



The Train Sheet

Issue 100
March/April 2000

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

Library Car "In Service"

by John Walker

One of the missions of the WPRRHS is caring for all of the archives that the FRRS/WPRRHS/PRM have collected over the years. For nearly 15 years this task has fallen on our former General Manager Norman Holmes. These documents and items are irreplaceable and Norm jealously guarded these items. His diligence in this area protected the items from exposure to the elements and from theft or damage.

Until recently, these

(Continued on page 5)



Our new library car is the culmination of many hours of work. Access to the interior of the car was made easier by framing in the opening of the plug door and installing a sliding glass door. This also protects the contents from the elements. - John Walker

Inside this issue:

Notes from the Chairman	3
Communications	3
CMO Report	4
Logging Flats Return	7
Zephyr Project	8
Calendar of Events	9
Past Board Minutes	10

Whitman Portrait Donated

by Norman Holmes

Harriet Whitman Lee, daughter and Franklin B. Whitman, grandson of Western Pacific's eighth president have donated a large portrait of Mr. Whitman to our museum archives. The portrait hung in the Whitman home until the death of Mrs. Frederick B. Whitman. The family felt our organization would be the appropriate place to have the portrait. We really appreciate the gift.

Mr. Whitman came to the Western Pacific from the Burlington Railroad where he was the General Superintendent at Lincoln, NE. He

first traveled to California at the invitation of a committee of WP Directors and accepted their offer to become executive vice president on October 1, 1948. Mr. Whitman became President of WP on July 1, 1949, succeeding Harry Mitchell.

Under Mr. Whitman's leadership WP became a first-class transcontinental line and a leader in railroad progress. The road had become completely dieselized, the first class one railroad to do so, the entire railroad except for paired track and branches was placed under Centralized Traffic Control and radio was used

(Continued on page 3)

From the Chairman

by Andy Anderson

As another season for Museum visitation unfolds, activities are underway to make sure that all is in order. The locomotives used in the "Run a Locomotive" program are being checked, serviced, and made ready for what promises to be a busy schedule. As always the Caboose Train will be on stand-by and ready to roll.

Another exciting happening is the ongoing fund raising efforts toward the total restoration of the California Zephyr Dome-Dorm Lounge car "Silver Hostel" as well as the last remaining Western Pacific FP7, 805A. The tireless efforts of Director Vicknair are very much appreciated.

Painting is also on the agenda for this year. This project, involving two locomotives and one boxcar, is on the drawing board with cost estimates being sought. This too is an exciting project with the results being very visible to the membership and the public. Other projects are also on-going including yard clean-up as well as the engine house re-roofing.

It was great to participate in the "work crew" that facilitated the return of the two logging flat cars to the property after a few years absence in Loyalton. A related story and photo can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Everyone is hoping that this summer will bring many visitors and that our members will become more involved with Museum activities. If the old adage is true, "we get out of it what we put into it", hopefully we can all put a lot into it this summer.

SEE YOU AT A GREAT PLACE...THE PORTOLA RAILROAD MUSEUM

Communications

A complaint often heard concerns the lack of communication among members and between the membership and the Board of Directors. In an effort to alleviate this concern and promote better communications among the membership, a mailing list has been created on the internet that is open only to FRRS members. This list is located at www.onelist.com/group/FRRS. The url must be typed exactly as shown. If you are not a member of OneList you will have to sign up for the service. This is a no cost service and sign-up is fast and easy. All applicants to the mail list are checked against the current FRRS membership list. If the url above does not work go to www.onelist.com and you can find the list under Recreation, Trains and Railroads. I look forward to seeing many members on the list with positive discussions concerning the FRRS and the future of our Society.

Portrait



Franklin B. Whitman and Harriet Whitman Lee shown with the portrait of past Western Pacific President Frederick B. Whitman.
- Norm Holmes

(Continued from page 1)

extensively for communications. An advertising campaign was instituted to promote the California Zephyr and WP's freight service bringing the railroad before the public as never before.

WP was the first to buy compartmentizer boxcars, cushion underframe and roller bearing freight cars. In 1959 WP had the highest average freight train speed for all railroads in the United States. In 1961 SP filed with the ICC to take over the WP. Mr. Whitman immediately contacted the Santa Fe to make a counter proposal. The control case was taken to the public and shippers for support. The ICC decided WP should remain independent.

Mr. Whitman didn't forget WP's employees. He started by having dinners for employees at the various terminals. He called them "Operation Nosebag." This was followed by annual company picnics. WP became a family.

Myron Christy took over as President of the Company on July 1, 1965, ending a fifteen year rein that brought the railroad prominence and profitability.

We thank the family for this most generous donation.

Library Car

(Continued from page 1)
 items were stored in the PFE reefer at the museum. Some items were used in the production of The Headlight articles or displayed around the museum. Very rare items have been cared for by individuals in the organization at their homes or businesses since there was no proper place to store them at the museum. Consequently, member and public access to these items has been severely restricted.



The fourteen foot plug door can be fully closed when the car is not being used. When closed the car appears normal and also adds additional protection and security for the contents.
 - John Walker

Many people have wondered when the museum is going to build a library to house these items. Well, folks, your museum has a little problem in that regard. Everyone in the organization agrees that we need to do this. We would all like to have a new building with offices, a library, a display room and new restrooms. The problem is we don't own the land where the museum sits. The UP does. And the UP has been reluctant to let us build any new buildings on the property. Your Board of Directors has looked at several alternatives including a modular building, acquiring the old WP hospital up on the hill, buying a bank building downtown, building a replica depot, trying to move an existing building down to the museum site; but for various reasons none of these efforts have succeeded. But, they are still working on it. They are talking to the UP about buying certain sections of the property where we might build a permanent building. They are working much more closely with Plumas County and the City now to try and acquire some additional property where, hopefully, someday, a new visitor's center/library can be built.

In the meantime, we needed a better way to store these archives. Despite all of Norm's best efforts to keep the PFE car organized, every time the car was moved around the museum (especially Railfan's Day), the contents of the car was tossed around and jumbled together. Addi-

tionally, more and more donations were going inside and the car was just filling up. We needed more room! After the WPRRHS took responsibility for the museum's archives, Norm suggested buying a 57 foot PFE reefer that the UP was getting rid of and setting it on the ground at the museum and making this the new storage car. While this idea had considerable merit, other considerations at the time caused us to put this idea on hold while we explored other alternatives. In mid 1999, we received the donation of 175 boxes of UTU WP union records. With all of our other alternatives quickly falling by the wayside, we had to come up with a solution to this storage problem.... and fast!

What we did starting last summer, was to clean out and refurbish a Cotton Belt 50 foot RBL insulated box car at the museum and turn it into a storage/office car. Doug Morgan previously owned the car and the museum traded him a flat car for this car. We repainted the interior, put in a new sub floor and vinyl flooring, built some new storage racks and Norman Holmes rented a U-Haul truck and went down to San Francisco and picked up 26 fire-proof filing cabinets from the former SP headquarters building to put in the car.

Overhead lights and electrical power have been installed and are supplied to the car via a heavy-duty extension cord which connects to a twist lock connection under the car. The car can be spotted anywhere around the museum and still have power supplied to it. The interior of the car has electrical outlets, plenty of lights and we can put a heater inside during the winter. The interior racks will have additional bracing added to prevent shifting of the contents when the car is moved. With the high R-value insulation that this car already has in it's ceiling, walls and floors, we should be able to maintain a constant temperature in the car without too much trouble. In fact, after the doors are closed, a couple of light bulbs should maintain the



Prior to completion of the new archives car, storage of many paper items was not the best it could be. Although items were boxed, a cataloging system was not in place and movement of the car made storage difficult.
 - John Walker

(Continued on page 6)

Library Car

(Continued from page 5)

temperature at a consistent level throughout the winter.

A unique feature of the car is the false interior wall just inside the 14 foot plug door. Initially suggested by Ken Roller, the interior wall has a sliding glass "patio door" installed for easy entry into the car. This interior wall protects the contents inside when the 14-foot plug door is open. Additionally, when the car is not being used, the plug door can be closed adding additional insulation and protection. This has worked out very well and there is no external difference in the appearance of the car when it is not being used. The plug door on the other side of the car will remain closed most of the time and will be sealed around the edges. But, if we ever need to put some heavy items in the car, like furniture, or more filing cabinets, this door can still be opened and heavy items lifted into the car with a forklift.

As you can see for yourself, the "Archives car" has turned out wonderful! We now have a clean, safe place to catalog and properly store these archives which will make it easier to access them in the future. I feel confident that we can now sort through all of the FRRS's archives and get them stored away properly. This should be enough room to clean out the PFE car, the stuff I have at my house, the UP baggage car and several other places around the museum and in peoples homes where archives have been stored.

I truly believe that this is one of the best projects that the museum has ever done. This is an excellent example of teamwork, leadership and dedication that we should continue to build upon. Several members who have seen the car have been very impressed by the work and money spent on this project. This is another fine example of how the FRRS is becoming



Storage for our collection will be much better with the 26 fireproof filing cabinets all in one central area. At the opposite end of the car a desk, sorting table, and computer will make cataloging much easier.

- John Walker

serious about preserving more than just locomotives and I think it will have a tremendously positive effect on membership, donations and volunteers. Once the archives are sorted and properly filed away, this will speed our ability to answer questions and speed up production of our magazine, The Headlight.

I want to extend my compliments to FRRS President Andy Anderson and Facilities Director Doug Morgan for their cooperation, leadership and expertise in this project. Not only have they spent a lot of time supervising the work on this car, they have gotten in there and gotten their hands dirty on numerous occasions. I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their support of this project and to Norman Holmes for acquiring the file cabinets from San Francisco which were donated by Don Davella. Jim Mann of Quincy did most of the wiring in the car and Steve Demboz of Quincy did a lot of the carpentry work inside the car.

Lolli Bryan has graciously let us use her basement to sort through some of the archives and store the UTU records until the "Archives car" was finished. Bart Rohles has begun sorting through the UTU Union records we received last year and with his friend Ralph Foster helped paint the interior of the car. Robert Forren, Kerry Cochran and other operating department people helped move filing cabinets, lumber and other supplies and carefully switched the car to different locations where work was done on the car. Tom Graham donated a nice set of map drawer filing cabinets, which will go inside the car. WPRRHS member Roland Brockman answered my request for storage material and donated four boxes of document page protectors while Norman Holmes purchased several boxes of surplus file folders from government surplus in Sacramento. Life member Tom Lawler



Overhead wooden racks provide box storage while books and magazines will be stored on metal shelving. Overhead and under rack lighting provide for a pleasant work environment.

- John Walker

Library Car

(Continued from page 6)

has made a nice cash donation to the project for which we thank him also. Frank Brehm has already cleaned out part of his collection at home and donated it to the museum to be stored inside the car. Again, it is gratifying to see so many members and volunteers from different areas in the organization coming together and working to solve a problem. This is the kind of teamwork and resourcefulness that makes you proud to be a member of the FRRS.

I have been working with WPRRHS member Garth Groff who works as a librarian at the University of Virginia and Kent Stephens (a librarian at Chico State in California) on a filing system for our archives. I have also been talking with Plumas County Museum Director Scott Lawson on these matters and he has helped us with our plans and given us some good advice. On a recent rip to Pennsylvania, I was able to spend several hours touring the library, processing room and archives of the Steamtown National Historic Site. These folks were extremely cooperative and helpful in explaining their procedures and how they store their archives.

Stop by the museum and take a look at the new "Archives storage car". Better yet, make plans to come up and work in the car sometime. There is plenty of room and plenty of stuff to sort through. Call me if you're interested. Now is also the time to look around the closet and consider donating some of your items to the museum (We are doing just fine on modeling magazines at the moment. We will let you know our specific needs in this area soon). We can even use copies of things that we do not already have.

These are just some of the donations we have received in the last year: 190 Al Phelps WP steam prints. Hap Manit's conductor's uniform and pictures and documents from his collection. The Thomas Phillips diaries from 1908 to 1951 chronicling his work as a construction engineer on the WP. The "Weso Papers" which include train registers for every WP and SP train, which went by this station in 1923! Two Fred Whitman paintings, two switch stand lamps, some negatives and several boxes of books and magazines.

If we keep getting more stuff...we might have to build another car!

Logging Flats Return to PRM

by Norman Holmes

Our two Pacific Lumber Company logging flat cars were returned to Portola from Loyalton in March this year.

Peter Langdon, a Sierra Pacific Industries employee and member of our Society, suggested we help Loyalton celebrate their logging heritage in the first annual Timberfest. Starting in 1993 Union Pacific transported a locomotive and caboose to Loyalton. The two logging flat cars were trucked over and loaded with logs to represent a logging train. When the event was over the equipment was returned to Portola. This operation was repeated the next two years. In 1995 we decided to leave the flats in Loyalton instead of going to the trouble of loading and unloading the cars. 1997 was the last year we participated in Loyalton's event but the flat cars remained in storage in Loyalton until this year when it was decided they should be returned to the museum.

Andy Anderson made arrangements with Wilburn Construction for two trips from Portola to Loyalton to truck the cars home. Also helping with the unloading was Norm Holmes, Ken Iverson, Doug Morgan and Tobie Smith. Equipment displayed and the year is shown below.

1993 - ONW 4, Baldwin AS616 - ONW 300, wooden caboose
 1994 - UP 849, EMD GP30 - WP 484, bay window caboose
 1995 - WP 707, EMD GP7 - WP 428, bay window caboose
 1996 - WP 2001, EMD GP20 - WP 428, bay window caboose
 1997 - SP 2873, EMD GP9 - WP 484, bay window caboose



After being lifted from the truck trailer one of the flat cars is being swung around in preparation for setting it back on its arch-bar trucks. - Norm Holmes