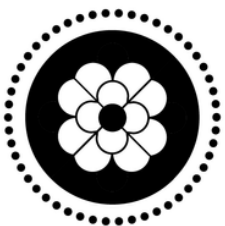




**TPL  
ARCHIVES &  
SPECIAL  
COLLECTIONS  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**

A photo of the Narrows Bridge submitted to the  
Tacoma News Tribune Snapshot Contest, 1978  
(Tacoma News Tribune Photographs, TNT0022S)



**Northwest Room**  
at Tacoma Public Library



**Community  
Archives Center**  
at Tacoma Public Library

# INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the Northwest Room team continued to pursue and implement a radically welcoming vision for local history collections at Tacoma Public Library. This vision centers on:

- Ensuring access and discoverability of our holdings
- Expanding our user base
- Mitigating silences existing in our collections
- Connecting the community to the Northwest Room through innovative education and outreach strategies

The Northwest Room made significant progress in all of these areas this year and continued to solidify our reputation as a vibrant community resource and leader in cultural heritage preservation.

This report summarizes our accomplishments in 2023 and establishes priorities for the coming year.



(Top) Members of Latinx Unidos of the South Sound (LUSS) participate in an oral history interview  
(Bottom) Artist Mike Cole participates in “Artists in the Archives”



(Top) Alyssa Torrez talks about the history of the Hilltop Action Coalition at “Hilltop Story Fest”  
(Bottom) Northwest Room staff appear on TV Tacoma’s CityLine





**320**

**COLLECTIONS NOW  
AVAILABLE IN  
NORTHWEST ORCA**

**40**

**EVENTS AND OUTREACH  
ACTIVITIES**

**587**

**STUDENTS REACHED  
THROUGH IN-CLASSROOM  
INSTRUCTION**

• In 1977, the Puyallup Tribe led a takeover of the Cascadia Hospital, evicting the state from tribal property (Tacoma News Tribune Photographs, TNT0014C)

# GRANTS, AWARDS, AND LEADERSHIP

In 2023, the work of the Northwest Room and Community Archives Center was recognized locally and nationally. We completed several grant projects and were awarded new grants to launch projects over the next year. Through the development and release of the Community Archives Center Toolkit, the work of Tacoma Public Library was shared and recognized nationally within the library and archives fields.

- The Northwest Room received the Leadership in Preservation Award from the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Committee.
- The two-year Community Archives Center project was completed in August 2023. The project, which received a \$250,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, exceeded all deliverables outlined in the application. The Tacoma community now has access to thousands of new community-centered digital items and over 200 oral histories and interviews.
- The Community Archives Center project team presented at the Washington Library Association Conference in Wenatchee, the American Library Association Conference in Chicago, and as part of the BiblioCommons Workshop Series.
- The Northwest Room was awarded a Heritage Grant from the City of Tacoma Historic Preservation Office.
- The Northwest Room was awarded an Archival Projects grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.



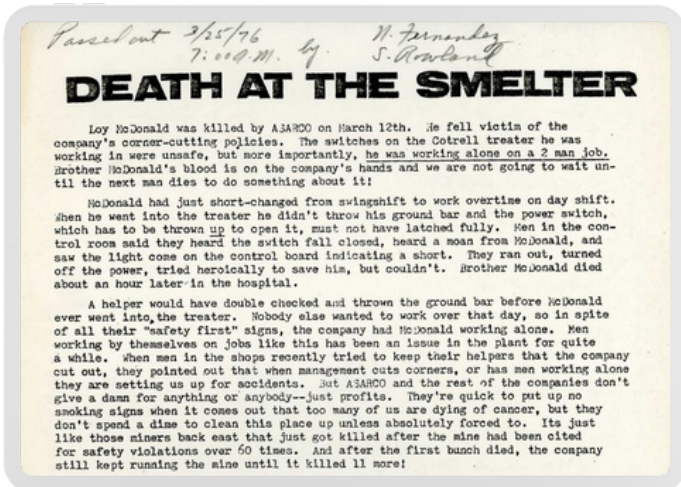
Members of the Community Archives Center Project Team at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, June 2023



dindria barrow, Anna Trammell, and Spencer Bowman receive the Leadership in Preservation Award, May 2023

# COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS

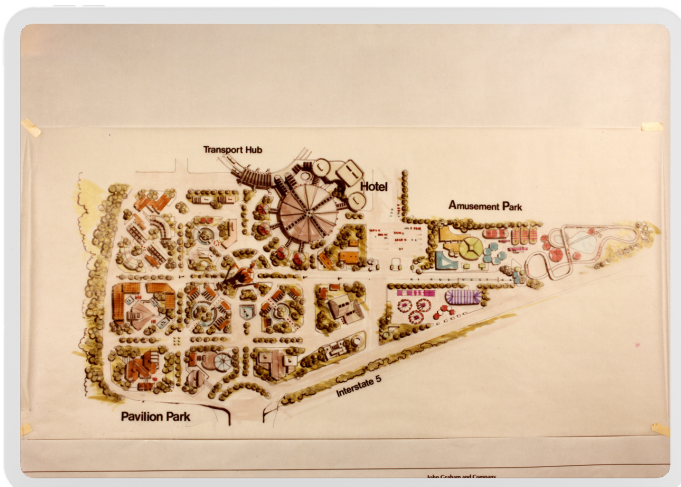
Over 320 collections have now been made publicly available in Northwest ORCA, giving users unprecedented access to the library's archival holdings. Thousands of documents, photographs, and audio/video recordings were digitized and made accessible including photographs from the Tacoma News Tribune, documents from the papers of several Tacoma mayors, records related to ASARCO, films of local events, and much more. Hundreds of boxes of irreplaceable documents and photographs were re-housed, arranged, and described according to archival best practices. Newly available collections include personal papers, family papers, photograph collections, business records, organizational records, and local periodicals. New collections were acquired including the photographs of Christopher Petrich, the records of the Martinac Shipbuilding Company, and more.



A document titled "Death at the Smelter" distributed by "Concerned Smeltermen" to other ASARCO employees, 1976 (ASARCO Records, Collection 2.4.1)



A photo of Ella Carter on her 100th birthday. Carter arrived in Tacoma from New Orleans in 1903. (Christopher Petrich Photographs, Collection 2.1.5)



A plan for the "Tacoma World's Fair." The proposed project would lead to the Tacoma Dome. (Mayor Mike Parker Papers, Collection 1.2.2)



A photo of a student at Mann Elementary School, 1989 (Tacoma News Tribune Photographs, TNT0028E)

# OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

To expand our user base and raise awareness about TPL's archives and special collections, the Northwest Room and Community Archives Center engaged in a variety of outreach activities in 2023. Our goal was to liberate our collections beyond the walls of the library and to create opportunities to connect with the community in new and exciting ways. Some of these activities included:

- Held Hilltop Story Fest, a full-day community event focused on documenting and sharing stories of the Hilltop neighborhood.
- Led Artists in the Archives, an innovative new program which connected artists to Northwest Room collections to help inform and inspire their artwork.
- Hosted neighborhood preservation events in the South Tacoma, South End, West End, North End, Northeast, and Eastside communities.
- Participated in community events and hosted preservation stations at A Proud Heritage: African American Family History Event, Metro Parks Community Listening Sessions, City of Destiny Festival, and more.
- Introduced mobile pop-up exhibits as a way to connect the community to Northwest Room collections. Exhibits were held at the T-Town Expo and Dome Anniversary Celebration, Hilltop Street Fair, Steen Family Symposium on Environmental Issues, Historic Cushman Street Fair, and more.
- Appeared on TV Tacoma's Cityline three times to discuss Northwest Room and Community Archives Center projects.



Performers at Hilltop Story Fest, May 2023



Artists examine Northwest Room collections as part of Artists in the Archives, September

2023

# EDUCATION

Local history collections play an important role in supporting lifelong learning. In 2023, we worked with educators across Pierce County to find ways to facilitate transformational encounters between students and archival materials. We also led teacher training and developed lesson plans to provide opportunities for educators to connect their students to the Northwest Room's collections. Educational projects undertaken in 2023 include:

- Led a full day workshop for over 100 Tacoma Public Schools teachers. “Grit City Stories: The Untold Tales of Tacoma” demonstrated for teachers how to engage their students in local history by discovering, documenting, and learning from stories that have been underrepresented in our local history narrative.
- Provided in class instruction for nearly 600 local students, including middle school, high school, and undergraduates.
- Developed lesson plans and primary source sets for classroom use.
- Participated in Educator’s Night to share information with teachers from across the region about instructional support offered by the Northwest Room.
- Hosted eight student internships for undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in local history and future careers in special collections.



A group of panelists who had been part of the Community Archives Center project shared their stories at “Grit City Stories”



8th grade students interact with Northwest Room collections

## **PROGRESS ON GOALS FOR 2023**

- The Community Archives Center Toolkit was published and broadly shared. The toolkit will serve as a model for other libraries interested in pursuing similar projects in their own communities. The Project Team led workshops and was interviewed on the Archives in Context podcast about the toolkit.
- Continued to move toward fully accessible and discoverable Northwest Room collections through digitization and arrangement and description projects.
- Increased community partnerships and outreach activities.
- Expanded educational programs for K-12 students in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, Bethel School District, and Franklin Pierce School District.

## **GOALS FOR 2024**

- Streamline access and improve discoverability of Northwest Room collections through metadata improvements and full migration to a single access portal.
- Continue to reduce backlog of unprocessed collections and moving towards fully accessible holdings.
- Become embedded within Tacoma Public Schools' curriculum ensuring that every Tacoma student interacts with Northwest Room collections as part of their educational journey.

## **OUR TEAM**

The accomplishments described in this annual report would not be possible without the hard work, expertise, and enthusiasm of the Northwest Room Team:

**dindria barrow, Community Archives Center Project Associate**

**Spencer Bowman, Northwest Room Librarian**

**Ilona Perry, Northwest Room Associate**

**Jim Peterson, Northwest Room Assistant**

**Damahn Sterling, Audio/Visual Digitization Project Assistant**

**Anna Trammell, Archives and Special Collections Manager**

Our work was also supported this year by an incredible group of volunteers and interns:

**Nancy Dang**

**Grace Holt**

**Ruth Keller**

**Claire Keppler**

**Leah Selinda Kusnierek**

**Em Millican**

**Lauren Moseman**

**Isabella Rodriguez**