Stanley F. Merritt papers

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Stanley Fowler Merritt was born in 1890. A plumber by trade, he had a consuming interest in trains and railroad photography. In 1924, he was invited by David L. Joslyn to join the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. In 1937, Merritt and Gilbert Kneiss founded the Pacific Coast Chapter of the R&LHS. The first meeting of the Pacific Coast Chapter was held on July 13, 1937 at 836 Alma Ave., Oakland, in the dining room of Stanley Merritt. Seven other members were in attendance, including David Joslyn of Sacramento, Frederic Shaw, Roy Graves, Gilbert H. Kneiss, Allan Meyer, W.E. Gardner and Merle Berryessa. From 1937, until his death on June 25, 1951, Merritt served as the Chapters' Secretary-Treasurer. In addition to being responsible for chapter membership and finances, Merritt also organized numerous excursions held by the Chapter for its members.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection documents Stanley F. Merritt's involvement with and contribution to the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, beginning as a new member in 1924, and after 1937, as the Secretary-Treasurer of its newly-formed Pacific Coast Chapter. •Contains correspondence with R&LHS officers, members, railroad officials, and other railfans. Merritt's friendship with David Joslyn, who invited Merritt to join the R&LHS in 1924 is documented in the correspondence files, as is his relationship with Gilbert Kneiss, with whom he co-founded the Pacific Coast Chapter of the R&LHS in 1937. Includes an invitation to Merritt from David Joslyn to join the R&LHS, photos and information about various Central Pacific and Western Pacific locomotives, preservation and restoration of equipment such as Virginia & Truckee Railroad locomotive No. 21 "J.W. Bowker" and Nevada Central Railway coach No. 3 "Silver State," effects of World War II on the Chapter, railfan trips and excursions, new and renewed memberships, and exchanges of photographs. Correspondents include notable railroad historians Gilbert H. Kneiss, David L. Joslyn, Frederic Shaw, and Gerald M. Best. •In addition to correspondence files, this collection includes records kept by Stanley Merritt while he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society from 1937 until his death in 1951. These include: Cash Books for 1937-1943, which were used to keep track of payment of membership dues, administrative costs, railfan excursion expenses and other financial matters of the Pacific Coast Chapter. Dues assessments for 1949-1951 were kept in separate notebooks. Receipt files for 1937-1943 were kept. They contain storage and shipping receipts, bills for expenses such as: printing and publishing services, hardware, office supplies, and film. Pacific Coast Chapter members were polled about possible meeting locations, and these ballots are included in the collection. The minutes of a few of the meetings were kept, including the first meeting in 1937. Membership lists were kept which show when each member joined, and often included that person's address and telephone number. •The Pacific Coast Chapter held numerous railfan excursions. Excursion files include flyers, souvenir brochures, timetables and schedules, tickets, newsletters, payment and other financial information, and
attendance cards. Joint excursions with the California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society in 1937-1938 are also documented. The Pacific Coast Chapter's participation in the Golden Gate International Exhibition is documented. Material includes: newsletters, application for exhibit space, passes and pass applications, correspondence and tickets. Merritt kept other Chapter-related material such as newspaper clippings, copies of some of the early newsletters, THE WESTERN CHAPTER NEWS, later called THE CHAPTER NEWS, membership ribbons and cards, flyers, publications announcements, drawing of pilot for Virginia & Truckee Railroad steam locomotive No. 21 "J.W. Bowker," Pacific Coast Chapter letterhead, a R&LHS pin, Sierra Railway train order, his business cards and those of Fred Stindt, and a brochure about Southern Pacific Company locomotives. File folders are organized alphabetically by type of material.