



# Seattle Area Archivists Newsletter

Spring 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

Need to contact Seattle Area Archivists? Write:

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

## From The Chair

### *Excuse me, I'm an archivist...*

Being an archivist is an excellent excuse for really digging into history: for immersing ourselves to the eyebrows in forgotten lore and stewing in the juicy details of a long ago age. Who else can milk the common misperception of history and its environs being dusty to get around the company dress code? Who can wear headphones on the job, without fear of the office protocol police, citing the importance of regularly checking the status of audio files? And let's not forget that all-important special parking space near the back door to facilitate our sometimes heavy and unwieldy work!

But my favorite way to take advantage of my archivist status is to say, “Excuse me, I’m the school’s archivist, and I was wondering if you would mind sharing with me your memories of ...” What a wonderful line! It opens doors to worlds of vicarious experiences and times. Part oral historian, part voyeur, the archivist mines memories in order to preserve, but more importantly, in order to create a relationship that exists within a cocoon of time brought forward from the past. Through that relationship, the archivist seeks to reconstruct a perspective of events and times gone by.

I recently had the opportunity to visit with “the smartest boy in America,” an accolade of the newspapers of 1929. In that year, Wilber Huston graduated from Lakeside School after winning a national interdisciplinary contest devised by Thomas Edison to promote the study of engineering among the youth of the day. Other judges in the contest included Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh. Bill and I talked at length about the wonder of a sixteen year old boy traveling alone across the country by train and horse-drawn carriage; the thrill of meeting Lindbergh, a national hero; and the dangers of a turned head for a young man in the national spotlight.

For Bill, as it is for many older folks, the past is shiny and bright in his mind, even as the present fades into gray confusion. It’s as though a giant spotlight shines back through the years highlighting clearest the years furthest away, with only peripheral light illuminating the years between. Or like looking into the wrong end of a telescope: 1929 is but a blink away, whereas the succeeding years at MIT, Edison’s labs, and NASA stretch away into the distance until we reach the present and he asks again when lunch will be served.



I may not have the opportunity to visit with Bill again, but I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to share the memories of his life for a while and to see through his eyes the legacy he leaves history. There are many things I like about my job, but my favorite aspect must be the unabashed use I make of this, the greatest pickup line known to archivists.

From the Chair, for the last time,  
Lisa Sanders, Archivist

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**Seattle Area Archivists Spring Meeting**  
**May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 - 4 PM**  
**NARA - Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)**  
**6125 Sand Point Way NE**  
**Seattle, WA 98115**  
**"Building Constituencies"**

Charles 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!

Click [here](#) for directions.

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## **Repository News**

### **Seattle Municipal Archives**

#### **New Focus in the Photo Archives**

The Archives initiated a new program designed to help City departments store, manage, and locate current city-wide photography in one central location. The staff are meeting with City agencies to develop procedures to transfer images files and accompanying description, such as dates and subjects, to the Archives. The images will be incorporated into the Photograph Index and made available for use by City employees and the general public.

Julie Viggiano is the Program Manager, coming to the Archives from the Rockefeller Archives Center. Also recently hired to work in the Photo Archives program are Jeff Ware, most recently with the City of Seattle Clerk's Office, and Julie Kerksen, most recently from the Museum of History and Industry.

- Anne Frantilla

### **Seattle Public School Archives**

Seattle Public Schools Archives has hired Dale Stirling as an hourly professional archivist.

Since he began on April 4th, Dale has, among other things, processed the papers from former school board president Don Nielsen and is currently working on the papers from former long-time Seattle Times

education reporter, Constantine (Gus) Angelos.

## **King County Archives**

### **Reconstructing Seattle's Salmon Bay Waterfront**

Construction (1911-1916) of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the Hiram Chittenden Locks raised the water level in Salmon Bay, adjacent to Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. In its initial right-of-way condemnation action, c.1895, King County erroneously provided for a raise of seven, as opposed to nine, feet. As a result of subsequent litigation, the county was required to conduct a second condemnation action (1915) prior to canal completion to accommodate the actual water levels.

King County Archives staff are currently reprocessing a collection of records (Series 102-276: Records, Salmon Bay Waterway condemnation survey no. 1255) which resulted from the 1915 survey. The records include a small number of text files, primarily field books; and over 100 maps, cross-section drawings, and plans. The graphical materials primarily relate to sawmills and shingle mills on Salmon Bay that were to be adversely affected by the raising of water levels. Present for most of the mills are ground, foundation and utility plans; cross sections, and profiles. Also present are finely detailed technical drawings of equipment within the mills (e.g., jack screw, band saw, etc.). Most of these drawings and plans are hand-drawn in ink on linen. The collection also includes a number of reference maps acquired by King County, or reproduced from other sources

(primarily railroad companies and the City of Seattle Engineering Department).

Utilizing descriptive tools present in its new collection management/reference database, County Archives Records Database System (CARDS; now in final development stages), Archives staff and researchers now have access to the graphical materials at the container (roll) level. Further description at the item level is anticipated, as well as additional physical processing.

In reprocessing this series, Archives staff determined that the textual and graphical materials relate closely to a group of photographs held by the Seattle Municipal Archives. The photographs, originally created by the City of Seattle Engineering Department, show various Salmon Bay sawmills and shingle mills. A placard reading "9 | 7" is visible in many of the images. This shows the predicted difference between the two water levels.

With the centenary of the Lake Washington Ship Canal approaching (2017), it is anticipated that collections in both repositories will be of increased interest to historians. Meanwhile, the Salmon Bay materials should prove useful for researching the Ballard waterfront, the early twentieth century lumber industry, and Northwest industrial and railroad history generally.

## A Report on "Picture This"

--Julie Viggiano Seattle Municipal Archives

During the first week of May, three local Archivists presented to a combined audience of 300 people here and in Portland, OR. Sponsored by the National Archives and Records Administration, University of Washington, the Seattle Municipal Archives, the City of Portland, and Multnomah County, Picture This: Digital Photos & Records Management was presented by a joint panel of archivists from three of the above organizations.

Representing NARA, Bill Greathouse spoke from his more than 20 years of experience as Director of Records Management for the Pacific Alaska Region. He provided for the audience a background in digital image files terminology as well as a description of best practices for storage and preservation. Bill also covered such material as the absence of metadata associated with photographs, the propensity to create many more photographs than are used to document the subject, software obsolescence and compatibility, the relatively large size of the digital files, and records retention issues.

University Archivist of the University of Washington, John Bolcer demonstrated the use of open-source file management software in institutional archives. The web based utility D-Space,

which the UW Libraries are using to manage digital objects in their collections, is a digital repository designed to capture, store, index, preserve, and redistribute digital objects. Issues addressed included system implementation, requirements and challenges, reference capabilities, and preservation management. John also included his impressions of the software and the pros and cons of its usability.

Finally, Assistant City Archivist Julie Viggiano detailed the Seattle Municipal Archives' new Digital Image Management project. In its development stages, this project is being designed to accommodate the large number of digital image files being generated by City Employees. This project is a training and outreach effort, as well as an archival movement towards building a robust digital image catalog. In this case study, Julie discussed why the project is being developed, how it works, where it is now and where she hopes it will go in the future.

Pleased with the turnout and interest in the topic presented, the NARA/UW/SMA joint forum looks forward to collaborating again next year. This year's production was such a success that they have been asked to return to Portland for an encore presentation!

## "MAY I HELP YOU?"

--Rebecca Pixler  
King County Archives

Every reference archivist is very aware, when responding to client queries, that "the only thing you know for sure is that you don't know what you're going to get." King County Assistant Archivist Rebecca Pixler had no idea, when she answered the

telephone a few minutes before closing time on January 9th, that responding to the request would take daily effort for the next three months.

The caller, a New York attorney, asked straightforwardly enough, "Do you have any photographs or 'Wanted' posters from the Ted Bundy criminal investigation?" She and her colleague were looking for visual

materials to accompany a class they were teaching on "the criminal mind-set."

The King County Archives holds 51 cubic feet of Bundy investigative files, including photographs and graphical materials, from the King County Sheriff's Office. Some years ago, Archives staff created a photocopied, redacted set of records and prepared folder and item inventories. Current reference practice is to send a set of the inventories to researchers, asking them to specify materials they would like to see.

It became clear to Archives staff, from telephone and e-mail conversations after the New York clients had received the inventories, that visuals for a classroom presentation were only a tiny part of the project. The attorneys were engaged in a large-scale research project about the Bundy case and they would be *very* happy to receive, and pay for, as much information as they could get. This meant--with the exception of several cubic feet of mainframe computer printouts of Washington State Volkswagen owners--reproductions of everything: text files, audiotapes, several large maps, and most of the photographs.

Between January and mid-April, Archives staff Deborah Kennedy and Rebecca Pixler duplicated the Bundy records. A small number of photographs were scanned in-house, but an outside vendor provided an additional 229 scans of photographs and eight scans of maps. Deborah duplicated

sixteen audiotapes, listening to interviews with psychics, mediums, and convicted killers. Rebecca made most of the 24,639 photocopies (mailed in 31 packages) and had the experience of finding her own name in the files. A group of pages copied from a 1974 city directory showed the names of everyone living on 12th Avenue NE in Seattle's University District...including Ted Bundy, one of his victims, and Rebecca, who was attending the University of Washington at the time.

The clients were happy with the work products and professed great satisfaction with the speed and thoroughness of the job. County administrators were happy with the vast increase in copying revenues generated by the Archives during the first quarter of 2006. Archives staff, however, were just happy to have the project completed!

King County Archives Accession 05-009, Sheriff's Office Closed Homicide Files (Ted Bundy), is available to researchers in four records series: investigative files, photographic files, map files and audiotapes. The original investigative files and autopsy photographs are closed until 2064 to protect the privacy of victims, their families and individuals suspected but not charged in these cases. A redacted set of investigative files is open for research purposes as are the remaining photograph files (including digital versions of the 229 images scanned in 2006), the map files and the audiotapes.

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## Events

**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 17-20, 2006**

### **Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting**

Butte, Montana

#### **"Archives in the 21st Century"**

Join us in historic Butte for an annual meeting filled with fabulous tours, informative workshops, thought-provoking sessions, fine food and beverage, and quality time with your great NWA colleagues. All this for the low, low registration price of \$60!

**Wednesday May 17**

Archival Basics Workshop (Day 1)

**Thursday May 18**

Archival Basics Workshop (Day 2)

Advocacy Workshop

Sessions on May 19 and 20 include tribal archives, processing techniques, and digital

institutional repositories. See the program for more details.

<http://weblib.lib.umt.edu/faculty/mccrea/nwalnwaindex.htm>

**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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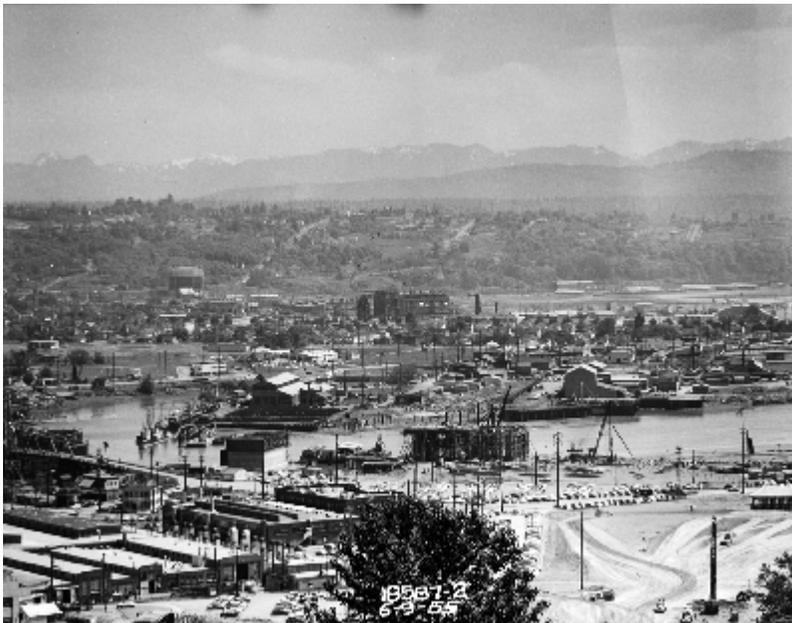
## Images from the Archives

Recently cataloged in the Seattle Municipal Archives are images depicting the construction of the 1st Avenue South Bridge over the Duwamish Waterway from 1955.



Construction of the 1st Avenue  
South Bridge  
June 1955

Item 52644



Distant view of the 1st Avenue  
South Bridge construction  
June 1955

Item 52651