Sound Archivist

NEWSLETTER OF THE SEATTLE AREA ARCHIVISTS

Featured Articles:

TRUMP AND RACIST HYSTERIA
BY CAITLIN OIYE

RACISM AND RECORDS RETENTION
BY JOSHUA ZIMMERMAN
Hello and Welcome.

As you saw from my last missive, the issue this time focuses on race. As archivists, how are we responding to issues of racism? How are we perpetuating them?

Working to educate my very white self amidst all of the internet chatter about white privilege and personal heartache about racially motivated police brutality, I had a moment of growth, a moment of better understanding. I came across an article explaining white privilege from the perspective of safety, and as a woman I could relate to that concern. At the heart of the article, the author pointed out that for anyone of color, and particularly for anyone with African ancestry, their physical safety, physical sovereignty is always in doubt. While I can leave the house and know that as long as I don't walk down the wrong street, as a white woman, I will probably not be assaulted, and certainly not by the police. On the other hand, this right to personal safety and police protection is not a given for anyone of color, and particularly male African Americans.

I relate to this concern deeply because as a woman, my right to my body, my rights of female sovereignty and safety are still in question. There are places and situations it's not safe for me to be in, simply because I am female. It is this reality that now enables me to begin to understand a little about about what it is to move through society as the subject of racial bias. But the truth is that it blows my mind, I can't really get a handle on it. I can't actually imagine a life where every choice I made for me, for my partner, for my kids, had to take this vulnerability into consideration.

My overwhelming sentiment is in the injustice of this reality. So I am asking myself, and now my colleagues, how do we participate in this injustice? How do we protest it? So far there are some interesting answers, and I hope this is a conversation that we will come back to professionally. For this issue we have Joshua Zimmerman discussing records retention policy for documentation of police brutality, as well as Caitlin Oiye discussing Donald Trump and the racial rhetoric he uses. I am curious to know what people think of these topics, or hear responses they might have. Please feel free to send them in, I'll publish them in the next issue.

Our next issue comes out in April, and for this issue I would like to focus on issues of professionalism. How is the archives profession doing in terms of improving the profession? What are we doing? Are we moving forward? Are we not, and if so, why not? Do people know what you do when you mention your work? How is outreach impacting your institution? What greater vision for the profession could we construct to move ourselves forward? I would love to hear from you in any capacity. Send me your thoughts, articles, ideas and admonitions.

Thoughts? Rebuttals? Fantastic Articles?
Send them to Odette Allen
Your SeaAA Member-At-Large
Seattle.Area.Archivists@gmail.com
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TRUMP AND RACIST HYSTERIA: REASONS TO REMEMBER INJUSTICE

By Caitlin Oiye

We are all aware of the November 13, 2015 terrorist attacks on Paris and the subsequent anti-Muslim backlash that occurred in the United States, particularly aimed at Syrian refugees fleeing their war-torn country.

The last months of 2015 were filled with racist rhetoric from politicians and pundits. The most notable air time went to Donald Trump who called for a database tracking Muslims while also declaring that we should bar them from entering the United States. As frustrating and frightening as this was to hear, I was reminded of the essential role community archives can play in responding to and combating these moments when history seems like it may repeat itself.

At Densho, a community archives/cultural heritage organization that preserves the story of the Japanese American incarceration, our work focuses on remembering and bringing attention to a historical injustice. Our mission, beyond preservation of the history, is to provide resources and educational pieces “as a means of exploring issues of democracy, intolerance, wartime hysteria, civil rights and the responsibilities of citizenship in our
increasingly global society.” We want people to learn from past mistakes through the use and analysis of first-hand accounts, historical photographs, documents, and ephemera.

Honestly, it can be easy to get lost in the day-to-day work we do, from interviewing narrators to digitizing materials to creating educational pieces. And we can forget our place in the larger narrative of racial history in the United States. But there are moments when we are reminded of the bigger picture, as we were these past few months.

When the racial rhetoric around the bombings and refugee crisis was at its strongest, specters of the incarceration appeared. On November 18, 2015 Mayor David Bower of Roanoke, Virginia released a memo in which he stated:

“I’m reminded that President Franklin D. Roosevelt felt compelled to sequester Japanese foreign nationals after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and it appears that the threat of harm to America from Isis [sic] now is just as real and serious as that from our enemies then.”

Mayor David A. Bowers, Roanoke, Virginia

And near the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Trump would not condemn the use of forced incarceration during World War II, telling Time:

“I certainly hate the concept of it [internment]. But I would have had to be there at the time to give you a proper answer . . . It’s a tough thing. It’s tough . . . But you know war is tough. And winning is tough. We don’t win anymore. We don’t win wars anymore. We don’t win wars anymore. We’re not a strong country anymore. We’re just so off.”

Donald Trump, via Time

Comments like these and the many other anti-refugee and anti-Muslim statements made by influential people in positions of leadership inflame racism and fear in this country. It is reminiscent of the war-time hysteria that allowed the incarceration to happen.

At Densho we responded by reaching out through Facebook, blog posts, and newsletters. One article we wrote compared statements made about the Japanese American community during World War II and those made today about the Syrian refugees (http://www.densho.org/5-alarming-similarities-between-anti-syrian-refugee-rhetoric-and-justifications-for-world-war-ii-era-mass-incarceration/).

This response was made possible through the preservation of the historical record in archives around the country. It is a perfect example of how we can look at the present through a historical lens.

Hide Yasutake, her children May and Joe, and a Nisei soldier. Their barracks are in Block 4, Apartment C. Via Densho. org. Courtesy of the Yasutake Family Collection.
The King County Archives announces the release of its new collection search site: www.kingcounty.gov/archives/search

From work, home, library, or via mobile device, now anyone can research King County Archives’ collection database. More than 200,000 records are currently in the database, and users can bookmark items of interest and use the site to request a research appointment.

The Archives is also in the early stages of making some of its rich photographic collection directly available through the site. At present, more than 1,000 scanned historical photographs are available for download, with many more on the way.

About the collection

King County Archives houses more than 20,000 cubic feet of historical records that document the history of King County government and the region from 1853 to the present. County functions represented include elections, economic development, community planning, public health, law enforcement and criminal justice, transportation, environmental protection, civil rights and social justice, marriages, property history, parks and open space, King County Council legislation, County Executive policy, and more. Record formats in the collection run the gamut from 19th Century handwritten ledgers, to large-scale architectural drawings, to audio and video recordings, to photographs, and to an increasing number of digital records.

To learn more about the King County Archives and to see online historical exhibits, visit www.kingcounty.gov/archives.

- Carol Shenk

NARA recognizes Black History Month with outreach efforts.

Displaying a lengthy list of resources on its Black History page, NARA is working to promote African American history during February by posting on Facebook and the NARA blog about federal collections featuring African Americans. These include Civil War Pension Files, the Freedmans Bureau Preservation Project, genealogical records and military records. - Odette Allen

Tacoma Community College Archive Reopens

Tacoma Community College's Archive was temporarily closed this past fall while the college conducted a search for a new archivist. Now that an archivist has been reinstated, the archive is once again open to the college community as well as Tacoma residents.

As one of the only community colleges in the state with an archive, Library Director Candice Watkins is excited to promote the value of the archive to the campus community. Reflecting the school's history of social engagement and activism, the archive is working to document the activities of the school and the student body.

- Odette Allen.
RACISM AND RECORDS RETENTION

By Joshua Zimmerman, Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle

- With the deaths of Trayvon Martin in Florida, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Eric Garner in New York City, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Sandra Bland in Texas, and Eric Harris in Tulsa, police brutality and racism have become important issues in the United States.

They have been discussed in newspapers, television, blogs, and especially social media, where the #BlackLivesMatter movement was born. Sadly, new cases arise almost daily where a black man or woman is killed by police with little or no recourse or care by many.

As a result of these murders and the protests that have erupted in the aftermath, our creative archival and librarian colleagues in collecting institutions and manuscript repositories have taken action and in one case acted quickly to capture ephemeral documentation that would have been otherwise lost. They have started collecting material to document these phenomena and have created projects and spaces where people can tell and share their stories of police brutality. Projects such as Archiving Police Violence in Cleveland, Documenting Ferguson, and Preserve the Baltimore Uprising augment and complement official accounts and often act as a counter-narrative.

What isn’t at the center of most of these popular or archival discussions are the mundane issues of records retention schedules and records management in general. If we explore what some of these investigations hinge upon, we find that records do indeed play a central role in police brutality and by extension, racism. Dashcam, bodycam, and bystander videos are records. Police union contracts are records. Internal investigation case files are records and it’s this particular type of record that I’d like to focus on here. I’d like commend the Washington State Archives and Records Management on recent steps taken to not only collect important police records, but actively create policy around these important records. Their Records Management Advice for December 2015 details the amended records series Internal Review/Investigation – Notorious/Historically Significant Incidents as well as information on what constitutes notorious or historically significant incidents. As they explain:

Did the incident:

- Cause controversy within the community, the county, or the state?
- Involve a serious injury or fatality?
- Involve a community-wide disaster (e.g., earthquake, mudslide, flood)?
- Create a major public threat that required a significant law enforcement response (e.g., major protest, riot, demonstration, terrorist threat)?
- Have a lasting impact on the community?
- Result in a major modification to the agency’s policy, training, or equipment?
- Cause a change in federal, state, or local law?
- Result in the participation of or investigation by a federal agency/body (e.g., National Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, etc.)?
- Attain significant contemporary public notoriety beyond the community?
• Become the subject of extensive news media coverage, a book, or a feature film?

• Become frequently cited in scholarly or professional literature or other resources?

While it hasn't made a social media splash, it does, however, represent a commitment to transparency and police accountability. This records series is a clear reaction to the killings listed above and from what I can tell, this type of proactive explanation and explicit records policy is rare among state and municipal archives across the country, though more research is needed on my part. Records that fall into this series must be retained for 6 years after review/investigation then transferred to the Washington State Archives (WSA) for permanent retention. Knowing that policy doesn't necessarily equal reality, the big question here is how WSA plans to enforce this policy and actually get municipalities and police forces to transfer these records to the archives after the conclusion of these investigations. Another question is whether the WSA will actively solicit records as these historically significant or notorious cases unfold. My hopes are that WSA will put pressure on these agencies to transfer records to ensure that they comply.

Police brutality and police records are one part of the larger problem of racism. When thinking about this topic, some people tend to look at it as simply a set of traits possessed by an individual. Using this logic one person is racist, while another is not. Others have developed a clear-cut and unambiguous line to determine racism. Does the person use the "n" word? Is this person a member of the Ku Klux Klan? Is this person part of a certain political party or member of a particular religion? Does this person have a particular socio-economic status? These simplistic indicators offer comfort to some, but it doesn't reflect the reality of racism today. Racism is systematic, held up and perpetuated by our laws, institutions, attitudes, media, and yes, even embedded in our records retention schedules. As a white person and an archivist in a liberal and "progressively-minded" city, it's hard to implicate yourself in this dense web of systemic racism, yet this is precisely what we need to do in order to undermine and ultimately eradicate it. If we start from this uncomfortable premise, then we are all in the game instead of passively watching from the comfort of the sidelines. Adopting this perspective asks that we look critically at our institutions and the policies that support them. I hope I've shown the enormous potential that something as minute and mundane as a single records series could have in addressing larger issues of police brutality and institutional racism. And though we might not all have police records on our shelves, we, as information professionals, are strategically placed within our various institutions to uncover some of these systematic inequalities and injustices. The point isn't that you see everything clearly and immediately. It's that you just start looking.
BASEMENT TO BAR STOOL:
INFORMAL MEET UPS!

Next meet-up, March 7th!

That's right. A regular professional drinks night. This is a chance to meet colleagues, share ideas and get to know each other in an informal atmosphere. You should really be there.

Next SeaAA Meeting: May, Date and Time to be announced soon! Currently seeking hosts! Show us your Archive!

Send proposals to our Chair, Lindsay Zaborowski, at seattle.area.archivists@gmail.com.

Steering Committee Elections: March 31st

Do you want to join the Steering Committee and help plan our activities? We are seeking two nominations or self-nominations for Chair and for Treasurer for the election we will hold in advance of the May meeting.

Please submit your nominations by March 31st, to the attention of our Chair, Lindsay Zaborowski, at seattle.area.archivists@gmail.com.

The dates/times through July 2016 will be:

- March 7th, 6pm
- May 9th, 6pm
- July 11th, 6pm
SEATTLE EVENTS CALENDAR:

- **Saturday Feb 13th, MOHAI Black History Month celebration. 11am-4:30pm**
  Special film screenings, performances, photography, and more! Participate in a community panel discussion continuing the Town Hall Seattle conversation on the role of Black Lives Matter and the civil rights movement in Hip-Hop. $7 special admission price all day, which includes all programming. - See more at: http://www.akcho.org/akchocalendar/

- **Monday Feb 15th, Presidents' Day Celebration at NAAM, 11am-2pm**
  Families and educators are invited to celebrate Presidents' Day with us at the Northwest African American Museum. There will be educational activities, including Michelle and Barack dress up, make-and-take presidential finger puppets, and storytelling by Eva Abram. Exhibits will be open. Explore local and national stories on your own or take a tour. This is a free event. The Northwest African American Museum is located at 2300 S Massachusetts Street in Seattle. [www.naamnw.org](http://www.naamnw.org)

- **Saturday Feb 20th, Seattle Asian American Film Festival, Densho, 2:30pm**
  Seattle Asian American Film Festival - Densho Densho will co-present a series of short films about the Asian American experience in the Pacific Northwest. The event will begin at 2:30 and is free. The screening includes a short documentary by George Takei, a film about Shiro Kashino, a World War II Nisei veteran, and another that examines the model minority stereotype. Visit the Seattle Asian American Film Festival website to see the full line-up. RSVP for the event here: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

- **Wednesday, Feb 24th. Complex Exchange: Race, Power and the Politics of Representation - NAAM 7-9pm**
  Join us at the Northwest African American Museum for this evening of provocative conversation amongst Barbara Earl Thomas, Zithri Saleem and Quinton Morris. Explore what happens when one is deeply immersed in art, technology and music and how it relates to questions of tradition and innovation: Owning a tradition not associated with African Americans. How technology is as much about African Americans as anything you can find out there. Knowing who you are as an artist and musician. Complex Exchange is a program partnership between NAAM and the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). This first in a series is inspired by Kehinde Wiley: The New Republic, (opening February 11 at SAM) and The Harmon and Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art: Works on Paper (at NAAM through April 17). The Northwest African American Museum is located at 2300 S Massachusetts Street, Seattle. This program is free, if you RSVP. [www.naamnw.org](http://www.naamnw.org)

- **Thursday Feb 18th, MOHAI's History Cafe - Queer People of Color Artistry Explored. 6:30-7:30pm**
  A panel of Seattle artists discuss their experiences as queer people of color (QPOC) and the representation and visibility of QPOC in media, history, activism, and the art world. DJ SassyBlack of Cat of THEE Satisfaction will moderate the conversation. Free but does not include museum admission. [www.mohai.org](http://www.mohai.org)
Events, Cont.

- **Thursday Feb 25th, NAAM Genealogy Speaker Series: Janice C. Lovelace, 6-8pm.**
  Janice C. Lovelace will offer an in-depth look at the physical and emotional effects of the trauma of slavery on descendants. An overview of DNA, epigenetics and inheritance of health issues will also be explored. At the Northwest African American Museum, 2300 S Massachusetts Street, Seattle
  [www.naanmw.org](http://www.naanmw.org)

- **Thursday March 3rd, Exhibit opening reception - Wing Luke Museum, 6-8pm.**
  The Wing Luke Museum and Interim-CDA present: Seeds of Change, Roots of Power: The Danny Woo Community Garden. Celebrate this neighborhood resource which preserves culture, tradition and identity, and helps support a healthy diet and lifestyle. The garden bridges generations and plants the seed for the future. Light refreshments provided and speaking program to follow. Free.
  [www.wingluke.org](http://www.wingluke.org)

- **Wednesday March 9th, Gardens of Eden: American Visions of Residential Communities - Historic Seattle presentation, 6:30 - 9:00 PM**
  Learn about historic but remarkably progressive approaches to housing a growing metropolis when Dr. Robert B. MacKay, editor/author for "Gardens of Eden" and former director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, teams up with Lawrence Kreisman, co-author of "The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest" and Historic Seattle program director, to discuss early 20th century residential developments in their respective regions. Co-sponsored by the Mount Baker Community Club and held at the Mount Baker Community Club, 2811 Mount Rainier Drive S, in Seattle's Mount Baker neighborhood. $35 general public.

- **Saturday March 12th, Digging Deeper: Special Collections, University of Washington, 1:30-3pm.**
  Digging Deeper is Historic Seattle’s program designed to provide insight to research materials in the many archives and libraries in Seattle and King County. In March the visit is to Special Collections at the University of Washington Libraries. Its holdings focus upon history and culture of the Pacific Northwest region. Lisa Oberg, Head of Public Services, will provide us with a behind-the-scenes view of this archive, and share new information on what research aids are available. The archive is open and accessible to the public. $10 general public. Register at 206-622-6952, ext. 221.

- **Saturday April 9th. Redmond Speaker Series - The Olympic - Story of Seattle's Landmark Hotel, 1924-2004**
  The Olympic Hotel has been the “grand dame” of Seattle hotels since it was built in 1924. Alan Stein, author and long time staff historian for HistoryLink, shares a mix of little-known vignettes and a travel through time as “life in the Olympic” reflected events beyond its doors. Redmond Historical Society Saturday Speaker Series. (Doors open at 10:00). Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center. 16600 NE 80th St., Redmond, WA. Suggested $5 donation for non-members. Speakers subject to change.
  [www.redmondhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.redmondhistoricalsociety.org)

- **Northwest Archivists Annual Conference, April 28-30th**
  The NWA Annual Conference will be in Seattle at the beautiful Hotel Deca, near the University of Washington. Early-bird registration deadline is March 31st. It promises to be a great conference and includes:
  • Interesting sessions and pre-conference workshops.
  • Stellar vendors and sponsors.
  • Exciting post-conference tours and activities.
  • Networking with your colleagues

Register at: [http://northwestarchivistsinc.wildapricot.org](http://northwestarchivistsinc.wildapricot.org)
MOVERS AND SHAKERS: NEW HIRES AND LOCAL MOVEMENT IN THE PROFESSION.

ELIZABETH RUSSELL: ADJUNCT FACULTY AT WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY FOR WINTER QUARTER.

In addition to her many hats at the University of Washington, Elizabeth is teaching Arrangement and Description for WWU's Archives and Records Management program.

Got a new intern you're psyched about? Ecstatic to have a full time job in the field? Ecstatic to have any job in the field?!?

I want to feature you here, send me your position and a pic!

Seattle.area.archivists@gmail.com

TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE HIRES NEW ARCHIVIST:

Tacoma Community College opened its archive in 2012 with the unstoppable Elizabeth Russell. Elizabeth has moved on and yours truly has stepped up to attempt to fill her shoes.
SEATTLE AREA ARCHIVISTS

The Steering committee of the SeaAA :
Chair: Lindsay Zaborowski
Vice Chair and Treasurer: Amy Heidrick
Secretary: Jeff Winter
Member-At-Large: Odette Allen

Questions, comments and communication can be sent to:
Seattle.Area.Archivists@gmail.com

Newsletter contributions actively sought, please email us your ideas and projects!

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