

Official Visit to California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives

- Kerry Cochran
Archive Manager

In September I made arrangements to visit the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) Library and Archives in Sacramento. The visit was confirmed the last week of September for Tuesday October 4th, 2022 at 10 a.m.

I invited archive staff member Paul Finnegan to accompany me on this visit. (In his capacity as both a member of the archive staff and the webmaster.)

This was an open invitation from FRRS member Jim Atkins (who works on the archive staff at CSRM) and Clair Phillips (CSRM employee). Clair was present at our annual convention in Reno this year. She was very enthusiastic about being at our convention and we discussed many things. During our conversations, she invited the FRRS/WPRM Archive Staff to visit them at Sacramento.

The visit started at the CSRM Library offices at 10 a.m.

Attending the meeting were:

- Clair Phillips, CSRM
- Chris Rockwell, CSRM
- Jim Atkins, CSRM & FRRS
- Kerry Cochran, FRRS
- Paul Finnegan, FRRS

We met in the offices for 2 ½ hours. During this time we discussed several items including:

- Several of CSRM collections - including Virgil Staff, Western Pacific Railroad and related WP items
- Collection management best practices
- Types of collections
- Archiving of manuscripts
- Archiving books and publications
- Archive policies and procedures
- CSRM shared suggestions for how the FRRS may want to approach indexing of

our collections based on their experience. It is more important to catalog our collection, rather than focus on getting materials digitized.

- Photograph reproduction guidelines and practices
- Payments for services
- Processing of requests
- Fees for services
- Permission to publish archived materials
- Copyrights and requirements
- Software programs – CSRM shared opinions and thoughts about several software programs available to manage archive collections.
- Support of public ability to search archives for materials

After these discussions, we adjourned for lunch.

Upon returning from lunch, Paul and I were given a tour of the new National Model Railroad Association exhibit in the museum.

After that tour, we traveled to the California State Parks archive warehouse for a tour of where all of the State Parks archives are stored (including the CSRM archives).

The warehouse is sectioned off into various areas for receiving, sorting, cleaning, office space and storage. The entire facility is climate controlled year round with controlled access to all areas.

The storage area has 20 foot ceilings with shelving layout in each section to accommodate the various collections, from standard office boxes to very large items (including motor cars, train headlights and train whistles) along with several other items such as a curved cocktail bar from an SP lounge car.

I can say this was an enlightening visit with CSRM, and it has opened up a new line of communications and cooperation between the museums.