

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

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SOS
Office of the Secretary of State

Employee Spotlight

Meet Alison Costanza

This month's Employee Spotlight showcases the Northwest region's Assistant Branch Archivist, Alison Costanza.

What is your role at the State Archives?

As Assistant Branch Archivist at the Northwest Regional Branch, I assist people in finding records that fit their research needs, and also accession, catalog and prepare records for use by researchers, assist with outreach activities, such as tours and workshops, and assist the Branch Manager with supervising volunteers and student employees, and with coordinating work on the building.

Do you have any tips on how to efficiently search the Archives?

Use the keyword search feature of the online catalog to learn about available records, then start a conversation with an archivist about your research project.

What is the strangest thing you have ever discovered in your research?

Covenants in deeds.

What do you find the most challenging at the State Archives?

Too much to do, too little time!

Describe which technology has affected your job the most.

Researchers bringing cameras to take photos of records instead of asking staff for copies.



*Alison Costanza, Assistant Branch Archivist,
Northwest region.*

What has been your favorite project at the State Archives?

Collaborating with colleagues to host two fourth-grade classes in a row.

Before working at the Archives, what was the most interesting job you've ever had?

Archival projects for the National Park Service.

If you could interview one Washingtonian (dead or alive, non-family member), who would it be and why?

An early explorer or settler, to better understand what was going on as different cultures were first meeting.

What would people never guess you do in your role?

Collaborate with staff of two other archives, Western Washington University's Center for Pacific Northwest Studies and the Archives and Records Center, which share our building (only our name is on the building).

What legacy would you like to leave at the Archives?

Greater accessibility to records by improving description of them online.

If you could go back in time to give advice to your 18-year-old self, what would it be?

Get more involved in extra-curricular activities.

What is your biggest pet peeve?

Assumptions made instead of direct communication.

Who is your personal hero?

My mom.

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery?

Solar panels for my house.

Describe what you were like at age 10.

Quiet in public.

How would your friends describe you?

A good listener.

What's your most and least favorite foods?

Potatoes, fixed any way; and I can't think of a least favorite. I'm open to trying almost anything.

What would be the ultimate gift for you to receive?

Peace on earth!