

# GUIDELINES & Examples



## BASIC ISSUES

### 4.1 Private Records

Most business records are private materials, although older resources are often deposited at archives and libraries that allow on-site research. Some major firms have corporate archives that are available to serious researchers from the public sector. Random business records can be found at county courthouses and city halls. All these materials can be cited in much the same fashion as other archival collections (chapter 3) or as local civil records (chapters 9 and 10).

Other institutions have records of immense historical value but usually limit public access to their files. Funeral homes, hospitals, penal institutions, and schools are common examples. In these cases, your citations will be to communications and, perhaps, photocopies you have received from those institutions.

In citing business records particularly, researchers are plagued by corporate changes. Companies fold and merge. Historic records may be discarded. A document or file that is properly cited to a business one year may later be difficult to locate from that citation. Nonetheless, a thorough reference note will provide a starting point for future efforts to find elusive records.

When constructing your Source List, if you are the person who obtained the record from the institution, your Source List Entry should reference the institution, not yourself or your collection of papers. However, some researchers prefer to list or group these records by an individual or a family name, rather than institutional name. This chapter offers alternative models for all these approaches.

### 4.2 Published Records

When you use business records that have been extracted and published