



# Seattle Area Archivists Newsletter

Winter 2006

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## Steering Committee & Contact Information

**Lisa Sanders, Chair (206-440-2895)**

**Julie Kerssen, Vice-Chair**

**Birgit Hansen, Secretary**

**Marjorie Reeves, Treasurer**

**Anne Frantilla, Member-at-Large**

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**Visit us on the Web at [www.historylink.org/saa](http://www.historylink.org/saa)**

## From The Chair

### **Skeletons in the Historical Closet**

In the March issue of *Dispatch*, the newsletter of the American Association for State and Local History, the chair of AASLH, David Crosson, begins his column with this passage:

*Dare I raise the question?* Almost every professional with whom I even casually have broached the subject has discouraged me. I have no proposal for how it might be addressed, or by whom. But, I believe deeply that the issue must be raised all the same. So here it is.

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*Is it time, would it be of value, for museums and historical organizations to officially acknowledge and apologize for our historical participation in ignoring and misrepresenting the role of slavery and its consequences in America and our local communities?*

*(<http://www.aaslh.org/dispatchissues/2006-03-dispatch.pdf>)*

The article prompted me to think about how we as archivists, whether we work for a governmental organization, a corporation, or a community, represent and interpret the uglier aspects of the history we document. Whether it is slavery, the internment of Japanese Americans, or a less than savory aspect of a personality whose story is told in our archives, what is our role in telling that story?

In another recent AASLH publication, I read with interest the “Dilemmas of a Corporate Historian” by Neil Dahlstrom. A reference archivist for the Deere & Company archives, Dahlstrom recently wrote a biography of the company’s founders, John and Charles Deere. During the project Dahlstrom struggled to maintain the balance between the need to maintain professional integrity as an historian and yet still be loyal to the company’s mission. He writes:

Should I even attempt to write about the venerated and seemingly impenetrable legend of John Deere, my company’s founder? Was it possible that in the course of my research I might uncover information that could tarnish his reputation, and worse yet, even vilify him? What were my responsibilities to my employer, to my profession, and to my own integrity as a historian?

Dahlstrom, Neil, “Perceptions and Realities: Dilemmas of a Corporate Historian,” *AASLH History News* 60 (Autumn 2005), 12-15.

I find myself wondering... Do I collect the good, the bad, and the ugly about my organization with equal fervor and intent? To what extent do I owe the organization I work for loyalty in presenting history that supports its current mission, and to what extent am I responsible for illuminating the less than shining moments? One might avoid the issue by saying that I am only a caretaker of the materials entrusted to my care. But I believe that I am the steward of a living archives and that my role includes interpretation. Every time I create a display, give a presentation, or write an article for the alumni magazine, am I not selecting and interpreting the aspects of history I choose to disclose? When I choose a photo to go up on the website, am I not helping to form the public’s perceptions of the organization?

In the day to day struggle to keep up with accessions, inventories of backlogged material, and preservation issues, I rarely think about the philosophical foundations of our profession. But from time to time, I find myself confronting them either personally or through others and hope that the time spent pondering the philosophical makes me a better archivist.

Lisa Sanders, Chair

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**Seattle Area Archivists Winter Meeting**  
**March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 - 4 PM**  
**University of Washington, Suzallo Library Room B69**  
**“Washington Film Preservation Project”**

The Washington Film Preservation Project will be the feature of the winter Seattle Area Archivists meeting. Nicolette Bromberg will talk about a consortium of institutions with a common goal of caring for film collections. She will speak about film preservation, goals of the consortium, and holdings of participating institutions. If you attend, you will leave feeling more excited about your film holdings and more comfortable handling film!

The University of Washington Libraries Special Collections was awarded a \$28,993 grant from the Washington Preservation Initiative to do a collaborative film project--the Washington Film Preservation Project (WFFP). Special Collections was previously awarded a \$20,000 grant from WPI to preserve film held in Special Collections and to write a manual about how to care for film collections to be freely distributed to other institutions.

In this new grant, Special Collections invited ten other institutions with film in their collections to participate in a grant to preserve their films. Special Collections is using their expertise and equipment to do the film preservation work along with volunteers who wish to learn how to take care of film. Each film will be inspected, cleaned, repaired, and rehoused. A small selection will also be transferred to digital masters and videotape viewing copies.

The participating institutions will be given a copy of the manual written as part of the previous grant: Washington State Film Preservation Manual: Low-cost and No-Cost Suggestions to Care for Your Film.

The other participating institutions are: the Burke Museum, the Seattle Municipal Archives, the Everett Public Library, the Highline Historical Society, the Museum of History and Industry, the University of Washington Ethnomusicology Archives, the Weyerhaeuser Company Archives, Providence Health System Archives, the Museum of Flight, and the Yakama Nation.

Among the eleven Washington Film Preservation Project members there are approximately 6,000 films in collections ranging in size from 50 reels up to thousands, most of which are original and irreplaceable materials. The format of most of the films is 16mm, although there is some 35mm, Regular 8mm and Super8mm among the holdings. The films come from every corner of our region and cover every conceivable genre from industrial and educational films, to documentation and research films, to films created by students and those produced by professionals.

Results of the recent Seattle Area Archivists member survey will also be presented at the meeting. In addition, the Steering Committee is soliciting names for two upcoming vacant positions. Please be thinking of candidates who would be willing to serve on the Seattle Area Archivists Steering Committee! Candidates do not run for a specific position; rather, committee members choose their positions at the first committee meeting.

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Directions to the meeting: Go to the lobby of the Allen Library North where the information desk is located. You will see

crows hanging from the ceiling. Take the elevator in that lobby to the basement. When you get off the elevator, turn to your right. The classroom is the first door on your right.

For a campus map go to:

<http://www.washington.edu/home/maps/northcentral.html?ALB>

## Repository News

### Seattle Municipal Archives

#### Audio Recordings

The Archives continues its program of migrating reel-to-reel audio tape of public hearings and council meetings to digital formats. Where the original tape is in jeopardy, a reel-to-reel tape copy is made as well. Work cataloging and indexing the tapes is beginning, and public access points are being created. Over 300 hours of audio have been digitized and indexed to date. Included in this project are the tapes which form part of the World Trade Organization Accountability Review Committee.

The audio recordings provide insight into debates going on in City government surrounding many issues. They provide useful background to legislation. Open housing, Pike Place Market, and Westlake Plaza are only a few. Here is an excerpt from a public hearing on open housing that took place on October 25, 1963.

Rev John H Adams

Central Area Committee for Civil Rights  
*The Central Area Committee on Civil Rights...believes that the inalienable and self-evident rights of American citizens are not to be debated, or to be negotiated, but to be fulfilled. The problems of prejudice, segregation, and discrimination in America are the moral problems of the white community. We know this and you know this. Your right and resolute action is the*

Please note: To prevent the items on view from being damaged, you'll be asked to leave your coats, bags, books, purses, etc. at the front of the room. No food or drink is allowed in the room.

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*only answer and your capacity take that action is the only debate.*

Nancy McGhee, homeowner

*This open housing ordinance is an attempt to deprive all of us of one of our basic democratic rights which is to dispose of property, both real and personal as we see fit. I do not oppose this law because it deprives one race and gives to another. I object because it deprives all of us of a basic freedom, which is a part of our American democracy, this being the right of person selection. This is not a matter to be legislated, it is a moral obligation to be determined by the individual when the circumstance arises or presents itself. Should such a situation present itself, I might be forced...into selling my property in a manner which I do not feel is satisfactory...Many minority groups in our own area have, in the eyes of their fellow citizens and neighbors, become openly welcomed in housing and in any public place. They gained this acceptance through their individual efforts and individual accomplishments. They did not need the federal, state, or local governments to deprive others to obtain these goals. They gained their through honest good work.... This is not a public housing ordinance. This is a thought control bill.*

- Anne Frantilla

## **Museum of History and Industry**

MOHAI is proud to present Fashion at MOHAI, a new exhibit featuring the first-ever Seattle appearance of Théâtre de la Mode, a world renowned collection of French fashion mannequins and stage sets, conceived in 1945 by leading fashion designers and artists to hail the rebirth of the fashion industry at the close of the World War II. Fashion at MOHAI will also feature more than 70 dolls created by late local artist Ada Odenrider, as well as a small assortment of couture garments from MOHAI's collection. Fashion at MOHAI premieres Saturday, March 4, 2006 and is open through Sunday, July 16, 2006.

The centerpiece of Fashion at MOHAI is Théâtre de la Mode, a unique display that takes you to Paris in the 1940s, where you feel the emotions and realities of the war. Couturiers, set designers, milliners, shoe and glove makers, jewelry designers and other artisans joined together to create a show of their fashions in miniature. Nina Ricci's son Robert first conceived the idea as a way to showcase the Paris fashion industry while raising money for war victims.

The intricate 27" tall dolls and their lush sets toured major cities of Europe and the United States, beginning in Paris and ending in 1946 in San Francisco. There, after the exhibit closed, jewels worn by the dolls

## **Musings from an Archivist**

*--Rebecca Pixler  
King County Archives*

I was up at the Frye a week or so ago and picked up one of their periodic bulletins. A foreword by the executive director, Midge Bowman, stated:

were sent back to France, the sets were presumably destroyed, and the dolls disappeared into storage in the basement of the City of Paris Department Store. Rescued in 1952, the dolls were donated to the then-new Maryhill Museum of Art near Goldendale, in Washington's Columbia Gorge. In the 1980s, the late Professor Stanley Garfinkel of Ohio's Kent State University rediscovered the dolls and the Maryhill Museum sent them to Paris for restoration. The sets were then rebuilt and the Théâtre de la Mode exhibit opened at its original 1940s location in Paris. Among the designers whose fashions are represented in Théâtre de la Mode are Worth, Pierre Balmain, Gres, Paquin and Nina Ricci. The collection recently completed an international tour that included The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Fashion Foundation in Tokyo, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and The Imperial War Museum in London. Now, for the first time, Seattle has a chance to experience Théâtre de la Mode.

Fashion at MOHAI will include a series of special programs, including lectures, fashion shows, films and special hands-on textile conservation workshops. For more program information, please see <http://www.seattlehistory.org>.

"Soon after joining the Frye, I toured the basement and found a sizeable number of boxes and files containing all kinds of Museum memorabilia.

Working with Steven Wright of the Winthrop Group, a professional archiving firm, we have undertaken an exciting and

rewarding project. Steven and a very dedicated group of twelve volunteers (donating 950 hours) have worked in their basement 'office' for more than a year organizing materials and creating an archive that is proving to be a valuable resource. To give you an idea of the scope of the project, the archive will fill 352 cubic feet of space.

One of our first research projects has been to study the memos and public pronouncements of Walser Greathouse,

executor of the Frye estate and the first director of the Museum...."

One of the Frye's current exhibitions features artwork acquired by Walser Greathouse, and it appears the Frye used some of the found memos in interpreting the exhibit.

It would be interesting to know more about what else they found!

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## Events

**March 4, 2006**

### **Pacific Northwest Historians Guild Annual Conference**

9 am - 5 pm

Museum of History and Industry

\$40 Registration

Bring your own lunch

Featured lunch speaker: Timothy Egan. Hear about many varied topics in local history.

**April 5-7, 2006**

### **Focus on Collections Care Workshop Series**

The three-day Focus on Collections Care workshop series, locally hosted by the University of Washington, will be held at the Watertown Hotel in Seattle, Washington. This series is presented by San Diego-based Balboa Art Conservation Center and is designed to provide an intensive training experience with a programmatic approach. The series curriculum focuses on care of collections, policies and procedures and planning and management. Nine full-day workshops will be offered to allow participants to select the workshop(s) appropriate to their specific needs. Participants may attend for the full three days or less. The workshop series is directed towards persons involved in

collections care management, institutional development and policy making, and exhibition development and installations. Students in degree-related programs are also encouraged to attend.

Each workshop will take place from 9 AM to 4 PM. Focus on Collections Care is made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency. Additional support was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Please contact the Balboa Art Conservation Center at 619-236-9702, or email us at [wrfso@bacc.org](mailto:wrfso@bacc.org), or visit [bacc.org](http://bacc.org) for the complete workshop schedule and registration information. Registration deadline is March 29, 2006.

**April 15, 2006**

### **Nearby History - An Introduction to Oral History Interviewing**

9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Museum of History and Industry

A day-long training in the practice of recording oral history interviews. What are some ethical considerations in interviewing? What is transcription? How can you get the best interviews?

\$30 for MOHAI members or \$40 for the general public. Day-of-registration add \$5. Call 206 324-1126 to register.

**May 17-20, 2006**

**The Association of Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) Annual Conference**

Red Lion Hotel, Seattle

<http://www.arsc-audio.org>

The Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue will be the conference site. The hotel, located at 1415 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, is offering special conference room rates of \$139 per night, single or double; \$149 triple; and \$159 quad. To reserve a room, visit the Reservations page at <http://www.redlion5thavenue.com> or call 206-971-8000, and use promotional code 0000784000 (all zeros need to be entered) to obtain the special rates, which are valid > until April 24, 2006.

ARSC is dedicated to the preservation and study of sound recordings - in all genres of music and speech, in all formats, and from all periods. Reflecting this broad mission, the upcoming conference offers a vast array of appealing talks and sessions. A few samples from the program currently being prepared are:

-- Carl Haber, "New Imaging Methods Applied to Mechanical Sound Carrier Preservation and Access"

-- Mark Hoffman, "Blues and the Power of Myth: Ten True Tales about the Big Bad Wolf" (Howlin' Wolf)

-- Copyright and Fair Use Session: David Levine from Stanford's Center for Internet and Society, speaking on the implications of the Naxos decision. Technical Committee Roundtable Discussion: Audio Preservation in the Digital Domain.

Conference attendees will have opportunities to attend other exciting events. A private tour of Benaroya Hall, the home of the Seattle Symphony, has been planned. All are welcome to join the annual Record Collectors' Gathering -- guaranteed to be filled with camaraderie and fascinating stories and recollections.

The pre-conference workshop, "A Tutorial on the Preservation of Audio in the Digital Domain," will take place on May 17. This tutorial will introduce the basics of digital-audio preservation, addressing some of the difficult equipment, metadata, and storage issues that must be resolved if enduring preservation is to be achieved.

Questions concerning local sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities should be directed to Paul Jackson ([research@ruralfree.net](mailto:research@ruralfree.net)). Other questions about local arrangement may be addressed to Laurel Sercombe ([julius@u.washington.edu](mailto:julius@u.washington.edu)) or Taylor Bowie ([bowiebks@isomedia.com](mailto:bowiebks@isomedia.com)).

**May 11 2-4 PM**

**Seattle Area Archivists Spring Meeting**

NARA - Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)

Charles Payton from 4Culture will speak about finding funding and building constituencies for your institution. Payton from 4Culture, the King County cultural services agency, will address a topic we're all concerned with -- securing funding and community support for our institutions. He will discuss how 4Culture's grants programs work, as well as give information about other places to look for funding. In addition, he will look at the big picture -- how do we build constituencies for our organizations that will advocate for us with local government entities, the media, and so on? How do we get people informed and excited about our collections and programs and develop a critical mass of support? This promises to be a valuable program for institutions of all sizes!

**June 18-30, 2006**

**Western Archives Institute**

San Diego State University

San Diego, California

This 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 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 20th Western Archives Institute is March 15, 2006. For additional information and an application form, contact:

Administrator, Western  
Archives Institute  
1020 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Telephone: 916/653-7715

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## Images from the Archives

Recently cataloged images in the **Seattle Municipal Archives** include a 1915 series of sawmills and shingle mills along the waterfront, in anticipation of the Lake Washington Ship Canal construction. Among the mills shown are: Seattle Cedar Lumber Company Mill, Canal Lumber Company Mill, Turgeon-Conrade Company's Mill, and the Bolcom Mill.



### **Woodland Shingle Company's Mill in Ballard**

September 25, 1915  
Shows concrete dry kiln, wooden shingle mill, refuse conveyor, and brick refuse burner.

*Item 51874*

*Seattle Municipal Archives*



### **Seattle Cedar Lumber Company Mill in Ballard**

September 12, 1915.  
Looking South.

*Item 51800*

*Seattle Municipal Archives*

## Jane Carlson Williams '60 Archives at Lakeside School

St. Nicholas School, a private school for girls, was founded on Capitol Hill in 1910 by the Buddecke sisters. The original schoolhouse was located at 712 Broadway North. In 1925, the school's trustees purchased property on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the architects Bebb and Gould were hired to design a new, larger school building. The resulting St. Nicholas building, next to St. Marks Cathedral, has become a Seattle landmark. When St. Nicholas and Lakeside Schools merged in 1971, the St. Nick building became the Lakeside Middle School. In 1981 the building was sold to Cornish Institute for the Arts.



The original St. Nicholas School building at 712 Broadway North

*Reproduction courtesy of the Jane Carlson Williams '60 Archives at Lakeside School.*

The St. Nicholas School building designed by Bebb and Gould, under construction in 1925

*Photo courtesy of the Jane Carlson Williams '60 Archives at Lakeside School.*

