

# ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle  
Seattle Municipal Archives

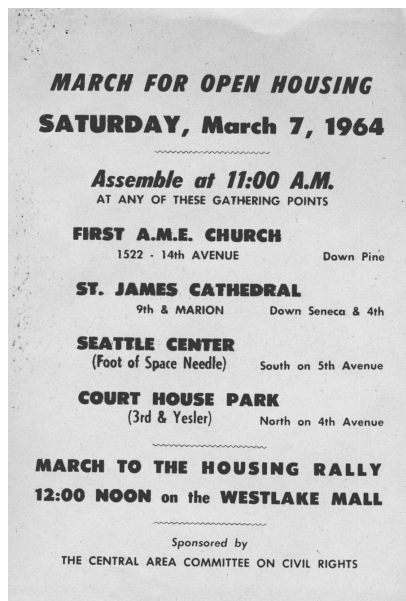
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Office of the City Clerk  
Legislative Department

## The Seattle Open Housing Campaign: 1959-1968

The story of open housing legislation in Seattle is told through documents and photographs in a new Seattle Municipal Archives outreach effort. The passage of a City ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing was a long struggle. The Seattle Municipal Archives is providing three different venues for depicting the events of this struggle.

The first venue is an addition to the Digital Document Library which can be found at: <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/doclibrary/OHousing/index.shtml>. The site includes digital copies of documents from the Archives as well as photographs from a variety of sources, including the Museum of History and Industry's Post-Intelligencer Collection and the Seattle Times. It is a resource for students and teachers to use in the study of civil rights in the 1960s in Seattle.



The second venue is an exhibit, which will appear both online and in hard copy. The exhibit will tell the story of open housing legislation using some of the same documents and photographs in the Digital Document Library. It will open at the Association of African American Historic Research and Preservation Conference on February 3, 2007 at Seattle University. The exhibit will appear at City Hall and will travel to several other locations around the City.

The Archives will also sponsor two events associated with the open housing exhibit. The Reverend Samuel McKinney will speak on February 13, 2007, about the fight for fair housing legislation. The leader of one of the oldest and most prominent black churches in Seattle, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, McKinney was a key participant in the struggle for open housing legislation in the 1960s. At the invitation of Councilmember Richard McIver, McKinney will speak at noon on February 13 in the Bertha Knight Landes Room at City Hall.



CORE-sponsored demonstration at Picture Plans, Inc., May 2, 1964.

"Human Rights 1964," Box 28. Office of the Mayor Records, 5210-01. Seattle Municipal Archives.

March for Open Housing flyer, March 7, 1964.

Folder "Human Rights 1964," Box 28. Seattle Office of the Mayor Records, 5210-01. Seattle Municipal Archives.

A second event commemorating Fair Housing Month will take place on April 12 and is co-sponsored by the Human Services Department, Race and Social Justice Change Team. Professor Quintard Taylor of the University of Washington will speak on housing and segregation in Seattle from the 1940s to the 1960s. This event will also be at noon in the Bertha Knight Landes Room at City Hall.

February 13, 2007  
Rev. Samuel McKinney  
12 noon, Bertha Knight Landes Room  
Seattle City Hall  
Seattle's Fair Housing Legislation

April 12, 2007  
Professor Quintard Taylor  
12 noon, Bertha Knight Landes Room  
Seattle City Hall  
Fair Housing in Seattle

## Recently Processed

Office of Urban Conservation Records (Record Series 5754) 27.4 cubic feet, 1942-1997 (bulk dates 1971-1997)

The Seattle Municipal Archives has recently processed a collection of records from the city's Office of Urban Conservation, now called the Historic Preservation Program. The OUC was created in 1975 in an era of citizen protests against a proposed urban renewal program that would have demolished Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market. The office's mandate was to coordinate Seattle's historic preservation programs and administer the city's landmark boards and historic districts.

The collection (record series 5754) includes the records of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board, as well as the boards overseeing the various landmark districts in the city. Minutes show the work of the boards in considering landmarks and approving architectural modifications and changes of use. There are also extensive subject files showing how larger projects such as downtown development and freeway access impacted historic neighborhoods. Some topics covered include Fort Lawton, landmarking religious properties, Union Station, METRO transit bases and shelters, the waterfront streetcar, transients and human services, and the Kingdome.

## One Hundred Years Ago

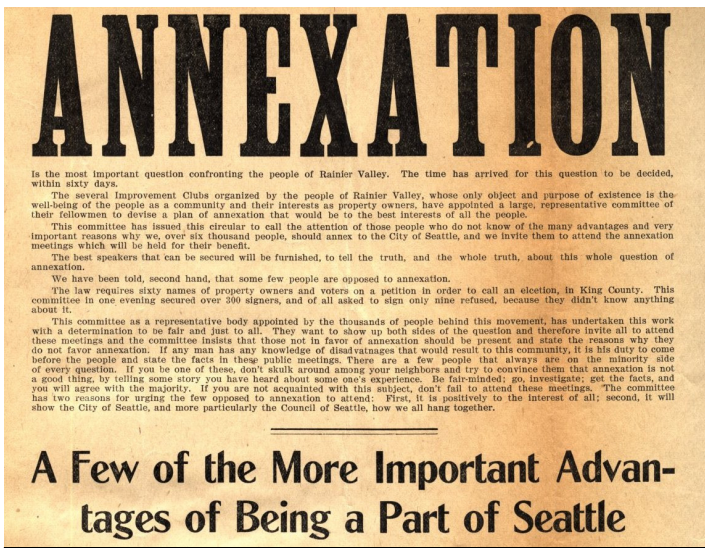
Between 1905 and 1910, eight small towns were annexed to the City of Seattle, nearly doubling the physical area of the City.

Six of the towns-Ballard, Columbia, Ravenna, Southeast Seattle, South Park, and West Seattle-were annexed 100 years ago, in 1907. At least two of these, Ravenna and Southeast Seattle, appear to have incorporated as towns specifically for the purpose of petitioning Seattle for annexation. Other towns, such as West Seattle, Ballard, and Columbia, had their own character and community before becoming part of the City of Seattle. Some of those towns became part of Seattle enthusiastically, and others reluctantly.

The most common method of annexation was a petition describing the area to be annexed, which had to be contiguous to the City. The petition had to contain valid signatures of at least 20% of the electors who had voted in the last general election in the area, and include a request that an election be held. If the Council approved the election, the county checked the validity of the signatures, and an election was held. After the vote, the Seattle City Council could accept or reject the annexation, although no vote for annexation was ever refused.

While each town had its own reasons for petitioning for annexation, some common themes emerge. Many had difficulties in securing a

safe and ample water supply for their populations, and other utilities like sewers and electricity also caused difficulties for the town councils. It was difficult to keep up with street improvements for their growing populations, and some towns found themselves with growing debt. The towns ended up deciding it was in their best interest to ask that their problems-and their resources-become part of the City of Seattle.



**ANNEXATION**

is the most important question confronting the people of Rainier Valley. The time has arrived for this question to be decided, within sixty days.

The several Improvement Clubs organized by the people of Rainier Valley, whose only object and purpose of existence is the well-being of the people as a community and their interests as property owners, have appointed a large, representative committee of their fellowmen to devise a plan of annexation that would be to the best interests of all the people.

This committee has issued this circular to call the attention of those people who do not know of the many advantages and very important reasons why we, over six thousand people, should annex to the City of Seattle, and we invite them to attend the annexation meetings which will be held for their benefit.

The best speakers that can be secured will be furnished, to tell the truth, and the whole truth, about this whole question of annexation.

We have been told, second hand, that some few people are opposed to annexation.

The law requires sixty names of property owners and voters on a petition in order to call an election, in King County. This committee in one evening secured over 300 signers, and of all asked to sign only nine refused, because they didn't know anything about it.

This committee as a representative body appointed by the thousands of people behind this movement, has undertaken this work with a determination to be fair and just to all. They want to show up both sides of the question and therefore invite all to attend these meetings and the committee insists that those not in favor of annexation should be present and state the reasons why they do not favor annexation. If any man has any knowledge of disadvantages that would result to this community, it is his duty to come before the people and state the facts in these public meetings. There are a few people that always are on the minority side of every question. If you be one of these, don't skulk around among your neighbors and try to convince them that annexation is not a good thing, by telling some story you have heard about some one's experience. Be fair-minded; go, investigate; get the facts, and you will agree with the majority. If you are not acquainted with this subject, don't fail to attend these meetings. The committee has two reasons for urging the few opposed to annexation to attend: First, it is positively to the interest of all; second, it will show the City of Seattle, and more particularly the Council of Seattle, how we all hang together.

### A Few of the More Important Advantages of Being a Part of Seattle

Poster for annexation meeting in Rainier Valley from 1906. Some of the advantages of being part of Seattle were cited as: free street lights, free mail delivery, free fire protection, free health board and sanitary protection and more schools and teachers.

*Southeast Seattle Minutes, 9178-01, Seattle Municipal Archives*

## Recently Cataloged Photographs



The hole in Ravenna Boulevard, November 12, 1957. The hole was caused by a break in the Ravenna Trunk Sewer. It disabled a brick sewer tunnel constructed in 1907-1910, 145 feet underground. Ten families were evacuated because of the danger of the hole engulfing them. Item 56003 Seattle Municipal Archives

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