

# PACIFIC NORTHWEST RAILROAD ARCHIVE

## NORTHWEST NEWS

This progress report is published to update the *Friends of PNRA* on the activities at the Archive during 2019-Q4.

### Community Outreach

The *Boeing Employees Model Railroad Club* and PNRA held our Annual Holiday Open House on the Thanksgiving weekend, November 29, 30 and December 1. The many visitors were entertained by trains running on the portable layout in the Archive's Main Work Room, along with those running on the Boeing's permanent layout on the west side of the Main floor. At the same time, PNRA volunteers conducted tours of the Archive and the collections



A young railfan enjoys the trains running on the portable layout in the Main Work Room during our Holiday Open House

Kim Ju-Wan, a Korean master's degree student in records management at Seoul, requested information on how we manage our collections. He was sent PNRA's Collection Management Policy which he found a great help in his research. This fall, the Pullman depot was successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The NPRHA contributed historical photos of the structure from the Ainsworth collection for use in the nominating submittal.

Kurt Armbruster presented the history captured in his book, *Pacific Coast: Seattle's Own Railroad* at meetings of the Skykomish Historical Society, White River Valley Museum and Northwest Railway Museum during Quarter 4 of 2019. The presentations, the sales of the book at a number of retail locations, and by the GNRHS Online Store has increased the visibility of PNRA's mission by reaching new populations with our railroad history message.

Heidi Scott is writing an article on the gas-electric passenger service that ran from Spokane to Coulee City in Washington during the 1940's and 1950's and requested information and photos from collections at PNRA. The article is expected to be published in *Wheat Life* magazine, sponsored by the Washington State Wheat Growers Association.

Chris Rea from Olympia, Washington, is studying library

science via an online program at the University of Maine. She visited PNRA on Oct. 30th as part of her research for a paper on digital preservation.

The Prairie Line Trail in Tacoma now connects the Brewery District and University of Washington campus to the Foss Waterfront a few blocks from the NP's 1873 "Western Terminus." The Trail integrates the historic right-of-way with gathering spaces, original artworks and interpretive features as shown online at [prairielinetrail.org](http://prairielinetrail.org).

On Nov. 12th 4Culture's Heritage Team, Chieko Phillips and Megumi Nagata visited PNRA for a tour and a discussion of our mission and processes.

In December, PNRA received 4,320 slides of structures taken in the 1970s by Mike O'Connell. These new slides are being added to the *Mike O'Connell Structures Photo* collection on [www.PNRArchive.org](http://www.PNRArchive.org). This donation included eleven different views of the Roy WA water tank which is being restored by a community group. The image files were provided to the group for use in their project.

Events on the PNRA calendar include:

- Monroe, Wash. Railroad Swap Meet, Feb. 22-23, 2020.
- Milwaukee Road Spring Meet at PNRA, March 7, 2020.
- PRRT&HS meetings at PNRA, March 28, 2020.
- Santa Fe 2020 Mini-Meet at PNRA, April 18, 2020.
- Camas Prairie Day at PNRA, May 2, 2020.
- SP&SRHS Swap Meet, Vancouver, Wash. May 9, 2020.
- Open House for FOBNR Members at PNRA, June 9, 2020.

### Preservation Activities

The master class in image scanning and post processing conducted by Dale Sanders for PNRA volunteers this spring, has been transcribed into an eight page scanning guide by Dean O'Neill. A copy of the guide may be downloaded from the Digital Archive Project folder on [www.PNRArchive.org](http://www.PNRArchive.org).

Now that the Archive's facilities are nearly complete with the installation of the last three mobile shelving carriages this fall, we are training many of our volunteers to support the Collection Management processes at PNRA. We are using a standard process that starts with sorting donated materials to select what will remain in the permanent collections. Materials not retained are handled through a deaccession process and approved by the RHO representatives. After the sorting is complete, the retained material is inventoried and then repacked into a "finished box" which is then placed on its permanent location on the mobile shelving to wait for final cataloging. As we proceed, the box catalogs are posted on the appropriate RHO website and PNRA's master collections database allowing users to search our collections to find items they seek.

To assist our preservation efforts, Ken Iverson, retired Administration Manager for BNSF Railway has been appointed the Archive's Collection Curator to oversee the Collection Management effort.

We provided information to Heather Miller on a manufactured gas plant site that operated in Wenatchee till it was demolished in the 1960-61 era and the later development of its parcels.

Robert Alexander was a senior engineer on the NP's Idaho

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*The contractor's crew installs the Borroughs carriage of mobile shelving on the west side of the lower floor.*

Division and a member of a legendary railroad family which worked out of Spokane. His family donated his time books which detail his entire career.

Members of the Union Pacific Historical Society working on a Camas Prairie Railroad (CSP) book traveled to PNRA on Oct. 8 & 9 to review the 36 boxes of CSP material recently received from the East-End. They plan to use some of PNRA's photos and AFE information in a forth coming CSP book.

Graham Johnson requested information on the car his grandfather, Robert Fulton Graham used as the Rules Examiner for the Western Division of the NP in the early 1950's. As it turns out, Dave Sprau remembers that he had at least two rules exam sessions in the car after Graham's grandfather had retired and identified the car as "Examination Car 1922." At this point we have not found a photo of the car at PNRA. If anyone does have a photo of this car, please email us.

PNRA provided drawings of Great Northern Bridge 24.1 to the *Ballard Terminal Railroad* to assist their inspection of the bridge.

Earl Overlie is closing the house of his father, Barne Overlie the long-time NP Road Master who reportedly walked every mile of NP mainline and most branchlines during his career. In October Earl donated five boxes of Barne's work records.

The goals of our Digital Archive Project Phase 3 are to produce a user-friendly front-end to the generic Access-To-Memory (AtoM) search portal and make data descriptions of materials at PNRA and JSRH compliant with the international standards. We received funding of \$3,500 from each of the GNRHS and NPRHA, plus PNRA committed \$1,500 toward the project. However, another granting source did not award any requested funding. The scope of Phase 3 has been rephased and additional grant funding is being requested to complete the project.

In December, Mike Bergman and his former workmates at Sound Transit in Seattle identified a circa 1912 cable hanger found by a teenage archaeologist. He was looking for rail spikes along an abandoned spur off the *Highland Park & Lake Burien* streetcar line that served the original Boeing factory on West Marginal Way in West Seattle.

Jim Mattson scanned the eight-sets of NP Branchline Title Plats donated by Montana Rail Link in 2016 and arranged them

into a single PDF file for each branch. These files can now be viewed on the NPRHA.org website.

Rick Schroeder, archivist for the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad Historical Society, transferred four 1938 photos of the interior of the tavern cars used on the Seattle-Portland trains.

## Become a *Friend of PNRA*

Our members, *Friends of PNRA* support the Archive and our mission to preserve the history of our region's railroads and make it available on our web sites. Our members live throughout the United States, as-well-as in the Puget Sound area. There are two ways you can become a *Friend of PNRA* by:

- **Joining a work crew** at one of regularly scheduled weekly sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays evenings or Saturdays. Email us to get started working on a collection that interests you at a time you are available.
- **Contributing funds** each year to help cover PNRA's operating costs. You can join the hundreds of contributors that regularly support PNRA online at [www.PNRArchive.org](http://www.PNRArchive.org), or mail a check to the address below and become a *Friend of PNRA!!*

## Facilities

The three new mobile shelving carriages funded by our 2021 *Washington State Heritage Capital Projects* grant award were installed before Christmas. The grant required that we match each dollar we receive with two dollars of capital investments. The invoices covering our matching investment and reimbursing the cost of the carriages were submitted before the end of the quarter.

A new file server for the Archive has been assembled by Dean O'Neill from high-end parts donated by Microsoft's Server Group and a purchased case and motherboard. This server, PNRA45 is capable of copying data at greater than 250 MB/second which is ten times faster than any of our other computers. This transfer speed cuts the backup times from our workstation to PNRA45 by a factor of five, even though the path incorporates a wireless connection. A second server is being assembled using similar parts to run the AtoM software for the Digital Archive Project.

## Administration

GiveBIG 2020 is being held on May 6, 2020. As before, commitments made within two weeks before GiveBIG day will be credited during the day. GiveBIG provides a significant amount of the individual donations each year.

A number of PNRA's Volunteers have agreed to lead our operating committees starting in 2020. They include:

- Collection Management: Ken Iverson
- Community Outreach: Kurt Armbruster
- Facilities: Cosmo DiFrancesco
- Financial Management: Bill Petryk
- Fulfillment Admin: Chris Haaland
- Info Technology: Bill Kajdzik

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2019-Quarter 4 Northwest News

