

# ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle  
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk  
Legislative Department

## Message from the City Archivist

Seventy-four years ago this month (April), Japanese-Americans were forced to leave their homes (and most of their possessions) in Seattle and were “evacuated” to a holding center (Camp Harmony) in Puyallup; subsequently they were transferred to the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho. This action followed the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese air force and President Roosevelt’s issuing of Executive Order 9066 authorizing the forced evacuation of everyone of Japanese descent.

The Japanese residents of Bainbridge Island were the first in the nation to be relocated from their communities. Japanese citizens and legal residents from Seattle and around the state soon followed. While there are still apologists for this action, it remains a dark stain on the American fabric.

Very little appears in City government records to document the transfer of this population. However, there is a beautiful vignette from several months earlier, captured in Parks Department records, that frames the internment with tragic irony.

On July 11, 1941, Jimmie Sakamoto, the blind editor and publisher of *The Japanese American Courier*, wrote to Ben Evans, the Seattle Parks Department Director of Recreation with a complaint about discrimination in public accommodations. Sakamoto, admittedly, was a controversial figure. Yet, as founder of the *Courier*, the first English language Japanese-American newspaper in America, and as founder of the Japanese American Citizen’s League, he was an acknowledged leader in the community.

Sakamoto wrote: “The incident occurred on Sunday, July 6, at the Colman Memorial Pool at Lincoln Beach, where two American boys of Japanese ancestry were stopped from entering the pool....Personally, I have every confidence in you and the Park Board that nothing implying discrimination in action or policy at our publicly supervised recreational centers will be tolerated by you.”

This letter evoked an immediate response from Acting Mayor James Scavotto who admonished the Park Board: “It has been called to my attention this morning that you have refused the use of the Colman Pool in Lincoln Park on racial grounds to racial minorities. If this is so, will you please discontinue practice at once, as all American citizens in this City will be accorded equal opportunities for all recreations owned, operated, and maintained by taxation, regardless of race, color, or creed.”

Scavotto voiced a moral and principled position that in 1941 was certainly way ahead of its time. In turn, Sakamoto felt confident in petitioning for redress, exhibiting faith that minority rights could triumph over discrimination. This was moment in which a city could take pride.

But then, everything changed for the Japanese-American community and for Jimmie Sakamoto. In May 1942, Sakamoto and his family were sent to Camp Harmony and then on to Minidoka. Sakamoto never recovered a leadership footing after World War II. He did not try to restart the *Courier*; he noted that it had never really made any money and the toll of trying to reestablish it would be too great. He died in the mid-1950s.

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A single archives can never contain a complete record of events. In our case, we have little on the Japanese internment. But, in the case of Jimmie Sakamoto, we are able to add texture (and a certain pathos) to the story. This is an example of what can make research both maddeningly difficult and exhilarating.

—Scott Cline

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## New Voices Exhibit: Low Income Housing at the Pike Place Market

On June 7, 1977, the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee discussed the Stewart House for low income housing. One of those who spoke up because she thought Council might “want to know the kinds of people that live there” was Shirley Collins, owner of Sur la Table.

Read the transcript and listen to the audio recording of either the excerpt or the portion of the meeting that was recorded on the [Seattle Voices](#) page.



Sur la Table and Stewart House (l to r) on Stewart Street, October 1972.  
Item 33902, Seattle Municipal Archives

## Newly Processed: Councilmember Sally Clark Records

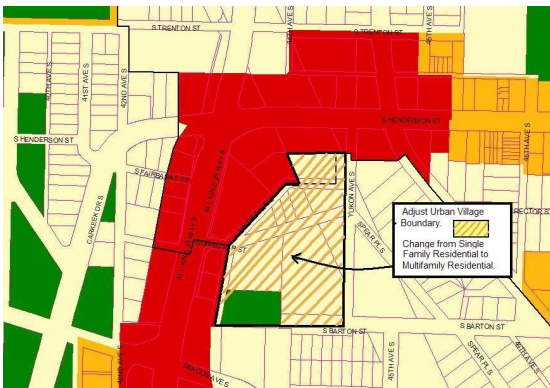
Sally Clark served on City Council from 2006, when she was appointed to fill the vacancy created by Jim Compton's resignation, until April 2015 when she accepted a position as director of regional and community relations at the University of Washington. Clark served as Council President from 2012 to 2013.

Land use issues, neighborhood planning, transportation, sustainability, housing and income inequality are some of the larger issues she worked on during her tenure. [Her records](#), both electronic and hard copy, include Subject Files and the many committees she chaired: Economic Development and Neighborhood, Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods, Built Environment, Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations, Housing Affordability, Human Services and Economic Resiliency, among others.



Councilmembers hear from the public at Taproot Theatre in Greenwood, March 2011. *Clark E-News 2011-#1 Sally Clark Newsletters, Record Series 4614-11 Seattle Municipal Archives*

Committee records can provide background on legislation, such as this proposed Rainier Beach Urban Village boundary change in the Comprehensive Plan.



Proposed Boundary Change, January 28, 2010, *Record Series 4616-05, Seattle Municipal Archives.*

Councilmember Clark's records also include websites harvested by [Archive-It](#). The captures here are from December 2011 posts.



### Final decision near in Roosevelt rezones

December 6th, 2011

As we get closer to what will likely be final committee-level action Dec. 14

(there'll be no Roosevelt action at the December 8 Committee on the Built Environment), the Roosevelt rezone work is shaping up to set a template for thoughtful zoning and development standards review in other transit-connected urban villages in Seattle. I say this with some caution because the work has taken far longer than hoped (a consistent theme in zoning work) and will result in new height caps that will please some and infuriate some (also a consistent theme in zoning work).



Councilmember Clark and her staff. Undated, *Sally Clark Subject Files 4616-02 Electronic Files, Seattle Municipal Archives.*

## 88 Years Ago: Opening Day

The opening of the 1928 baseball season gave the City Council an idea for a publicity stunt, [as laid out in Resolution 9477](#):

Whereas, the Seattle Baseball team opens its season April 17th, next, in Seattle; and  
Whereas, the news of the opening day of every city's baseball schedule is broadcast far and wide; and  
Whereas, it may be possible to break a world's record for attendance at a minor league opening day, which, if accomplished, would be the best



## Opening Day (cont)

possible publicity for Seattle throughout the United States; and

Whereas, this can only be accomplished by holding the game in a place of sufficient size to accommodate the crowd that it is hoped will want to attend the opening game; and

Whereas, the University of Washington Stadium is the only place in the city that would meet the requirements of such an opening day;

Now Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE:

That the Governing Board of the Associated Students of the University of Washington and the President of the University be requested to grant the Seattle Baseball Club the privilege of using the Stadium of the University for their opening game.

[A reply was quickly received](#) from UW President M. Lyle Spencer:

"I write to thank you for the copy of the resolution passed at the meeting of the City Council, February 14.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to grant the wishes of the Seattle Baseball Club, not because of the worth of this particular request, but because of the precedent. It has not been the thought of the Board of Control to discriminate against the Seattle Baseball Club in any way. The action taken was caused by the necessity for maintaining a fixed policy which would not involve us in any of the misunderstandings that so often accompany professional athletics. It was for this reason that the Stadium was refused some years ago to professional football, and for the same reason that we have not allowed various boxing bouts in the past, no matter how highly sponsored.

I really regret the necessity for supporting the Board of Control in this particular case, because I feel very kindly toward the Seattle Baseball Club, and I am a great personal believer in the worth of the team to our city."

The team made the best of their usual venue, Dugdale Park, setting up "temporary circus seats" in the outfield and arranging for the governor to throw out the first pitch and for Mayor Bertha Knight Landes to serve as honorary umpire. Before the game, "a hundred automobile loads of baseball boosters honked and tooted through the downtown streets" in a parade to the stadium. Only about half of the expected 20,000 fans were in attendance; the Seattle Times speculated that expected bad weather kept many fans away. However, the fans who did attend were noisy and enthusiastic, and were rewarded with a 10-1 win over the Hollywood Sheiks.

## Newly Processed: 1965 Boundary Dam Construction Photographs

Almost 200 images of Boundary Dam from 1965 to 1968 are available [online](#).



Ice on stairway, west side of spray deck, Boundary Dam. January 29, 1968. Item 110866, Seattle City Light Photographic Negatives, Record Series 1204-01



Looking upstream to Pewee Creek showing reservoir clearing. May 27, 1965. Item 172485, Seattle City Light Negatives, Record Series 1204-01

## Interns and Volunteers

WWU archives student Kelly Burton recently started volunteering with us, working with slides and textual records.

Another new volunteer, Rachel Steendahl, has been working on projects including maps and digital records.

Maris Sovold will soon leave her hard work on Woodland Park Zoo photographs and slides as she and her family are moving to Denver.

Jen Woodfield has been working on photos related to a historic preservation building survey.

Staci Crouch is wrapping up her Central Staff project and continues digitizing General Files.

Cass McQueen is cataloging city publications and will also be taking on some records management tasks.

Work study student Cierra Cooper transferred to Council President Harrell's office to begin work more closely aligned with her degree. We wish her well!

## YouTube and Flickr News

The most popular image on SMA's Flickr site in the past three months is a view from the cafeteria in Seattle City Light's building in 1961, facing west.



Seattle City Light cafeteria, 1961  
[Item 177127](#), *Seattle Municipal Archives*

After Paul Dorpat featured it in his blog, this 1940 Seattle Engineering Department film on the construction and opening of the Ballard Bridge jumped to the top of the most watched list.



"Construction and opening of Ballard Bridge," 1940.  
*Item 524, Seattle Engineering Department Moving Images*

## 55 Years Ago: Mutilating the City

The First Hill Improvement Club was organized in January 1959 because of alarm over the impact of the proposed freeway, I-5. They were concerned about the number of people who worked on First Hill and lived elsewhere as well as the volume of people visiting the medical facilities. They proposed covering the unsightly "ditch" to maintain easy access between neighborhoods. "Now with the Freeway running the full length of the City and only five blocks removed from the Alaska Way Viaduct ramps...our whole city faces mutilation." (CF 242747) Discussions between city and state officials ensued. As the city busied itself in preparation for Century 21, architect Paul Thiry drew up a plan in 1961 for covering the freeway between Marion and Pine Streets. Brought to a Committee of the Whole meeting in June 1961, the plan drew a lot of public attention and support. Supporters of Thiry's plan cited a need for urban beauty. "Speed and money are not as important as beauty for coming generations in a crowded world," Mrs. Andrew Price, Sr. wrote in June 1961. (CF 242745) After an agreement on the proposal was reached, it was submitted to the Federal Government and the State Highway Department. Both agencies rejected modifications in the fall of 1961, stating that neither federal nor state funds could be used for creating city parks. The State Highway Commission emphasized in a letter to Mayor Clinton on November 6, 1961, that, "The commission has no present plans for granting permission to construction garages or non-parking structures over, under or adjacent to the Central Freeway." (5210-01 7/5)



Freeway construction looking up James Street from top of Municipal Building, May 6, 1963  
*Item 173890, Seattle Municipal Archives*

## Upcoming Events

March 29 [MOHAI 7-8:30 PM Dr. Quintard Taylor, Jr.](#)  
March 30-April 3 [Environmental History Conference](#)  
April 28- 30 Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting, Seattle

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