

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

Number 45 Fall 2013

Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

Message from the City Archivist

Early in the life of the Archives, I visited the Parks Department headquarters at Denny Park to survey the records maintained in that office. Hanging on the walls were framed original Olmsted Brothers drawings from the firm's early 20th century plan for Seattle parks, playgrounds, and boulevards.

The Olmsted Brothers was the premier landscape architecture firm in the United States. It was established by Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York's Central Park, among many other signature parks throughout the country. The Olmsted Brothers worked on nearly 200 projects in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

Seattle is proud of its parks system, which still bears the design stamp of the Olmsteds. The natural beauty of the City apparently made their work that much more pleasurable. Correspondence with the Parks Commission on July 2, 1903, contained the following: "The work has interested us very much and we have derived a great deal of pleasure, not only from our intercourse with the Commission and city officials, but from an examination of the extraordinarily beautiful landscape and the delightful woods."

Their design drawings are gorgeous. Over the years, the Archives has preserved a remarkable body of Parks Department records. And in 2012, we acquired the approximately 60 original Olmsted drawings from Parks.

The Archives already held a trove of correspondence dated 1902-1929 from the firm to the City regarding parks designs. In addition, we have a copy of the original park system plan, as well as some other reports of individual projects. This year we received 64 Olmsted photographs via the Parks Department. The originals are held by the archives of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

The accumulation of what is, in my estimation, a remarkable collection of records documenting Seattle's Olmsted legacy is the result of cooperative work on the part of many organizations and institutions. These include the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, the Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks, the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, and the Seattle Municipal Archives.

In these pages, I've written about cooperation and collaboration in making records accessible to as wide an audience as possible. But access is possible only because records are acquired, cataloged, and preserved. Our plans now are to digitize all of our Olmsted holdings and make them easily accessible via our website.

In 1903, John C. Olmsted said of Seattle and the proposed parks system: "I do not know of any place where the natural advantages for parks are better than here. They...will be, in time, one of the things that will make Seattle known all over the world."

The Archives' goal is to do its part to ensure that the records of that legacy remain accessible for future generations.

--Scott Cline, *City Archivist*

New Seattle Voices

At a special meeting of the City Council on July 27, 1977, a brief discussion of a bond proposal for police precinct stations took place. The issue appeared on the ballot on September 20, 1977, and passed 73,745 to 37,258. Council President Sam Smith's views are transcribed here. They can be heard in the "Seattle Voices" section of the Seattle Municipal Archives website. Excerpt from: [Special Meeting of City Council, July 27, 1977](#)

Councilmember Sam Smith: I understand Mr. Hill's language, but perhaps Mr. Hill has not lived in the Central community, made a call for police and waited 45 minutes to get a response. By the same token, perhaps Mr. Hill has not lived in the community where that community was inflamed at the Police Department, and you had to literally throw yourself in between them to try to get them on speaking terms.



Jeanette Williams and Sam Smith in Council Chambers, March 15, 1974
Item 170706, *Seattle Municipal Archives*

(Voices *cont.*)

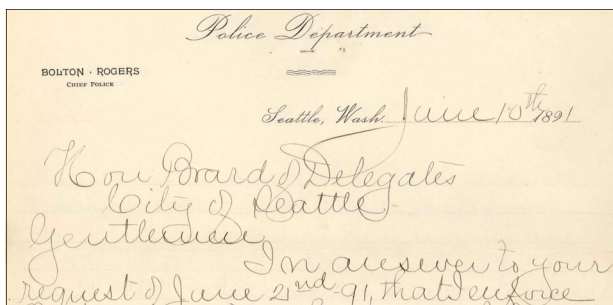
We have an atmosphere now whereby there is a congeniality and wanting a precinct out in our neighborhood somewhere and we're not going to fuss now about where it's located. The idea is to increase service. The people in the Central community pay the tax that supports the north and the south precinct and I think that they are quite willing to pay the tax to support that third precinct because the whole structure of government is moving towards neighborhood operations.

Just this morning, I participated in the opening of an unemployment security office in Ballard, so that the people in that general northwest neighborhood where Mr. Hill lives would not have to come downtown to Taylor Avenue North but that they could go out in that neighborhood to get services. So the people of the Central community have long been denied, often promised, and it's time for delivery. So, I strongly urge you to support Mr. Revelle's position for the three precincts.

The entire meeting can be heard here: <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Exhibits/voices/precincts.htm>

122 Years Ago

On June 10, 1891, Police Chief Bolton Rogers write to City Council:



“Gentlemen,

In answer to your request of June 21nd '91, that I enforce Ordinance #710, known as the “Laundry Ordinance,” I have the honor to report that I refered [sic] your communication to the Asst. City Atty., with the request that he make out certain complaints and was informed by him that the Hon. C.M. Rivers, Judge of the Municipal Court, had held that Section #6 of Ordinance #710, requiring keepers of Public Laundries to have a permit, was invalid.

122 Years Ago (cont.)

He also informs me that the same court has held that Ordinance #618 prohibiting Opium smoking and Ordinance #1651, Prohibiting the peddling of fruit etc. in certain districts, are both invalid, so that I am at a loss to know how to proceed, to enforce an Ordinance in the Municipal Court, when the Judge of that court holds the Ordinance to be unconstitutional.
Very Respectfully, Bolton Rogers, Chief of Police

Celebrating Archives Month: “This is Washington”

On October 1, 2013, archives from several institutions around the Puget Sound shared films from their moving image collections through the generosity of the Northwest Film Forum. As part of the Local Sightings Film Festival, films as diverse as the Northwest were shown to an audience of more than 70 people.

Institutions participating included: University of Washington (three separate repositories), Seattle Municipal Archives, the Museum of History and Industry, King County Archives, the Museum of Flight, and the Sisters of Providence Archives.

Films ranged from a 1927 Mountaineers Players performance of *Alice in Wonderland* in their Forest Theatre on the Kitsap Peninsula to Spanish flamenco legend Anzonini in a recording session on the UW campus in 1979. Other selections included public service announcements for the 1972 “Save the Market” campaign, a film shot by a local African American photographer, Vernon Robinson, at the St. Peter Claver Interracial Center in the Central District, and two UW promotional films presenting very different views of campus. There were home movies of the Skagit Corporation’s 1966 parade of logging equipment, soap box derby races at Woodland Park, the Boeing -80 doing a barrel roll over the 1955 Gold Cup Races, the Woodland Park Zoo Pony Club annual picnic, model trains in the Bon Marche Christmas store window, and Mr. and Mrs. Boeing at a party during prohibition. Films from the UW Media Center



looked at Avalanche Dynamics and the dangers of skateboarding, among other topics. Regional archives have got it all!

Clip from film of the Woodland Park Zoo Pony Club annual picnic, ca. 1935
Item 2147, Seattle Municipal Archives

New Photographs

Jeanette Williams (1914-2008) served on the Seattle City Council from 1970-1989, winning her first seat on the Council by advocating for senior citizens and for converting the Sand Point Naval Base into what is now Magnuson Park. She introduced legislation to prohibit employment and housing discrimination against gays and lesbians (and eventually transgender people) and undertook several other controversial issues. Williams also advocated for the creation of the Seattle Women's Commission.

Recently processed Jeanette Williams photographs (Record Series 4693-11) date from 1960 to 2003. A trove of late 20th century local and national elected officials and dignitaries, the photos reflect the effect that Williams' political career had on the region. Images include the Duwamish Bridge and the dedication of Magnuson Park as well as Williams with Mayors Royer and Uhlman signing legislation and proclamations. Photographs include Williams with dignitaries such as Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Senator Ted Kennedy, among others. Many photos show Williams performing her duties on Council: at the dais, in the Seafair Torchlight parade, at groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings. Copyright considerations did not allow all of the over 200 images to be scanned but more than half are available in the [Photograph Index searching on the series number 4693-11](#).



Phyllis Lamphere and Jeanette Williams presenting Suggestion Award to Water Pipe Leadman Douglas F Goett, November 18, 1974
Item 170704, Seattle Municipal Archives

Dedication of landscape triangle at 65th and Sand Point Way, July 3, 1973
Item 170781, Seattle Municipal Archives



(Photographs *cont.*)

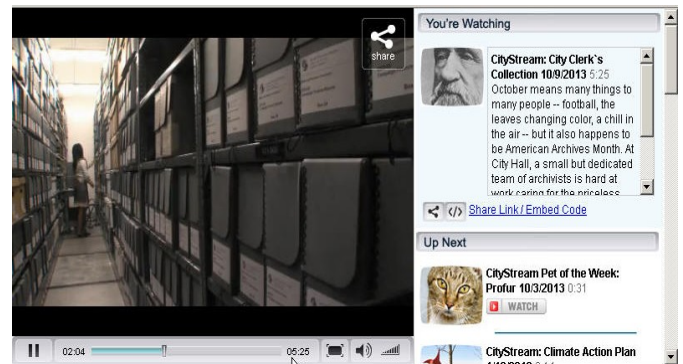
Photos continue to be added to the Discovery Park photograph collection acquired last year by the Archives. Of note are [56 photos](#) from the 1980s of Fort Lawton building demolition. The demolished structures include old barracks, the quartermaster building, tennis court, the hospital, old visitors center, and numbered buildings. All slides have been scanned to high resolution files and are available for download.



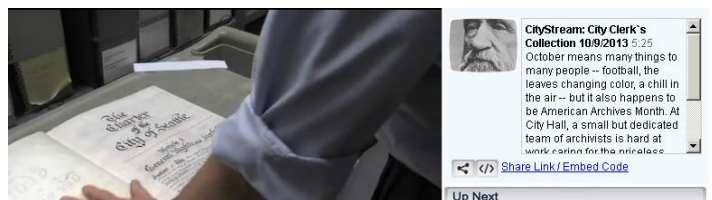
Discovery Park, Demolition of 423 Building, September 30, 1987
Item 170416, Seattle Municipal Archives

Seattle Channel Features the Municipal Archives in "City Stream"

City Archivist Scott Cline is interviewed in a short segment Seattle Channel produced on the Municipal Archives. Also featured is Councilmember Jean Godden speaking to the importance of history in understanding Seattle.



Featured above is work study student Kendra Hale pulling boxes in the Archives vault for Seattle Channel. The video is available [on demand](#) on Seattle Channel's website.



Flickr News

Putting our images on Flickr brings them to a wide audience, and often leads to requests to use our photos for various projects. All city-owned images are posted with a Creative Commons license that explicitly allows reuse, so people are free to use the photos without telling us. Some do let us know, however, and it's always fun to learn what people are doing with our images out in the world.

The most common request is for use in a blog post or on a website. We have also gotten image requests for use in books, including textbooks, academic monographs, and a book about Native American writers. Publications using our images range from an online Seattle guide to a magazine promoting the use of concrete products in Colombia.

It's not just web and print media creators who are using SMA images in their work. One Flickr user wrote to let us know he had used an image of a female construction worker in a poster and multimedia project promoting women in unconventional careers. Several filmmakers have used images they found on our Flickr site in their works, and a local band incorporated our images into album and poster artwork. We have also received a couple of requests for use of images by iPhone and Android app developers.

Perhaps the most unusual request we have received is for use of a photo in a board game. The game designer wrote to us explaining his map-building city planning game and notifying us that he planned to use a City Light photo of a restaurant on one of the game cards. He even sent a mock-up of the card so we could see what it looked like.

If you are using our images in your own creative projects, we'd love to hear about it!



Game card designed by Matt of burntorange games.com

Railroad Avenue continues to be popular on Flickr. This is one of the most popular Flickr images for July-September:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/9712367172/>



Railroad Avenue, looking north from Union.
Item 9728, Seattle Municipal Archives.

Also popular on Flickr, a bookstore in the Pike Place Market.



Left Bank Books, Pike Place Market, 1975.
Item 34398, Seattle Municipal Archives

Upcoming Events

- Seattle Area Archivists Meeting, October 16, 2:30-4:30 at Seattle Public Library
- History Café, October 27, 7:00 at MOHAI Café Genealogy Roadshow
- Pacific Northwest History Conference "Citizenships in the Pacific Northwest" April 3-5, 2014 - Vancouver, Washington

Seattle Municipal Archives

600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 3, PO Box 94728
Seattle, WA 98124-4728
206 233-7807 or 206 684-8353
archives@seattle.gov