

page. <http://wplives.org/wphistory_wp_documents.html>

Needs for the Archives:

We are always looking for help in getting materials properly stored and we need the support of the membership with helping supply storage materials for the archives. Items listed below are needed to help keep our collection stored properly and should you wish to help us out, we certainly would like your donation and help.

- Computer Program to track all the Historical/Archive items

(PastPerfect) is the computer program that I have been looking at, however I have not received a cost for that program as of yet.

- Archive Storage boxes for 35mm slides

- Archive Storage boxes for 8 1/2 X 11 materials

Should any member receive any donation and/or get an inquiry about a donation, please get in touch with Eugene, Frank, myself or any member of the board of directors so that we may follow-up with the donor to make sure we properly address the donation or inquiry. I would also like to thank all the volunteers that help us in the archive department.

New Audio Tour at Museum

—Paul Finnegan, Webmaster

Bring your smart phone with you the next time you are exploring the museum. We have a new tool to assist you in learning about some of our collection and the history of the society and the Western Pacific Railroad. The idea has been kicking around for years to have some kind of audio tour at the museum. There are various solutions out in the market; a popular one is having low power FM transmitters and the radio wands that people carry around with them. I long ago rejected solutions that require the museum to purchase and maintain equipment. The commercial solutions also tend to be rather pricey.

I realized we could leverage the technology many people carry with them: their smart phone and their data plans. I have created a new web tool at audiotour.wplives.org (which, although it works on a desktop, it is targeted at the mobile device.) This web page has subjects grouped by Railroad Company, then sorted by road-number. The visitor starts at that web page and as they explore the museum they select an entry from the top page and then click [Play] to hear a short audio clip about the subject. The audio plays on their mobile device and the visitor closes the audio clip page to return to the top page. The visitor is using the data plan on their phone, not the museum's Wi-Fi, so it should work everywhere on the property.

The audio page also includes the clip transcript as plain text so the user can read about the subject rather than listen to the audio clip. This may be valuable in noisy or crowded environments. Additionally, most of the pages have more information, related photographs and links to other web pages about the subject. A few even have links to short videos about the subject. The SPMW 208 rotary snowplow and the WP 106, "Charles O. Sweetwood", pages were the first to have video clips included.

A secondary top page has the audio pages grouped by type of equipment rather than by railroad. Each of these entries has a short audio about the type of equipment, (e.g. Locomotives) and has links to the specific pieces of that type of equipment in the audio tour.

Please try the tour the next time you are at the museum, or experience a virtual tour from the comfort of your own home!

