resources for the whole polity. The private business firm sells specific goods and services in a market. Its significant acts arise from the way it maneuvers in the space between public rules. Its external connections to customers, competitors, labor unions, and trade associations are vital aspects
of this behavior. It rarely collects information on persons who are not its employees or clients or on things in which it has no proprietary interest. Further, if business records are to be selected for preservation on the basis of the firm's social significance, i.e., its association with important phenomena, persons, places, events or things, it is scarcely surprising that evidential and informational values will be practically congruent and mixed in varying degrees in practically every series, file, or document. The same confusion exists when we look at use. Even institutionally focused research usually has a larger end in view. Indeed, insofar as its aim is to draw general principles and connections from the mass of individual events, the entire historical enterprise may be characterized as a search for informational value.

The Weberian model proposed by Michael Lutzker seemed equally inappropriate, given the large number of units and shifting arrangements over time. David Bearman's and Richard Lytle's distinction between mono- and poly-hierarchies seemed a particularly cogent criticism of this model. On the Pennsylvania Railroad, new functions tended to emerge in an ad hoc fashion through executive assistants or small bureaus long before they were fixed in the organization manual. For example, the Association of Transportation Officers, consisting of the heads of all the units
in the operating department, functioned outside of the formal organization with its own constitution and bylaws. It was organized along the lines of a professional society with topical committees and functioned like an in-house think tank.

Our experience also casts doubt on another of Lutzker's suggestions. He postulated that the budgeting process and an appeal to tradition serve as mechanisms by which conflict is mediated within an organization. In fact, these were the very issues at the core of the collapse of Penn Central in the late 1960's, total disagreement over budgeting and irreconcilable traditions. The more recent collapse of Lehman Brothers suggests that this was not an isolated case.

On the Pennsylvania Railroad, a strong sense of tradition and consensus was imparted by an equally strong "founding Father" figure, J. Edgar Thomson. It depended upon the fact that most of the company's managers came from a very narrow range of class and ethnic backgrounds, shared an equally focused professional training, the quasi-military "field culture" of the civil engineer, and were then initiated into the organization by long apprenticeships. Obviously, none of these controlling factors was immune to change. All of this suggests that large modern organizations are more likely to be poly-traditional and
well as poly-hierarchical, with often conflicting conceptions of standards and goals prevailing or succumbing, waxing and waning, with the passage of time.

The final shortcoming of the Weberian approach is that it is simply too broad. It looks at the phenomenon bureaucracy in general without considering the forms of actual organizations and the very real differences in their objectives. Neither does it account for autocratic or entrepreneurial elements. No one would choose a Weberian perspective to describe the pre-1948 Ford Motor Company.

One archival consequence of both the evidential and mono-hierarchical models is likely to be the "tip of the iceberg" or "slice off the top" approach that (whether or not it ever existed in a pure form) has come under increasing attack, as typified in the writings of Yates, Steinwall, and Mayer. Another is an over-reliance on the distinction between "administrative" and "operating" or "headquarters" and "branch" records. Our experience with Penn Central confirmed the validity of these criticisms. Both sets of terms reflect mono-hierarchial assumptions, and while they may adequately fit the agencies that carry out less sophisticated government activities, they are of little use in assigning value to the records of big business.
The main reason for this is that "administrative" and "operating" duties shade into one another as one moves from the center to the periphery of the organization. When one is "administering" a market-oriented process instead of a political decree, the tie between "administration" and "operations" is much greater. The records of the manager of a functional department document all the operations of that department. The act of coordination cannot be separated from that which is being coordinated. As with evidential and informational value, strategic, tactical, operating and entrepreneurial decisions will be mingled in every series if not every file. Furthermore, most big businesses become decentralized to some degree, as described at great length by Chandler, Yates, and others; hence "administration" cannot be equated with "headquarters" or "general office" either. The proper distinctions to be drawn in appraising business records are: top management, middle management (both which may have more than one level), bottom management, supervisors, employees. The last two generate no records of permanent value that are not adequately summarized in the files of their superiors. However, the archivist should at all times examine the records of bottom management to be certain that the material is adequately covered in the records of the office immediately above. This interface between management
and those managed (employees who perform essentially repetitive tasks) is an extremely important one. In our case, we examined the records of the division superintendents, the principal bottom managers. At least a small percentage of this material had some unique value.

There are also practical reasons for doing this. Frequently records survive longer in outlying offices and at lower levels because storage space is less expensive than at headquarters. For some reason, records originally stored in Pittsburgh survived when corresponding ones in Philadelphia did not.

Top and middle management form a complex unit that must be carefully studied. Because of their mediating role, the records of middle managers may be as rich as those of higher officials. As a rule, the appraiser should examine the records of all line officers and all heads of functional departments and geographical divisions.

The "field" versus headquarters" problem is likewise difficult to resolve. Within a complex organization, different functions will be performed in different ways, so the decision about whether field records should be retained must depend upon a detailed organizational and functional analysis. Generally, Yates' assertions that business organizations grant more autonomy to
lower or peripheral units is valid. In large measure this is imposed by the need to manage a complex mix of labor and machinery.

The more complex or far-flung the process, the greater the need for on-the-spot authority local conditions will exert powerful constraints on the available choice of actions. While the most important information will trickle back to headquarters, the appraiser should always examine the several levels of field records for such functions to determine how much is being handled at each. For example, grievances tended to be handled divisionally and regionally, but pensions and death benefits were handled centrally. Collective bargaining took place centrally on the basis of information generated regionally. Equipment and structures were designed centrally, but maintained and modified divisionally and so on. The focus of activities may also shift over time in response to perceived efficiencies.

Certain supporting functions were inevitably centralized, notably purchasing and insurance. Others remained highly centralized although they maintained branch offices, notably the Legal Department. All important cases were handled by headquarters for the obvious reasons that a great deal was at stake. This suggests that important issues of rights, restrictions, or threats to organizational order are automatically handled at the top.
The Development of a Chandlerian Appraisal Mode:

If public-sector terminology proved inadequate, the obvious source of appropriate concepts lay in the writings of business historians and professors of business administration, and particularly those of Alfred Chandler.25 His work traces the evolution of top and middle management structures, and we were primarily appraising the records of top and middle management. Francis X. Blouin, Jr., had produced several valuable suggestions in this area.26 We were able to use the project to expand his work into a more comprehensive application of Chandlerian concepts. The Appraisal Archivist delivered a paper on this theme at the SAA's Chicago meeting and is currently refining it for publication.

Chandler's work, particularly the cluster of concepts represented by the title "strategy and structure", highlights the linkage between organizational form and events, actions or objects in a way that is particularly germane to the appraisal process. In Chandler's view, organizational form is an outgrowth of a firm's market strategy. Relative strategic importance is therefore the ideal and possibly the only logical index of relative value in business records.

Since strategic decisions are strongly influenced by the nature of the production process and the conditions at critical points of production, distribution or exchange, and since the
ramifications of strategic decisions are carried out at all levels of the firm, a strategic analysis can help determine the proper mix of high and low-level activities, substantive and facilitative functions that should be documented. The same holds true for documenting the cooperative workings of various functional departments.

This approach also recognizes that market dynamism, the unfolding of technical and managerial innovation, and the continuously changing relations with opposing interests are usually more critical to the life of the firm than "policy" as defined by Schellenberg, i.e., "A course of action... to be followed in more than one instance". Clearly, all "policies" are not of equal importance, and the Chandlerian model offers a means of evaluating them. Repetitive tasks are important because they document an aspect of labor-management relations not because they are standards, per se.

The value of these concepts can best be illustrated by specific examples drawn from the PRR. First, we analyzed its development in strategic terms. During the Pennsylvania's first decade of life, its primary objective was to link Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and to serve the mercantile designs of Philadelphia by attracting traffic lost to New York and Baltimore. Its
primary activities were confined to selecting the best route, constructing the infrastructure, and designing a management to operate what was in effect a simple conduit. All of these objectives had been achieved by 1857. Both road and management were designed by J. Edgar Thomson and his cohort of engineers, and unlike on other roads, they proved strong enough to take control of management from the financial and mercantile interests. Naturally they began to pursue a strategy that evolved far beyond old-fashioned urban mercantilism.

In the next two decades, they began an expansion program that had several identifiable phases. Between 1857 and 1865, they secured their flanks by buying control of companies that could be used to create competing lines across the state and gave financial assistance to potential western feeders and branches. As competing lines in other states began to do the same, they were then compelled to secure direct control over these connections and direct access to the other eastern markets. When this process was brought to a halt by the depression of 1873-79, the result was a unified regional system, and subsequent expansion was limited to acquisition of the remainder of the northeast corridor and fleshing out the system with branches as regional development increased. Most of this expansion was accomplished by buying or leasing local companies which had pursued their own strategies.
prior to acquisition. The need to manage such a far-flung empire led to the creation of an innovative line-and-staff management system, cost accounting, and one of the earliest uses of the holding company. The need to increase throughput and compete with rival systems prompted a host of technical and marketing innovations: steel rails, air brakes, long distance through trains, sleeping cars, etc.

While such improvements continued unabated, the 1880-1910 period was increasingly dominated by the relations among big railroad systems, such as in the formation of pools and cartels, and by the increasing scope of government regulation, which ended with temporary nationalization during World War I. After 1920, the rails had lost their transportation monopoly and began their long decline. Strategy now revolved around promoting consolidation and reduction of excess capacity, retaining customers with improved services like streamliners, increasing plant efficiency, and diversifying into competing modes like trucks and buses and into non-transportation activities.

Proceeding to the actual appraisal process, we gave priority of selection to records about "strategic" functions and activities. Coverage of technical matters was similarly focused on those that constituted strategic innovations at a particular time: steel cars ca. 1900-15, roller bearings and automatic
train control in the twenties and thirties, dieselization between 1937 and 1957. The only instance in which we retained branch records from the Legal Department involved early truck and bus franchises, a strategic development for which we retained records wherever found.

In appraising the records of the financial department, we determined that its activities between about 1910 and 1950 were of little strategic importance. Most financial processes, such as accounting procedures and the issue of new stocks and bonds, were rigidly controlled by regulatory agencies and were adequately summarized in the trade press and in the small annual report of the company's treasurer. We thus made a much smaller selection of correspondence files in this period, emphasizing mergers and the consolidation movement, in which one of the financial officers played a leading role. Before 1910, cartel schemes and the anti-trust movement warranted a broader selection, while after 1950 the financial department was deeply involved in attempts to modernize administrative procedures, diversification, and the events leading up to the Penn Central merger.

More extreme cases involved the records of the secretary and treasurer. Aside from their custodial duties (the secretary of official documents, the treasurer of the corporate purse), both officers performed mostly housekeeping functions, chiefly
the transfer of stock certificates and the payment of dividends and interest, respectively. We determined that individual stockholdings were of no strategic impact after about 1900, even on most of the smaller predecessor companies. Ownership of railroad securities had become so widespread by that time, that the number of annual transactions was enormous, while the influence of all but the largest holders was nil. Consequently, we discarded most twentieth century stockholder records with the exception of periodic lists of the largest shareholders. Possible exceptions to this approach would have been specific periods, as during a takeover bid, when actual control of the company was threatened, but except for a few instances of ineffectual harassment, this was never a serious possibility on the PRR.

The strategic approach was most useful in selecting from over 6,000 feet of legal case and correspondence files. Here we were able to use it in tandem with "fat file" theory. A case of strategic importance: anti-trust, consolidation, or major rate case, always produced at least three inches of material, and in fact as much as 100 feet. On this basis, nearly 80% of both series could be eliminated. It would appear to us, following the experiences of the FBI and Massachusetts Superior Court Projects, that so-called "fat file theory" is most applicable and perhaps limited to this type of legal or quasi-legal case.
file. Over a quarter of the files that passed the "fat file" test flunked the strategic test and were discarded, primarily informational files on railroads in remote parts of the country or such cases as an interminable squabble over station parking log franchises. A few, such as those on major wrecks, were saved simply for informational content, particularly when they preserved photos and other ephemera as exhibits.

**Shortcomings and Implications of this Chandlerian Model:**

This Chandlerian approach, if it can be called that, seemed to meet the assessed needs of business historians, and to a large degree those of political historians and historians of technology, all of whom tend to be interested in big decisions, the decision-making process, and decision makers. It seemed to be less suited to the needs of social historians and others taking the "history from the bottom up" approach.\(^{33}\) It should be noted that despite its depth, Chandler's work has a very narrow focus, the development of modern managerial structures and the rise of the managerial class. It does not treat the effects of strategic and tactical decisions on ordinary employees or feedback from bottom to top to any degree.

Some strategic issues do, of course, permit some access to the lives and perspectives of ordinary employees. It is generally held that the severity of the Great Strike of 1877 and the resulting
destruction at Pittsburgh was exacerbated by a series of wage cuts needed to retain funds for the company's empire building. In the Depression, management's strategic objective of improving efficiency and cutting costs was at cross purposes with labor's objective of preserving and creating jobs. Labor was able to achieve its goals through the political process by securing the passage of Full Crew and Train Limit laws. Management's unsuccessful tactics included public relations and lobbying campaigns and court challenges, all of which generated significant records. However, the more mundane details may elude capture.

It seems therefore that we must move beyond Chandler to a higher level of generalization. I would propose that power and control are the underlying realities behind both strategy and structure. Strategic market behavior involves the extension and preservation of power, as when a firm moves into new territories, product lines, or markets or withdraws under pressure from well-defended or unprofitable ones. Competing centers of power, such as other firms, government regulators, organized labor, or grassroots political and social reform movements strongly influence strategic options and the choice of tactics.

The Chandlerian model describes but a few important power relationships: the control of information within an organization, the control of managers by other managers, the control by
managers of production and distribution processes previously
governed by market forces. In this model, information typically
moves toward the center along multiple paths, while decisions
flow outward. Since the power structures designed to effect
this control are finely tuned forms of top and middle management,
it is no surprise that such a model is most appropriate to
appraising the records of those structures, and in fact the bulk
of the records we appraised were those of top and middle
management.

The larger implication of our work, then, is that a number
of similar models exist for other situations. However, they
should have the common feature of a strategy of maintaining or
extending control being reflected in the form of a particular
institution or power structure. Different variants might
explain the distribution of power within an organization (as
Chandler primarily does) or the exercise of power between
conflicting organizations.

Although we have made no attempt to develop them, a few such
alternatives come to mind. There is a model for the control of
craft or technical skills, which can be developed from the work
of Harry Braverman and David Noble, Immanuel Wallerstein's
model for the distribution of world economic power, Thomas
Kuhn's concept of paradigm from the history of science.
Treating an organization as a power structure from top to bottom seems to be the best substitute for the traditional concept of evidential value. Specifically, it replaces the notion of what is important to the administration of an organization with the broader and more socially responsible one of what is important about the organization itself.

First, it calls attention to the need to follow the chain of power down to the bottom thus linking the needs of the social historian to those of other users. Business collections that have survived relatively undisturbed will usually contain some record of the interaction of management with ordinary employees. For example, we appraised grievance case files, pensioner death case files, and work history dossiers.

Furthermore, it can modify the definition of "routine" or "transactional" records in important ways. From this perspective, "routine" is simply a shorthand for saying that the balance of power, whether between man and man or man and nature, is not greatly altered, is not an issue in the transaction, or is not significant in any larger context. Thus case files of claims for damaged freight have less potential for understanding power relationships than grievance case files, and more power is at stake in a full crew court case than in a grievance case, hence the
archival decision to select nothing, a sample, and everything respectively. This principle would also seem to explain for example why the FBI case files are a live item, while most of the I.C.C. case files are a dead weight. \[39\]

However, we found that the form if not the content of typical or "routine" processes and procedures is generally well documented in printed sources such as textbooks and state-of-the-art articles in the professional and trade press. \[40\] As opposed to strategic "trade secrets", information of the type tends to be widely circulated and standardized on an industry-wide basis.

Of course, this approach, like any other, biases the record, in this case in favor of documenting innovation, change, and the presence or absence of conflict. On the whole, this seems to be a reasonable bias when dealing with the records of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Externalities and Information Value:**

In almost every body of business records, however, there is usually some significant information on persons, places, events, or things which are of little or no relevance to the firm's strategy or power relationships, that is, which meets the traditional definition of informational value.
The most obvious class of such records are those collected as background information on the activities of other organizations: complimentary reports, government documents, news service bulletins, and sales brochures. Of course, one organization's informational value is another's evidential value. Some organizations may only be known through the files of others, which begins to take the appraiser into the realm of documentation strategy.

Records that we appraised primarily on the basis of informational value fell into a few broad categories. The easiest to cope with were exotic blocks of personal papers intermixed with official ones. These ranged from the Chief of Freight Transportation, Andrew McIntyre's records of this service at the head of a railway battalion in World War II to those of a Vice President's chicken farm.

Another category of informational value is best represented by the records requested railbuffs and local historians who are interested in a large number of specific things rather than merely typical things or classes of things. One of the most prominent demand of such users is for data that fix material objects in time and space. A number of these concerns are shared in a more analytical and systematic way by historians of technology, museum curators, and other historians dealing in...
material culture. By limiting the types of data preserved to date, location, appearance, and physical characteristics, we found that it was feasible to preserve information on most examples of some of the more important parts of the railroad infrastructure: yards, engine terminals, stations, signal systems, and on each class of such mass-produced objects as locomotives and cars. Obviously, no attempt was made to document the host of smaller structures and other paraphernalia of railroad operations.

Also, peripheral material on the film's own activities may include important documentation of the texture of everyday life, those commonplace events that can take place beyond the reach of institutional controls. One striking example of this was the sociological data contained in pension death case files and the work-experience data contained in grievance files.

We selected these two series because they best met the traditional tests of informational value: completeness, consistency and long time span. The death files alone ran to about 900 feet, the largest uniform series in the project. Because both were so large, we tended to pass over other series that were fragmentary or contained less usable data. We were unable to agree on a sampling strategy that did not seem to sacrifice usable data, and this matter has yet to be finally resolved. Temple University has agreed to handle it during processing and
is considering retaining a much larger portion of the series than first anticipated.

The ability of depositories to accession many more such bulky series of raw data is doubtful. The flip side of this argument is that businesses themselves are now reluctant to warehouse such materials, and we indeed found that most of the other series of this type had been subject to short-term retention and turnover. Except where political pressure can be brought to bear as in the FBI case, such records are an endangered species. On the positive side, many such records, like twentieth century payrolls, have been rendered at least partly redundant by the statistical activities of the state and federal government.

Such problems defy simple solutions. In some respects appraisal must strike a rational balance between the incompatible demands of special interests. It must pay heed to the details while remaining cognizant of the big picture. While the extremes of value and worthlessness are easily recognized, the gray area in between is another matter. Yet it is precisely this area that must be confronted if voluminous modern records are to be brought under control.

Given the ultimately subjective or special-interest nature of many such appraisal decisions, we believe that the results of the project are generally satisfactory. Most relevant
material has been preserved in amounts roughly proportional to its importance. Enough material of middling value has been preserved to accurately reflect all the major activities of the organization that produced it. Over 1,000 tons of material has been earmarked for destruction or sent to the shredder. While enthusiasts seeking every document on every obscure subject may occasionally be frustrated, most of the needs of most potential users have hopefully been met.

The following description illustrates the way the appraisal team applied this theoretical model to the various record groups that were generated by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Corporate Records:

Minutes:

All 290 cubic feet of minute books were preserved. Of course there is a wide discrepancy in value between large and small companies, the latter being largely pro forma, but since they are the basic corporate record, it was decided to retain this information for all companies in the system.

Board Files:

The Board Files contain all documents passing to or from the Boards of Directors and presented at meetings. The "BF" series
(18 cubic feet) comprises documents of the PRR Board 1846-1897; and is continued by the "BFA" series, 1898-1960 (172 cubic feet). The "BFB" series covers subsidiary companies, 1898-1960 (136 cubic feet). The BF and BFA series are keyed into the PRR minute index; while the BFB series is accessed from marginal notations in the subsidiary company minutes. Most of the Board Files cover routine activities: elections, appointments, memorials, approval of contracts, leases, mortgages, and agreements, and the changes in property by construction and abandonment. There are, however, occasional reports and letters of high value, particularly in the BF series. However, since these documents were keyed to the minutes and we could not obtain authority for weeding, the entire group was retained.

Board Papers:

This item was used to describe 50 cubic feet of miscellaneous papers that were not arranged according to the Board Files system. They tended to be of the same general nature as the Board Files, though primarily from subsidiary companies and primarily pre-1910 (including good caches of material from the early 19th century). As a result, there was usually a larger percentage of higher-value material in the Board Papers than in the Board Files. All 46 cubic feet of Board Papers were retained.
Secretary's "Valuable Papers" File:

This was not available in hard copy but survived on microfilm made in 1950. These papers constituted a central file of deeds, contracts, mortgages, leases, and agreements. The company printed large numbers of the more important documents, copies of which were found scattered among the departmental files. Only those contracts which describe this process of corporate expansion, consolidation and major inter-corporate relations were deemed to have research value.

Printed Annual Reports:

Printed annual reports of most of the PRR companies were available in sufficient quantities to provide most of the participating institutions with complete or near-complete sets of the major firms and at least one or two sets for the smaller ones. About 85 cubic feet were retained.

In many cases, the printed reports when combined with the minutes and Board Files gave sufficient coverage for some of the smaller and medium-sized firms. Pre-1917 reports had much more detail, compensating somewhat for the loss of earlier manuscript series.
**Miscellaneous Documents:**

The secretary also maintained for each company printed organization manuals, corporate histories digests of charters and other documents from the "Valuable Papers" file. These were all preserved, and all 30 cubic feet were retained.

**Account Books:**

The basic account books have been described by Meissner as noted previously. The PRR proper generated 310 feet of account books, while the numerous subsidiary firms added 950 feet. Our analysis of these series was too detailed to report in full here, and we plan to treat it in a separate article in the future. Its main point is that in big business, books of entry take on the characteristics of raw data, while analytical summaries become the more important source for historical research. The annual reports to the I.C.C. (1888+) are one such summary, as is the comptroller's annual statements (1892+). While these forms back much of the detail, by the twentieth century such detail is usually superfluous. The most important individual expenditures tend to occur in the start-up phase which in our case meant pre-1880. Consequently we did not retain twentieth century account books except for the parent company and for non-railroad companies that did not make regulatory reports. Even so a total of 730 cubic feet of account books were retained.
Annual Reports to Regulatory Agencies:

There were 215 cubic feet of returns to the I.C.C. and state agencies, each containing basic corporate information, and financial and operating statistics. Although they are also available elsewhere, we retained all I.C.C. reports. The state reports usually duplicated the information in the I.C.C. reports and were not retained where these were available. A total of 195 cubic feet were retained.

Comptroller's Summaries:

The comptroller prepared a bound annual report consisting of balance sheets and income statements for all companies. Similar data was included in the published annual reports. All 3 cubic feet (1891-1960) were retained.

Stock Records:

The secretary also collected the stock ledgers and transfer books which recorded the trading in each companies shares. There were about 650 cubic feet of these records. As with the account books, the phenomena that these volumes illustrate become routinized by the twentieth century. In our appraisal model, the principal research value of these records is to document significant changes in ownership and control. From a study of
the PRR's history, we noted that no such changes occurred in any company between 1901 and the 1970 bankruptcy. Stock of wholly-owned subsidiaries are adequately covered in the minute books and board files. We retained a total of 280 cubic feet.

Microfilm Records:

The PRR microfilmed most of its corporate records in 1942 and 1950 of which 39 cubic feet survived. Therefore, many important twentieth century account books will be available in this compact form. All negative microfilm was sent to PHMC. Other depositories secured copies of the most pertinent materials to fill out their holdings.

Managerial Records:

President:

The records of the President (1899-1954) and Chairman (1949-1968) comprise 593 cubic feet. Inbound correspondence from 1846 to 1899, described as a "wagon load" was destroyed by the company in 1912. Outbound correspondence for the same period was destroyed in the Broad Street Station fire. The remaining correspondence is complete with the exception of one package of A. J. Cassatt (1899-1907), and about one quarter of N. W. Atterbury's correspondence (1925-1935), was missing.
The entire group was preserved, and no attempt at weeding was made at this stage, although perhaps 20% deals with relatively trivial issues; such as friends arranging for the movement of their private cars. The President of the PRR was an important enough figure to warrant preserving the files intact. The earlier presidents also appear to have been kept informed about more minor details than the later ones, and it seemed advisable to preserve evidence of this change. An additional 197 cubic feet from the Penn Central period and 125 cubic feet from Conrail (1976-1982) were beyond the scope of the project.

**Executive Vice President:**

Records of Elisha Lee (1920-1933) and M. W. Clement (1933-1935) amounting to 12 cubic feet were preserved in toto. The Executive Vice President was heir apparent and during the years represented (the Atterbury administration) they appear to have handled a lot of the detail work normally handled by the President's office. These records had been preserved as an adjunct to the President's files, and we treated them the same way.

**First Vice President:** (Finance and Accounting)

Files of John P. Green (1897-1909) cover accounting and financing of new construction and the expansion and modernization
of plant including the "community of interest" plan of interlocking ownership to reduce wasteful competition among rail systems. Also covers advertising and promoting special events and services.

All 25 cubic feet were retained, although there will be some reductions in processing.

Second Vice President:

The office files of Samuel Rea, (1905-1913) and his assistant A. J. County (1913-1916), who acted as coordinators for projects requiring the combined inputs of finance, engineering, and corporate work (the securing and maintaining of charters and franchises). This group was reduced from 38 to 23 cubic feet by eliminating cover letters, requests for routine financial information and files on minor real estate transactions.

Secretary:

The secretary served primarily as the custodian of the corporate records generated by the board of directors. In addition he handled all dealings with the stockholders and was office manager for the headquarters. Most of these duties were extremely routine, one of the most common being replacing lost certificates and transferring them from deceased stockholders to their estates. The only time this function was of any importance
was during the sequestration of enemy holdings during both World Wars. In providing information to stockholders, the secretary built up files on the histories of individual companies and a collection of historical miscellany which were the only part of the series to have real research value.

Major Series are:

1. Departmental Reports, 1926-54, 1 cubic feet, retained.
2. General Office Files, 1869-1966, 90 cubic feet; 28 cubic feet retained.
3. Correspondence with Stockholders, 1960-80, 185 cubic feet.
4. Office Manager Files, 1960-80, 140 cubic feet.
5. Stock Transfer Sheets, 1960-80, 502 cubic feet.
6. Scrapbooks - General Motors, 1881-1931, 5 cubic feet, retained.
7. Officer data cards, 1920-1968, 1 cubic foot, retained.

Treasurer:

The Treasurer handled the financial transactions involving capital accounts and held all valuable securities and investments. As with the secretary, a large portion of his work consists of routine transactions for which summaries are available. Files were selected on the basis of the Treasurer's contribution to strategic decisions on financing the companies'
activities.

1. Departmental Annual Reports, 1883-1959, (2 sets), 6 cubic feet, retained.

2. General Office Files, 1896-1956, 52 cubic feet, 46 cubic feet retained.


4. Files on Senate Investigation of Railroads, 1930-1940, $6\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet, retained.

5. Pennsylvania Tax Returns, 1877-1907, 2 cubic feet, retained.

6. Income Statements, various companies, 1886-1908, 9 cubic feet. These were interfiled with large volumes of work papers, to the extent that it proved infeasible to segregate them. Data is available in Annual Reports and Board Files.

Other series discarded include:


2. Cremation Certificates, 1900-1949, 19 cubic feet and 53 reels microfilm.

3. Dividend Lists, 1918-1927, 19 cubic feet.


7. Voucher Correspondence, 1945-1957, 6 cubic feet.

8. Liberty Loan Receipt Cards, 1917-1920, 40 cubic feet.
Total: approximately 370 cubic feet; 81 cubic feet retained.

Chief of Corporate Work:

The office files of A. J. County (1916-1938) and George J. Adams, Chief of Corporate Work, (1925-1946) who handled corporate work as defined above. County was also the company's unofficial "foreign minister" handling negotiations with other railroads and Congress. This group was reduced from 35 to 13½ cubic feet by eliminating routine files on office operations and notices of appointments of directors which are duplicated in the minutes and board files.

Manager of Economic Analysis:

Special project files of F. N. Sass (1959-1967) who was in charge of developing air rights over the 30th Street yards in Philadelphia. The company attempted to sell the site for a sports stadium which was eventually built elsewhere. Reduced from 6 to 4½ cubic feet by eliminating work sheets, drafts and personal items interfiled with official papers.
Finance Department:

1. Central Files. Vice President - Finance and Assistant Vice President - Finance (1905-1971)

The department monitored the financial aspect of all company operations including stock and bond issues, taxes, loans, mergers and reorganizations. It also received a considerable amount of background information on non-financial matters.

We retained 113 of 443 cubic feet. The reduction was effected by eliminating worksheets on the computation of interest, dividends, and payrolls, bills brokers receipts for securities bought and sold, market letters, routine trading in outside securities as investments for which annual summaries are available. About 120 cubic feet of the files had been taken by Penn Central and the post-1960 portion of this could not be released.

From a review of railroad literature, we determined that most of the processes involved in the issuing and rollover of railroad securities and become routine by the early 1900s and particularly after the imposition of federal regulation. This situation did not change until the companies were forced to cope with declining revenues in the mid-50s.

After that the department was caught up in the work leading to the Penn Central merger and bankruptcy. Consequently, we skewed our selection strategy to favor annual summaries and
discount minor stock and bond issues in the 1910-1955 period.

2. Special Case Files (1940-1958)

Two special case files totalling 8 cubic feet covered tax appeals in Jersey City and New York and reflected the negative impact of high local taxes on a declining business. The Jersey City case also involved the Hague political machine. Both cases were retained.

3. Minor Series

The following minor series were discarded because of their routine or fragmentary nature:

b. Credit and Collection Files (1959-1967) 85 cubic feet
c. Dividend and Interest Controls and Transfer Sheets (1950-1967) 5 cubic feet

125 cubic feet

Legal Department:

The Central Files of the Legal Department consisted of 6139 cubic feet in three major series and several minor ones: regulatory cases (I.C.C. and state), general litigation, general correspondence, files of local counsels, case registers and departmental reports. The regulatory and general litigation case files consist of correspondence, briefs, exhibits and transcripts of testimony. The correspondence covers evaluation of pending bills (federal and state), data for congressional hearings, plus
legal advice needed by the other departments relating to charters, franchises, mergers, abandonments, reorganizations, government aid, and construction projects. Principal subjects included the consolidation movement of the 1920s and 30s, New Deal legislation, the military traffic in World War II, truck and bus competition.

Most coverage begins in the mid-1920 with the case docket books going back to 1855 and the departmental monthly reports to 1916.

A total of 850 cubic feet were retained for a retention rate of 14%. This can be further reduced by weeding out the large number of duplicate briefs and exhibits during processing.

The appraisal method was a straightforward application of the "strategy and structure" approach. Those cases and subject files which delineated the interplay with competitors, legislators, and organized labor or the expansion and contraction of the company's physical and corporate structure were retained, along with summary reports. The vast majority of case files proved to be of a relatively petty and local nature: small claims cases, litigation involving small parcels of property and so on.

Generally, we found a strong correlation between file thickness and research value. Major case and subject files were usually over 3 inches or one Amberg box, so all files over that
thickness test did not pass the strategic test and were discarded, such as an interminable suit over station parking lot franchises. Files under 3 inches thick were sampled at random as a check. The only ones of any significance tended to cluster in groups that were larger than 3 inches.

Additionally, we found that the exhibits tended to include documents from other departments not available elsewhere, such as correspondence, traffic maps and charts, photos, timetables and advertising ephemera. In particular, Legal Department case files on rate applications compensated for the loss of Traffic Department records and tended to give a better overall view of the situation.

Some problems were raised by the fact that duplicate records were most likely to be on file with the I.C.C. or the courts. However, we did not have the time to ascertain this on a case-by-case basis, and most of the cases were of sufficient importance to preserve copies in the PRR archive. Also, case files preserved in the public archives would lack the railroad's internal correspondence. Once the decision to preserve the correspondence was made, it seemed necessary to preserve the court documents to which it refers.
Claims Department:

The Claims Department grew out of the Legal Department to handle the claims arising from death and injury to employees and the general public. The department consisted of a number of district offices each covering a different part of the system and reporting to Chief Claim Agents in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. The work generated parallel series of case files containing a standard form describing the accident backed up by depositions, medical reports, reports of autopsies and records of negotiations between lawyers for both sides in the case.

Because of the sensitive nature of much of the material in the files, the companies would not release them. In any case their historical value was quite limited. The claims adjudication process is a relatively routine one. Bulk dates were all post-1960, and summary statistics on accidents and fatalities were available in the safety department.

Records consisted of 837 cubic feet of case files from the three Chief Claim Agents (1941-1977); 1,552 cubic feet from 20 District Claim Agents (1934-1979); 4 cubic feet from two Regional Claim Agents (1949-1962); and 44 cubic feet from the Office Manager for General Claims (1969-1973) for a total of 2,437 cubic feet.
Vice President - Operations:

The Vice President-Operations ran the Transportation Department and supervised the regional general managers, including all of the functions required to run trains and maintain equipment. Unfortunately, nearly 500 cubic feet from this critical office was destroyed in 1981. However, many of the offices on the next lower level were relatively intact.

Of the General Office Files (1926-68), 83 cubic feet remained of which 41 cubic feet were retained. Files were selected on the basis of major strategic issues, including labor policy, consolidations, dieselization, containerization, the decline of passenger service, etc. Routine files like those on per diem (car rental) payments, passes, and vacations, were discarded.

System Train Rules Committee Minutes, 1951-59; 2 cubic feet were also retained, as were 10 cubic feet of arranged Freight Service Files (1930-63) giving details of the operation of freight trains.

Board Appropriations, 1940-56, 15 cubic feet, were discarded. These forms are duplicated in the Board Files.

Vice President - Transportation

The company declined to release 30 cubic feet of these files (1968-75). We discarded 40 cubic feet of Unit Coal Train Register Sheets (1965-70).
Assistant Vice President - Operations - Planning:

This office was created, ca. 1962, to handle the pending Penn Central merger. Of 42 cubic feet, we discarded 6 cubic feet of work papers.

Series were:

- Testimony and Exhibits
- Merger Studies
- Master Operating Plant (3 sets)

Transportation Department:

This is the primary unit under the Vice President - Operations. It handles the actual operation of trains. Records remain for the department heads - Chief of Transportation (1920-27), Chief of Freight Transportation (1927-55), Chief of Passenger Transportation (1927-55). There are 155 cubic feet of Central Office Files from these officers, but they have been intermixed and need to be segregated. We retained 46 cubic feet on major strategic issues like bus and truck competition, containerization, World War II, major labor cases and the decline of passenger service. There is also good coverage of Fruit Growers Express, or cooperative venture that pioneered the shipment of Florida citrus. We also retained minutes of departmental meetings and statistical summaries. We discarded routine forms on the detention of trains, shipping instructions,
car supply, and applications for pipe and wire crossings of right of way.

This group also contained 8 cubic feet of Train Consist Sheets and 1 cubic feet of Troop Train Orders which were retained, though primarily of interest to railbuffs. There were also 4\frac{1}{2} cubic feet of printed reports of the Post Office Department.

**General Manager - Passenger Transportation:**

This group (1955-76) consisted of 80 cubic feet, of which about 5\frac{1}{2} cubic feet were retained. It consisted primarily of head counts and work papers for train-off applications. The portion retained consisted of summary reports and studies, a sample of dining car menus, and files on special movements like Robert Kennedy's funeral train.

**Director of Industrial Engineering:**

This office was established, ca. 1960, to improve operating efficiency. Records included 5 cubic feet of time and motion studies and reports on improving service. It was reduced to 3-feet by weeding duplicates.

**Car Service Department:**

This unit of the Transportation Department coordinated the
movement of cars. These were 715 cubic feet of various forms (1900-64) covering interchange of cars, condition of cars, number of cars available, etc., none of which were retained.

**Supervisor of Operating Rules - Altoona:**

These records consisted of 90 cubic feet of train log sheets (1964-75) none of which were retained.

**Motive Power Department:**

This subunit of the Transportation Department was responsible for the design and maintenance of all equipment, including shop workers. Our appraisal strategy concentrated on tracing the major trends in railroad technology, emphasizing innovations and disregarding routine maintenance and minor appliances. We also selected files on top-level discussions of major operating problems, labor conditions and unionization, R&D, industrial design and streamlining, and the showcasing of technology at World's fairs.

1. Departmental Annual Reports, 1881-1913, 6 cubic feet - retained.

2. Departmental Office Files, including General Superintendent of Motive Power (1903-1920) and Chief of Motive Power (1920-52) - 472 feet - 150 cubic feet retained.

3. Statements (1896-1923); 12 cubic feet - $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet
4. Mechanical Engineer's drawings, 7 cubic feet of microfilm.

5. Test Department (1884-1946) - correspondence and test reports, 310 cubic feet - 100 cubic feet retained (work papers and routine tests eliminated).

6. Electrical Engineer (1928-33), employee time sheets, 12 cubic feet - none retained.

7. Supervisor of Equipment Expenditures, Correspondence (1900-57), 20 cubic feet retained.


9. Works Manager - Altoona (1909-50); statements, material control cards, x-ray forms, 89 cubic feet - 30 cubic feet retained.

10. Manager of Heavy Repairs - Altoona (1956-68); Payrolls and invoices, 113 cubic feet; not retained.

11. Master Mechanic (1965-69); inspection and repair reports, 18 cubic feet, not retained.

**Motive Power Accounting:**

The cost accounting for locomotives and cars was handled by the Motive Power Accountant. The Supervisor of Motive Power Expenditures and the Supervisor of Equipment Expenditures which were sometimes under the Motive Power Department and sometimes
joint with the Accounting Department. The exact succession of titles is not yet clear, and the files of each show signs of considerable intermixing; which will be deciphered during processing.

The records of this group consist of a variety of cost statements, of which only the most summary were retained. There were also cards and registers recording individual pieces of equipment which are primarily of interest to buffs.

1. Correspondence (1880-1957), 132 cubic feet; 32 cubic feet retained; Appraised under same criteria as Chief of motive Power.

2. Statements (1868-1957); 825 cubic feet; 88 cubic feet retained plus 4 cubic feet of microfilm.

3. Registers and Record Cards (187et; 40\(\frac{1}{2}\) cubic feet retained.

4. Payrolls (1934-1955); 4 cubic feet - not retained.

5. Electrification work papers (1929-1939), 496 cubic feet - not retained.

**Personnel Department:**

A Formal Personnel Department was created in 1920, but the files contain much predecessor material that is being properly identified during processing.

1. Personnel Department Central Office File (1880-1965), 225 cubic feet, 182 cubic feet retained. Files selected covered
development of labor policy, relations with unions, strike, and welfare work; work papers were not retained.

2. Central Grievance and Discipline Files (1928-1975), 55 cubic feet - all retained.

3. Personnel Files (1945-83); 515 cubic feet. All of the material was relatively recent so that a large percentage of the individuals mentioned were still alive. This material was not released because of the confidentiality factor. Since it dated from a period for which abundant labor statistics are available, the loss was not a significant one.

4. Wage Bureau Central Office Files (1906-1947) 346 cubic feet; being reduced to about 150 cubic feet during processing. These files contain lower-level discussions of labor policy, but focus on collective bargaining and grievances. The portion destroyed consists of work papers for wage negotiations and labor cost studies, for which adequate summaries exist.

Safety Department:

The Safety Department was a subunit of the Personnel Department with system-wide responsibility for collecting safety statistics and orchestrating safety education efforts. The records were reasonably complete from the establishment of the department in 1927 until the mid-1950's. Twenty of thirty cubic
feet were retained, the items discarded being printed I.C.C. compilations on accidents nationwide. Principal series are:

1. Correspondence on Safety Campaigns, 1927-37
2. Employee Casualty Statements, 1927-56
3. Monthly Accident Statements, 1937-45

**Pension Department:**

Surviving records consist of minutes (1899-1943), 23 cubic feet, all of which were retained. Cancelled checks (1938-60), 101 cubic feet, were destroyed.

**Provident & Loan Association:**

This was a mutual savings and loan association to which labor and management contributed. Death case files (1926-40) 37 cubic feet, were retained. Except for a small sample of bank books (1963-65), 9 cubic feet, all other records of this department had been destroyed. Some information on its activities was available through other departments.

**Relief Department:**

This department operated a sick-and-death benefits plan from 1886 to 1957. The central files contain discussion of general policy matters. The main body of records is the group known as "death files", which are case files settling the individual
accounts of death. This proved to be the most comprehensive source of sociological data on individual workers, going back to people who joined the company in the 1860's.

1. Central files, including minutes and ledgers (1886-1953) - 345 cubic feet, 158 cubic feet retained by eliminating work papers.

2. Death Files (1900-1968); 715 cubic feet - retained to be reduced during processing.

3. Medical Examiner's Files (1930-1955), 33 cubic feet.

An additional 393 cubic feet of successor offices (1956-83) including the Manager of Employee Benefits and the Manager of Personnel Accounting were rejected. They were primarily work papers. The few substantive materials were too recent for inclusion.

**Engineering Department:**

About 2,700 cubic feet of Engineering records (1880-1976) were stored in Merion Avenue. However, since most refer to facilities still in use, they are considered active. We could only accession those records which the department reviewed and released, and since inactive files were finely intermixed with active ones, the process was usually not worth the effort. We ended up with about 20 feet of files and 10 feet of obsolete
drawings. PHMC had acquired another 150 feet of obsolete drawings before the project began. About 3 cubic feet are xerox copies of the most important documents that the department refused to release.

The Engineering Department handles all aspects of civil engineering for the design and construction of the railroad's infrastructure. The design process is the more important since this is where the decisions are made. The construction process is relatively routine: negotiations with contractors, specifications, etc. Consequently most of the records were not high value and the most significant projects could be adequately captured in the small sample and through records from other departments.

Accounting Department:

The Accounting Department handled all operating accounts and prepared all internal financial statistics and studies. However, the department ranked relatively low in the corporate pecking order, and the Transportation Department gradually set up its own internal accounting officers.

The records of the Accounting Department were appraised for the accounting contribution to strategic issues like consolidation, dieselization, wage rate changes, etc.

Therecords of the Comptroller, Assistant Comptroller, and
Director of General Accounting were all intermixed and will require separation during processing.

1. General Office Files (1910-69), including correspondence and statements, 188 cubic feet, all retained for further cuts in processing. Penn Central would not release 12 cubic feet pertaining to taxes.

2. Profit and Loss Summary (1851-1927) - 1 1/2 cubic feet; retained.

3. Securities Cards (1900-1950) - 1 reel microfilm; retained.

4. Equipment Record Cards (1950-67); 29 cubic feet; retained.

5. Work papers (1886-1972) 490 cubic feet; not retained.

Auditor of Disbursements:

This officer in the Accounting Department handled payrolls. Payroll records amounting to 915 cubic feet and 82 reels of microfilm survived, but they were only for the years 1930-31 and 1950. The material was too fragmentary and had a very low data-to-bulk ratio. Consequently, it was not retained.

Manager of Car Accounting:

The group consisted of 257 cubic feet of 17 different forms (1953-64) that were used to keep track of cars of other railroads.
while on the PRR; not retained.

**Manager of Accounting - Altoona:**

This office was represented by 3100 cubic feet of computer time slips (1970-75); not retained.

**Valuation Engineer:**

The Valuation Engineer maintains records on the cost of construction required by the I.C.C. under the Valuation Act of 1913. Since these records are continuously updated, the entire series is considered active. However, we were able to accession 51 reels of microfilm and 3 cubic feet of briefs and dockets.

**Purchasing and Stores Departments:**

This department handled the purchasing of all raw materials and finished goods used by the company. This was not a very important department in the corporate hierarchy. It performed largely facilitative functions, and its more important activities are also recorded in the records of the major departments for when it bought goods. Furthermore, some of the most valuable records had been impounded for pending litigation. Of the 262 cubic feet (1920-75) for this department, only $\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet were accessioned. The rest were primarily work papers, purchase orders, and daily report.
**Insurance Department:**

The most important records of this department must be retained by the company under I.C.C. regulations. The remaining records were recent property insurance policies of little interest. None of the 105 cubic feet in this group was accessioned.

**Tax Department:**

None of the 135 cubic feet of this group (1900-73) was accessioned. Records were primarily local property tax returns and work papers. Policy-level data on taxes is available in the records of the Finance and Accounting Departments.

**Traffic Department:**

The records of the Vice President - Traffic were not found. Records for subordinate units for freight, passenger and coal and ore traffic (1882-1976) totalled 565 cubic feet, of which 65 cubic feet were retained.

The Traffic Department handled all matters of traffic procurement and rate-making, much of which was highly routinized. Since the I.C.C. had the last word on rates during this period, we found that the I.C.C. case files in the Legal Department gave better summary coverage of rate policy. Traffic Department
records were selected on the basis of the importance of the particular commodity or dispute or the departments place in larger issues like the Penn Central merger or the development of innovative services like unit coal trains.

Real Estate Department:

The I.C.C. requires the company to retain past records on all real estate currently owned. While enormous amounts have been sold, it was not feasible to cull the records and higher level file would have been indivisible, the most important tracts being still in use.

Consequently, we were able to accession only 33 cubic feet of a total 189 cubic foot General office file (1876-1960). Fortunately this included the earlier letterbooks (1876-1902) as well as a few files on the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City and the impact of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

We could not accession the 70 cubic feet of Real Estate Atlases, the most summary form showing land acquisition since the 1830's; but we were able to obtain most of them in microfilm copies.

The great bulk of the records of this department consist of purchase, sale, and rental case files for individual tracts. Most of these are small tracts acquired in the course of obtaining right of way, or those occupied by the roadbed. The
most important data is available in the atlases, and the individual deeds were generally registered in their respective counties. There were no more than two brief of title binders where landholding was traced back to the original grant from the sovereign. We noted a total of 3,142 cubic feet of headquarters case files (1890-1980) and another 2,567 cubic feet from twelve field offices (1886-1976). The bulk far outweighed any value. Additional real estate data is available in the minutes and board files.

**Special Services Department:**

This department handled planning for the Penn Central merger, and government subsidiaries. We retained 26 of 85 cubic feet after eliminating work papers.

**Regional Records:**

The Operating Departments were organized in a line-and-staff-format and divided into three subordinate levels. The line officers were the General Managers, General Superintendents, and Division Superintendents each of who had functioned staffs in charge of motive power, transportation and personnel.

The regional records show the local impact of strategic planning and the feedback of data to the top managers. However, the larger part of their files deal with specifics, like the
location files for each station or community. The appraisal selected first for the larger issues and the most important elements of the railroad infrastructure. Much of the information on stations dealt with routine maintenance and was discarded, as were three large categories: private sidings, real estate parcels, and pipe and wire easements. As a result, fairly substantial reductions were achieved.

1. New York Zone line: 221 cubic feet; 118 cubic feet retained
   staff: 552 cubic feet; 60 cubic feet retained
2. Eastern Region line: 133 cubic feet; 35 cubic feet retained
   staff: 526 cubic feet; 44 cubic feet retained
3. Central Region line: 1813 cubic feet; 438 cubic feet retained
   staff: 1061 cubic feet; 62 cubic feet retained
4. Western Region line: 1261 cubic feet; 52 cubic feet retained
   staff:* 440 cubic feet; 223 cubic feet retained

New York Central Records:

The records of the New York Central were appraised by the same methods. However, managerial records had largely been destroyed by records managers over the last thirty years. Most were too fragmentary to warrant preservation.

* The higher retention rate for the last item is due to the presence of a large body of subordinate wage bureau files.
1. Corporate Records:

Minute books: 146 cubic feet; all retained
Board files and dockets: 65 cubic feet; 55 cubic feet retained
Agreements and contracts: 22 cubic feet; all retained
Annual Reports: 30 cubic feet; 25 cubic feet retained
Reports to I.C.C.: 45 cubic feet; 39 cubic feet retained
Financial Statements: 150 cubic feet; 56 cubic feet retained
Account Books: 559 cubic feet; 250 cubic feet retained
Stock Records: 75 cubic feet; 5 cubic feet retained

2. Managerial Records:

President: 15 cubic feet; all retained
Secretary: 6 cubic feet; all retained
Tresurer: 52 cubic feet; 4 cubic feet retained
Accounting: 1905 cubic feet; 2 cubic feet retained
Valuation: 7 cubic feet; all retained
Mechanical Engineering: 51 cubic feet; 9 cubic feet retained
Civil Engineering: 164 cubic feet; 18 cubic feet retained
Real Estate: 243 cubic feet; 25 cubic feet retained
Personnel: 995 cubic feet; 4 cubic feet retained
Finance: 415 cubic feet; 3 cubic feet retained
Traffic: 6 cubic feet; all retained
Claim: 820 cubic feet; none retained
Tax: 160 cubic feet; none retained
DISPOSITION

When we began thinking about the Penn Central Records in late 1982 or early 1983 and came to the conclusion that the archive was too large for any single repository to accession in its entirety and it would therefore have to be divided, we knew that we were entering uncharted waters. As archivists we, of course, realized that an archival collection has an organic unity which should if possible be maintained. This is the reason why the principles of respect de fonds and provenance have always been the central tenants of our profession. Throughout the project we struggled in order to reconcile these basic principles with the necessity of dividing the archive. We began with the assumption that since the Pennsylvania Railroad's structure included many semi-autonomous departments and subsidiaries, the links between certain record groups were presumably rather weak and it would, therefore, at least theoretically be possible to devise a strategy to divide the records that did not compromise the basic integrity of the archive.

Our initial plan was to divide the PRR's system wide records between Hagley and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). According to this strategy, PHMC would accession corporate records including minute books, board files, financial records, and presidential papers, Hagley on the other hand would acquire the managerial records - particularly those of
the Vice Presidents and General Managers, e.g. Vice President for Operations, and his sub-units, the Personnel, Motive Power, and Transportation Departments. The records of the railroad's various divisions and subsidiaries were scheduled to be divided on a geographic basis among the six other participating repositories: Temple University, Pennsylvania State University, New York Public Library, New Jersey State Archives, Ohio Historical Society and the Bentley Library.

When we began this effort, we were operating under the illusion that this project might serve as a model for other archivists, who, in increasing numbers, were being forced to cope with the huge quantities of records that all modern bureaucracies generate. However, three years later, and perhaps a bit older and wiser, we would not make this claim. If we came to any conclusion as a result of our project it is that the contextual relationships that bind an archive's records groups, series, and subseries together makes surgery of this kind extremely difficult and should only be contemplated in very rare cases.

As things turned out in our case, the disposition process turned out to be almost as complicated and time-consuming as the appraisal process. The key question that we had to try to answer was what are the most important links which hold an archive together and should be maintained if at all possible and which ones can be severed with minimal damage.
We soon realized that in order to do this we had to come to terms with the nature and structure of bureaucracy. This was necessary because the Pennsylvania Railroad was America's first modern bureaucracy and by dispersing its records we did not want to destroy the artifactual evidence which documents the way it was organized and functioned. We returned to the classics and reread Max Weber's "Bureaucracy" and from there turned to Alfred Chandler's seminal works: *Strategy and Structure* and *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*. Francis X. Blouin's, JoAnne Yates', and Michael Lutzker's recent efforts to apply the Chandlerian and Weberian insights to archival appraisal were also particularly useful.

According to Max Weber, the bureaucratic form of organization is synonymous with capitalist development. The management of the modern office is "based on written documents", which makes the office and the paper records it generates the central nervous systems of all modern corporations. Written communication is essential to the functioning of all bureaucracies which depend on formalized procedures; hierarchical chains of command, and an elaborate division of labor.  

In many ways Alfred Chandler's work builds on the Weberian model. Chandler persuasively argues that the coming of big business was associated with the development of a new structural form of organization -- the vertically integrated firm. These
modern corporations, of which the Pennsylvania Railroad was the first, were organized on the basis of functional departments and divisions that were run by semi-autonomous managers who were supervised by a central office. Administration was based on written reports memoranda and, correspondence through which "salaried managers monitored and coordinated the work of the units under [their] control." As Fran Blouin and JoAnne Yates have observed, after studying Chandler's model it becomes clear that records should not only be evaluated on the basis of the concrete information they contain, but from the perspective of what they tell us about the ways in which an organization functioned. Records tell us a good deal about the evolution of corporate structures and the ways in which communication flowed both vertically and horizontally through the corporate structure which, of course, reflected lines of authority. 43

The structure of the records can tell us who reported to whom on both a formal and informal basis. What officers had input into various decisions. Whose opinions were important? What concerns were taken into account when making particular decisions? Was the Vice President for Finance routinely consulted before investments were made in new technology? What kinds of questions came to the Personnel or Motive Power Departments? How much authority did the President and Board of Directors exercise? In short, how was policy decided, who was
involved and why?

Once we recognized that these were the critical questions which had to be addressed while dividing the records, we concluded that if we did not want to destroy the evidence of the PRR's communication system we had to frame our disposition strategy by carefully studying the railroad's corporate and managerial organizations. The corporate organization consisted of the parent and subsidiary companies which evolved through the process of merger and acquisition. The PRR system grew when the parent company absorbed other corporations by lease, stock control or purchase. Except when extinguished by merger or sale, the subsidiary corporations continued to have legal existence. This growth was carried on in such a way as to produce a number of distinct subsystems, i.e., the Philadelphia, Baltimore & Washington, Northern Central, the Long Island, and Grand Rapids & Indiana. Most of the corporate documents for the subsidiaries were centralized in the PRR's Philadelphia headquarters. While the PRR's subsystems did not adhere to state boundaries, they did have regional foci and we divided the records accordingly -- for example, Pennsylvania based subsidiaries went to the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, the records of Grand Rapids & Indiana were sent to the Bentley Library and those of United New Jersey Railroad and Canal were sent to the New Jersey State Archives.
This was a relatively straightforward process and as things turned out the corporate records were much easier to divide than those which were generated by the full-time managers, whose functions were defined by the organization chart (see Appendix II). Very early on in the project the appraisal staff concluded that it was essential to divide the records in such a way as to preserve some sense of the vertical and horizontal flows of information which were reflected in decision making. In order to do this we used the organization chart as our guide when distributing the records. Since most managerial decisions took place along the vertical chains of command, we tried to maintain the integrity of this structure when distributing the records. Thus we decided to keep the records of the Vice President for Operations group which included Chiefs of Personnel, Motive Power, Passenger and Freight Transportation in a single repository (Hagley). These officers usually worked closely together and we did not want to destroy the evidence of their communication network. Of course, most decisions also required the cooperation of several functional staff officers since they could have operating, financial, tax, and legal ramifications horizontally. Unfortunately, once we made the decision to preserve the structure of the vertical chains of command, we were forced to break many of the horizontal chains. During the course of the project an effort was made to recognize the difference
between records documenting system-wide activities like Motive Power and Personnel and those documenting locally based projects which tended to focus on particular subsidiaries and are found in the real estate and engineering departments. In the latter category are records documenting individual yards, stations, divisionally based grievances and files on the formation, financing, and liquidation of specific subsidiaries. In practice these records tend to be of local importance and tie in with the minutes and board files of the subsidiary companies. We concluded that the files on projects such as the building of the New York Post Office would be of primary interest to people in New York City and, therefore, should be placed at the New York Public Library rather than with system-wide records at Hagley or the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission. (See Appendix III, Indexing of records in each repository.)

Another issue that the staff had to face stemmed from the fact that record preservation took place in an inconsistent manner. This meant that a surviving fragment found in one department's files was, in fact, often more closely related to the records of another department than to the file in which it was found. For example, the Records of Employee Provident & Loan Association presented a particularly difficult problem. After examining these records the staff discovered that there were approximately 1,000 cubic feet of case files which were virtually
complete from about 1880-1968. They were scheduled to go to Temple University. A search of the Merion Avenue warehouse failed to turn up the minutes of the association. The staff, however, did find that the Vice President for Finance maintained a complete set of Provident & Loan Association minutes and these survived relatively complete in his papers which were scheduled to go to Hagley. What should we do with these minutes? Should they be kept with the Vice President for Finance's papers or removed to join the Provident & Loan Association records at Temple? At a consortium meeting at least one member of our group made the case for keeping the Provident Loan Association minutes with the records of the Vice President for Finance. He asked what does the fact that the Vice President for Finance had a reference copy of the Provident & Loan Association minutes tell a researcher about the working of the Finance Department? However, given the fact that the Vice President for Finance did not make any marginal notations on the minutes and we felt that it was important to reconstruct as complete an archive of the Provident & Loan Association as possible we shipped the minutes to Temple. Technically by doing so we again violated the principles of provenance and respect de fonds, but after considerable debate we felt that, given the nature of our project, we had to be at least somewhat flexible in this area. Again, the link between the minutes of the Employee Provident & Loan Association and the Vice
President for Finance papers was relatively weak, certainly much weaker than the linkages between the association's case files and the minutes, which we in good conscience did not feel we could separate.

There were times during the course of the project when we thought about dividing major portions of the archive according to subject and geographic lines. The reason that this temptation arose as often as it did was because most of our participating repositories defined their collecting interests by subject or geography. Hagley, for the most part collects business records, while Temple and Pennsylvania State University are largely repositories for labor and social history records. Similarly, the New York Public Library seeks to document the history of the greater New York area and rarely collects records west of the Hudson River, while the Bentley Library and the Ohio Historical Society normally do not acquire out-of-state records. However, early on we all realized that it would not be possible to tailor our disposition strategy in such a way as to satisfy all the specific collecting interests of each of our participating repositories. This would have been particularly difficult with an archive of a railroad whose subsidiary companies and subsystems crossed state and regional boundaries. Recognizing this, the New York Public Library agreed to accession the records of New York Central subsidiaries from New York City to Buffalo,
while the Bentley Library acquired the records of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad even though approximately two-thirds of this line ran outside Michigan.

Reconciling our mandate to divide the Penn Central archive in a rational way which respected its provenance with often conflicting collecting interests of our participating repositories was a real struggle. The issues that emerged from this effort were constantly debated at our steering committee meetings. Hopefully we exercised good sense and good judgement during this very difficult process and we did not compromise the integrity of the archive or its research value.

It has always been our hope that some of the damage that inevitably took place during the appraisal and disposition stage of the project would be able to be repaired through careful arrangement and description. Our initial proposal to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission promised that a unified guide would "intellectually reconstruct the archive that we [were] being forced to divide geographically." With this aim in mind, our consortium submitted a processing grant to the National Endowment for the Humanities. This proposal sought funding for a unified processing effort which would have allowed us to arrange and describe the archive as a whole rather than as eight separate fragments. Unfortunately, N.E.H. turned down the consortium's proposal and invited each of
the repositories to apply separately. Hagley submitted the first of these individual proposals and received $60,000 to arrange and describe the records that it accessioned. In November the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission submitted a similar proposal which is now being evaluated by the Endowment. The other repositories that acquired smaller quantities of records appear to be willing to make the effort to process them with their own resources. The fact that processing will go on in a decentralized fashion will certainly create problems for both researchers and the repositories. Descriptive standards will undoubtedly be inconsistent and it will be necessary to stagger the schedule by which we open the archive's various record groups and series. However, we do intend to describe the entire archive on the RLIN data base and this will allow us to create an overall guide.

The past two and one half years have been very challenging, sometimes frustrating, and there is still a good deal of work to be done before the Penn Central Records can be made available. However, we are very satisfied with the outcome of our project. The archive that has been distributed to our participating repositories has extraordinary research value. We believe that it is one of the most important collections of business records to be accessioned in recent years. Scholars from a wide variety of disciplines are certain to make extensive use of the records
for decades to come. Ultimately, the success of our project will be measured by the research that will come out of the archive.
ENDNOTES
ENDNOTES


3. Dennis S. Meissner, "The Evaluation of Modern Business Accounting Records," The Midwestern Archivist 5 (1980): 75-100. Meissner generally points out the particular value of each record type, but suggests retaining all major series. Our examination showed that twentieth century account books take on the characteristics of raw data so that comparative criteria are necessary to permit choosing between series.

4. See Samples in Appendix I.


6. The most appropriate term for such records is "organizational", since businessmen have long referred to these structures as "the Organization", a term that carries implications of unity and common purpose. Theodore Schellenberg has used this term quite differently. Different types of what Schellenberg terms "organizational documents" will be found in both corporate and organizational records as defined here. In light of this possible confusion, "departmental" or "managerial" may be a better term. See, Theodore R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 145.

7. George H. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946 (Philadelphia: PRR, 1949); William Bender Wilson, History


10. See for example the evaluation in Leonard Rapport "In the Valley of Decision: What to Do About the Multitude of Files of Quasi Cases," American Archivaria 48 (Spring 1985): 173-89. While I agree wholeheartedly with Rapport's assessment, appraisal criteria may differ when institutional perspective is shifted. A document valuable to understanding the internal workings of the PRR may have no value when considered in relation to the workings of the I.C.C., the industry as a whole, or the development of judicial precedents.


22. For terminology, see Chandler, Strategy and Structure, pp. 9-13.

23. In moving from the analysis of Strategy and Structure to that of The Visible Hand, Chandler abandoned the detailed distinction of central office vs field office, etc. and identified the system of top and middle management as the central characteristic of the modern large business. Compare Strategy and Structure, pp. 9-11 with The Visible Hand, pp. 1-12, particularly the organization chart.

25. Particularly the concepts developed in *Strategy and Structure* and *The Visible Hand*.


30. Saunders, p. 49.

31. Salsbury, pp. 35-120.

32. Hindus, Hammett, and Hobson, pp. 62, 70, 80-81. Interestingly, fat file theory did not work in formulating a sampling strategy for the pension death case files, where a fat file simply indicated numerous trips to the doctor and medical exams.


34. Burgess and Kennedy, pp. 362-373; Robert V. Bruce, *1877*: 

35. Railway Age 104 (1938): 34.


41. Condit, pp. 10-26. Examples of the types of non-academic works that influenced our thinking in this area are, George W. Cook and William J. Coxe, Atlantic City Railroad: The Royal Road to the Sea (Ambler, PA: Crusader Press for the West Jersey Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, 1980), and Edward A. Lewis, Reading Victorian Stations (Strasburg, PA: The Baggage Car, 1976), both of which used materials from the Reading Company archive at the Hagley Museum & Library. Descriptions of operations, stations lists, equipment rosters, maps, drawings, and photographs are the primary concerns of most of this literature.

Appendix I

PENN CENTRAL/CONRAIL RECORDS PROJECT

Data Sheet (Appraisal)

Data Base Record Control Number 3

Company: PENNSYLVANIA RR

Subsidiary: 

Department: PRESIDENT

Series: A.J. CASSATT + JAMES McCORD

Subseries: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Span Date 1899-1918

Bulk Date 1899-1918

Quantity: 53 cu. ft., including 2 cu. ft. index cards

Location of Office: PHILADELPHIA

Area of Coverage: SYSTEM

Country

State or Province

County

Analysis Strategy:

1. Type of Record (evidential informational functional)

2. Research Value (high medium low none)

3. Analysis (narrative)

This is a major source on the PENN Station project (including minutes of the Board of Engineers in Pittsburgh, OHIO, BOSTON, BOSTON, WILMINGTON, BUFFALO & CHICAGO projects).

Condition: Good

Disposition:

Retain Sample Destroy

Sample technique used

Repository PHILADELPHIA

Sampling Analysis (narrative)

Approximately 5-7% of this correspondence deals with very trivial matters (posting meeting minutes, etc.) and could be destroyed during processing. At this time the President appears to have monitored relatively minor activities. The appropriate minor files should be saved to show how the duties of the office changed over time.

Approx. 5 cu. ft. could not be located, including 1 cu. ft. of Penn Station photos, 9 vol. of A.J. Cassatt's letterbooks & 2 cu. ft. A.J. files index cards. Records were loaned to Patricia J. Davis for Cassatt, 1974-77.

N.B. These records have not yet been reviewed by Conrail or P.&O.
PENN CENTRAL/CONRAIL RECORDS PROJECT

Data Sheet (Appraisal)

Data Base Record Control Number 27

Company: PENNSYLVANIA R.R.

Subsidiary: —

Department: CHIEF OF MOTIVE POWER

Series: GEN., CORRESPONDENCE

Subseries:

Span Date 1903 -1946

Bulk Date 1935 -1946

Quantity: 220 CU. FT. - 186 CU. FT. RETAINED

Location of Office: PHILADELPHIA

Area of Coverage: SYSTEM

Country

State or Province

County

Condition: GOOD TO FAIR - HEAVY ACID DAMAGE TO FOLDERS & LOW GRADE PAPER USED FOR COPIES

Analysis Strategy:

1. Type of Record evidential (informational) functional

2. Research Value high medium low none

3. Analysis (narrative)

SUBJECT INCLUDES DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION OF LOCOMOTIVES, MODIFICATIONS OF EQUIPMENT, LOCOMOTIVE CAR COMPONENTS, AIR CONDITIONING, SUBSIDEN ELECTRIFICATION, KOREOK STEAM ENGINES, SHOPS, EARLY DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES & TRAINS, 1933 WORLD'S FAIR TRAIN PERFORMANCE.

NOTE: MANY FILES WERE DESTROYED IN 1935. PRESUMABLY ON STEAM LOCOMOTIVES NO LONGER IN USE. SURVIVING FILES PRIMARILY DEAL WITH ELECTRIC & DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES, CLASS J-1 IS ONLY STEAM ENGINE DESCRIBED IN DETAIL. SOME INFO ON CLASSES K-4, K-5, M-1, I-1

Disposition:

Retain [Sample] Destroy

Sample technique used - SELECTING RETENTION BASED ON CONTENT - SEE BELOW

Repository HAGLEY

Sampling Analysis (narrative)

THOSE FILES WERE BOYED BY YEAR AND WILL HAVE TO BE EXAMINED BY DECIMAL NUMBER FOR FINAL EVALUATION. ABOUT 10-20% OF THESE FILES ARE OF TRIVIAL NATURE (LITERALLY JUST WASTE) AND SHOULD BE DESTROYED IN PROCESSING. HOWEVER, THEY ARE TOO MUCH INTERMIXED TO BE SEGREGATED AT THIS TIME AND STILL KEEP THE PROJECT ON SCHEDULE.

AMONG THE RECORDS SEGREGATED FOR DESTRUCTION AT THIS TIME ARE

1. REQUISITIONS

2. EXPENSE ACCOUNT FORMS & PAY RECEIPTS

3. CERTAIN OTHER ITEMS HAVE BEEN SEGREGATED FOR THE R.R.

ABOUT 15 CU. FT. (ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR 1936) IS MISSING.

5 CU. FT. REMOVED TO DEPT. OF ENERGY MANAGEMENT IN 1981.

BY A RESEARCHER, NOT RETURNED

NB: This group has been cleared by PENN CENTRAL for lot 7/10/84. Approval for destruction by CONRAIL is pending.
PENN CENTRAL/CONRAIL RECORDS PROJECT

Data Sheet (Appraisal)

Data Base Record Control Number 31

Company: PENNSYLVANIA R.R.

Subsidiary:

Department: ENGINEER OF TESTS

Series:

Series:

Subseries:

Span Date 1934-1946

Bulk Date 1908-46

Quantity: APPROX.310 LIN. FT.

Location of Office: ALTOONA, PA.

Area of Coverage: SYSTEM

Country

State or Province

County

Analysis Strategy:

1. Type of Record: evidential informational functional

2. Research Value: high medium low none

3. Analysis (narrative).

INCLUDES RECORDS OF TESTS, CORRESPONDENCE - COVERS MAJOR LOCOMOTIVE CAR TYPES, INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS, ETC. INCLUDES BOTH LAB & FIELD TESTING. ITEMS OF NOTE INCLUDE AIR BRAKE TESTS (1913) AND CALIBRATION TRAILS TO DEVELOP ELECTRIC LOC. FOR MAINLINE IN 1930.

THESE RECORDS ARE TYPICAL OF ENGINEERING LABS AS THEY INCLUDE ALL DOCUMENTS FOR A GIVEN EXPERIMENT, INCLUDING ROUGH NOTES, SKETCHES, NOTEBOOKS, GRAPHS, OCCILISCOPE PLOTS.

CONDITION: GOOD TO FAIR - ACID DAMAGE TO FOLDERS

Disposition: Retain Sample Destroy

Sample technique used DISCARD SOME MINOR EXPERIMENTS & SOME ROUGH NOTES WHERE SUMMARIES SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE

Repository HALGY

Sampling Analysis (narrative)

1. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (1934-1936) IS VERY GOOD RECOMMEND RETAINING MOST IF NOT ALL OF IT.

2. THE NOTES & REPORTS POSE A SPECIAL PROBLEM: FIRST,

MOST OF THESE TESTS WERE TOO LATE A DATE, IF THERE WERE RECORDS OF TESTS IN THE 1930-1906 PERIOD, THEY WOULD BE MUCH MORE VALUABLE AND I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO PRESERVE THEM IN TOTO. THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIMENTS ARE THE CALIBRATION TRAILS OF 1934-35 WHICH LED TO THE DESIGN OF THE GG-1 ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE.

SECOND: MANY OF THE MORE IMPORTANT TESTS ARE WRITTEN UP IN THE TRADE & ENGINEERING JOURNALS, THUS RAISING THE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION IS NECESSARY.

THIRD: THE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH DOCUMENTATION IS NECESSARY FOR A GIVEN EXPERIMENT. THE AIR BRAKE TRIAL RECORDS (1913) CONSIST OF OVER 100 LIN. FT. OF NOTES, GRAPHS, ETC., ALL ROUGH ROUGH NOTES DONE ON THE SPOT; ONE ENVELOPE FOR EACH OF SEVERAL HUNDRED (EVER)
continued:

Individual tests. It appears that there is a form summarizing
the test data. Perhaps one or two people would appreciate the extra
data in the graphs & be capable of using them in a meaningful way.
I would seriously question keeping all this extraneous paper.

Fourth: It is clear that this group must be examined with care
and that it will require careful processing at the individual
item level. Each file will have to be checked to see if the
raw data is available in summary form. Some research
will have to be done on the significance of some of the tests.
For historians of technology, this is a very important series
which should justify spending more time on it.

Conclusion:

Since we do not have time to process these files now,
I recommend shipping the entire group to Hasley, whether
it can be worked on. Eventually I would like to reduce it
to about 200 cu. ft. maximum.

Note: These files all deal with locomotives & cars long out of
use, so there should be no objection on the part of railroad
men to destroying these files which we eventually determine
have no historical value.

While I have my own opinions as to what files are most
important, I would like to have additional input from John
White & Steve Usdin before any final decision is made.
Data Sheet (Appraisal)

Data Base Record Control Number 4|A,B,C.
Company: PENNSYLVANIA R.R.
Subsidiary: -
Department: ASST. V.P. - FINANCE (P.C. BEVAN, ETAL.)
Series: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCES
Subseries: -
Span Date 1893-1967 Bulk Date 1940-63
Quantity: 250 cu. ft. - 65 cu. ft. RETAINED
Location of Office: PHILADELPHIA
Area of Coverage: SYSTEM
Country
State or Province
County
Condition: - GOOD

Analysis Strategy:

1. Type of Record  evidential  informational  functional
2. Research Value  high  medium  low  none
3. Analysis (narrative)
   FILES ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH ROUTINE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS
   SUCH AS STOCK ISSUE ISSUES, DIVIDEND PAYMENTS, ETC. THERE ARE ALSO
   A NUMBER OF GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES ON CORPORATE REORGANIZATION,
   BACKGROUND DATA ON OPERATIONS, ETC. WHICH TO A CERTAIN EXTENT Duplicated
   THE PRESIDENT'S FILES. OTHFR FILES DEAL WITH FINANCIAL MATTERS AT LOCAL
   SUBSIDIARIES INCLUDING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & ROUGH MINUTES (BOARD
   MEETINGS). COPIES OF MOST STOCK & MINUTES OF THE PRESENT BOARD & AGM.
   ARE AVAILABLE HERE. THE ORIGINS WERE DESTROYED IN 1930. NOTABLE OBJECTS INCLUDE
   THE L. R. R. PROTEST PLUS LEHIGH VALLEY REORGANIZATIONS, DEVELOPMENT OF PENN
   CENTER & MADISON SQUARE GARDEN. ALSO INCLUDED ARE 2200 RUFT FUNCTIONAL RECORDS CONCERNING
   COMPUTATION OF PAYROLLS, INTEREST & DIVIDENDS. CA. 1955-68.

Disposition:

Retain  (Sample)  Destroy

Sample technique used  BASED ON CONTENT

Repository  BASED ON CONTENT FOR SYSTEM-WIDE MATERIALS & LABOR

Sampling Analysis (narrative)

FILES RETAINED INCLUDE: 1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, 2. POLICY LEVEL
   MATERIALS ON COMPANY FINANCING & OPERATIONS, 3. FILES ON LARGE LOCAL
   PROJECTS (PENN STATION, PENN CENTER, NEVADA CITY, CHICACO, ERC) WHERE THEY CONTAIN
   MAPS, BLUEPRINTS & REPORTS. 4. SPECIAL REPORTS 5. DATA ON PROVIDENT & 
   ASSN. & RELIEF ASSN. 6. ROUGH MINUTES & BOARD MINUTES.

FILES NOT RETAINED INCLUDE: 1. FUNCTIONAL RECORDS ON COMPUTATIONS
   OF INTEREST, DIVIDENDS, PAYROLLS, 2. FILES ON ROUTINE BOARD & STOCK
   ISSUES, PURCHASE & SALE OF SECURITIES

N.B. ENTIRE COLLECTION RELEASED BY PENN CENTRAL - PER LETTER OF 6/14/64
   IS CONRAIL ITEM 497 IN MR. CRAIG'S FILE.

"PERMANENT" GROUP (4|A) - COVERED BY DESTRUCTION ORDER OF 7/17/64
"TEMPORARY" GROUP (4|B) - DESTRUCTION ORDER HAS PASSED - ORDER FOR DESTORY
IN PENDING
APPENDIX III

Penn Central Railroad Archives Disposition

At the end of the project on October 15, 1986, the PRR records were divided along the following lines:

1. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Corporate Records:

PRR proper plus Northern Central, Cumberland Valley and other subsystems in eastern and central Pennsylvania, Manor Real Estate Company, Susquehanna Canal Company, and Union and Empire freight lines.

Managerial Records:

Real Estate, Purchasing & Insurance Group
Civil Engineering Group
Secretary
Motive Power Accountant
Traffic Department Group
System Wide Law Department Records
Regional Records pertaining to Eastern and Central Pennsylvania
Mechanical Engineering Department
2. Hagley Museum and Library

Corporate Records:
Duplicate PRR minutes plus microfilm copies of board files, also Philadelphia, Baltimore & Washington, and Pennsylvania Company (lines West) subsystems and truck and bus subsidiaries

Managerial Records:
First Vice President/Vice President Corporate Work
Finance Department
Transportation Department
Personnel Department and Labor & Wage Bureau
Motive Power Department
Lines West Executive Departments (pre-1920 fragments)
Law Department records specific to appropriate subsidiaries, labor and technology
Western Region Records

3. New York Public Library

Corporate Records:
Long Island Railroad, Pennsylvania Tunnel and Terminal Railroad subsystems, New York Connecting Railroad

Managerial Records:
Superintendent, Long Island Railroad
Real Estate, Hotel Pennsylvania Records
4. New Jersey State Archives
Corporate Records:
   United Railroad and Canal Corporation
   West Jersey and Seashore Railroad Company
   Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines
Managerial Records:
   New York Zone

5. Temple University
Corporate Records:
   Philadelphia area subsidiaries
   American Steamship Company
Managerial Records:
   Relief Department
   Provident & Loan Association
   Project files specific to Philadelphia

6. Penn State University
Corporate Records:
   Western New York & Pennsylvania subsystem,
   subsidiaries in Pittsburgh area
Managerial Records:
   Central Region Records

7. The Bentley Library
   Records of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad
New York Central Railroad Archives Disposition

The division of the New York Central Railroad archive, which consisted almost exclusively of corporate records was relatively simple.

The records of the parent company and all branches in the territory from New York City to Buffalo were placed at the New York Public Library; as were the records of subsidiaries whose activities were system-wide.

The records of the Michigan Central and Lake Shore & Michigan Southern subsystems, covering the territory between Buffalo and Chicago were placed at the Bentley Historical Library.

The records of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis (Big Four) and Toledo & Ohio Central subsystems, covering the territory between Cleveland and St. Louis, were placed at the Ohio Historical Society.

The records of the Beech Creek subsystem and the Pittsburg & Lake Erie Railroad, in central and western Pennsylvania were placed at Pennsylvania State University.

In addition, the records of the Boston & Albany subsystem were placed at the Baker Library as they had previously received many older records of these companies.

The New York Public Library also received a complete set of all subsidiary minute books on microfilm, so that any question requiring access to all system data can be researched there.