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Aug. 24, 1983

Dear Todd,

Before starting this letter I read over our previous correspondence; not everything I said would happen, has!

But before recounting some events, some ideas about your photos/the CP book I'm working on. I've collected a number since writing you and took some this summer myself so that I know now better what is short, or lacking and which you may possibly have and be willing to let me consider for the book.

You mentioned several categories among the 8½ rolls of 35mm films you took, B&W. I like the "mood" shots category for one. Panorama shots are another especially if they are other than on the Grangeville line, which seems to be more completely covered. You also mentioned some prints in your collection, which I presume are by other photographers, and of steam. I'd be interested in some of these.

Aside from that some of action at Headquarters would be most desirable. They weren't operating up there this summer although I got some good shots at Jaype and along the river between Orofino and Lewiston. I didn't get to take any at Kooskia and took only one at Kamiah - so if any taken there showing the locale as well as action would be welcome.

For those in the above categories you're willing to let me look at, it's a matter of how to do it. I can go by contact proofs OK, but would you want to lend these to me? I see no need to go to the trouble and expense of anything further at this point, but rather wait until a final selection is made, then 5x7 or 8x10 prints would be in order. PFM can work from 5x7s perfectly all right.

I haven't tried to get color shots, but do have probably as many as PFM would put into a book. However, if you have any shots you think are quite unusual and excellent in color and would like to see them used, how about some dupes of these? Let me know what cost is involved and I'll send you a check.

Does all this sound OK to you?

Other bits of information:

Herb Banks is quite alive! I saw him last summer and got some of his photos to use. He has moved to Pasco as his wife is not well and the climate is better there and also close to relatives. Would you want his address?

I'm getting photos from Phil Hastings, though don't know which ones yet. These would be of steam days.

I've tried all kinds of ways to get a response from Hank Griffiths, including sending him a copy of my Kettle Valley book hoping this might get him to thinking about railroads again. All to no avail. I heard on good authority this summer that he has deteriorated to the point of being "just a vegetable" now. Sad too. He is such a marvellous photographer - the best I think of any CP shots I've seen. Sure wish I could get hold of some of his, but I guess that's only wishful thinking.

On the prints (above) in your "collection", Xerox copies would be quite adequate now.

Oh, one other category. If you have any of the NezPerce railroad I'd sure like to see them. I've tried 3 summers to get hold of Joe Lux but without success. Have also written and enclosed an SASE; no soap.

Last summer I rode Orofino/Headquarters on the hy-rail with Dennis Prewitt, then trainmaster. But took only super 8mm movies. Should have had the Nikon along, but didn't. This summer unknown to anyone back in the office, I rode cab and caboose up the Grangeville line and got what I hope are some good shots of the trestles, tunnels, scenery of my own. (Films are developed but I haven't yet made even contact proofs.)

I think the slant to the book will be influenced somewhat by Dick Steinheimer ("The Electric way Across the Mountains") in that there are personal bits through the writing. I've interviewed five of the old timers in Lewiston and have it all on tape. My interest in locos, origins, rosters and all doesn't extend as far as your's so the emphasis will be somewhat different from what you might write. But it will still be a coffee table book, of course, with mostly pictures. Probably less writing in proportion than in the Kettle Valley book, if you've seen it.

But none of this is gelled yet. I must get all the stuff together and then figure out how to go about it, though the general plan is in my head. The Kettle Valley was a good book and this will be something like that.

To me Camas Prairie may be fighting for its life. Trucks are taking more and more of the log business away; floating them down to the Dworshak dam then trucks from Orofino to Lewiston. 350 per day on that highway they project. So you and I (figuratively) are subsidizing their transportation by road taxes. And grain is somewhat the same situation. There's gossip about CP wanting to take over the line from Arrow up to Moscow since BN doesn't want that. But who knows! Oh the railroad will probably always be there, but locals don't seem to like the way things are going. Economizing by laying off people; much of the office work now going to Seattle (in BN's new huge office building) and Omaha and computers taking over. Dennis Prewitt is now Manager and Harwood was retired after discovery of the misuse of some funds. Popham was still around though on vacation when I was there. (People consider him a snake in the grass!)

That's enough gossip, Todd. Don't take it for fact as it is hearsay although it all may be true. At least don't spread it around as truth and from me!

I'm leaving for 3 weeks in Switzerland on Sept. 15th so won't be home to answer should you write then.

I hope all of the above is to your liking and that we can conclude some arrangement about your photos. They will make a fine addition to the book. (People in Lewiston speak of you as the person who was there several years ago and who did a magazine story.)

My best,

Handwritten notes:
John + Ann 8-12-83
re: photos of the railroad