

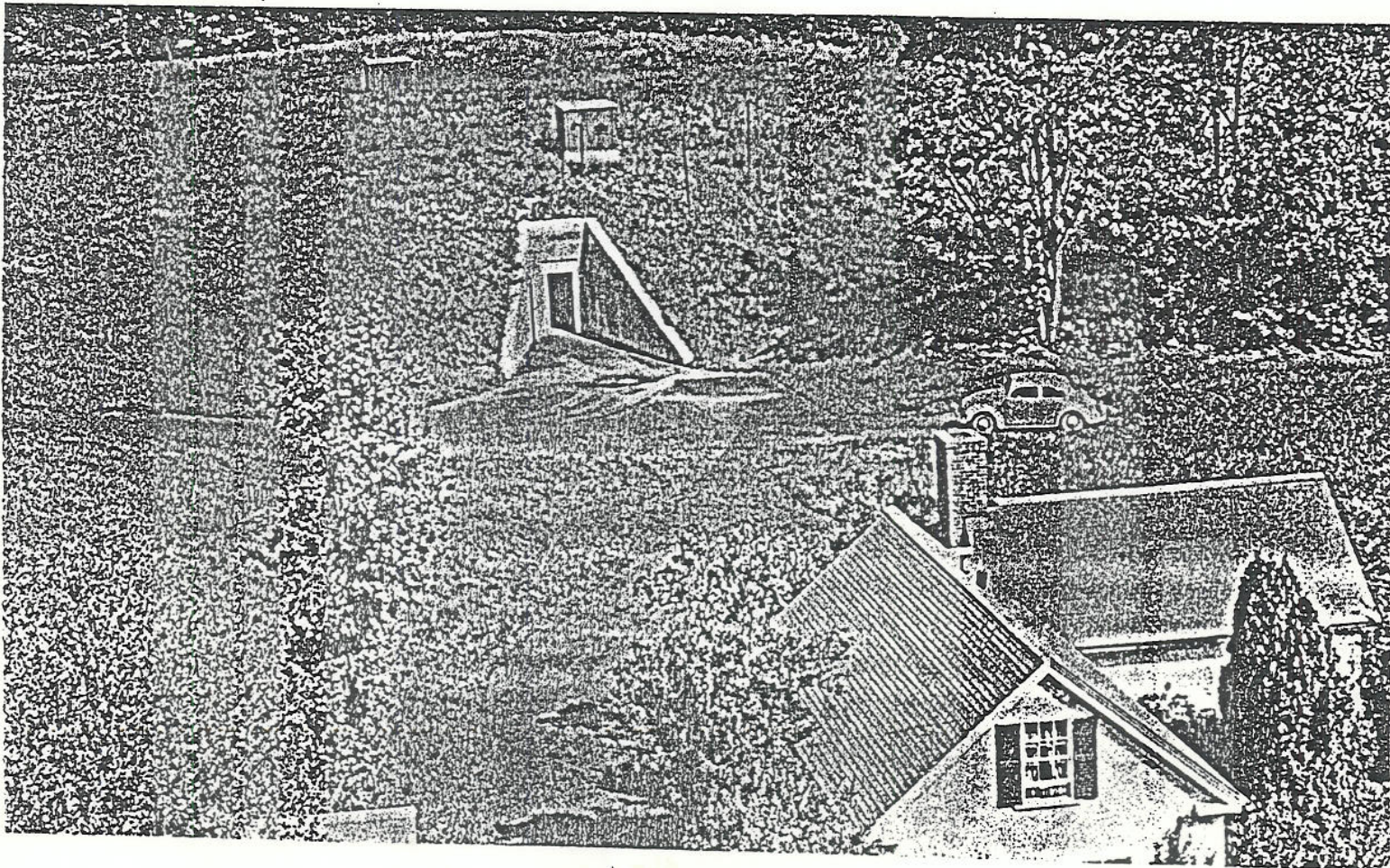
Arden Storage Inc.



THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK *of* BOSTON

UNDERGROUND RECORDS STORAGE CENTER

IN PEPPERELL, MASSACHUSETTS



UNDERGROUND RECORDS STORAGE CENT

A new idea in industrial protection — group civil defense — was inaugurated on December 1, 1960, when The First National Bank of Boston opened its "Underground Records Storage Center" buried deep in a countryside meadow of Pepperell, Massachusetts. The underground building is filled with records which are shipped daily from The First and seven other member and associate banks of the Boston Clearing House Association which have ten-year leases with The First for space in the Center. In the event of a disaster, these records will permit the reconstruction of all accounts of the banks.

The Center, which measures 60 x 120 feet, was constructed from approximately 1,500 cubic yards of concrete and approximately 100 tons of reinforcing steel. Designed in cooperation with the local, regional and national civil defense authorities, it is located 42 miles from Boston and far from any areas which might be considered as targets in the event of an enemy attack. Further, it is estimated that the Center would withstand the blast of any currently known bombs which struck anywhere outside a five-mile radius.

Although the Center is primarily designed for records storage, it also contains several emergency supplies and equipment for persons if they should be in the building during a disaster period. Practically as self-sustaining as an atomic submarine, the building is equipped with a gasoline-powered emergency generator to furnish power in case the outside current is shut off; an inside well which goes 426 feet into the ground; food rations for 50 persons (computed to provide 842 calories daily for a two-week period); a shower room to be used for decontamination purposes; and a special air-conditioning unit which will heat, cool, dehumidify and double filter the air in the Center to protect against radiation particles.

In addition to its main entrance of an outer steel-reinforced door and two massive inner doors weighing 16,000 pounds, the building also has an "escape hatch" which can be sealed off from the building by an inside steel door. The exterior entrance to this hatch is a surplus U.S. Navy escape door which came stencilled "U.S.S. Nautilus".

The first of its type to be built specially for use by a group of banks, the building is located on the grounds of a 40-acre country estate which The First purchased as an alternate operating location in the event of a disaster. The main house on the estate will be The First's temporary headquarters.

The entire construction of the Center cost \$170,000, of which approximately \$24,000 was attributable to the extra expenses of excavation blasting and the drilling of the well. It serves as the focal point of The First's three-point survival program by providing: (1) a meeting place for bank personnel; (2) reconstruction location for bank records; and (3) storage of records.

In addition to The First National Bank of Boston, which owns and operates the Center, these other Boston banks are also storing their vital records at Pepperell: The New England Merchants National Bank; The National Shawmut Bank; State Street Bank and Trust Company; United States Trust Company; Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company; City Bank and Trust Company; and the Boston Office of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co.

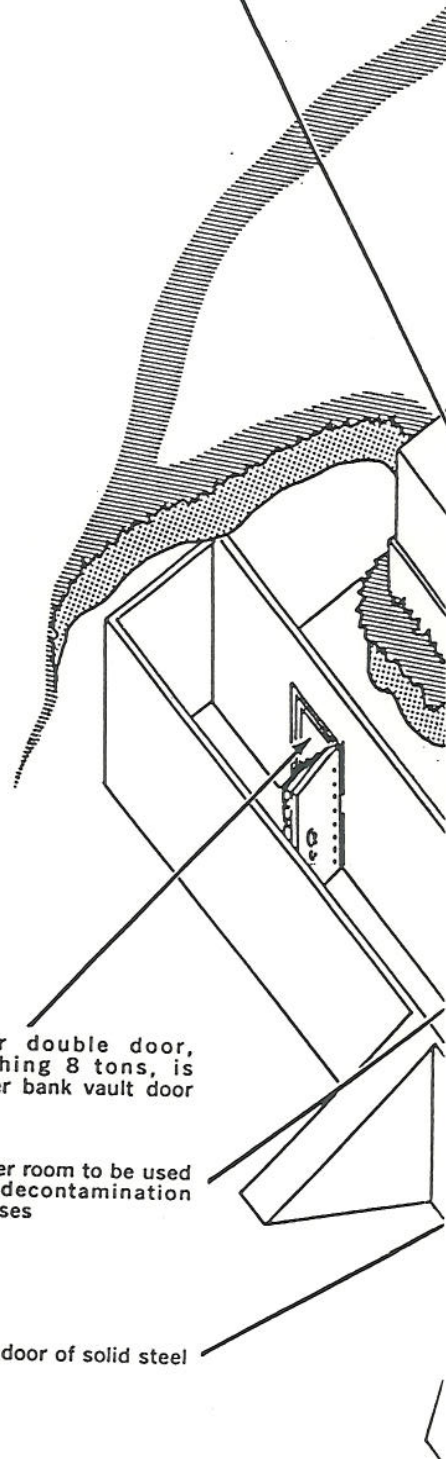
Center is buried three feet below ground.

Filter Turret will filter air through two sets of filters to protect against radiation particles.

Inner double door, weighing 8 tons, is former bank vault door

Shower room to be used for decontamination purposes

Outer door of solid steel



Underground storage facility a unique feature of Pepperell

by Frank Clark

PEPPERELL - Pepperell is a town of many unique features, including Pepperell Springs, the airport and jump school, and the underground storage facility. Yes, Pepperell is home to a unique business designed to provide complete protection of information under any circumstances.

Located in a herein undisclosed area of Pepperell, is a climate controlled, disaster proof vault. The vault was built in 1959 and opened in 1960. Designed by the Army Corps of Engineers for the First National Bank of Boston, the facility was used by First National and leased to several other banks. Known as "location X," the vault then became the secure storage facility for six of the largest financial institutions in New England.

From 1985 to 1990, a major computer company used the space for storage. Since 1991, it has been owned and operated by Archive Storage Inc. (ASI), which stores media such as computer magnetic tapes, cassettes and cartridges, microfilm and microfiche, and optical disks. The president and major stockholder of ASI is Pepperell resident Paula S. Rechnitz.

The decision to build the vault in Pepperell was based on geological survey data that determined Pepperell to be the best location. The facility consists of a below ground vault with a 60,000 cubic foot storage capacity. The "vault proper" is entered through a 16,000 pound vault door that is so well designed that in the words of General Manager Gregory Contos, "it can still be moved with just two fingers."

The walls, floor, and ceiling of the vault are made of concrete four feet thick, to a total of 1500 cubic yards, and reinforced with 100 tons of steel. Just to enter the foyer area for shipping and receiving (before even encountering the eight ton vault door), a visitor must cross a motion detector and a steel door plus another security detector.

Upon entering the vault, the atmosphere becomes completely climate controlled and disaster proof. The reasons behind this are twofold.

First, consider the time when the vault was constructed, late in the 1950's, just months before such events as the Cuban Missile Crisis, with the thought of disaster in the air. Though this vault is not a bomb shelter, it is built to withstand a hydrogen bomb blast within two miles.

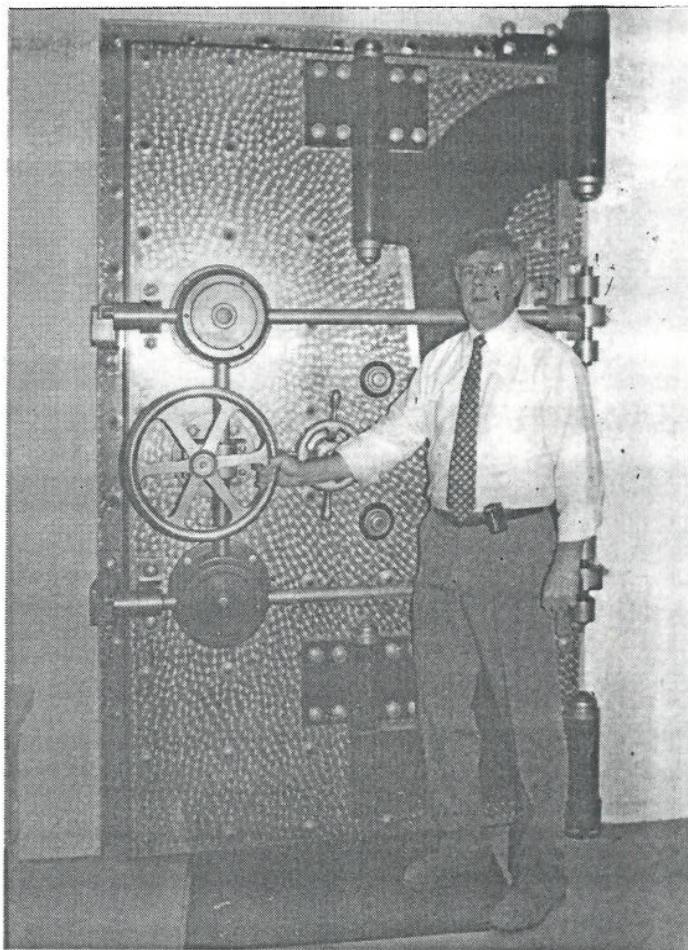
Second, the vault was constructed to ensure safe storage for banks in the event of any disaster; to make certain records and operations could continue uninterrupted. Daily courier runs would replace the information, as banks updated and backed-up their files.

Disaster proofing was attained through the inclusion of reinforced walls and a Halon fire suppression system. The piping for this system is suspended from the ceiling by seismic hangers in the event of earthquake, with all wiring enclosed in concrete.

In terms of security, once the vault proper is entered, the only other exit is through a solid steel door, past additional detectors and then straight up to the surface and through a blast door from the USS Nautilus.

As Contos explained, if someone were to manage to get through the blast door and make their way down the dark hole, past two alarms connected to the Pepperell Police Department and a private security company, and then enter the vault, they would find that all records are kept by code. There are no names of companies on any files and they are stored by a random locator system which ensures that the records for any one client are not located together.

This is not a storage warehouse but controlled archive storage. When asked if there are other vaults such as this one, Contos can only think of a handful. He added, "There are plenty of vaults, but not like this." There is a real difference between this and a reinforced wall in a warehouse or building, he said.



One of a kind... This underground archive storage facility located in Pepperell is the only such facility in Massachusetts. Constructed from concrete and steel, the facility contains security systems, a climate controlled atmosphere, and a coding system that all serve to ensure the safety of sensitive records kept at the site. (Locapo photo)

This vault is the only underground climate controlled facility in Massachusetts. The temperature in the vault is maintained at between 45 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit with a constant humidity level between 45 and 55 percent. The importance of these factors relates to the storage taking place of primarily computer media that is both irreplaceable and extremely delicate to changes in climate. To further ensure these vital elements, all systems are backed up by auxiliary generator. The vault was designed to be entirely self-contained in the event of emergency.

Through her ownership, Rechnitz joins the growing numbers of women who own their own businesses. She is joined by Contos as General Manager, currently serving as a director of the New England Chapter of the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM). ASI are members of ARMA (American Records Management Association) and NASDV (National Association for Security and Data Vaults). These organizations serve the needs of customers both large and small who require a place to keep records in the event of disaster. As Rechnitz explained, "we have become very dependent on the vital information contained in our computers."

In the event of fire, flood, theft or other disaster, crucial information could be lost if not adequately stored. To that end, this site is a unique and amazing facility.