

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

Out of the Archives

At the publication of last year's Spring Gazette, a new normal for the city and the world was ushered in as COVID-19 was officially declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. During the past year, SMA archivists have been working in a new and previously unimagined remote environment. Through our [virtual vault activities](#), [virtual tours](#), and [virtual presentations](#), we've worked to creatively find new ways to provide access and services while continuing to process collections and serve researchers remotely.

We're also thrilled that clips from SMA's video collections continue to be highlighted in the monthly (Virtual) Moving History archival video series, produced by our friends at MIPoPS and the Northwest Film Forum. Now streamed online and saved on the [NWFF Facebook Videos page](#), the screenings are available to be viewed online either in real time or enjoyed later.

February's screening honored Black History Month and featured clips including Chad Goller-



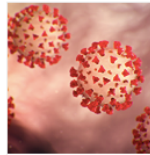
Sojourner reading his poetry, Ossie Davis delivering a keynote about Black labor history, and Seattle's own Sir Mix-A-Lot performing at Judkins Park in 1988 (the performance also was shared on [SMA's Instagram](#) and garnered over 1,500 views). See the full screening compilation at the [MIPoPS YouTube channel](#).

Since the pandemic began, departments across the city have pivoted to respond and provide services in new ways. Through the regular capture and archiving of city websites and social media accounts, actions such as public safety and health alerts, new service delivery methods, and other communications to the public are being preserved. More information about how to access, search, and view this content is available at our [Digital Archives](#) page.

 Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment ▶ Public Health - Seattle & King County

Mar 2, 2020 · 6

This is a great overview from Public Health - Seattle & King County including guidance of when and how to seek medical attention and best prevention methods (More Handwashing, Less Face Touching!)



What you should know about the first coronavirus cases in King County – PUBLIC HEALTH INSIDER

King County has its first cases of novel coronavirus, including one death. More cases have been identified in the U.S. Although the risk is increasing, there are ways to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus and decrease your risk of getting sick.

PUBLICHEALTHINSIDER.COM

An archived Facebook post from March 2, 2020.

New! Black History Month DDL

A new Digital Document Library on [Black History Month in Seattle](#) highlights how the month has been celebrated in Seattle since February 6-12, 1927, when "National Negro Week" was declared and sponsored by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (later the Association for the Study of African American History). Eventually, the week evolved both locally and nationally into Black History Month, which is now proclaimed annually by the Mayor and City Council.

The DDL includes a narrative describing past celebrations, as well as links to city legislation, scanned archived material, and related articles in local newspapers from the 1920s to the present. Accompanying the DDL is a [Virtual Collection](#) pulling together photos, videos, and other records from the archives.

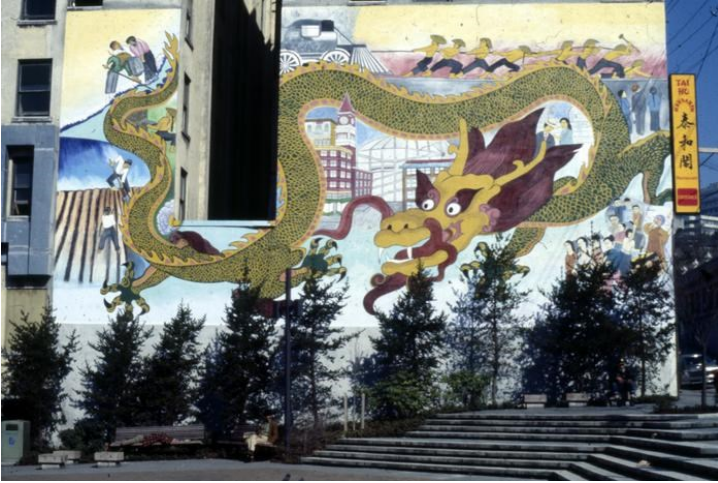


Black History Month kick-off event, February 1, 2002.

[Item 124218](#), Fleets and Facilities Department Image Bank Digital Photographs (Series 0207-01), SMA.

Recently Processed Photos

Newly digitized and available online are [photos](#) showing buildings, businesses, parks, and street scenes in the International District. Cataloged as part of the Historic Building Survey Photograph Collection (Series 1629-01), the bulk of the photos date from the 1970s to the 1980s.



Tai Ho Mandarin Restaurant, 1970s (estimated)
[Image 195634](#), Series 1629-01, SMA.



International District community bulletin board, 1976 (estimated).
[Image 195671](#), Series 1629-01, SMA.

Recently digitized [Water Department negatives](#) (Series 8200-13) show the newly installed International Fountain at the Seattle Center. Dating from March and early April 1962, the photos show the fountain's early operations before officially opening with the rest of the Seattle Center grounds at the Seattle World's Fair on April 21, 1962.

International Fountain, adjusting nozzles, March 12, 1962.
[Image 195611](#), Series 8200-13, SMA.



(Photos, cont.)

International Fountain architects Hideki Shimizu, Kazuyuki Matsushita and John Phillips, and World's Fair primary architect Paul Thiry (left), April 12, 1962.
[Image 195653](#), Series 8200-13, SMA.



New! MLK Jr Day Virtual Collection

Featuring scanned photos, video, and textual documents, a [new virtual collection](#) available on SMA's Digital Collections site highlights how Martin Luther King, Jr. Day has been celebrated by the City of Seattle over the years.

Soon after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, the campaign for a federal holiday in his honor began. On January 8, 1971, both Washington State Governor Dan Evans and Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman signed proclamations declaring the City and state would honor him on January 15, 1971. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law, and it was first officially celebrated nationally in 1986. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

The Seattle City Council City Operation Committee held a public hearing on September 7, 1984 to discuss [Ordinance 111890](#) (introduced as Council Bill 104430) "declaring Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a City holiday and amending the Seattle Municipal Code accordingly." The bill passed unanimously and was signed into law by Mayor Charles Royer on September 17, 1984.

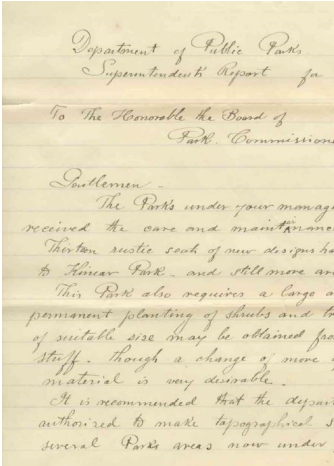


Mayor Uhlman signs Martin Luther King Jr. Day Proclamation, January 8, 1971.
[Image 195661](#), Engineering Department Negatives (Series 2613-07), SMA.

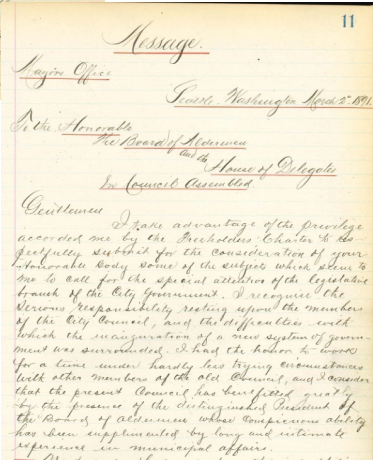
Transcription Project Update

SMA's crowdsourcing transcription project continues to grow, with new content added monthly. Records available for transcription include petitions and letters, departmental reports, and council minutes.

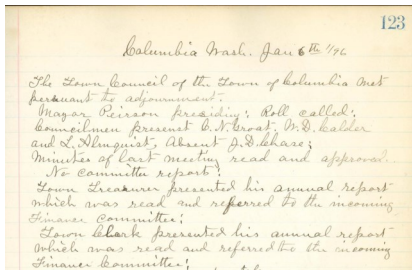
One of our regular volunteer transcribers, Stevie, was kind enough to share with us some of her favorite transcription discoveries. We thought we'd share just a few of them here, too, in her own words!



"The Parks Commission collecting plant specimens was great! I had no idea that they traded with the private citizens, and then led expeditions to the peninsula to find plants to nurture in the parks here. And getting to trade with the botanical gardens back east and in France and England too." Department of Parks and Recreation Monthly Reports, Series 5802-12.



"Mayor Harry White's chiding analysis of the new city government vs the Common Council government under the Territorial Rules was very insightful. He had some very cutting remarks about the sloppy ways the City negotiated bad deals made to rail franchises and water companies. Also, he explained bonding and indebtedness in a way that made sense to me, and I hope, the new Councilmen and delegates!" Harry White Mayor's Messages, Series 5295-01.



Regarding Columbia City Council Minutes: "It was an interesting thing to see them at the very beginning of a town, putting together the first ordinances, and figuring out how to tax the dogs in town. I keep thinking of how much Columbia is going to change when the lake is raised." Columbia City Council Minutes, Series 9112-01.

"The over the top letterheads are so beautiful." General File 990147, Series 1802-04.



"I like learning through indirect evidence," Stevie says. Transcribing original documents opens a window into history and provides a unique way to learn from and engage with original documents. Try your hand at transcribing City of Seattle records [here!](#)

67 Years Ago: Attempts to Integrate SFD

In 1954, Willie Richey applied to become the first Black firefighter in the Seattle Fire Department. He took the physical and mental examinations and passed both with high scores. His final hurdle to be hired was an oral interview, but the examiners voted 2-1 not to qualify him for employment. He appealed this decision to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) but the appeal was denied.

Mayor Pomeroy had previously appointed a [Mayor's Committee on Minority Employment](#) to look into current City employment statistics and hiring practices, and to make recommendations for bringing more non-white citizens into the municipal workforce. The committee looked into the Richey case and felt that his perceived failure in the oral interview "might be due to discrimination," and pointed out that his case "arose in the context of a department which had never employed a non-white." They met with the CSC and asked that Richey's case be reconsidered with that background in mind, but the CSC denied the request.

Philip Burton of Seattle's NAACP, acting as attorney for Richey, wrote to the CSC to again request a reconsideration, pointing out that despite state, municipal, and departmental policies against discrimination, "there is not now, nor has there ever been a Negro fireman in the City of Seattle." The CSC again denied the request, stating that "no new facts or evidence were presented" to justify reopening the case. This led the Seattle branch of the NAACP to charge the CSC with "a serious lack of understanding and sensitivity concerning the problem of Negro employment in municipal jobs... They have succeeded in perpetuating a 'white-only' Fire Department, and discouraging other Negro applicants from even trying to get employment."



Seattle Fire Department Ladder 3 B shift, 1938 (estimated). [Item 195490](#), Series 9995-01, SMA.

The Mayor's Committee felt the episode showed that the CSC "has displayed a lack of understanding of the problems confronting non-whites who seek employment in the Fire Department, thus perpetuating a racially exclusive condition." It found that while the Fire Chief said he desired a racially integrated workforce, the department "has not assumed affirmative responsibility" to achieve that goal. It also pointed out that cases like Richey's contributed to a widespread belief that "qualified non-whites will not be hired as firemen" and therefore discouraged others to apply.

It was not until 1959 that the department hired Claude Harris as its first Black firefighter. Harris became Fire Chief in 1985 and served in that role until 1997.

Read this and other Find of the Months [here.](#)

YouTube and Flickr News

A popular image recently posted to [SMA's Flickr](#) site is this photo of craft vendors and shoppers at Pike Place Market during the 1970s.



[Image 192721](#), Series 1629-01, SMA.

With over 10,250 views (and counting), one of the most popular videos available to view on SMA's YouTube channel is black and white silent footage of street scenes taken by the Seattle Department of Streets and Sewers during the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to views of bridges, the footage also shows street cleaners and dump trucks busy at work.



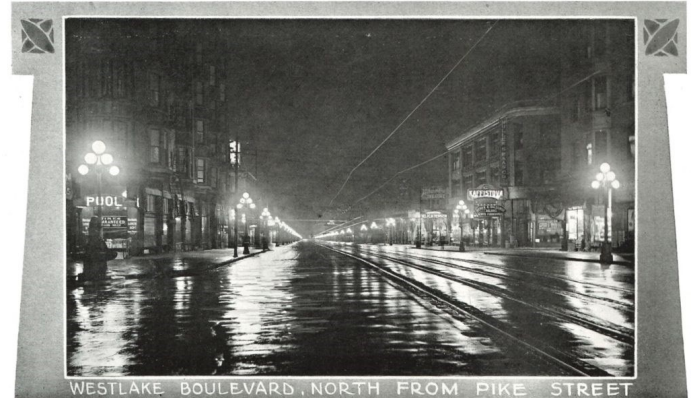
Seattle bridge footage, circa 1920-1930..
[Item 453](#), Record Series 3902-01, SMA.

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SMA in the News

The February 2021 NWPPA Bulletin cover story, written by Seattle City Light's Nathan MacDonald, is about globe lighting replacement in the Pioneer Square Historical District and was informed by MacDonald's research in the archives. Images from SMA's Lighting Department Annual Reports illustrate the article. Read all about it at SCL's [Powerlines blog](#).



Globe Lights on Westlake Boulevard North from Pike Street
Lighting Department Annual Report, 1911, SMA.

31 Years Ago: Office For Women's Rights



Mayor Norm Rice poses with the Office for Women's Rights in 1990.
[Image 186934](#), Series 8401-01, SMA.

Upcoming Events

[Virtual Moving History](#), Sundays, 4:30-5:30 PDT.

Twice-monthly archival video screening documenting a diverse history in Seattle, presented by MIPoPS in partnership with the Northwest Film Forum. Upcoming: April 11, 25; May 9, 23; June 13, 27.

[MOHA! History Café](#) (virtual, 6:30pm PST)

April 21: Filipino American Labor Activism in the Fields and Canneries
May 19: How Railroads Brought a Checkerboard Landscape to the Northwest
June 16: Revisiting Initiative 13 and LGBT Activism in the 70s