

ARCHIVES GAZETTE

City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Out of the Archives

Although SMA's research room is closed, archivists are still working and are busy processing records, creating exhibits and other resources, and answering your research questions! Please continue to get in touch by emailing us at archives@seattle.gov.

During this time of social distancing, we have also been finding fun ways to bring collections "out of the archives" and into a virtual space.

SMA's new [Virtual Vault](#) page compiles an online collection of creative activities available to do



from anywhere with an internet connection, all inspired by records in the archives. Listed in categories for adults and kids, activities in the "vault" include coloring pages and jigsaw puzzles for all ages and levels, links to playlists of archival film and video for

your next movie night, Zoom backgrounds featuring archival images to liven up your next video call, postcards that can be downloaded and mailed to friends and family, and educational resources like online exhibits and sample classroom projects.



A popular Zoom background: [City Light Control Center](#) in 1968.

Be sure to also follow us on social media ([Flickr](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [YouTube](#)) to keep up to date with what's new at the archives.

New Voices: Police Review Board

A [new Seattle Voices exhibit](#) on SMA's website highlights efforts to establish a Police Review Board in 1964-65.

As early as 1955 in Seattle, there were requests for an independent police review board due to reports of police brutality. On November 13, 1964, the ACLU filed a request for a hearing to discuss the creation of such a board. The issue of police misconduct was receiving national attention and other cities were considering oversight boards.

At the hearing on January 22, 1965, testimony was given by multiple witnesses, including the Reverend Samuel McKinney and Seattle NAACP Branch President E. June Smith. ACLU attorney Alvin Ziontz stated, "We have confidence that, having heard the evidence that will be presented here today, Council will feel as we did that we cannot sit idly by and allow such serious charges to be made without investigating into them." After an hour and a half of testimony, and after a second hearing with testimony from the police, City Council unanimously voted to reject the ACLU's petition for establishment of a police review board in Seattle.

Listen to excerpts or the full hearing and read hearing transcripts and related records, at the Seattle Voices exhibit page on the SMA website.

New Virtual Collection: Seafair

Visit past Seafair parades and events with SMA's new [Seafair Virtual Collection](#). Due to the current global pandemic, 2020 will be the first year since Seafair began in the early 1950s that no in-person events will be held. The new virtual collection provides a glimpse into the evolution of Seafair, and features images and film footage that capture the sights, sounds, and excitement of Seattle's long-standing summer celebration.



Seattle City Light Seafair Float, July 1956. [Item 78684](#), Record Series 1204-01, SMA.

ADA 30th Anniversary

On July 26, 1990, the City of Seattle joins cities and states around the country to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SMA's new Digital Document Library on [Implementing the ADA in Seattle](#) explores how the City has worked to accommodate people with disabilities before, during, and after the ADA was passed, with links to scanned documents, photos, and video records.



City Light Director of Construction Engineering John Hansen speaking to wheelchair users who had requested additional curb ramps be installed as part of an underground wiring project along 45th Street in Wallingford in 1979. The person standing with two canes is Paul Wysocki, Director of the City's Handicapped Services Unit and later Supervisor of the Human Rights Department's Affirmative Action/Disability Unit. [Item 195241](#), Record Series 5274-01, SMA.

New Voices: Teen Dance Ordinance

The Seattle community battled over the Teen Dance Ordinance (TDO) for almost two decades. From its inception in 1985, the City's controversial law passed severe restrictions on local venues, limiting the ability of underage patrons to attend concerts and negatively impacting local musicians and the local music industry. While early attempts to repeal or replace the law were unsuccessful, in 2002 the Seattle City Council approved the All-Ages Dance Ordinance, which replaced the TDO.

A [new Seattle Voices exhibit](#) explores the history of the Teen Dance Ordinance and features audio clips from City Council meetings and hearings, including testimony from local musicians Krist Novoselic of Nirvana and Chris Walla of Death Cab for Cutie.



Teen Dance Ordinance Sticker, est. 2000. Record Series 9900-01, Box 1, Folder 4, SMA.

New! Finding Aids Search Platform

SMA's new public user interface for searching collections in the archives is now live on our website. The [Finding Aids search platform](#) replaces the former Subject Files and Record Series Guide databases and offers increased functionality.

There are several new options for customizing searches and filtering results, including: searching record series and archival folder names by keyword, title, or subject; limiting searches by date range; and filtering results by date or folder title. Researchers can also refine searches and customize how results are sorted. Links to digitized content, when available, are also included.

The site is user friendly and has a responsive design, making it easy to use on your mobile device. For an overview on how to use the new site, check out the brief step-by-step [video tutorials on the Help page](#).

131 Years Ago: The City Physician

July's [Find of the Month](#) highlights a former provision in Seattle's city charter that declared the city's health officer "shall act as city physician." This position's duties were not further defined. In the Health Department's annual report for 1899, health officer Dr. M.E.A. McKechnie laid out how this lack of clarity was becoming a problem: "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, and attend, free, all those who may feel themselves unable to employ a physician of their own."

Providing free medical care to the city's residents was taking up more and more of McKechnie's time. He said that in the previous year he had "prescribed for 700 patients in the office, made 621 outside visits, and vaccinated 435 children in my capacity as city physician." Continuing in this vein was "manifestly impossible."



City Hospital, June 22, 1922, Item 2654, Record Series 2613-07, SMA.

The main duties of the health officer were meant to involve investigating cases of infectious diseases and treating prisoners in the city jail. He noted that "many prisoners are brought in injured, demanding the immediate services of a physician" – but that at such times he was often unavailable due to his work with the city's general population. McKechnie proposed: "As a remedy 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."

Recently Processed Photos

[Newly cataloged photos](#) at SMA include images of City employees from departments like City Light, Engineering/Buildings, and the office of Councilmember Sam Smith. The images date from the 1950s to the 1970s and show employees working at desks, staffing public service counters, and posing in the office with co-workers.

Some employees are identified by name, but most are not. If you recognize anyone, let us know!



Unidentified SCL employee at desk using adding machine, 1974.
[Item 195212](#), Record Series 1204-01, SMA.



Unidentified SCL employee in motor pool, 1974.
[Item 195202](#), Record Series 1204-01, SMA.



Unidentified SCL employee at drafting table, 1974.
[Item 195211](#), Record Series 1204-01, SMA.

Information station and telephone operator in Engineering Department, October 1956.
[Item 195164](#), Record Series 2613-08, SMA.



Employees and customers in the Building Department in the King County Courthouse office building, September 1952.
[Item 195174](#), Record Series 2613-08, SMA.

Newly Processed Electronic Records

Recently processed electronic records at SMA include email records from former councilmembers Jean Godden and Sally Clark, and from Mayor Mike McGinn.

[Jean Godden Electronic Correspondence](#) (Record Series 4631-01), covers 2004-2015 and includes both office and constituent correspondence. Topics include city utilities, parks, transportation, homelessness, waterfront planning, and one of her final efforts, Gender Pay Equity and Paid Parental Leave for city employees.

[Sally Clark Electronic Correspondence](#) (Record Series 4616-01) covers 2006-2015 and includes the councilmember's correspondence as well as staff accounts and correspondence from constituents. Major issues covered include neighborhood planning, land use and zoning, homelessness, minimum wage, farmers markets, taxis and for-hire vehicles, affordable housing, and human services.

Electronic records in [Mike McGinn Subject Correspondence](#) (Record Series 5246-01) include email, memoranda, reports, and other materials relating to City programs and services during the McGinn administration from 2010-2013.

SMA's electronic records are typically available onsite in the SMA reading room. Please email archives@seattle.gov to inquire about access during the current COVID-19 closure.

YouTube and Flickr News

A popular image recently added to [SMA's Flickr site](#) is [this photo](#) showing the Field House and Gymnasium at Garfield High School, circa 1965.



[Item 192958](#), Record Series 1629-01, SMA.

One of the most watched videos on [SMA's YouTube channel](#) is footage of Seattle Fire Department Trainees in 1968. In the late 1960s, SFD established a new trainee program aimed at recruiting African Americans. This footage shows the original group of trainees learning how to use the ladder truck and firehoses.



[Item 931](#), "First Trainees" 1968. Record Series 2801-11, SMA.

SMA uploads new content to [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#) on a regular basis, as well as [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#). Be sure to visit and subscribe/follow to see much more!

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SMA in the News

Two SMA archivists were recently featured in stories produced by local news show KING 5 Evening. Including interviews conducted via Zoom by KING 5's Ellen Meny, each episode highlighted stories from the archives and materials in SMA's collections.

Assistant City Archivist Julie Kerssen shared details about two "alternate reality" stories from Seattle's history, each featuring a major city development project that had once been planned but ultimately never realized: a proposed [floating stadium on Elliott Bay](#), and a flawed attempt at a ["whale bathtub" at Seattle Center](#).

Audiovisual Archivist Libby Hopfauf discussed [quirky public service announcements](#) (PSAs) produced by departments like City Light and SFD during the 1980s.

The stories aired in May and June and are available to view on the King 5 website.



Julie Kerssen (above) and Libby Hopfauf (left) chat with King 5's Ellen Meny.

Upcoming Events

Virtual Moving History, Sundays, 4:30-5:30 PDT.

Weekly series of archival videotape documenting a diverse history in Seattle, presented by MIPoPS in partnership with the Northwest Film Forum. Featuring a variety of material and topics, the series curates a set of clips each Sunday to provide comic relief, historically relevant medical and public health documentation, performance recordings, and much more.

August 9: Analog Animals (documentaries, footage, and more focusing on local pets and wildlife)

August 23: City as Character (showcase of student work in Minda Martin's documentary filmmaking class at UW Bothell)

More information: <https://nwfilmforum.org/series/moving-history/>

Aug 3-8 Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting (Virtual)

More information: <https://www2.archivists.org/am2020>