

THE FRRS ARCHIVES

introduction by Thom Anderson, WPRRHS Administrator

Railroad history preservation, specifically that of the Western Pacific Railroad and its subsidiaries, is the primary mission of the Western Pacific Railroad Historical Society, the archives and historical division of the FRRS. While the most obvious form of preservation conducted under the FRRS is the collection of locomotives and cars at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum at Portola, there are other aspects of preservation that are no less important to fulfilling the mission. One of these aspects, which has been receiving much more attention lately, is the Society's archives. John Walker, WPRM Manager is our current Archivist.

Okay, we have an archives - what's in it? The primary focus for the materials is the Western Pacific, its subsidiaries, and connecting railroads. The materials include photographic slides, negatives and prints, timetables, maps, logbooks, drawings and even personnel records and diaries. There are some time books used by employees to record their work hours, company publications, copies of WP Mileposts magazines, AFE (**A**uthorization **F**or **E**xpenditure) books covering various years, and a selection of railfan and modeler type magazines, just to name a few things. All of these pieces help tell the story of the Western Pacific. It is the intent of the Society to tell that story by using these materials for books and Headlight articles, museum displays, and through other appropriate means. It does no one any good for them to be locked away, never to be seen, studied and interpreted.

The next big step for the archives is to organize and catalog them for reference and inventory. Since we have no paid staff dedicated to this effort, it has been handled thus far by volunteers, mainly the Headlight staff. Staff member Allan Lamb has developed an archives protocol for donations and cataloging the archives based upon standard practices of other museums, which we will be using. (If this project is something you are interested in participating in, contact Archivist John Walker or Headlight Editor Dave Pires.)

In the earliest years of the existence of the FRRS, no suitable site at the Museum existed to store the materials in the collection. Eventually, an insulated plug-door boxcar was converted into a temporary archives with the installation of lighting and shelves. While this temporary archives still exists and is in use today, the FRRS has since secured a climate-controlled, secure, 24-hour monitored storage site in the Reno

area where the more valuable portions of the collection have been relocated. The ultimate goal is construction of a climate-controlled archives at WPRM, either in the former WP Hospital structure or elsewhere on the Museum grounds.

The FRRS did not exist until after the WP was absorbed by Union Pacific, and did not have the benefit of a donation of any corporate files, papers, drawings, etc., directly from WP. Almost all of the materials in the archives have either been donated by private individuals or purchased from railroadiana dealers and individuals. We still need help to tell the WP story. If you have something in your collection that you think the archives might be able to use, please contact us. While our preference would be an original item, a copy is better than nothing at all in some instances. The FRRS is a 501c(3) organization and donations can be used for tax deductions.

While no one likes to discuss death, it is inevitable for all of us. Please consider including the donation of your WP materials to the Society in your will or living trust. On more than one occasion we have heard about family members of deceased railfans, unaware of the value of their departed relative's collection, sending it to a landfill when a preservation group would gladly accept it.

And now, we present a glimpse into the holdings of our archives. We hope you enjoy the show!



We begin near the middle of the WP's history, with a view of the engines that pulled her proudest train, the *California Zephyr*. WP FP7 804-A, a product of General Motors' Electro-Motive Division, is shown at the Oakland (CA) Roundhouse, waiting for the next call to take the "Silver Lady" east to Chicago.