

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

Message from the City Archivist

The past several months have been busy in and around City Hall. A small sampling of issues, events, and actions since November 2013 include:

- A socialist was elected to City Council
- Voters approved Council elections by district
- \$15/hour minimum wage legislation was passed
- A gender pay equity initiative is underway
- Seattle is getting its first female Police Chief

A wide variety of records are being generated around these issues. A couple of points should be made here.

First, we often think of archival records as cool, old things. They can also be very new things. Archival records are archival the moment they are created. And archivists are committed to ensuring that over time, those records find their way to the Archives.

Second, in significant ways, these issues are not new. We have seen them before, but with different particulars and different historical contexts. The observer who is interested in using history to understand the present must parse those particulars to extract what is relevant and meaningful.

Two examples illustrate my points.

The City Charter amendment establishing districts returns the City to a representative structure that was in place over 100 years ago. A Ward system was established in 1884 and abolished in 1910. That system did not allow for redrawing Ward boundaries. As the City expanded, so did the number of Wards. By 1910, there were 14 Wards and 18 Council members forming an unwieldy and inefficient body. The current district plan allows for redrawing districts periodically to accommodate demographic changes.

The old system also suffered from corruption, patronage, and vote trading. One wonders what citizens will be saying about district elections a hundred years from now.

The appointment of Kathleen O'Toole as Police Chief is a first. "Firsts" are always fun. In 1926, Bertha Knight Landes became the first woman mayor of a large American city. But more striking is that no woman has been elected mayor of Seattle since then. And an analysis of department heads of Seattle's mega-departments suggests a glass ceiling for women. There still has not been a woman serving as City Attorney or Fire Chief; only one of 14 City Light superintendents has been female; and only two of 65 heads of the public utilities and transportation departments.

The glass ceiling is a gender equity issue, part of a bigger package that includes the pay issue that

City Council is addressing in 2014. These are topics that were raised by Jeanette Williams (1970-1989) and Phyllis Lamphere (1968-1978) during their pioneering terms on City Council.

As archivists, it doesn't matter what our personal views are on these issues. What matters is that City government action in 2014 is transmitted and available to observers long after we are gone. After all, these questions will arise in some form again, and hopefully future citizens will learn from their past.

--Scott Cline, City Archivist

70 Years Ago: Tearing Up Street Railway Tracks

In 1944, *Public Works Magazine* sent City Engineer C. L. Wartelle a questionnaire about his most interesting job in the past year and he replied that it was removing abandoned street railway rails from streets. The magazine wrote back requesting he write an article about it, and he did. The article was published in the March 1945 issue.

Wartelle wrote that in 1940 trolley coaches supplanted street railways, leaving about 27,500 tons of steel rails on 100 miles of streets. The rails that existed between paved roadways were removed by the



Tearing up rails between Jefferson and Cherry, August 21, 1941
Item 39906, Seattle Municipal Archives

transit

system in 1940 and 1941.

By 1943 about 13,000 tons remained. A government agency, War Materials, Inc. (which subsequently had work done by Northwest Construction Company), contracted with the City to remove 10,000 tons; the City removed 3,000. The steel was sold to local mills at about \$16.50 per long ton. Money the city received was put towards resurfacing the streets, many of which were brick.

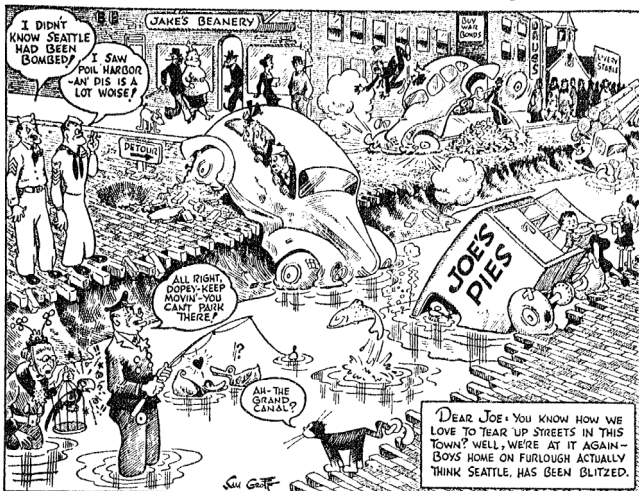
(Tracks cont.)



Tearing up tracks on Second Avenue between James and Cherry, September 16, 1943. Item 40200, *Seattle Municipal Archives*

Apparently, however, the rail removal project was interesting in a different way to the citizens than to Wartelle. This cartoon by Sam Groff accompanied a *Times* column by Robert Mahaffay. The “Dear Joe” column read, in part, “You ought to see the streets these days. Furloughed service men who happen to drop in keep ducking and looking around for foxholesEdgy citizens, however, are coming to regard the thing as a gigantic plot to discourage motoring.”

Joe, There Are Foxholes Here, Too

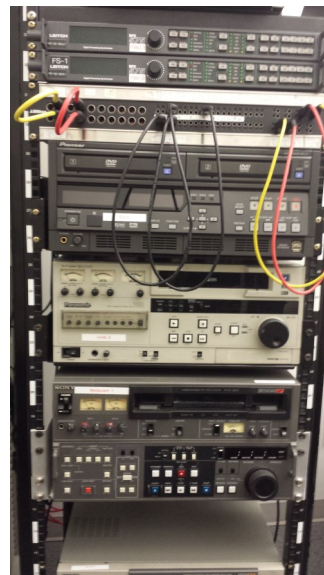
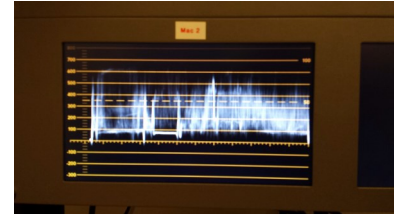


Source: Seattle Engineering Department Miscellaneous Improvement Files, Record Series 2615-03, 1/2334 and 2335.

Fledgling Consortium: Moving Image Preservation of Puget Sound

A group of three institutions - Seattle Municipal Archives, University of Washington Special Collections, and King County Archives, with Rachel Price providing the foundation - have formed a fledgling consortium dedicated to preserving legacy audio/visual media by providing a platform for cultural institutions to transfer analog videotape to digital.

The process of gathering equipment, putting it all together and learning how to use it has been a long one but the digitization station is up and running!



Consultant Dave Rice has provided technical support.

Logistics and workflow are coming together as we work on items from our own collections. The consortium, known as MIPOPS

(“meepops”) hopes to be able to invite additional institutions to be part of the consortium by early 2015. MIPOPS provides the platform, equipment and processes for transferring various kinds of videotape, not central storage for digital files. Each institution will be responsible for curating their own digital files. MIPOPS looks forward to being a hub for other cultural organizations in the area.

New *Seattle Voices*: Intermittent Workers

A new “Seattle Voices” audio clip is on the website with an excerpt from a 1977 Human Resources and Operations Committee meeting on the topic of intermittent workers. The clip features John R. Scannell, a part-time employee at the Seattle Center, also known in the 1970s as “Zamboni John” for his colorful driving of the Zamboni at hockey games.

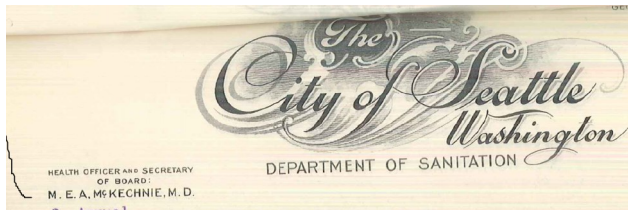
(Voices *cont.*)

Subsequent to this hearing, John R Scannell and the Intermittent Workers Federation filed a suit against the City for benefits in 1978; specifically the suit was filed on behalf of seventeen plaintiffs for vacation pay. The plaintiffs represented employees who worked for the City more than half-time on an ongoing basis. The State Supreme Court ultimately ruled against the City. The case was settled out of court in 1989 for \$5.5 million in retroactive employee benefits.

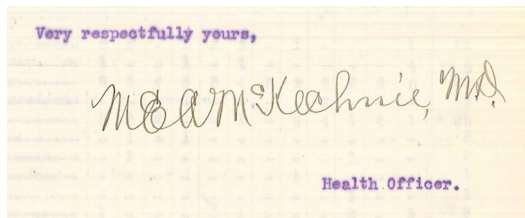
Listen to the excerpt as well as the entire meeting [here](http://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/seattle-voices/intermittent-workers): <http://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/seattle-voices/intermittent-workers>

102 Years Ago: The City Physician

In the 1899 Annual Report of the Health Department, M.E.A. McKechnie, M.D., suggests that the duties of the “city physician” be limited to work at police headquarters and the city jail.



“Section 4, Article X of the City Charter says: ‘The Health Officer shall act as city physician.’ Just what the duties of city physician are can only be guessed at. The public has jumped at the conclusion that the city physician’s duties require him to respond to all calls at all hours,



Annual Report of the Health Officer to the Board of Health for the Year Ending December 31, 1899.
Record Series 1802-G6, 1/4, Seattle Municipal Archives

and attend, free, all those who may feel themselves unable to employ a physician of their own...I would respectfully suggest the passage of an ordinance defining the duties of ‘city physician,’ and limiting them to work at police headquarters and the city jail. If it is considered desirable to have the city physician do a general practice among those who may consider themselves too poor to employ a physician of their own it will be necessary to provide an extra physician for the work.

(Physician *cont.*)

During the year just closed I have prescribed for 790 patients in the office, made 621 outside visits, and vaccinated 435 children in my capacity as city physician.”

New Photographs

Among the photographs recently scanned and uploaded to the web are: Olmsted park photographs from the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks, images of Mayor Rice, and construction of the Duwamish substation construction.

A total of 67 photographs donated by the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks are now scanned and available on the website using the series number 5801-08. The images reflect work done by the Olmsteds in 1903 and 1909.



Concourse, concert grounds and formal garden on top of hill. View is from top of water tower observatory.
Item 172594, Seattle Municipal Archives

View from Queen Anne Hill looking southeast over city with Washington Hotel on Denny Hill in distance.
Item 172597, Seattle Municipal Archives



Duwamish substation construction, May 1955.
Item 173039, Seattle Municipal Archives

(Photos *cont.*)



Mayor Rice and Goodwill Graduate of the Year Ceremony, December 1990. *Item 173317, Seattle Municipal Archives*

YouTube and Flickr News

If you follow our YouTube account, you've probably noticed a flurry of activity in the last couple of months. As our digitization efforts have ramped up, we have been posting newly-transferred films and videos to our YouTube channel. We have also been adding short clips to our Flickr site.

Moving images from City Light, the Police Department, SDOT's Urban Forestry division, and the Woodland Park Zoo have all been recently added. The films cover a variety of time periods, and range from training videos to raw footage to well-produced public programs. If you haven't been to our [YouTube](#) site in a while, come take a look and see what's new!

A 1986 public service announcement by Seattle City Light, [A Powerful Day](#), is one example of what's new on YouTube.



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
<http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives>

(Flickr *cont.*)

The most popular image on Flickr in the past three months is one of Third and Pike from 1936:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/13851702015>



Interns and Volunteers

Valerie Vega, from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, completed her internship with SMA. She contributed in the areas of audio processing and processing Legislative Department Central Staff records, and also stepped into the world of records management.

Lauren Welch from the UW Information School finished her volunteer stint at the Archives with a flare, bringing doughnuts for all! She completed a good body of work processing videotape from the Woodland Park Zoo, processing Neighborhood Matching Fund grant records, and scanning City Light negatives.

One volunteer remains, Kate Chmela, who continues to work on processing parks construction files, and a project relating to electronic records.

Upcoming Events

June 19: MOHAI's History Cafe - 7 PM - 860 Terry Ave N
Paul Dunn and John Turnbull on the "Keep the Market" events leading up to the 1971 public initiative, and the subsequent preservation/evolution of the Pike Place Market as a unique historic district.

June 24: AKCHO membership meeting - 9:30 AM
Redmond Historical Society - cemetery walking tour
7200 180th Avenue NE, Redmond

July 14: 30th anniversary panel on West Seattle Bridge
Hosted by Southwest Seattle Historical Society - 6:30 PM
Hotwire Online Coffeehouse courtyard,
4410 California Avenue SW