

## **VI. INTERMODAL FOUNDING FATHERS ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

The Intermodal Founding Fathers Oral History Program preserves the rich history of the intermodal freight transportation industry for posterity, research, and educational purposes. During the last 40 years, revolutionary changes have impacted the movement of freight and precipitated a restructuring of North America's freight transportation system.

The University of Denver Intermodal Transportation Institute (ITI) and the ITI Board of Directors hosted the Intermodal Founding Fathers of North America Conference on 27-29 July 1999. This historic conference provided the backdrop for more than 40 industry pioneers to be interviewed as a part of this important oral history program. In all likelihood, there will never be another opportunity like this event to record the history of the intermodal freight movement in the words of those who created it.

The Intermodal Founding Fathers Oral History Program will create a unique record of the legacy of these trailblazing industry leaders who had such a significant impact on the transportation system of today. The project has lasting value to the transportation industry, students, and scholars by providing the opportunity to view and read about the wisdom and vision of those early pioneers, stated in their own words. The timeliness of this project highlights the importance of preserving historical records and materials to ensure that those who wish to may study history and hopefully not "be doomed to repeat it."

The Intermodal Founding Fathers Oral History Program began with the Intermodal Founding Fathers of North America Conference. However, ITI is taking the lead on this project to record and preserve the history of this industry for three main reasons.

First, ITI was established in order to educate the next generations of transportation leaders. To that end, it has developed an innovative, Master of Science in Intermodal Transportation Systems program. This graduate program is unique and focuses on developing and operating intermodal systems, including e-commerce and global business applications. It is truly an interdisciplinary program with a broader focus than the traditional fields of logistics, business, or engineering. This rigorous grad-

uate program requires commensurate educational materials. Since there are few materials available, ITI seeks to collect the primary source material directly from the founders of the industry. Second, several intermodal pioneers have already passed on. Others cannot remember their experiences as well as they might have even a few years ago. Literally every day, the rich and unique heritage of this industry is being lost. And finally, ITI seeks to preserve this historical record because there is no other effort underway.

ITI is committed to promoting an intermodal transportation system through its education programs and research projects. In addition to recognizing the necessity to gather and preserve the historical record of the intermodal founding fathers, ITI, in collaboration with the National Freight Transportation Library, Inc., is already preserving historically significant transportation collections, such as the 60,000-volume historical library of the former Interstate Commerce Commission and the 3,500-volume US Railway Association Collection.

The oral history project recorded, in video- and audiotaped interviews, the more than 40 individuals at the conference who have contributed to the development of the intermodal freight system. Currently, the interviews are being transcribed and edited, and they will be deposited in the ITI Transportation Library Collections, which are managed and maintained by Penrose Library at the University of Denver. Transcriptions will also be available on the ITI Website: [www.du.edu/transportation](http://www.du.edu/transportation).

Subsequent phases of this project will expand the scope of oral history interviews. In addition, the information in this collection will be used to develop educational materials for the classroom and will provide resources and data for research projects. The collection will be available to other researchers and scholars with legitimate historical or educational objectives as well as to the industry.

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