

# Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

February 2017



Office of the Secretary of State

## Employee Spotlight

### Meet Allie Honican

*This month's Employee Spotlight showcases Digital Archives Archivist Allie Honican.*



*Allie Honican, Digital Archives Archivist*

#### **What is your role at the State Archives?**

I am an archivist at the Digital Archives. My main job duties include handling all of the reference requests the DA receives and updating and maintaining all of the description on our website. I am responsible for 1,315 unique titles on the Digital Archives, and we are adding more all the time. I have been going through one-by-one and making sure they are current and updating our description format from [this](#) to [this](#). I also work on other special projects including coordinating an inventory of all the marriage records we hold at the regional branches in paper and electronic format, and inventorying records on hard drives that we hold at the DA. And finally, general office duties such as labeling, mailing, shipping, ordering, and killing our office plants (oops, I meant watering).

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

My first tip is to be aware of what the Washington State Archives collection policy is. We generally only hold records created by state and local government agencies, so you have to think about how your person, event, or topic might have come into contact or the purview of a state or local government agency, or not. That can be very difficult if you are not familiar with how those agencies operate, but luckily for you we have a staff of archivists who are ready to assist! Always contact us with questions!

Another note about efficiently searching the Digital Archives: From our [homepage](#) you can search by name and I recommend keeping searches broad. Never include a middle name. If you

are searching for a woman, try both her married and maiden names. If you're looking for an individual before 1940, search only their first initial and last name. It was very common (for men especially) to use their first initial, middle initial, and last name on official documents. Again, no middle names!

**If you could change anything about the Archives, what would it be?**

If I could change anything, we would have more time to do research and create document exhibits. We have so many phenomenal collections in our holdings.

**If you could witness any historical event in Washington, what would you want to see and why?**

I would park myself outside of 334 Front Street in Spokane from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. on June 21st, 1898 to catch a murderer who got away with the crime. Read next month's newsletter to find out more about this unsolved mystery!

**Describe which technology has affected your job (for the better) the most.**

Well, since I work at the Digital Archives, without technology I wouldn't even have a job!

**What would people never guess you do in your role?**

I spend many hours walking people through how to obtain their records on our website. We take customer service very seriously and I like to think we give all state employees a good name by going the extra mile to help researchers find what they need.



*Family photo at Allie's Master's graduation, June 2016.*



*Allie's dog, Laila, and a photo of Laila!*

**What has been your favorite project at the State Archives?**

I love updating the description online. Although I have quite a few more titles to update, we are making sure the description of records we have online are accurate and accessible to the public. I think I speak for the other archivists at the Washington State Archives when I say that we love making records more easily accessible to researchers.

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

A death record that turned into a year-long research project. Again, read next month's newsletter to find out the whole story!

**What 3 words would you use to describe the State Archives?**

Interesting, engaging, and full-of-surprises (I know that is cheating)!

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

Travel more and don't put so much pressure on yourself.

**What would be the title of your autobiography?**

Dogs, Documents, and DIYing. I don't know, this is a hard one. Those are just things I enjoy! I'm obsessed with my baby dog Laila (who has a picture of a picture of their dog??) she is truly a member of our family and the sweetest. We take her on every road trip, she even made it all the way down to New Mexico and back last summer! Of course, research is one of my interests. And last but not least, I'm obsessed with HGTV and creating, so naturally most of the things I create are for my house. My boyfriend and I bought a fixer upper (love that show!) in the fall of 2015, so I'm definitely not lacking for projects.

**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

Food sounds. When people chew with their mouth open and you can hear it smacking around in their mouth. So gross.

**Who is your personal hero?**

Definitely my mom. She is the greatest mother, the hardest worker, and the best friend I could ask for. I am incredibly lucky to have had such a strong, independent, and nurturing woman in my life.



*Allie's dog, Laila, with her sister Brooke's dog, Ollie, soaking up some rays by the pool.*



*Selfie with mom (Yvonne) at Washington Monument.*

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

I would pay off my student loans. Luckily, mine are only half the national average but still, the worst bill to pay every month.

**What's your most and least favorite foods?**

I'm a vegetarian so I guess my least favorite food is meat. But my favorite food: French fries! I could probably eat them at every meal and never get sick of them. Toppings like, salt, pepper, garlic, cheese, green onions, and herbs make them so diverse. Not to mention the sauces: ketchup, BBQ sauce, ranch, gorgonzola sauce, tartar. I guess I'm making fries for dinner tonight...