

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

Number 10 Summer 2002

Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

NEH Grant for Northwest Digital Archives

The Seattle Municipal Archives is part of a consortium of 13 northwest institutions that has received a \$350,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a regional union database of encoded finding aids for archival materials. The database will offer researchers the ability to search across finding aids in multiple repositories presented in a standard format. Part of the grant includes developing a plan and infrastructure for ongoing support and growth by continued addition of finding aids.

Other institutions involved in the project include the University of Oregon, Washington State University, the University of Washington, the University of Montana, the Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State University, Western Washington University, the University of Idaho, Montana Historical Society, Washington State Archives-Central Branch, Whitworth College, and Pacific Lutheran University.

The Seattle Municipal Archives plans to contribute over 50 finding aids to the project.

Recently Processed: Court Engineer Records

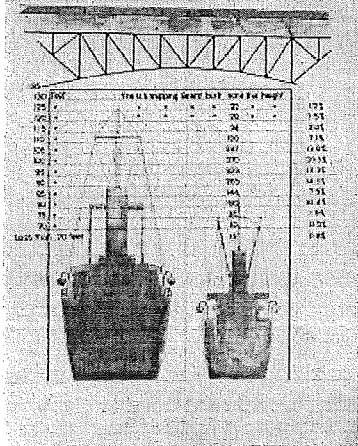
Archives staff recently completed processing Court Engineering Records and they are available for research. The records measure 6.0 cubic feet and date from 1890 to 1967. The Court Engineering section of the Engineering Department provided mapping and other services to the

Law and Legislative Departments relating to proposed legislation, condemnation ordinances, damage suits, and widening, as well as many other topics.

Chart showing height of vessels built by U.S. Shipping Board. 1928.

Drawn by Jacobs and Ober.
Box 9 Folder 10
Record Series 2608-05
Engineering Department
Court Section Records
Seattle Municipal Archives

EVERY VESSEL BUILT BY THE SHIPPING BOARD COULD PASS UNDER THE LAKE UNION BRIDGE WITH CLEARANCE OF 135 FEET



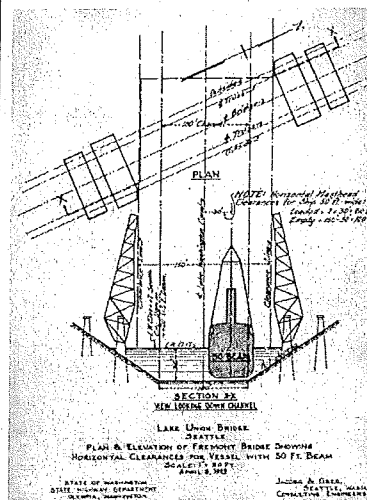
The bulk of the records date from the 1920s and 1930s and include a large number of maps. Annual reports from 1909 to 1958 describe the work of the section; information on salaries and classification of engineers is especially well documented from 1932 to 1938. Court work is documented through maps, reports and correspondence. Communication between state and federal agencies is documented. Legal proceedings and legislative history are included in the records for some topics.

Of note are records documenting the proposal to build a bridge from Seward Park to Mercer Island in the 1920s, a report on the South Sewer Tunnel from 1925, and negotiations between the City and railroad companies in several locations. Legal issues associated with several bridges and viaducts are well documented, including: the West Spokane Street Bridge Number 1, the Spokane Street Drawbridge, the University Bridge and the Albro Place Viaduct.

An example of the type of records making up the Court Engineer's records is those documenting the planning effort, which began in 1927, for the George Washington Memorial or Aurora Avenue Bridge, then known as the Pacific Highway Bridge or Lake Union Bridge.

The vertical clearance necessary was an important topic of discussion because the cost of the bridge increased dramatically with each foot of added height. Consulting engineer R. H. Ober wrote to the U. S.

Army Corp of Engineers in 1929 that "during the period from the opening of the Canal Locks in 1916, to date, no steamship having masts exceeding 135' in height has passed through the Canal Locks..." He also states that it "is generally recognized that the present trend of development of the water front of Lake Washington is, that of a residential instead of a commercial or business development..."



View looking down channel of Lake Washington and Fremont Bridge April 8, 1929.

Drawn by Jacobs and Ober
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Court Section Records, Seattle Municipal Archives

100 Years Ago in Seattle

Richard Hayter wrote to City Council in 1902 about garbage. He was not the first individual to do so; there are petitions dating back to the 1890s on this topic. Hayter lived at 811 Fourth Avenue and was managing editor of *The Daily Bulletin* whose offices were in the Pacific Block.

He wrote:

I respectfully petition that Your Honorable Body take suitable action with the view of regulating the collection of garbage in this City.

Under the present system, if it can be so termed, the individuals who control this business fix their own charges and make collections at their convenience rather than that of their customers, the tax-payers of the City.

As a result overflowing and reeking garbage barrels are often left unemptied two or three weeks at a time; and even a casual inspection of the alleys of the City reveal a condition of filth that only the exceptional, natural purity of the Seattle air prevents them from being a frightful menace to the health of the people.

Complaints to the Health officer are fruitless, as he states that there is not ordinance which gives his office jurisdiction over the scavengers.

The Committee of Health and Sanitation placed his petition on file. Ordinances in 1907 addressed licensing vehicles hauling garbage and prohibited nuisances detrimental to public health, including rotting garbage. In 1908 Charter amendments changed the duties of the Board of Public Works to include overseeing garbage removal from city streets.

Interns in the Archives

The Archives welcomes a new volunteer, Cathie van Veen. She is cataloging and scanning Streets and Sewers photographs, primarily from 1914. Work study students Erica Owens and Allison Duzenski are returning full time this summer, and the Archives welcomes a new work study student, Andrea Wright. They are working on scanning and cataloging additional photographs from the Engineering Department and processing City Council and other records.

Contact the Archives: archives@ci.seattle.wa.us

Seattle Municipal Archives
600 Fourth Avenue, Room 104,
Seattle, WA 98104

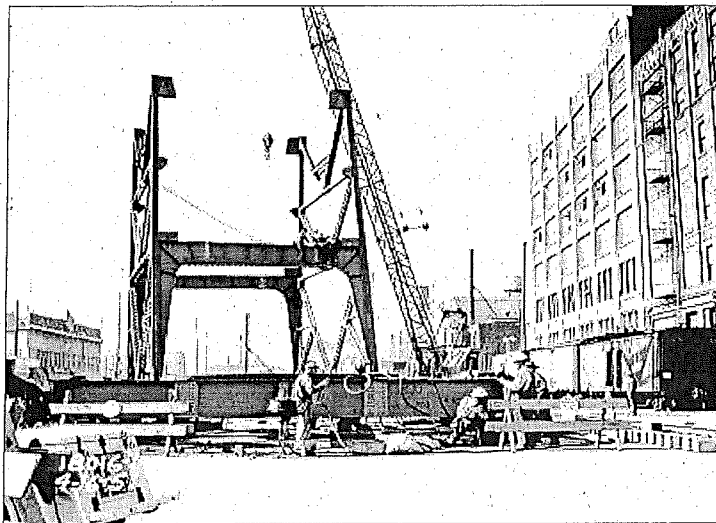
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/CityArchives>

Photographs Added to Online Database

An additional 500 images from the Engineering Department were added to the online database in the past few months and indexing was provided for close to 1,000 images. The images date primarily from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. The photographs document groundbreaking at Hiawatha Playfield for a new gymnasium, parking strip planning, slides on Perkins Lane and other locations in the City, the construction of the Public Safety Building, earthquake damage from 1949, water damage from floods in 1950, and many public works projects.

One public works project documented extensively through photographs from this time period is the construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

Alaskan Way Viaduct Construction
April 16, 1951 Item 43128
Seattle Municipal Archives



Construction of Alaskan Way Viaduct at Pike
November 15, 1949
Item 43037
Seattle Municipal Archives

