

GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTING DONATIONS TO THE PRRT&HS ARCHIVES

The Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society welcomes donations of archival materials. During the past few years the Society has received a large number of monetary and material donations to its archives. Such donations are greatly appreciated and help the Society reach its objectives for creating a working research archive.

Donation Offers the Society Can Accept

The Statement of Purpose of our archive is: “The Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society has restored and maintains the former PRR station at Lewistown, Pa. as the location of its archival collections. The Society collects, organizes, and preserves documentation relating to the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad and its subsidiaries with the goal of making this information available for research by interested persons.” This is an enormous challenge, given the size and extent of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Society must be very selective in what we collect in order to avoid acquiring more than we can properly care for or use. However, there are gaps in our collection, and we sincerely appreciate the generous donation offers that we receive. The PRRT&HS has developed a collection plan to provide guidance in the often-difficult decisions regarding what we should and should not accept.

Making a Donation to the Society’s Archives

Individuals or organizations wishing to donate materials to the PRRT&HS Archives should contact the Accessions Manager, Rich Ader, at RR5 Box 10E, Bushkill, PA 18324 or at richie0754@yahoo.com. He will request a list of the items proposed to be donated and will determine which items will enhance the Society’s collection and help reach our objectives. Unusual cases may be referred to the Society’s Board of Directors for decision. Monetary donations should be sent to the Treasurer of the PRRT&HS at the address listed in each issue of *The Keystone*. Checks should be made out to PRRT&HS and Archives account should be written on the memo line and in the accompanying letter.

Types of Items the Archives Seeks

In very general terms the following items are desired: PRR (and subsidiary) paper documents such as employee and public timetables; track charts; maps; plans of equipment and structures; diagrams; pamphlets; books; official correspondence such as executive, engineering, operating or real estate documents; and photographs, negatives, slides or movies of equipment, trains or facilities. We are also interested in high quality railroad history, industry and business publications that help put the PRR in context. For example, we are interested in standard reference sources, such as Official Guides, Official Railway Equipment Registers or Guides, Cyclopedias, instruction manuals, and other books that have a significant PRR content or importance. Because of the wide variety of our holdings and interests, each offer of items must be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine suitability. When in doubt, please contact us.

Types of Items the Archives Is Not Seeking

Generally speaking, the Society does not accept modeling magazines or books, items that pertain entirely to other railroads, personnel records or other materials that raise privacy concerns, or duplicates of items already in our archival collection. Since we intend to operate a research archive and not a museum, we have only limited interest in items of hardware such as lanterns, marker lamps, signs, models, etc. We have extremely limited space in which to display such items and do them justice. However, if the item adds significant interpretive value to the research collection, such as a keystone number plate that was recently donated, it will be considered for accession.

Acknowledgement of Donors

Archives donors are assured that their gift has contributed to the success of the Society's archival collection. Donors receive a letter of acknowledgement and thanks, detailing their gift. They are publicly acknowledged at our Annual Meeting and in an issue of *The Keystone*, the Society's official quarterly publication.

Tax Deductions

The Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society is listed as a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service. So, donations to the Society and its Archives are eligible for tax deduction. Society staff members are not permitted to offer tax advice, so it is the responsibility of the donor to confer with a tax advisor. Likewise, a formal appraisal of donated items is the responsibility of the donor. IRS regulations prohibit our staff from making appraisals of intended donations.

Conclusion

Each year the PRRT&HS receives donations from generous individuals and organizations. We are pleased to serve as a dedicated repository for items that help us meet our goals of preserving the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad. We are making continuous improvements in our cataloging and archival storage of our collections . We are grateful to the donors whose contributions make this work possible.