

# ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle  
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk  
Legislative Department

## Message from the City Archivist

It's a great time to be a government archivist!

Three moments during the third week in January give voice to that sentiment. The week was dominated by the Presidential Inauguration, a stunning event, not only for the symbolic--and real--importance of an African-American taking the oath of office, but also for the peaceful, orderly, and nearly seamless transfer of power that we take for granted. The other two moments are of the same cloth. On his first full day in office, President Obama issued an executive order broadening access to presidential records and issued a memorandum calling for new FOIA guidelines that would carry a presumption in favor of disclosure.

None of these three moments have a direct, practical impact on the Seattle Municipal Archives. However, what they say about records and governance can't be stressed enough. The presidential transition reminds us that our republican form of democracy fosters continuity and stability, even in the face of broad policy differences between the parties in our system. The President's orders on access to information remind us that, in some measure, the health and moral legitimacy of our democracy depends on the right of its citizens to know what its government is doing...or has done.

Citizens in the State of Washington are blessed with strong public records and disclosure laws. As a government archivist, I deal with public records requests (the State of Washington's version of the FOIA request) quite often. While these requests are often time consuming and resource intensive, I fully understand that records laws and the right of access are part of the bedrock in constructing government accountability and transparency.

Accountability and transparency are fundamental values for government archivists, part of our public service ethic. And these values place us squarely in the ranks of active agents who support and foster the democratic process.

President Obama has committed his administration to open government. And as citizens, it is our responsibility to hold him to this policy. That the President's statements on access to records came at the very inception of his new administration speaks volumes about the President's support for open government and the people's right to know.

— Scott Cline, City Archivist

## Newly Processed: Mayor Uhlman Records

The records of Mayor Wesley C. Uhlman are available for research at the Seattle Municipal Archives. Transferred recently from the University of Washington Special Collections, the records shed light on many of the issues the City of Seattle faced in the 1970s.

Wes Uhlman was born in 1935 in Cashmere, Washington. He attended Aberdeen High School, Seattle Pacific College, and the University of Washington, where he served as president of the Young Democrats. He married a classmate, Leila Hammond, and returned to UW for law school in 1956.

In 1958, as a 23-year-old law student, he became the youngest member of the State Legislature, representing the 32nd district in the Washington State House of Representatives. He served four terms before running for, and winning, a seat in the Washington State Senate.

Uhlman was elected Mayor in 1969, the youngest chief executive in Seattle's history and the first Democrat in almost 30 years. He was immediately faced with a host of problems ranging from racial tensions and large anti-war demonstrations to a police scandal and an economic downturn.

Continued on page 2



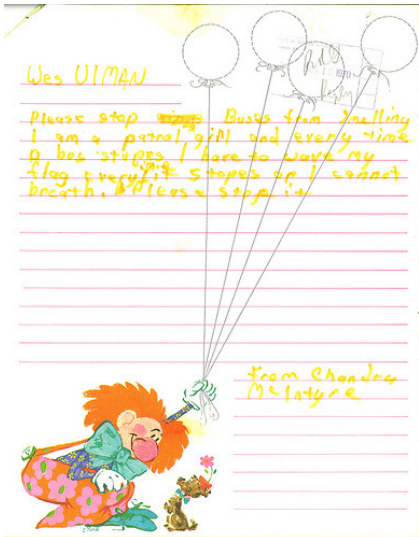
Mayor Uhlman at Pike Place Market anniversary in August 1976.

*Item 36726, Seattle Municipal Archives*

Uhlman contd.

He responded by overhauling the city bureaucracy, encouraging increased citizen participation in government, and expanding social services. He was a strong believer in affirmative action, and the percentage of City workers who were minorities doubled during his time in office.

Uhlman left the mayor's office in 1977 after serving two terms that included an unsuccessful run for governor in 1976. After his political career, he worked in law and real estate development.



One of the mayor's constituents wrote him about her perspective on environmental pollution. "Wes Uhlman: Please stop buses from smelling. I am a patrol girl and every time a bus stops I have to wave my flag..."

*Wesley Uhlman Subject Files (5287-02), Seattle Municipal Archives*

These records help illustrate many of Seattle's major issues and challenges in the 1970s, including economic woes and unemployment, transportation and land use, and the Forward Thrust projects. The emerging historic preservation movement can be seen in records relating to Pioneer Square and the thwarted redevelopment of Pike Place market. Civil rights-related issues are represented by records relating to desegregation, redlining, affirmative action, and gay rights. And increasing concerns about the health of the environment are reflected in files about pollution, Earth Day, and new environmental policies.

## One Hundred Years Ago

The City was busy getting ready for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition one hundred years ago. A special committee was named by the Chamber of Commerce to decorate the city for the Exposition. The Committee wrote the Mayor on April 30, 1909, to request funds to construct a Welcome Arch "to be located on or near Fortson Place." C.B. Yandell of the Chamber wrote, "...I desire to direct your attention to the fact that the arch erected by the city of Portland, for the Lewis & Clark Exposition, made such an impression upon visitors that the city afterwards determined to

retain it as a permanent feature, believing that the impression which it made upon the minds of visitors to that city was well worth the cost of maintenance... [I]f the arch is to be erected, work must begin at the earliest possible moment."

City Council and the Mayor approved the project, passing Ordinance 21037 to fund a welcome arch at the intersection of Second Avenue and Marion Street. The architects were Somervell & Cote and their contract stated they would be paid \$5993 for construction of the Arch. Unfortunately, the plans and drawings are not with the ordinance and are not in the Archives.

The Arch was finished in time. The Archives does not have a photograph, but fortunately there is one in the University of Washington Special Collections, which can be seen in our online AYPE exhibit.

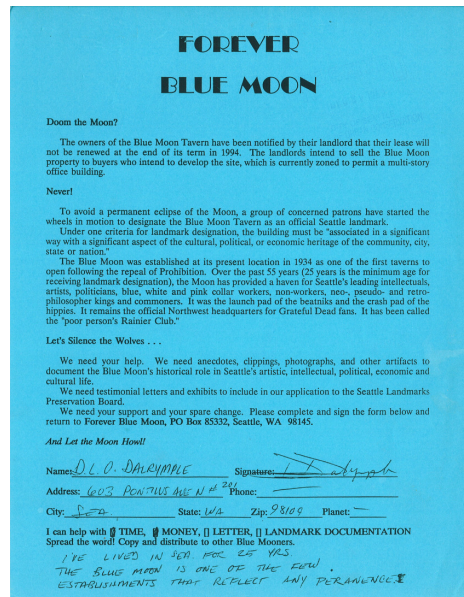
<http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Exhibits/AYPE/default.htm>

## Collection Focus: Seattle's Denied Landmarks

The Landmarks Preservation Board Records include records documenting the Board's decisions to deny a building, object, or structure historic landmark status. The records include nomination forms, news clippings, correspondence, reports, Board agendas, photographs, and additional background information related to the nominated properties.

Some properties represented in the records

were granted landmark status but lost their designation due to fire damage, property neglect, loss of insurance or lease. These properties include the Jolly Rodger Roadhouse, Kelleher House, the San Mateo Ferry and the Temple de Hirsch Sinai. The files are arranged alphabetically by property name.



Flyer soliciting support for the landmark designation process for the Blue Moon.

*Department of Neighborhoods, Denied Landmark Applications (5754-A5), Box 2, Folder 4*



Collection Focus cont.

Some properties documented in the collection include Franklin High School, the Music Box Theatre, the Newhalem buildings owned by Seattle City Light, and the Olympic Hotel. The Blue Moon Tavern files contain many interesting items of note including letters of support from authors Tom Robbins and Calvin Trillin and an audio cassette containing a KRAB radio station interview with Blue Moon regulars.



Snapshot of the Blue Moon signage.  
*Department of Neighborhoods, Denied Landmark Applications (5754-A5), Box 3, Folder 2.*

## Recently Indexed Photos

The Seattle Municipal Archives recently received, cataloged, and uploaded to the Photography Collection website over 1,500 digital photographs documenting the construction of the Joint Training Facility in White Center. This state-of-the-art facility serves the combined training needs of the Fire Department, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Seattle Department of Transportation. Along with classroom space, this complex includes a six-story high drill tower, overpass prop, collapsed building prop, trench prop, burn building, and vehicle extrication and foam area. Construction began in 2004 and the facility was dedicated in January, 2008 after the settlement of wetlands restoration controversies. These photos can be viewed by typing "[Joint Training Facility](#)" into the search box at the Municipal Archives online [Photography Index](#).



Early site construction, September 2004.  
*Item 159357, FFD Capital Programs Division Photos, Seattle Municipal Archives*



Drill Tower Construction, October, 2005.  
*Item 159357, FFD Capital Programs Division Photos, Seattle Municipal Archives*

## Events 2009

March 7: Pacific Northwest Historians Guild,  
Museum of History and Industry  
March 19: Women in the Fire Department  
Presentation at History House  
March 24: Women in the Fire Department  
Presentation at City Hall  
April 15-18: Northwest Archivists Conference,  
Portland, OR  
July 15-18: NAGARA Annual Meeting, Seattle

## Sightings of the Archives

As the online presence of the Archives grows, the connections made grow also. It's always interesting to see who is coming to visit the Archives online.

The Archives' Pike Place Market Centennial Exhibit received accolades from the Friends of the Market Newsletter in January 2009.

Those of you who want some good computer research should look at the Seattle Municipal Archives Pike Place Market Centennial posting. It gives a concise chronological history of the Market and presents the documents that make the Market history. In later chapters audio clips are included from the 1960's.

Here is the URL for this archival treasure:

<http://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits/ppm/>

VintageSeattle.com, which describes itself as a "High-Res Blog Visualizing the Emerald City's Past," wrote about the Open Housing Exhibit:

With it being Martin Luther King Jr. Day I thought we could go back into the Seattle Municipal Archives to get some local perspective. These 1964 photos show a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) sponsored protest of the Lake City and Aurora offices of Picture Floor Plans Inc. after a May 1963 investigation found it had discriminated against non-white buyers. Click [here](#) for an in-depth narrative of the Seattle Open Housing Campaign from 1959-1968.

The VintageSeattle link is:

<http://www.vintageseattle.org/2009/01/19/core-demonstrations-1964/>

Seattle Metblogs is part of international Metroblogging which started off as a more locally focused alternative news source in Los Angeles and has turned into the largest and fastest growing network of city-specific blogs on the Web. As part of its coverage on Martin Luther King Day, it also took a look at the Open Housing Exhibit and the Archives' website:

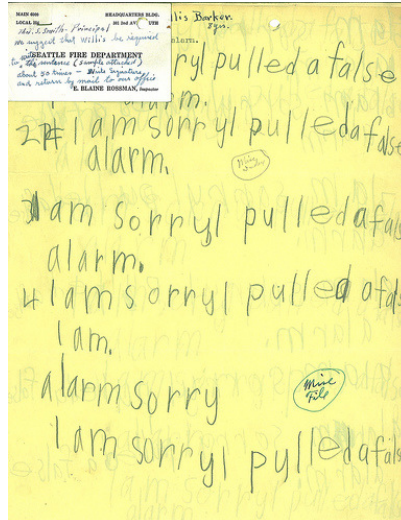
When Ann Dunham settled down on Capitol Hill in 1961, it's doubtful it was of her own volition. [The Seattle Municipal Archives](#) shows that the push for civil rights movement within Seattle began as early as 1949.... In 1953, the city council agreed and in 1957, the State passed the [Omni-bus Civil Rights Act](#). Although attempts were made to enforce such anti-discrimination legislation, white citizens (such as realtor John L. Scott) pressed to continue residential segregation... A request came to Seattle City Council in 1961 from the NAACP, "propos[ing] that the City pass an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing."

The Seattle Metblogs link is:

<http://seattle.metblogs.com/2009/01/19/obama-and-the-hill-part-2/>

The Flickr site maintained by the Archives continues to experience lots of traffic.

One popular recent item on the site is a document showing 8-year-old Willis Barker's punishment for pulling a fire alarm. A commenter wrote, "This is fantastic, thanks for sharing," and 12 people added the image to their favorites within two weeks of its posting. Barker wrote, "I am sorry I pulled a false alarm" 25 times, but actually got



off a bit easy, as the fire inspector recommended he be required to write it 50 times.

We have also received some useful information via the comments on our images. For example, on a 1915 photo of taxis being tested,



one commenter made note of the license plate, saying that 1915 was the first year Washington State issued the

plates, while another explained how the taxi meter was being calibrated in the photo.

Another commenter gave kudos to the site in general, saying, "I love what you are doing here - bringing the library into the homes and offices of people. I am new to Seattle and have much to learn and by far, this is the most incredible set of photos I have seen."

### Seattle Municipal Archives

600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 3, PO Box 94728  
Seattle, WA 98124-4728  
206 233-7807 or 206 684-8353  
archives@seattle.gov <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives>