

# ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle  
Seattle Municipal Archives

Number 56 Summer 2016

Office of the City Clerk  
Legislative Department

## Message from the City Archivist

As many of you know by now, I am retiring in early August after more than three decades leading the Seattle Municipal Archives. This final “Message from the City Archivist” is a bit longer than usual. It contains a few acknowledgments, some musing on public service, and an observation on an event I recently attended. The latter comes first.

On July 4, my wife and I joined hundreds of family, friends, and observers at the annual naturalization ceremony at Seattle Center. Over 500 individuals from 85 countries were sworn in as new citizens of the United States. As civic rituals go, this is about as “feel good” an experience as one can have.

While dignitaries (including Mayor Murray, Governor Inslee, and Senator Cantwell) gave heartfelt remarks about citizenship, three Native American musicians told a wisdom story, and the Total Experience Gospel Choir sang, the power of the day resided in the 503 individuals who became citizens during the ceremony.

National politics can sometimes make us cynical and we can sometimes become a little uncomfortable with overt expressions of patriotism. Those feelings melt away, at least for a while, when challenged by the unadulterated joy evident in the hearts of those who have chosen to become U.S. citizens.

What does this have to do with archives?

I can make the case about naturalization records and the other source materials created around immigration and the process of applying for citizenship. Those records are invaluable in conducting family history, as well as social history. Or I could discuss documentation of the ceremony itself—a ritual of American civic pride.

But for me, watching the machinery of government support the dreams of people who sought citizenship for untold numbers of reasons is an expression of the positive role of government and validation of my deep belief in public service.

It has been a privilege to serve the citizens of Seattle, and the officials and agencies that represent them, for 31.5 years. This is not a pro forma statement; it is a strongly held conviction. Government rightfully plays an important, necessary, and overwhelmingly supportive role in the lives of the City’s residents.

In broad categories, City agencies serve the public safety, social service, arts and culture, public utilities, transportation, parks and recreation, and neighborhood development needs of Seattle. And it has been my great pleasure to preserve records illustrating the evolution of those functions over time.

I like to think that the Seattle Municipal Archives has served its constituents well for three decades. But it is not something that I could do alone; the Archives has a great staff. Respect and responsiveness are values I’ve tried to model; the SMA staff have embraced those values and taken them to another level, indeed.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank the current archives staff—Anne Frantilla, Julie Irick, Julie Kerksen, and Sarah Shipley; as well as Jeff Ware who left in 2010—for their excellent work in making the Seattle Municipal Archives a national model for local government archives.

I also want to thank the City Records Management Program staff—Jennifer Winkler, Andrea Bettger, and Steve Anderson, as well as former staffer Gail Snow—for making our work so much easier.

The Archives has been blessed with an abundance of volunteers, particularly during the past decade. Volunteers come to us for many reasons. Students and recent graduates might be building a portfolio as they look for their first archives job, others may just want to work with “cool stuff.” Whatever the reasons, volunteers have allowed us to undertake a wide array of projects that we might never have been able to tackle. I am extremely grateful to them and to our staff who guide them through the training to ensure that they are successful at what they do.

We live in what some sociologists and political scientists have referred to as a volunteer society. *(cont.)*

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## New Exhibit: Salmon Bay Sawmills



A new [exhibit](#) highlights the mills that existed on the shore of Salmon Bay before the Lake Washington Ship Canal.

*(Archivist cont.)*

Most of us have the freedom to choose to be politically active; to join whatever social, cultural, or religious organizations we wish; to volunteer for social service or charitable institutions...or in an archives. The 503 new citizens come from different backgrounds and experiences; their needs are varied. Many come from national experiences that did not include the freedom to make voluntarism a choice. Listening to them recite the oath of citizenship reminded me of an important aspect of what we do in the Archives. We must be cognizant of the many needs of our constituents and of their varied circumstances and try to put ourselves in the place of the other. That, I think, is the essence of good public service.

-- *Scott Cline*

## New Exhibit: A 1978 Housing Crisis

In the late 1970s, a housing crisis came to a head in Seattle. Because of an economic downturn, builders could not obtain financing. It was possible, however, for apartment building owners to convert their units to condominiums. Availability of apartments in already tight rental market was reduced further. Seattle City Council addressed the "condominiumization" of apartment buildings in 1978, placing a six-month moratorium on conversions so they could consider the issue.

A new [exhibit](#), with research performed in large part by volunteer Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman, illustrates the issue with both textual and audio records. The voices of apartment owners, realtors, and builders can be heard alongside advocacy groups and citizens. One of the tenants described herself as an "urban refugee," displaced from her rental apartment. An 85-year-old woman, Ruth Campbell, was featured in the *Seattle Times*, highlighting one of the biggest concerns, displacement of the elderly.

**HOUSING CRISIS HITS  
SEATTLE - BUT NO  
MONEY FOR TENANTS!**

Seattle Tenants Union flyer, August 1978. Box 13, Folder 11, Charles T Royer Legal Subject Files (Record Series 5274-03), *Seattle Municipal Archives*

[Visit the exhibit!](#)

## 4Culture Grant: Processing Department of Neighborhoods Building Survey Photograph Collection

Photo archivist Julie Irick received a grant from 4Culture to process approximately 14,000 color slides taken by Victor Steinbrueck and Folke Nybert in the late 1970s. About 30-40% of the slides focus on neighborhoods and industrial areas bordering the Ship Canal. Providing access to these images is timely, as the Lake Washington Ship Canal is celebrating its centennial in 2017. Volunteer Jen Woodfield will provide processing support for this project.

Sample images include a tugboat towing a barge through the Fremont Cut and a view of the

Montlake Bridge from Portage Bay.



Tugboat, 1978.  
Item 178791,  
*Seattle Municipal Archives*

View from Salmon Bay, April 1977.  
Item 178793,  
*Seattle Municipal Archives*



## Interns and Volunteers

We recently bid farewell to volunteer Maris Sovold after two years of working on our zoo photo collection. We wish her well on her move to Denver!

Thanks as well to Kelly Burton, who left us recently for a job with the University of Washington.

Alexandra Swast is back volunteering with us, processing records from City Council, Parks, Woodland Park Zoo, and other departments.

New volunteer Rae Brown has been working on Central Staff records and Supreme Court briefs.

Rachel Steendahl continues her work on our City Light map collection.

Staci Crouch has been working on General Files and City Council committee records, as well as getting our small reference library into shape.

Rachel Pearson just started a summer stint with us and will be diving into a number of projects.

We will be losing our champion documents cataloger Cass McQueen, but wish her well on her new job!

## Newly Processed: Allan Pomeroy Records

The records of Allan Pomeroy measure 4.4 cubic feet and date from 1906 to 1970, although most are from his 1952-1956 mayoral term. Included are the Mayor's speeches to visiting conventions, records relating to his participation in the Japan-American Pacific Coast Mayors' Conference, and his efforts to explore a proposed toll road between Tacoma and Everett.

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*Read the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to*

**NITE LETTER** February 17, 1954

Barrie M. White, Jr., President  
Operation Statehood  
1542 G Street  
Anchorage, Alaska

Seattle's good will toward Alaska has been demonstrated on many occasions. The solution of Alaskan shipping problems during the past year is important current evidence that we believe in "the present and future importance of Alaska". Statehood is an undebatable goal. May your efforts be crowned with success.

Allan Pomeroy  
Mayor of Seattle

Mayor Pomeroy supports Alaska's bid for statehood in a February 17, 1954 telegram.

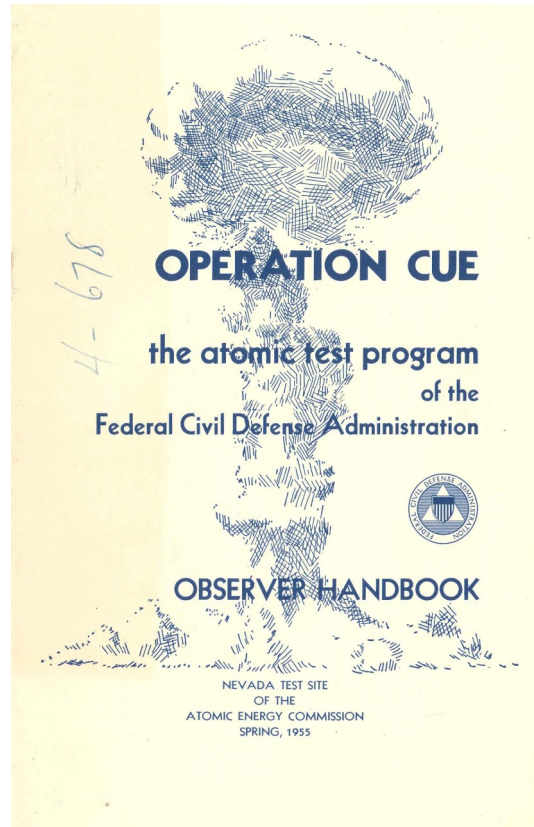
Box 6, Folder 9, Record Series 5267-01, Seattle Municipal Archives

Over forty photographs of Mayor Pomeroy are available [online](#), in addition to the textual records.



Mayor Pomeroy entering his office, undated. Item 178858, Seattle Municipal Archives

(Pomeroy cont.)



Mayor Pomeroy was invited to attend the test explosion of the atomic bomb. Box 5, Folder 9, Record Series 5267-01, Seattle Municipal Archives



Mayor Pomeroy in kilt, undated. Item 178861, Seattle Municipal Archives

## YouTube and Flickr News

One of the most popular images on SMA's Flickr site lately is an aerial view of Gas Works Park, before it became a park. Taken in approximately 1973, the photograph shows the gas plant with the Grandma's Cookies sign behind it.



Site of Seattle's Gas Works Park, 1973  
[Item 177127](#), *Seattle Municipal Archives*



Kim-An Libererman reading, "2009 Words' Worth Poetry Reading," 2009. Item 5751, Record Series 4650-12, Seattle Municipal Archives.

## 94 Years Ago: Earwig Menace

In early 1922, the Commissioner of Health, the Superintendent of Streets and Sewers, the district horticulture inspector, and the director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture all wrote to the City Council asking for help eradicating a citywide earwig problem. Queen Anne resident George Cowell also wrote City Council, describing the pest in great detail and emphasizing that even extraordinary efforts like his would not eliminate the problem if others did not do their part. Read Cowell's letter in the [May 2016 Find of the Month](#).

## 49 Years Ago: Seattle City Light Advertisement



### You can put an electric water heater just about anywhere

No special venting or insulation required with flameless electric water heating. Goes wherever there's electricity... even beneath counters, in the attic or crawl space. Electric water heaters are clean, quiet and trouble-free. Nice to live with.

### your Seattle City Light

TAX PAYING/SELF-SUPPORTING/CITY OWNED

Newspaper advertisement, January 1967.  
*City Light Advertising Scrapbooks (Record Series 1201-03)*,  
*Seattle Municipal Archives*

## Upcoming Events

- July 9 Historic Seattle - "Digging Deeper" 9 AM -12 PM  
Built heritage research using land ownership  
King County Archives
- July 11 Seattle Area Archivists meeting 6 PM  
Capitol Cider, 818 E. Pike St
- July 25 Scott Cline honored at Seattle City Council 2 PM
- August 14 SS Virginia V Cruise: 100 Years of the Lake  
Washington Ship Canal - Journey through Ballard  
Locks and discovery history through stories and  
hands-on activities led by Friends of the Ballard  
Locks and MOHAI educators

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