
Walter P. Gray III Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Walter P. Gray III Papers

Dates: 1968-2007

Collection Number: MS 793

Creator/Collector:

Extent: 6 boxes

Repository: California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives
Sacramento, California 95814

Abstract: This collection of documents related to the activities of Walter Patton Gray III, a well-known railroad historian, preservationist, and train buff.

Language of Material: English

Access

This collection is open for research at our off-site storage facility with one week's notice. Contact Library & Archives staff to arrange for access.

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Preferred Citation

Walter P. Gray III Papers. California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives

Acquisition Information

Gift of Mary Helmich, 2007

Biography/Administrative History

Walter Patton Gray III was born and grew up in Falmouth, Massachusetts. He lived in Southern California before moving to Sacramento in 1970. He received a bachelor's degree in history from California State University, Sacramento in 1976 and completed graduate work in history, collections management, museum studies and administration. In 1993, he graduated from the Virginia Management Institute program in museum management, University of Virginia. In 1980 he married Mary Helmich and they settled in East Sacramento. Mr. Gray was involved with the planning, development and opening of the California State Railroad Museum. He began his 20+ year career with the California State Railroad Museum by joining the staff in February of 1977 as a restoration researcher. He became the CSRM Library Archivist in 1981, the Curator of Railroad Operations in 1985 and was named Director of the California State Railroad Museum on October 1, 1990. In April 1998 he left CSRM to become California State Archivist and Chief, Archives & Museum Division in the California Secretary of State's office in Sacramento. In 2004, he became Chief of the Archaeology, History, and Museums Division of California State Parks. Throughout his career, Mr. Gray was actively involved with promoting railroad history and preservation. He wrote articles, gave speeches and interviews, helped write scripts for (and appeared) on television programs and in videos expounding on railroads and railroad preservation. Mr. Gray joined the Sacramento Model Railroad Club in 1970 and served as its Secretary from 1971 to 1974 and President from 1976 to 1977. He belonged to numerous historical organizations including the Sacramento County Historical Society, the Knight Foundry Corporation, the California State Historical Records Advisory Board, and was an honorary founding member of the Los Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation. Mr. Gray died on May 8, 2007 at age 54.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection of documents related to the activities of Walter Patton Gray III, a well-known railroad historian, preservationist, and train buff includes texts and drafts of selected speeches and writings, correspondence, employment and membership rosters, reports, brochures, minutes, management practice guidelines, histories, sources and outlines of the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. They are arranged into two series: 1. SUBJECT FILES 2. WRITINGS
