

Seattle Engineering Department Negatives, 1910-1994

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Seattle (Wash.). Engineering Dept.
Title	Seattle Engineering Department Negatives
Dates	1910-1994 (inclusive) 1910 1994
Quantity	1.5 million images, (more than 40,000 digitized images)
Collection Number	2613-07
Summary	Photographic negatives documenting public works, city employees, and elected officials.
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English

Historical Note

The Engineering Department (SED) maintained the City's streets and bridges, designed and oversaw construction of public works projects, provided traffic and transportation planning, and operated the sewer and solid waste utility. The position of City Surveyor was created in 1873 to survey the City, establish boundaries and street grades, and administer condemnation processes. This position was renamed City Engineer in 1890. In 1931 the Engineering Department absorbed part of the Department of Public Utilities and in 1936 it assumed the responsibilities of the Department of Streets and Sewers and the Traffic Department. In 1997, the water, solid waste, drainage, and wastewater utilities from the Engineering and Water departments were merged with the Engineering Services Division of SED and the Customer Service Call Center and Construction Engineering Sections of City Light to form Seattle Public Utilities. The traffic and transportation functions of the Engineering Department were consolidated in the Seattle Transportation Department.

Content Description

Photographic negatives shot by the Seattle Engineering Department photographers documenting public works, including construction of buildings and bridges, paving, and sewer and water pipe installation; city employees and elected officials; and damage to streets and buildings by earthquakes

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<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv52609>

and landslides. The Court Engineering division of the Engineering Department provided engineering services to the Law and Legislative Department, and many photographs support this work, including regrades, condemnations, street use violations, law suits, and other legal work. All projects approved by the City, and often documented by Engineering Department photographs, can be traced in the Ordinance database to discover dates and project costs. The evolution of the water system, the sewer system, the construction of streets and bridges, and other major public works projects, such as the Alaskan Way Viaduct and I-5 are documented through these photographs. The Engineering Department negatives capture the construction of dams, both for water supply and hydroelectric purposes, especially well. There are many images of the Gorge, Diablo and Ross dams and power plants on the Skagit River, as well as the Tolt and Masonry Dams on the Cedar and Tolt Rivers. Construction of other structures, such as reservoirs and tunnels are also subjects in these images. Employee events, such as safety awards, retirement parties, and holiday get-togethers are covered as well. Digitization of negatives is ongoing. More than 40,000 digitized images can be viewed on our digital platform. [View digitized material online](#) Researchers should speak with an archivist to obtain information on images not available online.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Title of image, date. Item number.] Seattle Engineering Department Negatives, Record Series 2613-07. Box [number], Folder [number]. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Bridges--Washington (State)--Seattle
Bridges--Washington (State)--Seattle
Municipal engineering--Washington (State)--Seattle
Roads--Washington (State)--Seattle
Traffic engineering--Washington (State)--Seattle
Viaducts--Washington (State)--Seattle

Corporate Names :

Seattle (Wash.). Engineering Dept.

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Photography--Negatives

Finding aid prepared by Julie Kerssen
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