

ERHA-SC / Ray Younghans Collection Comes to OERM January 2007

The Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM) and the Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California (ERHA-SC) are pleased to announce an historic cooperative agreement to bring the collection of famed Los Angeles traction historian Raymond E. Younghans to the Museum. The collection came to the ERHA-SC in 2001, and had been in storage at various locations in the Los Angeles area since that time. In the interest of getting the collection inventoried and made available for display and use, the ERHA-SC moved the collection to OERM earlier this month.

The Younghans Collection consists of a very large group of Los Angeles Railway and Pacific Electric plans, paperwork, photographs, ephemeral items, hardware and other objects collected by the late Ray Younghans of Los Angeles. Ray was well known for his private "museum" in the Cypress Park neighborhood, featuring an L.A. Railway Birney streetcar in the backyard and a house and garage filled with artifacts from the electric railway era in Los Angeles. Ray was also a talented draftsman, and his hand-drawn track and equipment drawings were found throughout Ira Swett's famous "Interurbans Specials" documenting the Los Angeles Railway and Pacific Electric systems. Ray passed away in 1999 at the age of 78.

The history of cooperation between the ERHA-SC and OERM dates back to 1956, when members of the Southern California Division, Electric Railroader's Association (predecessor to today's ERHA-SC) started a separate organization known as the Orange Empire Traction Company (predecessor of today's OERM) to acquire streetcars and a permanent museum site to display them. Cars originally purchased by the ERHA-SC were later transferred to OERM by placing them on permanent loan. Since their formation over fifty years ago, both groups have continued to pursue an active interest in LA's electric railway history, and so the cooperation in preserving the Younghans Collection was a natural fit.

Now that the Younghans collection has arrived at OERM, the process of organizing and cataloging its contents can begin. The bulk of the collection has been given its own archive space at OERM in order to keep it intact as a single significant unit. As it is organized and inventoried, it will be made available to researchers, and assistance with the inventory work is also being sought. Contact Alan Fishel at the ERHA-SC or John Smatlak at OERM for further information.



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