



Seattle Area Archivists Newsletter

Winter 2005

Steering Committee and Contact Information

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SAA Steering Committee

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Steering Committee & Contact Information

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From The Chair

Peter Schmid

Amazingly, the holidays are over and we're in a new year. We have two more general meetings prior to fall.

A small group of about 15 of us toured the "new" (is it still OK to call it that?) Seattle Public Library at the November 4 meeting. Jodee Fenton, past SAA Secretary and now

head of the library's Seattle Collection, gave an engaging tour of most of the library. Given its daring design, the building is full of fun stories and statistics. Everyone was impressed with the automatic book sorter, an intimidating apparatus of almost frightening efficiency. Who of us who were library

pages can imagine the joy of having those shelving carts pre-loaded!

The tour ended with an in-depth look at the Seattle collections, including maps, vertical

files, Seattle biographies and neighborhood history. We looked with affection upon an old card catalog (they still work pretty darn well, don't they?).

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Winter Meeting

Where: Seattle City Hall, Room 370, 600 Fourth Avenue, Seattle

When: March 3, 2005, 2:00 p.m.

Please join us for our March 3 general meeting, where Sue Bigelow, conservator for the City of Vancouver Archives, will present "*Cold Storage at the City of Vancouver Archives--an Update*". Sue will discuss the findings of her Canadian Council of Archives publication, *Cold Storage of Photographs at the City of Vancouver Archives* (2004), and talk about what the archives has learned since then.

Sue Bigelow has a Master's degree in Art

Conservation from Queen's University, Kingston. She has worked at the Canadian Conservation Institute, the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, and has held the position of Conservator for the City of Vancouver Archives since 1985. She has also taught Archives Preservation at the University of British Columbia since 1990.

This session should be of special interest to those of us with photograph and other special material holdings, as well as anyone contemplating a cold storage solution for their collections.

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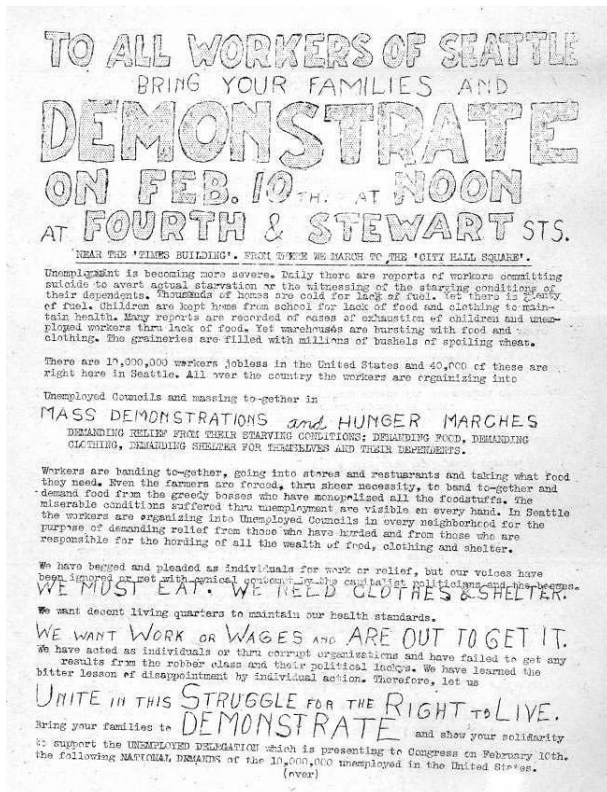
Staff and Repository News

New Resource for Educators from the Seattle Municipal Archives

The Seattle Municipal Archives recently mounted a new resource for students of Washington State History, a Digital Documents Library. The Documents Library contains digital representations of primary source documents on selected historical topics focusing on the history of Seattle from a state and national perspective. The website is located at:

<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/doclibrary/>. Designed to help middle school teachers more easily integrate the use of primary source materials into their classrooms for the study of Seattle and Washington State History, the website currently presents four topics:

- Seattle's Great Fire of 1889
- Hoovervilles in Seattle
- The New Deal: Unemployment and the WPA in Seattle
- World Trade Reorganization Protests in Seattle



CF 130044. Petition of Unemployed for Relief, February 13, 1931. Comptroller Files, 1802-01, Seattle Municipal Archives. Unemployed "Demonstrate flyer," front, Washington State History Archives Document Library.

The staff will be adding more topics in 2005. Developed with assistance and resources from the King County Archives and the Seattle Public Library, the Municipal Archives staff plans to work cooperatively with other institutions and educators to make the website as rich as possible.

The site was inspired by a middle school teacher in the Shoreline School District. The lesson plan from this teacher, a "newspaper" project, is incorporated into the website. Also included on the website are: a discussion of what constitutes a primary source document, links to other archival institutions in the area, and an introduction to sources at the Seattle Municipal Archives. The Archives is eager for input and feedback from other archival and educational institutions as the site grows in 2005.

King County Database System Going Online

After nearly a year and a half of design work, the King County Archives will unveil its new County Archives Records Database System (CARDS) in the upcoming week. The new database system will "go live" March 7, and Archives staff anticipate at least a week of conversion data cleanup.

The database was placed on the drawing board upon the arrival of Deborah Kennedy, the County Archivist, in 2001. Determined to learn from past efforts to create a database system, Archives staff wanted a robust database grounded in the principles of archival description. Additionally, the staff needed a vendor in which there would be no worries of them disappearing, leaving the archives without maintenance support. After extensive research, Deborah determined that the best vendor would be the County's own Information Technology Services. In the fall of 2004, Dennis Matthews, a King County Web and Distributed Applications programmer was brought on board and immediately set to work.

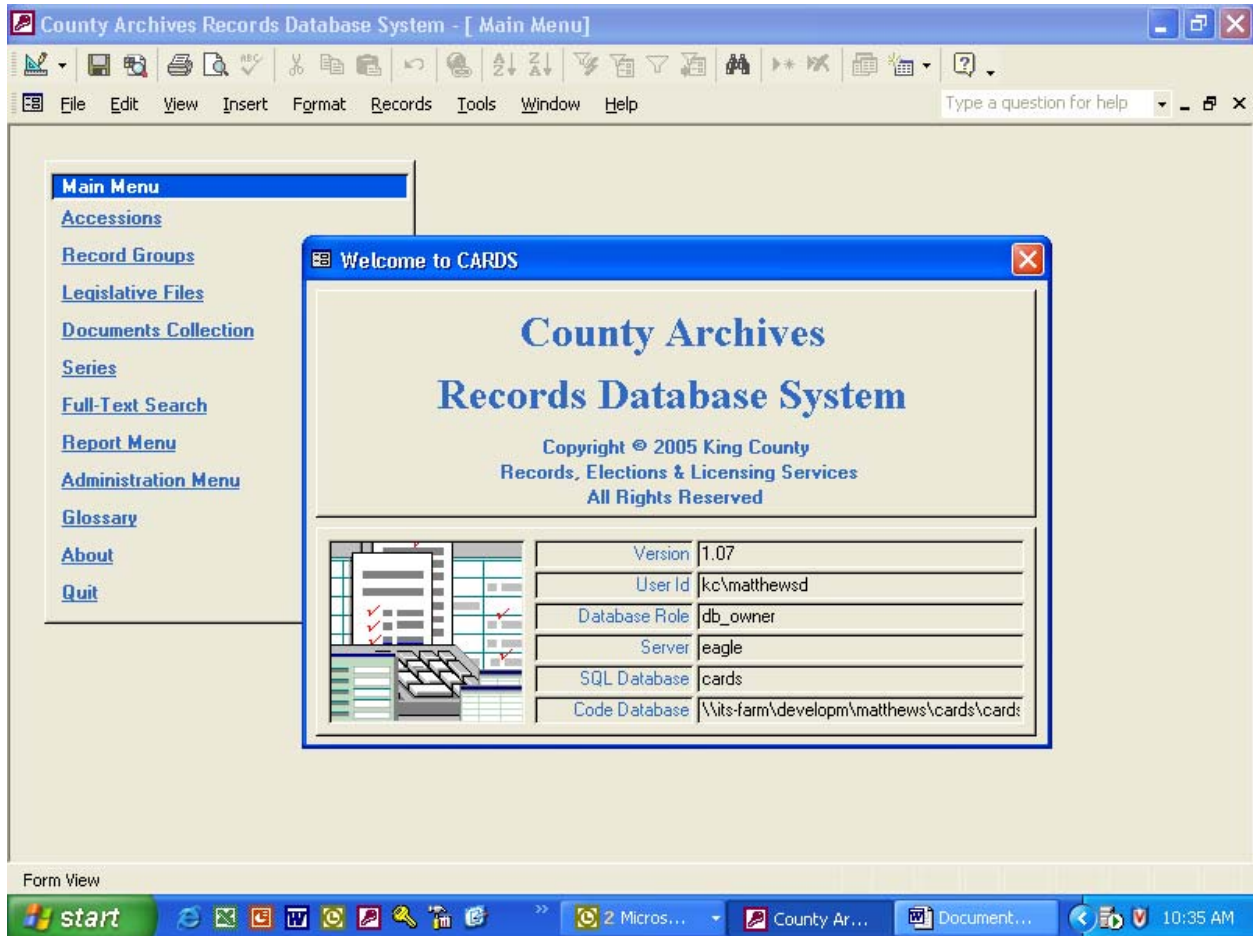
Dennis relates:

The database design for the King County Archives has many things in common with other traditional database designs, but it is also has unique features guided by and modeled after archival principles. This presented a challenge for understanding those principles and implementing them in the logical structure of the application.

An interesting and unique aspect of this system is the architecture of the full-text search and retrieval sub-system. It relies on facilities built into Microsoft SQL Server and Microsoft Search Server products to provide fast and efficient searches of information stored in title, description, notes and other comments and text fields. This free flowing type of text data is normally not included in a database index, and is difficult to search effectively. The Full-Text Service can not only search this information quickly, it can also perform inflectional searches so that plural and singular, as well as gender and neutral forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives can be matched. Various tenses of verbs can also be matched.

Data conversion is always a challenge, not only for the developer, but for the staff as well. It is difficult to map existing database systems to new designs, and it can be tedious and time consuming to perform all the necessary data clean-up required by the business rules that have been implemented in the new system.

Future plans for the database system are to attach electronic records to database catalog records, and a web presence for researchers. Questions can be directed to eric.fair@metrokc.gov.



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Other News

Nineteenth Annual Western Archives Institute to be Held

The 19th annual Western Archives Institute will be held at the University of California, Davis in Davis, California, in July 10-July 22, 2005. The intensive, two-week program provides integrated instruction in basic archival practices to individuals with a variety of goals, including those whose jobs require a fundamental understanding of archival skills, but have little or no previous archives education, those who have expanding responsibility for archival materials, those who are practicing archivists but have not received formal instruction, and those who demonstrate a commitment to an archival career.

The principal faculty member will be David B. Gracy II, the Governor Bill Daniel Professor in Archival Enterprise, School of Information, the University of Texas at Austin and a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. He teaches on the practice and history of archival enterprise, including a seminar on detection of forged historical documents, and has taught and lectured at San Jose State University, the University of Arizona, and universities in six foreign countries. Previously, after establishing the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University, he served as Texas State Archivist. In addition to serving as President of the Society of American Archivists, the Academy of Certified Archivists, the Society of Georgia Archivists, and the Austin Chapter of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Gracy wrote the first SAA manual on arrangement and description.

The program will feature site visits to historical records repositories and a diverse curriculum that includes history and development of the profession, theory and terminology, records management, appraisal, arrangement, description, manuscripts acquisition, archives and the law, photographs, preservation administration, reference and access, outreach programs, and managing archival programs and institutions.

Tuition for the program is \$650 and includes a selection of archival publications. Housing and meal plans are available at additional cost. Admission is by application only and enrollment is limited. The application deadline for the 19th Western Archives Institute is March 15, 2005. For additional information and an application form, contact:

Administrator, Western Archives Institute
1020 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
T: 916/653-7715 FAX: 916/653-7134
E-mail: ArchivesWeb@ss.ca.gov

The application package is available on the California State Archives' website at http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives/level3_wai.html and on the Society of California Archivists' website at www.calarchivists.org/.

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Northwest Archivists Scholarships Still Available

It's not too late to garner some travel money for the upcoming annual meeting and professional development season for those in the Northwest. The application deadline for the NWA At Large Student Scholarship and Professional Development Scholarship is March 1st. Details can be found at the following links.

http://www.lib.washington.edu/nwa/stu_sch.html
http://www.lib.washington.edu/nwa/dev_sch.html

Application materials may be mailed or emailed and will be accepted up to midnight of March 1st. Send materials to:

Brian K. Johnson
City of Portland, Archives & Records
9360 N Columbia Blvd
Portland, OR 97217
503.823.4631

SAA Workshop

Seattle Area Archivists are co-hosting the Society of American Archivists' *Understanding Archives: An Introduction to Principles and Practices* educational seminar. The seminar will be held May 19-20 from 9 to 5 each day. Registration fees are:

Early bird (on or before 4/19/2005): SAA Member – \$285; Nonmember – \$320

Regular (after 4/19/2005): SAA Member – \$360; Nonmember – \$395

SAA requires at least 11 members to be registered one month prior to the workshop. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee if you are interested or go to [the Society of American Archivists website](#) for more information.

Action Alert: NHPRC Funding to be Discontinued in FY 2006 Budget

The President's Federal budget proposal for fiscal year 2006 contains no funding for either grants or administration of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). As you know, the NHPRC has been a vital source of funding for processing and preservation projects in the past (King County Archives started on a NHPRC grant). In response, the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC), and the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) have formed a Joint Advocacy Task Force to create an action plan to lobby for the restoration of funding. To find out what you can do to help, go to [SAA's website](#).

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Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project Looking for Materials

Following up on the publication of its 2002 collection of oral history interviews (Mosaic 1: Life Stories, from Isolation to Community), the Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project is planning a new project that will look at the influence of place on Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered (GLBT) history. The project, which is still in its early developmental stage, proposes to explore such themes as: How have public and private spaces influenced the development of the gay community? How has migration influenced people and ideas?

For this project, the NLGHMP is especially interested in locating photographs, maps, graphics and other visual materials that show the settings in which GLBT life took place around the Puget Sound area. Examples might include:

- Exterior and interior images of tavern and meeting halls [contact the LGHMP for a list of specific sites].
- Interior images of Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, where the Metropolitan Community Church met.
- Photographs of the grounds at the Royal Arch Masonic Park near Maple Valley
- Photographs of parks (e.g., Seattle's Volunteer Park and the Bobby Morris playfield) in the 1960s/1970s
- Photographs of sites considered to be gay-related public health risks (e.g., bathhouses).

Repositories with visual materials which could be of potential use with this project are invited to contact the Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project, 1122 E. Pike St., PMB#797, Seattle, WA 98122. Voicemail: (206) 903-9517; email: gayhistnw@AOL.com. Rebecca Pixler, King County Archives, (206/296-1538, email: Rebecca.Pixler@metrokc.gov) also has some additional information about the project.

Spring Workshop: Teaching Teachers Session for Librarians, Museum Educations, and Archivists

Friday, April 8, 2005 at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), 2:00-4:00 pm.

Faciliated by Library of Congress staff, this discussion-based session will explore strategies for training teachers to work with primary materials such as maps and documents.

This workshop is sponsored by MOHAI and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Pacific Alaska Region and held in conjunction with the Library of Congress exhibit Rivers, Edens, Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America which will be on view at MOHAI from April 2-June 12, 2005. For more information or to register contact Patty McNamee at patty.mcnamee@nara.gov.

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Calendar

- ❖ March 3, 2005 – Seattle Area Archivists Spring Meeting, Seattle City Hall, Room 370, 2:00 PM
- ❖ March 5, 2005 - **Pacific Northwest Historians Guild Conference**, Museum of Science and Industry, Seattle
- ❖ March 16-20, 2005 - **American Society for Environmental History Conference** Houston, Texas
- ❖ April 14-16, 2005 - **Northwest Archivists Conference**, Las Vegas, Nevada
- ❖ May 19-20, 2005 – Workshop: **Understanding Archives: An Introduction to Principles and Practices**, NARA Pacific Alaska Regional Facility, Seattle
- ❖ July 10-22, 2005 – **Western Archives Institute**, University of California, Davis
- ❖ August 15-21, 2005 – **Society of American Archivists 69th Annual Meeting**, New Orleans, LA
- ❖ September 18-21, 2005 - **American Association for State and Local History Conference**, Pittsburgh, PA

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