

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Message from the City Archivist

The Japanese American Redress Movement of the 1970s and reparations in the 1980s and 1990s for wartime internment is an example of historical accountability built in part on a foundation of access to public records. Historian and former archivist Jim O'Toole has shown that "there is no shortage of cases to illustrate the need for and the processes of historical accountability." (See "Archives and Historical Accountability: Toward a Moral Theology of Archives," *Archivaria* 58, Fall 2004, 3-19).

As a government archivist for over 26 years, I am intimately aware of the accountability question. In this part of our work, records can be used in defending human rights, upholding property and other legal rights, holding government officials financially and politically accountable to citizens, the redress of wrongs, and the search for truth and reconciliation.

Certainly, our work at the Seattle Municipal Archives is also about supporting the business functions of the City of Seattle and providing information to citizens who want to know the history of their neighborhood or local park and supplying records that will help students complete course projects. But a critical motivation for our work must be accountability. Accountability is one of the major building blocks for what our work is really about: **justice**.

Most of the literature on archives and justice addresses the righting of grievous wrongs: the Japanese internment, apartheid, East German Stasi domestic surveillance, the Tuskegee Airmen syphilis case, and many, many more. These are important subjects in which the archival record plays a critical role. Redress, reconciliation, and the establishment of truth lead us toward justice, imperfect though it may be. But justice goes beyond these big issue questions.

In a recent conference presentation I argued that a healthy society is built on a foundation of responsible citizenship that fosters what Aristotle termed *the good life* for all. The good life can be

achieved only when we balance our understanding of individual and collective rights with our duties and obligations to one another and society. Justice occurs when we reason together, cultivate civic virtue, and create a public culture that embraces difference and moral disagreement.

The information, evidence, and knowledge that archivists manage provide tools to our citizens to engage one another in civic discussion of issues such as civility laws, land use disputes, police-community relations, and myriad other topics. Our records uncover silenced history that opens new vistas of conversation. Our educational outreach programs take these records to students and the general community, providing opportunity for learning, debate, and civic engagement.

Archives can support the restoration of justice long after injustices of the past; archives also support justice as a way of life. I don't think there is a higher calling than that.



Cherry Hill
Urban
Renewal,
March 28,
1961

Item 59415,
Seattle
Municipal
Archives

The Cherry Hill Urban Renewal Project, also known as Conservation Project No. 1, was Seattle's first urban renewal project and is one of several documented in the Seattle Municipal Archives. It covered nearly 63 acres and was bounded by E. Cherry and Yesler Streets and 17th and 23rd Avenues.

Recently Indexed Photographs

These recently cataloged and indexed photographs are from the Seattle City Light Color Negatives, a collection of several thousand color photographs taken from the 1960's to the mid-1990's. The collection includes many City Light facilities, promotions, and general city images used in various publications.



Downtown Skyline and I-5, 1968
Item 75974, Seattle Municipal Archives



Georgetown Steam Plant, September 1970
Item 75964, Seattle Municipal Archives



Seattle City Light Seafair Parade Float, August 6, 1964
Crop of Item 75975, Seattle Municipal Archives



Aerial of Seattle Waterfront, circa 1960
Item 75970, Seattle Municipal Archives

69 Years Ago — Test Blackout Night

On March 7, 1941, a test blackout was held from 10:30 to 10:55 pm. Police stopped all traffic and citizens turned off lights in their homes. Street lighting was off at 10:40. Except for two shipbuilding companies and 52 lights left on in defiance of the blackout, the city was dark. In a report on the blackout in Seattle Fire Department Central Files (2801-03), Chris Gilson described the event's publicity. When plans got underway, he wrote, "many persons in Seattle were indifferent toward the adventure. And a number actually opposed the affair on the ground that it would create a needless war hysteria." The report includes a map of air raid warden districts.

The blackout event originated with Councilman John E. Carroll and was carried out by the Home Defense Committee, with each City department having a specific responsibility.

**Proclamation of Rules and Regulations for
TEST BLACKOUT NIGHT
MARCH 7, 1941 10:40 P. M.**

By virtue of the authority vested in me by Sections 2 and 3 of Article V of the City Charter, and Ordinance No. 70615, an emergency is hereby declared to exist during the period of a trial blackout in ten minutes. This is a measure in the interest of preparation for the National Defense, and the cooperation of all citizens of Seattle in connection therewith is requested. The following rules and regulations for such trial blackout are hereby proclaimed:

Blackout warnings will be given promptly at 10:30 o'clock p. m., March 7, 1941. Within not more than ten minutes thereafter all citizens shall comply with the following regulations:

When the Test Blackout Warning Is Given

For your own safety and to avoid confusion, stay at home or indoors elsewhere. Wherever you are, individually turn out all lights visible from the outside, but DO NOT turn off main switches.

If You Are at Home, in a Hotel Room or Apartment

1. Turn out all external lights.
2. See that no lighting in your house is visible from the outside.
3. If you cannot obscure your windows with dark materials turn off your lights, but do not use the main switch.
4. Listen in on your radio for the happenings all over town.
5. Managements of hotels and apartment houses are responsible for exterior lighting.

If Driving Your Car or Motor Vehicle

1. Immediately pull over to the curb or roadside and turn off your lights and motor.
2. Do not try to drive on with your lights out.
3. Do not park in front of fire exit, fire plug, hospital entrance or at a street intersection.
4. Do not block center of street as fire engines and police cars may have to answer emergency calls.

If you must be away from your premises, do not leave any light visible from the outside.

Stores, Manufacturing Companies, and Industrial Plants

1. Have someone on duty during the blackout.
2. Be sure all external lights are out, including neon signs.
3. See that internal lights are not visible from the outside.
4. Your presence on the premises will aid materially in protecting your property making our test a success.

If Unavoidably Outdoors

1. Remain on sidewalk—do not cross street.
2. Do not smoke or expose any light.

Main Switches

will not be turned off—it is up to you individually to make this test a success.

Important

Do not forget your skylight if you have one.

All male citizens of the city, over the age of eighteen years, are hereby called upon to aid in enforcing these rules and regulations, by reporting violations to the Police Department, and if especially call for assistance in this connection to the local chapter of the American Legion, the American Red Cross, King County National Defense Council, local Posts of the American Legion and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other national and local organizations, to report to the Police Department any violation thereof.

Ordinance No. 70615 makes it unlawful to willfully refuse or neglect to obey these rules and regulations, but it should not be necessary to enforce the same by legal process. The spirit of patriotism and cooperation, which I feel is present in all the citizens of Seattle, should be sufficient to make this trial blackout a successful test. Be assured that this is not a needless gesture but a practical test of your response to a possible situation of extreme gravity. You are requested to prepare for this test on the night of March 7, 1941. Check the means of turning off all of your lights visible from the outside before that date.

Promptly at 10:30 p. m. whistles will indicate the "alert" signal for the start of the test blackout. All traffic shall stop at once. Within ten minutes all exposed lights of any nature shall be effectively shielded or turned off. At 10:40 p. m. the city street lights and the fifteen-minute blackout period will begin. At the end of the fifteen minutes the street lights will be turned on again, indicating the completion of our test blackout. Listen for the whistle which will be the warning signal.

DATED at Seattle, Washington, this 14th day of February, 1941.

JOHN E. CARROLL, Mayor.

Newly Processed Collections

Several collections were recently processed, including Greg Nickels Mayoral Records and several series from the Department of Human Services.

Records from the first six years of the mayoral administration of Greg Nickels (64.8 cubic feet) are now available for use in our research room. Dating from 2002-2007, the largest portion of the records consists of subject correspondence, which is arranged by year and then grouped by City function (for example, transportation, public safety, economic development, parks, human services, and so on). Major topics covered include environmental issues, the Alaskan Way Viaduct, public utilities, civil rights, neighborhood issues, and Seattle Public Schools.

Another series of records consists of weekly reports from executive department directors. These reports highlight issues needing attention and document progress on departmental projects and goals. Mayoral proclamations make up the final series, and include the proclamation along with information about the honoree or the event being celebrated. Records from 2008 and 2009 will come to the archives and be added to these series as their legal retention periods expire.

The following record series are all from the Department of Human Services:

The **Neighborhood Planning Records** date from 1997 to 2003 and relate to planning efforts by the Human Services Department. Topics include planning for the areas of Link Light Rail stations and cluster meetings on community development and human services. Also included are project files containing memoranda, emails, draft documents and other material from the City's Neighborhood Planning Review and Response Team concerning planning policies and recommendations for individual neighborhoods. (Record Series 3601-01, 1.2 cubic feet)

The **Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Office Records** document an agency that was founded in 1995 to direct the City's response to domestic violence and sexual assault. Records include a timeline of the Office, tracing its history from its origins to 2004; records of the Domestic Violence Council and Domestic Violence Task Force; scripts, correspondence and booking information regarding a play, "Lisa loves Charlie, OK?" which was performed by the Municipal Light and Theater Company to heighten awareness about domestic violence; and subject files. (Record Series 3605-01, 0.8 cubic foot)

Join Mayor Norm Rice and Police Chief Norm Stamper on Thursday, May 11, 1995 from 11:30 - 1:30 pm, in the Arctic Building Dome Room

Top off your lunch with a sweet dessert at an educational event for City employees about Domestic Violence featuring...

Lily Loves Charlie, OK?

Shirley Williams as Lily, Todd Rice-Stanton as Charlie, Shelia Kropp as Lisa, Kathy Heston as Victoria Lily, Doug Scholz-Caston, Mel Anthony, Catherine Olegent

A live, original theater production created by a cast of professional local actors and Director Susan Floss, in collaboration with agencies and individuals who are involved with domestic violence issues. ASL interpreters/actors will provide sign language translation.

and also featuring...

- Classical music performed by The Brian Nova Trio
- A raffle for a handmade quilt made by "Gulls from the Heart," a weekend getaway to an Oregon Coast resort, and a restaurant evening by local artist Betty Kirkald
- Information and resource booths
- An event honoring people and agencies who have been at the forefront on domestic violence issues

Records of the director and staff of the **Division on Aging** date from 1974 to 1994 and include correspondence, subject files, reports, and audits. Subjects include allocation of resources to providers of senior services. Other issues affecting seniors, including adult day care, long-term care, health care and senior employment are also documented. The series also contains records concerning local preparations for the 1981 White House Conference On Aging, including a series of community forums throughout King County. (Record Series 3611-01, 4.6 cubic feet)

SMA's 25th Anniversary Celebration

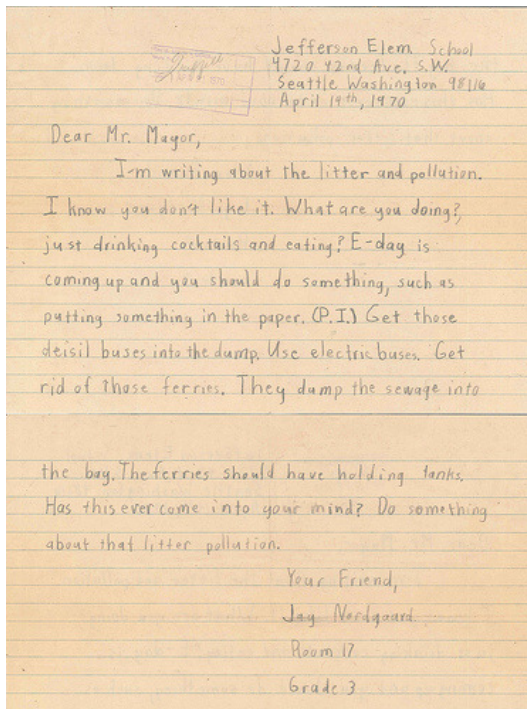
The Archives successfully celebrated its 25th anniversary in March with two public presentations and two cakes! City Archivist Scott Cline



(pictured here) spoke on March 16 about "Treasures in the Seattle Municipal Archives" and again on March 23 on Seattle's Great Fire.

Flickr News

In addition to photographs, SMA also posts ephemera and other non-photographic materials to the Archives' Flickr site. For example, on Earth Day we posted a letter from the first celebration in 1970. It was written by a West Seattle third grader to Mayor Uhlman, asking why more wasn't being done to clean up pollution and litter. In one notable line, he wrote, "What are you doing?, just drinking cocktails and eating?" The student advised the mayor to "get those deisil [sic] buses into the dump" and prevent ferries from dumping waste into the Sound.



Third grader Jay Nordgaard uses the occasion of the first Earth Day to castigate Mayor Uhlman for not doing more to fight pollution.

Folder "Pollution - Children's Letters for Earth Day, 1970," Wesley Uhlman Subject Files (Record Series 5287-02), Seattle Municipal Archives

Flickr (cont.)

Another item of topical interest was an ad placed by the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company during the 1918 flu epidemic. They asked that customers limit their telephone usage because of "the large

An Urgent Appeal to Restrict the Use of the Telephone

THE large number of operators now absent because of illness makes it necessary for us to appeal to our patrons to restrict the use of the telephone.

The thanks of the community are due to those patrons who have already restricted the use of the telephone, thus helping the service of war industries, hospitals and stricken homes in the city.

The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company

number of operators now absent because of illness." Cooperation in this matter would help "war industries, hospitals, and stricken homes in the city." This short ad gives us a glimpse of life in Seattle during the epidemic.

Newspaper notice asking people not to use the telephone system during the flu epidemic.

Found in the 1918 Public Utilities annual report (Record Series 1802-H19), Seattle Municipal Archives.

From a User...

"The Archives has been instrumental in correcting my own misunderstandings and deepening my knowledge on matters such as legislative history, design review, design guidelines, neighborhood planning, and neighborhood commercial zoning. The knowledge provided by my research at the Archives has enhanced my participation in the community and before the Council.... The availability of the Archives has empowered me as individual and, most importantly, as a citizen. The Archives is a unique part of Seattle City Government in that it is the only place such information can be found."

Seattle Municipal Archives

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