

Washington Secretary of State

*First Tuesday Presentation for October 7, 2008: Archives, Public Records, and the Washington State Archives*

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Presented by:

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**What are archives?**

Archives are the non-current records of individuals, groups, institutions, and governments that contain information of enduring value.




For more information visit the Society of American Archivists website at <http://www.archivists.org/>

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**What are archivists?**

Archivists bring the past to the present. They're records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research. – Lisa Lewis




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**Manuscripts**

Manuscript repositories collect records of private individuals and organizations.

- University of Washington
- Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma
- Washington State Library
- Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University in Bellingham
- Washington State University
- Eastern Washington State Historical Society / Northwest Museum of Art and Culture in Spokane

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**Resources for locating manuscript collections:**

- Northwest Digital Archives <http://nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu/>
- Online Archive of California <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/>
- ArchiveGrid (subscription) <http://archivegrid.org/web/index.jsp>
- National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (Library of Congress) <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>
- WorldCat

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## Government Records

- ❑ **Government records belong to the public.** They must be retained for prescribed retention periods and may not be transferred to private ownership.
- ❑ **Federal agencies** should contact the Seattle branch of the National Archives and Records Administration at 206-336-5145.
- ❑ **State agencies** should contact the Records Management Division of the Washington State Archives at (360) 586-4901 or [recordsmanagement@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:recordsmanagement@secstate.wa.gov)
- ❑ **Local agencies** should contact their regional archivist. Contact information is at <https://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/>
- ❑ Public records of state and local governments are governed by the terms of **Chapter 40.14 RCW** <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=40.14>
- ❑ Washington State **records retention schedules** are posted on the records management section of the State Archives website.

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## Government Records: Federal

### National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle branch

<http://www.archives.gov/pacific-alaska/seattle/>

**Frequently used records include:**

- ❑ **Bureau of Land Management** records used for land disputes, genealogy, and regional history research.
- ❑ **Immigration and Naturalization** records, specifically the Chinese Exclusion Act case files.
- ❑ **13<sup>th</sup> Naval District** records often used for environmental clean-up research.
- ❑ **Bureau of Indian Affairs** records of various Indian Agencies including Tulalip, Puyallup, Taholah, Yakima, Colville, and others in Oregon and Idaho.
- ❑ **Forest Service** records used for environmental studies, land and road disputes and mining history.
- ❑ **U.S. Coast Guard** records used for genealogy and maritime history research.
- ❑ **Contact NARA in Seattle at 206-336-5115 or [seattle.archives@nara.gov](mailto:seattle.archives@nara.gov)**

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## Government Records: State

Washington State Archives in Olympia at 1129 Washington St. SE 98504  
<https://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/>  
 Contact us at (360) 586-1492 or [research@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:research@secstate.wa.gov)



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## Washington State Archives Collections

- ❑ State Constitution
- ❑ Laws of Washington
- ❑ Capitol Campus Drawings and Plans and Capitol Committee Records
- ❑ Legislative Committee Files and Recordings
- ❑ Voters Pamphlets and Election Returns
- ❑ Governors' Papers
- ❑ Supreme Court Case Files
- ❑ State Officials Oaths of Office
- ❑ Municipal Articles of Incorporation
- ❑ Marriage and Divorce Indexes (1968-present)
- ❑ Birth Index (1907-1929)
- ❑ Death Index (1907-present)
- ❑ State Penitentiary and State Reformatory Inmate Records
- ❑ Veterans Bonus Application Files, WWI through Vietnam
- ❑ Dept. of Ecology Environmental Contamination and Clean-up Records
- ❑ Corporations Records including Articles of Incorporation and Dissolution, Mergers and Name Changes (companies that have been defunct 20 years or longer)

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## Government Records: Local

- ❑ Washington State Archives regional branches collect county, city and special district records. Some local agencies have their own archives: King County, City of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools.
- ❑ **Northwest Region - Bellingham**  
Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties
- ❑ **Southwest Region - Olympia**  
Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum Counties
- ❑ **Central Region - Ellensburg**  
Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima Counties
- ❑ **Eastern Region - Cheney**  
Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman Counties
- ❑ **Puget Sound Region - Bellevue**  
King, Kitsap, and Pierce Counties
- ❑ <https://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/>

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## Regional Branch Collections

- ❑ Birth and Death Registers (1891-1907)
- ❑ Marriage Records
- ❑ Divorce Records (in Superior Court Civil Case Files)
- ❑ Naturalization Records
- ❑ School District and Educational Service District Records
- ❑ Dockets and Case Files from Superior Courts (includes Territorial Period "Frontier Justice" collection case files indexed on the Digital Archives)
- ❑ County Commissioners and City Councils Proceedings / Minutes, Ordinances and Resolutions
- ❑ Deeds and indexing
- ❑ County Assessors Real Property Tax Assessment Records and Photographs
- ❑ Maps, including plats
- ❑ Log and livestock brands
- ❑ Articles of Incorporation



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## Washington State Digital Archives

- ❑ <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/>
- ❑ 1878 and 1889 State Constitutions (in "Top 10 Treasures" section)
- ❑ Websites of Governors Lowry and Locke
- ❑ Some federal census records
- ❑ Social Security Death Index, all states
- ❑ Index to civil, criminal and probate case files from Washington's territorial period (identified as "Frontier Justice" collection)
- ❑ Marriage certificates from some counties
- ❑ Naturalization records index from some counties
- ❑ Veterans' Home (Retsil) and Soldiers' Home (Orting) resident records
- ❑ Professional licensing records of physicians and dentists
- ❑ Minutes, Ordinances and Resolutions from some cities
- ❑ Photographs

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Conservation Department, Planning and Development, 2014-01, Lot 1011-1014, 1010-1019

Celery grown near Olympia / Asahel Curtis, 1920-1930

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## Doing research at the Archives

- ❑ **Visiting us**  
Making an appointment is not required, but it is a good idea. It allows staff to have records prepared for researchers to use, so they don't have to wait for them to be retrieved. Some records are stored off-site and may not be available for same-day research.
- ❑ **Contact**  
Contact us by email, regular mail, phone or fax. Contact information for all branches is on the website.
- ❑ **Fees**  
Research and copying fees: copies made in person are 25 cents per page. Researchers may use their own camera or desktop scanner (without a feeder attachment). Research and copying conducted by staff on your behalf costs \$30.00 per hour plus 25 cents per page or image for copies, plus postage if needed. There is no charge for research that takes less than 15 minutes to complete. Most branches cannot spare staff longer than an hour or two for research or to make more than 500 copies. Patrons may hire professional researchers or copy service companies to come in on their behalf.

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## Doing research at the Archives

- ❑ **Security**  
Most archival records are unique and irreplaceable if lost. Therefore, archival repositories take special precautions against theft and damage. At the Washington State Archives, researchers must lock up all personal items such as purses, bags, etc. prior to entering the reading room. Outside paper may not be brought into the reading room, but staff will copy any notes the researcher needs to refer to onto ivory colored paper for use inside the reading room. Pens are not allowed; pencils and notepaper are provided.
- ❑ **Handling documents**  
Researchers will be asked to have only one box on the table at a time, to remove only one folder from the box at a time, to mark the place where the folder belongs with an out-card, and to keep items in order within the folder.  
  
Researchers may be asked to wear gloves when handling older or delicate records or unsleeved photographs.  
  
Some volumes are too fragile to be placed on a photocopier, but pages may be photographed with a camera.

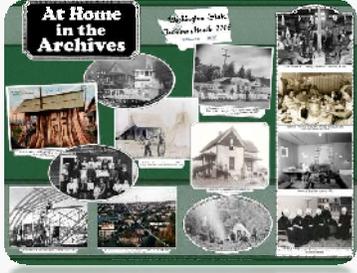
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## Where to learn more

- ❑ **Basics of Archives workshops** are free, day-long workshops taught by professional archivists, offered several times a year in different parts of the state. Four workshops will be given this October; see the Archives Month website to register. At other times of year, contact the State Archives for information about upcoming workshops.  
<http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Archivesmonth/Events.aspx>
- ❑ **The Western Archives Institute** is a 2-week class that offers more in-depth training in archival work. The 2009 Institute will be June 14 – 26 at UC Berkeley.  
[http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/level3\\_wai.html](http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/level3_wai.html)




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Thank you for helping us celebrate Archives Month!

To request a copy of the 2008 Archives Month poster for your library, email Ben Helle at [bhelle@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:bhelle@secstate.wa.gov)