From The Chair

Peter Schmid

20th Anniversary Program

Thanks to those of you who made it to our 20th anniversary celebration on June 23 at Sisters of Providence St. Joseph Residence in West Seattle, home to Providence Archives and site of the first SAA meeting in 1985. Several founding members addressed the group of about 30, including former and current heads of Providence Archives, Sr. Rita Bergamini and Loretta
Greene, respectively. Carol Wynn shared memories as well. We gave a tour of the newly-renovated archives, and enjoyed a social hour replete with an archive-themed cake.

SAA Anniversary Cake, designed by Peter Schmid

SAA members touring the Sisters of Providence Archives

Election results for our two Steering Committee vacancies will be available soon, and our transition meeting will be held after the fall program. Candidates do not run for a specific position; rather, committee members choose their positions at that meeting.

Society of American Archivists, New Orleans
The Society of American Archivists meeting in New Orleans, August 18-20, provided an excellent program and a fascinating city to explore, even in the extreme heat and humidity. It is a
strange feeling having been there only days before the hurricane (I added some vacation time and did not leave the city until the 23rd). Those of us who had never visited New Orleans were privileged to experience a city that will never look the same again, and lucky to have left when we did. I cannot help but remember the faces of those locals that I met, and wonder how they fared: Leo, a tall, incredibly friendly bellman at the hotel; Cedric, who beckoned me into his restaurant on Decatur St. and kept me company during dinner; Warren, and another Leo, shuckers extraordinaire who “shucked and jived,” scooting me free oysters and telling me stories about the town; and the countless buskers, pan-handlers, and desperately poor people I saw each day, walking the streets. Who survived? Where are they now?

Overall, it seems that the French Quarter and heritage organizations did pretty well through the hurricane, all things considered, though I’m sure that the mold and humidity are continuing to do their damage. I keep thinking of the famous painting Napoleon Crossing the Alps by Jacques-Louis David, housed in the Cabildo in Jackson Square, next to the Cathedral (I had no idea such a famous painting was housed there), and all the early French and Spanish documents on exhibit there.

The conference itself offered some very useful, and some provocative sessions: in More Product, Less Process we heard recommendations on reducing backlogs of 20th-century documents by curtailing our inclination toward file- and even item-level description. The speakers advocated taking a hard look at our finding aids and processing times, and argued that basic fonds-level and series-level description will suffice in providing access to most collections. In What WERE We Thinking? Theory and Practice of Reappraisal and Deaccessioning, the panelists reminded us that both are integral functions of archives, and that even a processed collection may be held up to scrutiny at a later time. The speakers argued that reappraisal of collections should not be piecemeal, but rather a developed program with a strategy for addressing certain types of records at one time workshop in Seattle next year. I encourage all members to send in their ideas for programs as the new steering committee begins its planning.

Washington Film Preservation Project to begin in October

The University of Washington Libraries Special Collections has been 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 will use 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.

Repository News

King County Archives

The King County Archives was pleased to host an intern from the WWU Archives and Records Management program again this summer. Brett Straka spent 550 hours of his summer working on the legislative files of the King County Council. The archives now holds the legislative files of the county from 1853-1998.

When mounting information and images on a web site you never know what sort of interest they might generate. The King County Archives recently received a request from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Solid and Hazardous Waste. They were producing a poster to encourage children to recycle and were seeking permission to use a photograph from the King County Archives web site of a man collecting garbage with his horse and wagon. http://www.metrokc.gov/recelec/archives/kcarch/healthphoto.htm

Of course we gave them permission to use the photo, what better reuse could a Seattle/King County photo have than promoting recycling in New Jersey?

Deborah Kennedy
Jane Carlson Williams '60 Archives, Lakeside School

The upper campus of Lakeside School recently celebrated its 75th anniversary.

In 1930 Lakeside School moved to its current 1st Avenue location in North Seattle.

The four original buildings were designed by famous Seattle architect Carl Gould and built for the depression-era price of $150,000.

Lisa Sanders

Seattle Municipal Archives

Photographs
Close to 2,000 new images have been added to the Photographs Database in the Municipal Archives over the summer, primarily taken by the Water Department. Many images document floods from water mains breaking from various time periods; the terms "water mains" and "International District" will retrieve an interesting set of images on this subject. Landslides in different places around the City are another topic.

Photographs documenting the replacement of the Cedar River pipeline in 1920 along 20th Avenue provide good visual documentation of the neighborhoods from the Central Area to Capitol Hill. And farmlands near Lake Youngs illustrate the Cedar River Watershed in 1917. They are available online:

http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/phot1.htm

Taken near Railroad Avenue and Dearborn in 1917, the photograph illustrates buildings

Another set of images from 1915 show property on Salmon Bay prior to the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, primarily sawmills. A search for Ballard and sawmills will retrieve these images. Another set of images from 1917 show the Seattle Tidelands just south of the central waterfront during dredging and dock construction.
Puget Sound Traction, Light and Power Company Maps and Drawings

Over 500 maps and Drawings from the Puget Sound Traction, Light and Power Company were cleaned, flattened and cataloged. The maps and drawings describe the street railway property transferred to the City in 1918. The property includes franchises, contract, and right of way, land, street railway track system, railway distributing system, tools, and buildings. Property was located through Seattle including: Fremont, Green Lake, East Jefferson, Madrona, Madison Street, Yesler Way, James Street, North Seattle, Georgetown, Ballard and West Seattle. Individual maps are cataloged in the Map Index and can be retrieved using the terms Puget Sound Traction in the Map Index:

http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/maps1.htm

Anne Frantilla

Museum of History and Industry

Photography Collection Negative Duplication Project

As part of the Washington Preservation Initiative, MOHAI received funding to duplicate 3,000 at-risk negatives in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection. This project builds upon a previous project funded by NHPRC in which the P-I Collection was inventoried and resleeved. Over the course of two years, we identified over 3500 diacetate negatives and 4000 cellulose nitrate negatives. In addition, there are many more negatives of acetate base that will become more at risk over time.

The diacetate negatives in particular constitute a preservation nightmare. This film stock, which we found had been used extensively by the newspaper’s photographers in the early 1950s, has undergone a deterioration process that results in an unusable buckled and fragile object. The 4x5 negatives are comprised of three layers that, as they age, are changing size at different rates. The result is a buckling effect that creates large creases across the surface of the negative. Small bubbles also form between the layers.

The process of reclaiming the image that is locked within the buckled negatives is very labor intensive. MOHAI contracted with Chicago Albumen Works of Housatonic, Massachusetts, to undertake this work. This specialized photographic laboratory has a proven track record in the process of treating these damaged negatives. They separate the image-bearing or emulsion layer of the diacetate negative from its base, cleaning and flattening it and finally producing an archival film interpositive. The interpositive can then be used to produce a duplicate negative, or it can be scanned. This procedure costs over $50 per negative, but because of the delicate nature of the work we felt the cost was justified.

Librarian Carolyn Marr and Curator of Photography Howard Giske selected 200 diacetate negatives to receive treatment from Chicago Albumen Works. They were sent in May and returned to us in June 2005. We have been positively impressed with the
results of the separation and duplication process. Among the subjects that are now viewable are the first showing of Boeing’s B-52 bomber, the disastrous fire at Playland, baking bread at Gai’s Italian bakery, the Mission Macaroni Company, official opening of the Northgate Shopping Center, views of the tuberculosis wards at Firland Hospital, and soldiers returning from the Korean War. A picture of Bing Crosby, taken during a 1951 visit to Seattle, is among the conserved images.

The remainder of the WPI funds will be expended on duplicating about 2500 acetate and nitrate negatives in house. A darkroom technician trained specifically in this process has been hired to complete this work. Although we are not able to duplicate as many photographs as we would like to under this grant, the mastering of the duplication technology will make it possible to continue on with more duplication in the future.

*Carolyn Marr*

Staff News
King County Archives

Assistant Archivist Eric Fair left King County Archives July 8, 2005 to return to the Midwest. Eric and his family relocated to Normal, Illinois following his wife Kate’s discharge from the Navy. Eric reports that the journey east was pretty wild. The Fair family (Eric, Kate and Charlie) travel by car with Kate's two sisters. They arrived in Bloomington-Normal on Monday, July 25th only to find that their belonging wouldn't be there for another week. They are settled into their new home now and Eric keeping busy entertaining Charlie while he looks for an archival position.
In the meantime, the King County Archives is anxious awaiting administrative approval to begin recruiting for Eric's position. Please watch the King County Employment web site for the posting if you are interested. http://www.metrokc.gov/ohrm/jobs/

National Archives - Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)

The National Archives-Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle) would like to announce that Sarah Nelson has been hired as an archivist to replace John Ferrell who retired in the spring. Sarah has been a technician at the Region for a year and is finishing up her Master's degree in History/Archives and Records Management from Western Washington.

Archives Week, October 10-14

As part of Archives Week activities, the King County Archives will host an open house on Tuesday, October 11, 2005, from 12:00 to 3:00 PM. This event will be a perfect opportunity to tour the facility, view recent acquisitions and other material from the collections, and enjoy refreshments. The Archives facility is located in Seattle's Central District at 1215 E. Fir Street (between 12th and 13th Avenues, one block north of Yesler Way). Please call (206) 296-1538 or send an e-mail to Archives@metrokc.gov if you have any questions or need more detailed directions.

Information about the King County Archives also is available on our Web site: http://www.metrokc.gov/recelec/archives/archives.htm

Fall Meeting

Peter Schmid, Chair

Fall Program

Our fall program will be held at the Eastside Heritage Center in Bellevue, at the historic Winters House. Newly-appointed Director Heather Trescases will give us a tour of the facility and overview of collections, and we may hear from other Eastside heritage organizations as well. Hope to see you there!

WHERE: Eastside Heritage Center
2102 Bellevue Way SE
Bellevue, WA 98004
(425) 452-6914
http://www.eastsideheritagecenter.org

WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 29, 2005
TIME: 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Events
September 29  SAA Fall Meeting
October 10-15 Archives Week
October 11 King County Archives
Open House  12-3 PM
October 12  Archives Expo
          Seattle Public Library
          11 am  Preservation of Photographs
          Workshop
          1 pm  Ghosts of Lakeside Cemetery

April 2006
Association for Recorded Sound Collections
Conference, Seattle

Images from the Archives

Olivia Esbach, the first record librarian at Providence Yakima Medical Center in Yakima, Washington, pulls files, c. 1920s [Image #80.C15.1, Providence Archives, Seattle].
The first of two students in the 1949-50 inaugural year of the Medical Record Librarians program at Providence Seattle Medical Center. The sign reads, “Providence Hospital School for Record Librarians Grants Certificates in Medical Record Library Science. Eligible for National Registration, American Association of Record Librarians” [Image #SP2440.43, Providence Archives, Seattle].

Boeing employees protesting in City Hall Park, February 25, 1943
Signs read: Production always above Expectation
Seattle Municipal Archives, Item 50455