

## Local History Digitization in Snohomish and Island Counties Gets a Boost from the Washington State Library

A recent grant from the Washington State Library has sparked a growing digitization program in Snohomish and Island counties, providing citizens with online access to the unique historical materials of local heritage organizations. The [Digitize Our Community History](#) project—the brainchild of Sno-Isle Libraries' Colleen Brazil—is described in this Friday, April 18 article from the Everett Herald:

[www.sos.wa.gov/q/DigitizeCommunityHistory](http://www.sos.wa.gov/q/DigitizeCommunityHistory)

**Background:** In 2012-2013, the Washington State Library awarded Sno-Isle Libraries with \$5,435 as part of a [Washington Rural Heritage](#) grant opportunity aimed at giving libraries the skills to digitize local historical collections. This grant funding was used by the Langley branch of Sno-Isle Libraries to purchase digitization equipment and partner with the nearby South Whidbey Historical Society. Staff from the Washington State Library provided in-depth training in all aspects of digitization—everything from performing copyright research, to digital imaging and advanced digitization topics, to cataloging—and also provided the digital library database and website for the project. The collaboration resulted in a freely available, online digital collection documenting the history of South Whidbey Island: [www.washingtonruralheritage.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/whidbey](http://www.washingtonruralheritage.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/whidbey)



*Loggers with Calligan Logging Company, Whidbey Island, circa 1887.*

According to Becky Bolte, local grant project manager at Sno-Isle, “The digitized photos and film are now available online from the Sno-Isle website to students, historians, and genealogists around the world. Sno-Isle Libraries was interested in learning more about local history digitization and developing a process through the South Whidbey Digitization Project that could be implemented in the other 21 communities that Sno-Isle serves. Our intent is to continue and broaden the work accomplished through the grant.”



*Collaborative digitization crew at the South Whidbey Historical Society, 2013.*

Building on the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained through the State Library grant, Brazil, and colleagues at Sno-Isle Libraries successfully replicated the Washington Rural Heritage model at a local level beginning in late 2013. To date they have partnered with five local organizations to digitize and provide access to their photographic collections (see their Historical Photo Archive here: <http://sno-isle.org/catalog/photos>)

Sno-Isle Libraries has brought to light previously hidden historical treasures from some of our smallest memory institutions, and joined a growing of 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries providing innovative services to their communities.

State Librarian Rand Simmons observed, “We know we are using federal dollars wisely when project money provides impetus to libraries to continue projects using local or private funding. Congratulations to the Sno-Isle Libraries.”