

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Message from the City Archivist

In the Winter 2010 edition of the *Gazette*, we announced the creation of new online exhibit space, "Seattle Voices," a series of evocative audio clips from public hearings and City Council meetings from 1963 to 1977. They cover a range of challenging issues in our past – civil rights, freeway-caused residential displacement, the struggle for acceptance of women in the ranks of Seattle firefighters. The clips include a wide range of activists, politicians, and citizens: Wing Luke, Jeanette Williams, Rev. Samuel McKinney, Roberto Maestas, Larry Gossett and many others.

Technology allows us to make these voices available online. But the notion of "voices" in the Archives predates modern technology. Archivists and users of archives have long heard these voices. (Deputy City Archivist Anne Frantilla gave a wonderful presentation on this topic at the 2001 Northwest Archivists meeting: "Sources in Municipal Archives: Whose Voices do you hear?")

Early in my career, while working at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, I processed a large collection of personal papers of Rabbi Barnett Brickner, a figure of national prominence in the American Jewish community. I got to know him well, and to like him a great deal, through his sermons and lectures, his involvement in local and national organizations, his correspondence with friends and colleagues, and his progressive political activities. The last box of his papers that I processed was accumulated by his family; the material documented his tragic death in an auto accident in Spain in 1958 at the age of 65. I was stunned by my feelings reading the newspaper accounts and letters of condolence to the family. I found myself grieving for the loss of my new friend...a quarter century after his death.

A couple of years ago I put together a presentation about "treasures" in the Municipal Archives. It included a 1941 letter to the Mayor and City Council from local Japanese-American leader Jimmie Sakamoto who successfully argued for the right of local Asian-Americans to swim in public pools. Eight months later, Sakamoto was sent to the internment camps. Sakamoto's voice spoke of American ideals; the voice of Presidential Executive Order 9066 spoke of intolerance and fear.

These examples are resonant voices in the archives; voices that are heard through reading. The Seattle Voices exhibit is auditory; it gives the listener a chance to really hear the voices. Listening to past City Council meetings and hearings may not immediately seem like a pleasant (nor particularly emotion-rendering) way to spend an afternoon. However, if one listens with an ear to history, social ferment, and political accountability, the power of voices in governance is manifest. Listen to the stingingly humorous, but utterly serious, Roberto Maestas chide City Council regarding public safety concerns. Listen to Jeanette Williams' interchange with Wayne Larkin over women's rights. Listen to the Rev. John Adams' resounding lecture on moral responsibility.

City records document governance and municipal works. They are not all as compelling and evocative as the examples I've given. In Seattle, we like to complain about "process," of what sometimes seems like the painfully slow churning of decision making. Nevertheless, the act of governing and the interaction of citizens with their elected leaders and officials is the hallmark of our civic culture. What greater powerful voice can there be than the democratic process?

--Scott Cline, City Archivist

New "Century 21" Bibliography!

A [bibliography](#) of primary sources on Century 21 is new on the SMA website. If you are interested in researching the 1962

World's Fair, make sure to check out this list. It is on the Teaching and Learning page of the SMA website, along with other bibliographies on open housing, women in the Seattle Fire Department, and more.

Seattle City Light Advertisement about undergrounding power wires. *Seattle City Light Advertising Scrapbooks, Vol. III, Record Series 1201-03, Seattle Municipal Archives*



What's New in Photos

Additional Forward Thrust Photographs (Record Series 5804-04) are available online thanks to the scanning work of SMA intern Ellie Letterman. So far, 275 color slides have been added to the Photo Index, representing 25% of the collection. These colorful and scenic slides cover many of Seattle's parks and recreation centers. Highlights include Golden Gardens, Jim Ellis Freeway Park, and several fire stations. More than 40 of the images are aerials showing sweeping views of Seattle from above.

When Forward Thrust was put to the voters in 1968, it was the largest bond issue ever passed in the US at the time. Jim Ellis Freeway Park is named for the Forward Thrust Committee founder James R. Ellis.

Included in the Forward Thrust Photographs are aerial shots of the future Myrtle Edwards Park. The view at left includes Seattle Center and Lake Union and was taken about 1970 (Item 77715).



Also new in the Photo Index are recent images of the NE 45th Street Viaduct replacement project. See Record

Series 8101-10 in the Photo Index for pre-construction, construction, and the opening day celebration of the new viaduct in 2010, as well as images of the West Galer Flyover Project and 14th Ave S. Street Improvements.

The Seattle City Light Millennium Bridge Lighting Project photographs, 1999-2000 are also now online (Record Series 1206-16).



Jose Rizal Bridge (12th Avenue S.) on Beacon Hill with downtown skyline in background.

Seattle City Light Millennium Bridge Lighting Photographs, Item 126836, Seattle Municipal Archives

Many new digital submissions from the Fleets and Facilities Department are also online, including fire station construction and building maintenance.

Also new online are 59 images of the 1962 World's Fair, or Century 21, taken by citizen Jim Skinner in April 1962. In addition to general images of the Fair, images of the Ice Follies performance are included.



International Fountain at night, April 1962
Item 77820, Seattle Municipal Archives



International exhibits at Century 21, April 1962
Item 77821, Seattle Municipal Archives

Newly Processed Collections

Among the recently processed collections at SMA are a large number of series from the Department of Neighborhoods. Many of these have to do with the neighborhood planning process that took place in the 1990s. The Neighborhood Planning Office (NPO) Director's Records (Record Series 5760-01) document the office's interactions with other city departments during the planning process on topics including transportation, parks, and utilities, and also highlights issues surrounding the public involvement process. The Neighborhood

Newly Processed (cont.)

Planning Project Records (Record Series 5762-02) show the work of NPO staff who worked directly with citizen groups to create the plans.

Another set of records documents the variety of projects completed under the city's Neighborhood Matching Fund program. Project records include those for large grants awarded for



Bradner Gardens Park, Matching Fund site, May 24, 2000
Item 101954, Seattle Municipal Archives

parcs, gardens, commemorative structures, and other products (Record Series 5756-02). Other series document smaller grant programs targeted toward specific goals such as tree planting (Record Series 5756-04), school beautification (Record Series 5756-05), and youth anti-violence projects (Record Series 5756-07).

Several neighborhood service centers were closed earlier this year, and our colleagues in the City Records Management Program assisted the centers' staff in cleaning out their records and sending those with historical value to the archives. Records processed include those from the Downtown (Record Series 5752-04), Fremont (Record Series 5752-05), Greenwood (Record Series 5752-06), Capitol Hill (Record Series 5752-09), and Central Area (Record Series 5752-09) service centers. The records reflect interactions with community councils and highlight issues and concerns in the neighborhoods.

Other records document a project to revitalize the 12th Avenue area near Seattle University (Record Series 5757-04), issues surrounding the creation of an African-American Museum (Record Series 5751-05), and the work of the director of the Citizens Service Bureau (Record Series 5752-03).

50 Years Ago: Height Variance

On March 24, 1961, representatives of John Graham & Company and the Century 21 Exposition requested a height variance for the Space Needle from the City's Board of Adjustment. The Board stated it did not have jurisdiction to make "such a substantial variance from the existing code" and granted a variance for the period of the Century 21 Exposition. Exposition representative Harry Henke III wrote to the Mayor and Council on March 27, 1961, in an appeal and stated that assurance of a permanent height variance was needed and "the temporary Century 21 duration variance will actually be of no use."



Space Needle construction, 1961
Item 77335, Seattle Municipal Archives

The Public Safety Committee had a public hearing on the appeal on April 5, 1961, and recommended the appeal be sustained, thereby granting the height variance.

(Comptroller/Clerk Files 242202 and 242207)

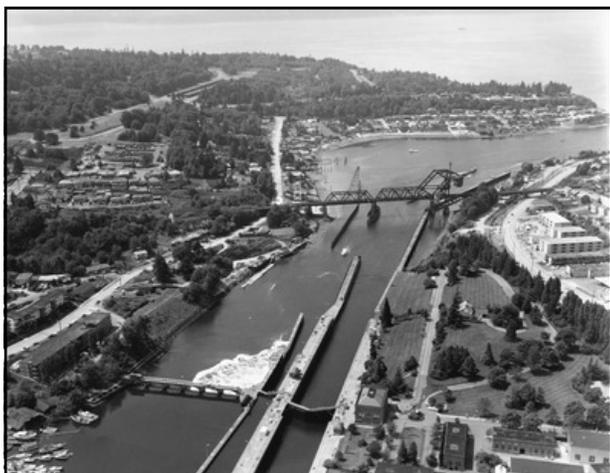
Flickr News

Commenters continue to add information and context to images we post on our Flickr site. A 1963 aerial photo of the Hiram Chittenden Locks in Ballard elicited a comment about the tree growth in Discovery Park since the photo was taken, along with a reminiscence about gathering with other train watchers to see the afternoon Empire Builder go by.

4 Kudos to our Volunteers and Interns!

The Municipal Archives is pleased to have Ellie Letterman working with us, fulfilling her internship requirements for Western Washington University. She is involved in a variety of activities, including processing textual records, records management, and work with photographs. Alyssa Enders, an undergraduate from Seattle Pacific University, also completed an internship at the Archives, completing several processing projects and finding aids during her time with at SMA. Finished with her undergraduate work in March this year, we wish her the best of luck as she moves on to graduate school.

The Archives is lucky to have a good number of volunteers working on cataloging published documents, processing textual records, and scanning photographs. Current volunteers include: Lauren Woody, Jonathan King, Kay Calkins, and Megan O'Shea. Current MLIS student Morgan Bell is also volunteering at SMA, scanning City Light glass lantern slides. We are very grateful for their many talents.



Aerial of Chittendon Locks, April 1963
Item 77635, *Seattle Municipal Archives*

A photo documenting a snowplow at work in 1923 had no information attached identifying the location. After one commenter theorized that it may have been taken on First Hill or Capitol Hill, another recognized a building in the background and determined that the photo was taken on Highland Drive in Queen Anne.



Removing snow on Seattle streets after February 14, 1943 snowstorm
Item 12992, *Seattle Municipal Archives*

Commenters added a great deal of information to a 1959 aerial photo of northeast Seattle, pointing out the locations of Dahl Field, Nathan Eckstein Junior High, and the Maple Leaf Reservoir. They also explained the name change from Bothell Way to Lake City Way, and noted the remaining farmland in the photo.

Check us out on [Flickr](#) and add your own knowledge and memories!

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/>

Did you know...

The Seattle Municipal Archives has almost 140,000 photographs, both scanned negatives and born digital, available online for searching and downloading?

Total images available online = 139,711
Number of scanned historic images = 76, 957
Historic images with high res scans = 3,189
Number of born digital images = 62,753

One of the most popular images on the Seattle Municipal Archives Flickr site for January through March 2011 was of Third Avenue looking south from Marion Street in 1907. Horse drawn carts, planks over ditches - take a look at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/5148900715/>

Upcoming Events

ACKHO Meeting April 26, 2011 7:00-8:30 pm
Awards Ceremony with reception 5:30-7:00 PM
MOHAI, 2700 24th Ave E, Seattle

Seattle Area Archivists Preservation Road Show
May 14, 2011 10 am—2 pm
NARA 6125 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

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