



Seattle Area Archivists Newsletter

Summer 2005

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Steering Committee & Contact Information

Peter Schmid, Chair (206) 923-4012

Lisa Sanders, Vice Chair

Birgit Hansen, Secretary

Anne Frantilla, Treasurer

Eric Fair, Member-at-Large

**Need to contact Seattle Area Archivists?
Write:**

**Seattle Area Archivists
P.O. Box 95321
Seattle, WA 98145-2321**

E-mail: seattle_area_archivists@yahoo.com

**Visit us on the Web at
www.historylink.org/saa**

Summer Meeting

**Where: Providence Archives, 4800 37th Ave
SW, Seattle WA 98126**

When: June 23, 2005, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Commemorate the first meeting of
Seattle Area Archivists!**

**Tour the newly-remodeled Providence
Archives, hear reminiscences about the first
Seattle Area Archivists Meeting, and shape
the future of SAA.**

Refreshments served! RSVP: 206 937-4600

Staff and Repository News

From Panels to Pixels

Peter Schmid

For most women in the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were few career options beyond teaching. But as industrialization spread, immigration grew, education improved, and attitudes shifted, large numbers of them began entering the workplace. A profession that saw a spike in membership as it modernized was the field of nursing. The Sisters of Providence, many of them pioneering nurses themselves, paved the way for many would-be care givers by instituting schools of nursing affiliated with their hospitals.



Portrait panel from Providence Seattle's School of Nursing, class 1936

The impact of these schools was felt in nursing education and practice and in the area's health care. Likewise the impact on archival collecting of closed schools' photographs and records has been abundant and wide-ranging. An excellent example is the student portrait collection from the School of Nursing at Providence Hospital, Seattle.

Numbering a total of 1,057 photographs, portraits of students from 1913 to 1960 were glued on unwieldy wood panels measuring three by two feet and weighing about 20 pounds each. Needless to say reproducing the photographs was extremely difficult. Thus digital imaging and cataloging of each photo became necessary. The in-house project took two weeks to complete. As a result staff can now search for portraits by name or year using the Archives image database.



Ruth Marshall, 1913



Gail Parson, 1960

Digitization has allowed us to provide portraits and other information to researchers, many having genealogical interest in relatives who attended the school. In fact, previous requests for photos that were thought inaccessible have been fulfilled much to the delight of the researcher. Through these images the progress of women in nursing is made real and personal.

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Seattle Municipal Archives celebrates 20 years

Anne Frantilla

Earlier this year the Seattle Municipal Archives quietly celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Archives was established in 1985 with a two-year grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The grant went into effect February 14, but an archivist was not hired until March 25. Scott Cline, then Archivist of the Cleveland Jewish Archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio, was hired with the responsibility to develop the Seattle program. He has been the City Archivist ever since. The future of the Archives was by no means clear in the mid-1980s; the Office of Management and Budget removed the program from the City budget in three consecutive years. However, lobbying by the local heritage community and a friendly City Council reinstated the Archives in each instance. In 1989 the Archives won the prestigious C.F.W. Coker Award from the Society of American Archivists for its publication of *A Guide to the Archives of the City of Seattle*. The national Award honors the best finding aid published during the previous year. The Archives has since been recognized as one of the most prominent local government archives in the United States. Since coming to Seattle, Cline has been active regionally and nationally in the archives profession and is currently president of the Academy of Certified Archivists, the profession's national certifying association.

In 1999, the Archives hired its second professional archivist, Anne Frantilla who came to Seattle from the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan. The Archives is administratively situated in the Office of the City Clerk. The Clerk and the Archives were part of the Office of the Comptroller until 1992, when a City Charter amendment moved the City Clerk to the Legislative Department.

In 2003, the Archives moved into the new Seattle City Hall after 18 years in the old Municipal Building. The new facility includes two archives vaults, freezer and refrigeration units for special media (to be completed in August 2005), a spacious processing room, and a bright and pleasant research room.

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Scholarship Award Winner Reflects on SAA Workshop, Impact on Seattle Art Museum

Jennifer Rainman

As the honored recipient of the SAA Workshop Scholarship Award, I am pleased to report on the workshop and the subsequent progress of the Seattle Art Museum archives.

My interest in attending the SAA workshop "Understanding Archives" stemmed from volunteering at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) Library. I was surprised to learn that SAM does not have an official archives and I expressed an interest in helping them to establish one. Though I have a MLIS degree and some basic archives experience, I felt unprepared to tackle such a large project. Fortunately, the workshop was offered at the perfect time, just as SAM entered the planning process for the archives.

I was one of three representatives of SAM at the workshop, joined by Traci Timmons, the SAM librarian, and Faye Lovvorn, a fellow SAM volunteer with an archives background. The workshop provided an excellent overview, refreshing our collective knowledge and giving us the tools to properly plan for the archives. One of the most valuable parts was brainstorming with other participants on how to promote the archives to the target audience.

The three of us have reflected on the workshop and outlined the first steps that we need to take. Topping the list is establishing the scope of the archives. This will help us decide what is relevant as we survey the archival material, which is scattered throughout Seattle. We are also contacting similar museums to learn how they have fared in creating their archives. Support for the SAM archives is growing, especially as SAM will be celebrating its 75th anniversary, which seems a natural milestone to reflect on the museum's history.

Please direct any questions about the SAM archives to Traci Timmons at tracit@seattleartmuseum.org.

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NARA News

Susan Karren

Archivist John Ferrell is retiring as of June 11. He will be missed. Patty McNamee will be taking over his reference duties with regard to Bureau of Indian Affairs records.

2nd Quarter FY 2005 Accessions

Seattle—NARA's Pacific Alaska Region

Contact archival operations, 206-336-5115

Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers (Record Group 77)

1 cubic foot

Portland District. Civil Works Project-John Day Dam, 1955-57. Records are open.

Records of the National Parks Service (Record Group 79)

114 cubic feet

Mount Rainier National Park. Park Master Plans, ca 1930-1960; Historical Files, 1899-1995. Records are open.

Records of the Federal Highway Administration (Record Group 406)

139 cubic feet

Vancouver Field Office. Project Files, 1921-1988. Records are subject to screening before use.

Records of the Environmental Protection Agency (Record Group 412)

.5 cubic feet

Region X Office. State Authorization Files, 1977-1984. Records are open.

Records of the Energy Research Development Agency (Record Group 430)

1 cubic foot

Idaho Falls Operations Office. Waste Management Files, 1951-1962. Records are open.

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A New Space for Providence Artifacts

J. Norman Dizon



The bulk of the artifact collection reflecting the “material culture” of the Sisters of Providence of Mother Joseph Province made its way this spring to the repository at the Spokane provincial branch office. Formerly stored at nearby Providence Mount St. Vincent, the long-term care complex in West Seattle, also home to the Archives, the collection occupied practically all 367 sq. feet of floor space reaching up to the ceiling. The collection joins other artifacts in Spokane where a small museum had been set up by previous archivists. Expansion and better access to the museum are intended in the future.

Examples of relocated artifacts are liturgical objects, antique school furniture, medical and nursing instruments, stained glass windows, and sisters’ memorabilia and works of art, such as the bronze-and-wood crucifix (see photo) carved by sculptor Sr. Bernard of Jesus. The challenge for the Seattle staff is managing and making use of the collection remotely. Steps to address this will include the enhancement of finding aids, closer work with branch personnel, periodic travel by Archives staff, and creative and efficient use of delivery services.

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Other News

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 of June 15, 2005, the House of Representatives Transportation, Treasury and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia Appropriations Subcommittee has recommended restoration of funding for the NHPRC, but the full House has yet to act, and the Senate has yet to hold hearings on the issue. 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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Calendar

- ❖ July 10-22, 2005 – [Western Archives Institute](#), University of California, Davis
- ❖ July 20-23, 2005 – [National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators Annual Conference](#), Richmond, VA
- ❖ 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
- ❖ September 26 – October 2, 2005 – [National Trust for Historic Preservation – National Preservation Conference](#), Portland, OR

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