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Andrew D. Sharp

Kristen L. Phillips

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ACCOUNTING HISTORY, RAILROADS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES: ALL ON THE SAME TRACK

Andrew D. Sharp and Kristen L. Phillips
Spring Hill College

Through the years, many people -- from children to adults -- have been fascinated with railroads. This tradition continues today, even for curious accountants and historians.

In the Introduction of his book *Nothing Like It in the World*, Stephen E. Ambrose p.17] describes the myriad ingredients required to build a railroad. The list reflects the prominent role of teamwork in the historic endeavor: the building of the transcontinental railroad, 1863-1869:

Next to winning the Civil War and abolishing slavery, building the first transcontinental railroad, from Omaha, Nebraska, to Sacramento, California, was the greatest achievement of the American people in the nineteenth century. Not until the completion of the Panama Canal in the early twentieth century was it rivaled as an engineering feat.

The railroad took brains, muscle, and sweat in quantities and scope never before put into a single project. It could not have been done without a representative, democratic political system; without skilled and ambitious engineers, most of whom had learned their craft in Ameri-

can colleges and honed it in the war; without bosses and foreman who had learned how to organize and lead men as officers in the Civil War; without free labor; without hardworking laborers who had learned how to take orders in the war; without those who came over to America in the thousands from China, seeking a fortune; without laborers speaking many languages and coming to America from every inhabited continent; without the trees and iron available in America; without capitalists willing to take high risks for great profit; without men willing to challenge all, at every level, in order to win all. Most of all, it could not have been done without teamwork.

Robert H. Parker stresses the need for bibliographies and teamwork in conducting accounting history research. Part II of his article offers suggestions for future research, such as more bibliographies. He states [p. 4], "we need research tools and materials. We need, first of all, to know what primary and secondary sources exist and where they can be inspected. The compilers of bibliographies, the discoverers and preservers of accounting records of all periods and kinds will

continue to merit our blessings.”

Diana Triok Flamholtz, as chair of the Academy of Accounting Historians Research Committee noted the importance of teamwork in the analysis and synthesis of historical evidence [p.9], “The researcher must digest the evidence thoroughly, use the work of other scholars and venture into some generalization” or conclusion. The value of the interpretation or conclusion depends upon the analysis of evidence in the context of events, including coordination with the work of others.

The following Selected Bibliography for Accounting History on Railroads: 1995-2007 encompasses an array of research topics found in the recent literature. They include: capital markets; financing; depreciation; betterment accounting; income measurement; quality of earnings; corporate governance; bylaws; ethics; financial reporting; disclosure; valuation; auditing; audit committees; internal controls; personal property; economic development; and regulation.

The entries in this bibliography should be a helpful tool to those conducting accounting history research on the various aspects of railroads. Hopefully, it will contribute to the effort of exploring accounting issues related to the intriguing railroad industry.

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MINUTES

ACADEMY OF ACCOUNTING HISTORIANS OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES MEETING

April 12, 2008

Held at the first joint mid-year conference of the Academy of Accounting Historians and the Public Interest Section of the American Accounting Association, at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia

The meeting convened at 2:15 p.m.

Present: Hiroshi Okano (president, chair), Dale Flesher, Dan Jensen, Jim McKinney, Stephanie Moussalli, Gary Previts, Jennifer Reynolds-Moehrle, Steve Walker, Tiffany Welch (Academy Administrative Coordinator)
Guest: Tracey Sutherland, Executive Director, American Accounting Association

Approval of minutes of Officers and Trustees meeting held April 27, 2007, in conjunction with the conference of the European Accounting Association in Lisbon, Portugal.. Motion to approve, Moussalli, seconded by Flesher. Unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

A. Strategic Renewal Committee, Cheryl McWatters (in absentia; read by Moussalli)

"This committee has not been active

more and Ohio Railroad, Circa 1831," *Issues in Accounting Education*, Vol. 21, No. 1: 45-62.

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since established in February, mostly due to the chairperson's research commitments in the first quarter. It is her intention to focus on this committee now that the conference plans are in progress and the Lifetime Membership Committee has established its timeline. This year the committee will need to develop a list of priorities and outcomes based on the significant work completed under the previous president, Stephen Walker. One area that is likely to figure prominently will be the relationship of the Academy to other bodies, including the American Accounting Association and other accounting and management organizations."

B. External Relations & Communications Committee, Joann Noe Cross (in absentia; presented by Moussalli)

As editor of the *Accounting Historians Notebook*, Cross asked the Academy officers and trustees: a) Should the Academy continue publishing the *AHN*? b) If so, what is its charge?

The background to these questions is that there is declining interest and content for the *AHN*. Since Elliot Slocum's help of about five years ago, members do not submit information for the *AHN*. In the past, the *AHN* published minutes, pieces on the history of the Academy, bibliographic lists of

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No. 4: 335-357.

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