

# Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

August 2016



## Employee Spotlight



### Meet Larry Cebula

*This month's Employee Spotlight is on Assistant Digital Archivist Larry Cebula from the Digital Archives in Cheney. He is also a Professor of History at Eastern Washington University.*

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

I am the Assistant Digital Archivist at the Washington State Archives, Digital Archives

in Cheney. I have a joint appointment with Eastern Washington University, where I direct the program in Public History.

#### **Do you have any tips about searching the archives?**

The Digital Archives site has a wealth of information about our state, from territorial court records to MP3 recordings of the state legislature. I always tell people to start at the Collections tab. Learn how to use the advanced search features--they are not always intuitive, but they are powerful. If you get stuck, use the Ask an Archivist button or just give us an email or a call.

#### **Before working at the Archives, or teaching, what was the most unusual or interesting job you've ever had?**

I spent my 20s working in different National Parks and Forests—Zion, Great Basin, and particularly the North Cascades. I was often on trail crews, packing chainsaws into the backcountry to clean up storm damage or build new trails. I'd save my money and travel during the winter. It was a good life.

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

I love how Eastern Washington University student workers and interns have been integrated into many of the tasks at the Digital Archives and Eastern Region Branch. My students get to work with skilled professionals

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like Debbie Bahn and Lee Pierce, and by the time they graduate they have hundreds of hours of professional experience.

**What is on your wish list for the next 10 years for the State Archives?**

First, that staffing levels increase so that we can do the needed work. With more staff we could see a redesign of the Digital Archives website, enhanced educational programs and outreach, and expanded research hours.

**If you could meet anyone from any time period in Washington history, who would it be and why?**

In 1884, a few hundred yards from where my EWU office now stands, an American Indian was dragged out of the county jail and murdered by a lynch mob. Some aspects of the story are hazy--no one even recorded his name. We do know that he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused. If I could meet him, I'd ask his name.

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

I'm not telling. Let us never speak of this again.

**What did you know about the Archives before working here?**

My training is as a historian, so I was a long-time patron of archives. Yet I still did not properly appreciate the sheer amount of human effort and dedication that goes into collecting, organizing, and preserving records of the past. Archivists are heroes.

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

Fascinating, dedicated, understaffed.

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

My job is 50/50 between the State Archives and Eastern Washington University, and it is a challenge to maintain the balance between the two halves of my position.

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

My major project for the last few years has been working with my students to create Spokane Historical, a smartphone app and website for local history with over 400 stories. ([Visit us at SpokaneHistorical.org!](http://SpokaneHistorical.org)) I have become fascinated by Spokane in 1890s-1910s, when it was a rough workingman's town with a lingering frontier feeling. I would like to walk the streets in those days.

**What legacy would you like to leave at the Archives?**

That electric kettle I left in the breakroom? You can keep it. More seriously, I would love to see the State Archives (maybe working with partners) sponsor something like Spokane Historical but for the whole state. We could partner with the State Library, county historical societies, and regional universities to tell stories from the San Juans to the Snake River. It would be a great outreach effort.

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

*None of This was My Fault.*