

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

Number 18 Spring 2006

Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

New Focus in the Photo Archives

The Archives has initiated a new program designed to help City departments store, manage, and locate current city-wide photography in one central location. The Digital Image Management project The staff are meeting with City agencies to develop procedures to transfer image 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.

Currently, there are over 100,000 historic and modern images in the Photograph Index at www.seattle.gov/cityarchives. This includes the more than 40,000 digital files that were transferred from the City Photographer Image Bank site in 2004.

Other images acquired recently as part of this new program in the Archives are from City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and the Fleets and Facilities departments. The aim of the new project is to provide access to the city's ever-growing digital photograph collections through education, outreach, and image administration.

To date, archives staff have met with Parks Department, Seattle City Light, the Fire Department, Public Utilities, and others. Images recently transferred from the Office of Arts and

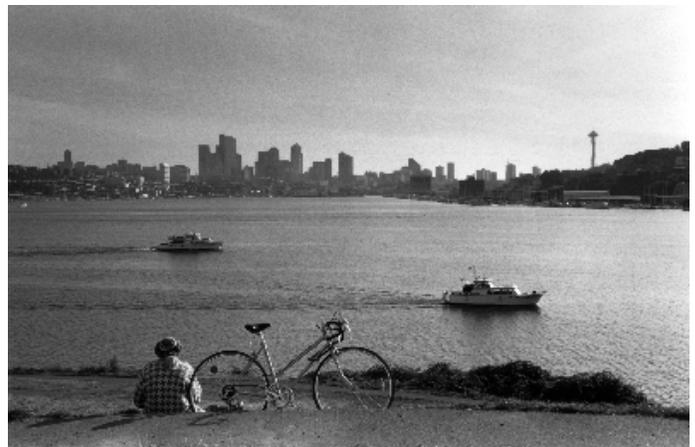
Cultural Affairs are featured here.



Alley, downtown
Seattle
c. 1985

Item 57742

Access to all materials in the Photograph Index is free; the only requirement is that the source of the image be cited. All new images that are uploaded to the Index can be downloaded at high resolution. Photographs can be used for presentations, publications, or to be enjoyed as art on your wall. Questions? Call Program Manager Julie Viggiano at (206) 233-5160 or e-mail her at julie.viggiano@seattle.gov.



View of downtown Seattle from Gasworks Park
c. 1985

Item 57729

100 Years Ago

In 1906 Charles Cowen donated land for what is now Cowen Park. The 1906 Parks Annual Report states: "Located just west of and adjoining Ravenna Park, a large private park, reached by the University carline, is Cowan [sic] Park, one of the new parks acquired during the past year. Thru the generosity and public-spiritedness of Charles Cowan this park of twelve acres was secured without cost to the city. It is traversed by a brook, the outlet of Green Lake, and consists of steep slopes, together with a considerable area of level land, which will make a small play-field. A design for its improvement has been secured from Olmsted Brothers, and work along these lines has been commenced; clearing and grading for walks, cleaning up of the slopes and other preliminary work having been started. This will be carried to completion and the planting done during the fall and winter of this year.

“The acquisition of this piece of land is considered of more than usual importance on account of its situation, being such as to form a link in the system of boulevards leading from Washington Park, the University Grounds, thru the University Addition, via Cowan Park and Meadow Place, to the shores of Green Lake.”

Films in the Seattle Municipal Archives

Films number in the hundreds in the Seattle Municipal Archives but until recently little was known about them. Thanks to the work of staff and volunteers, a database is available to explore film holdings at:

<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/film2.htm>.

The films in the Archives date from the 1920s to the 1970s although the largest numbers are from the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the films were created by Seattle City Light and Seattle Engineering Department. Not surprisingly, most of the films focus on Seattle public works projects. Spillway tests and construction footage of dams as well as narrative films on hydroelectric power on the Skagit River are included. The Ballard Bridge opening, the Spokane Street bridge in the 1930s are the subjects of other films. City Light's cooking school is featured in one film from 1949. Construction of the Alaskan Way seawall, installation of street lights, and footage City Engineer R. W. Morse make up some of the Engineering films. Other films document the construction of Freeway Park, the last day at the University Dump, and a civil defense training exercise. Other films feature employee events. A 1925 employee picnic at Fortuna Park is complete with captions. A fish fry from 1957 is the focus of another film.

The Seattle Municipal Archives is participating in the Washington Film Project grant at the University of Washington. One of the benefits of participating in this project is that staff and volunteers are learning how to clean, core, and can films themselves. Work preserving films will be able to continue after the grant period.

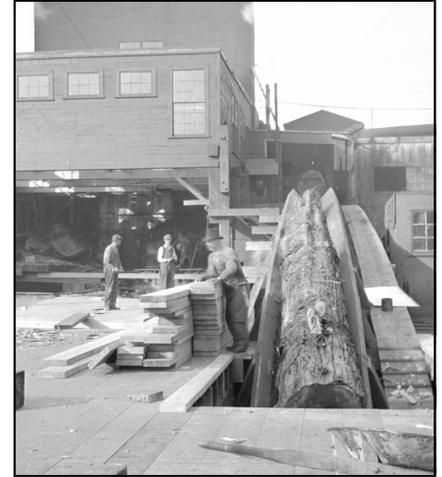
Very few films are available in alternate formats, such as videotape, for viewing. Researchers interested in viewing films should contact the Archives staff at archives@seattle.gov or 206 / 233-7807.

Recently Cataloged Photographs

Photographs recently added to the Archives Photograph Index date primarily from the 19-teens. They include images of sawmills in Ballard, in preparation for the condemnation of property for the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Many are interior views. Also added recently are images (from 1955) depicting construction of the 1st Avenue South Bridge across the Duwamish Waterway.

Seattle Cedar Lumber Company Mill, Ballard, September 1915

from Item 51845

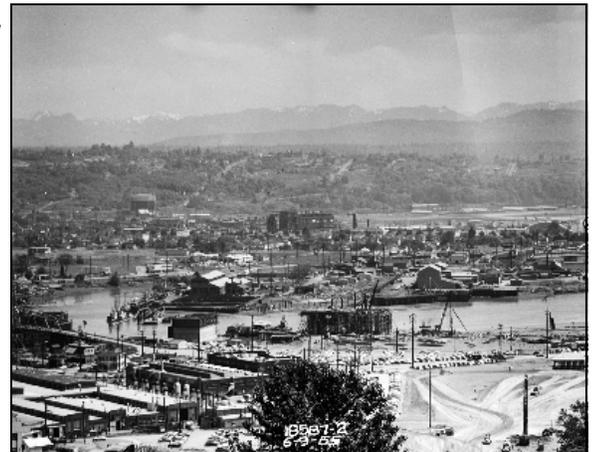


Construction of the 1st Avenue South Bridge over the Duwamish Waterway, June 1955

Item 52644

Distant view of construction of the 1st Avenue South Bridge over the Duwamish Waterway, June 1955

Item 52651



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>