

Washington Stories Fund: *Pasts Recipients*

2017*

Washington State Historical Society

McNeil's Legacy

The format of “McNeil's Legacy” is meant to be both a digital and on-ground project consisting of a series of six (6) podcasts, released weekly over the course of a McNeil Island exhibition (Washington State History Museum, July 14 through October 28, 2018), as well as an in-person panel discussion on the legacy of McNeil Island, the ethics of incarceration, and what constitutes “cruel and unusual punishment.” The series focuses on the personal stories of how the experience of McNeil Island Prison affected the families of those who were incarcerated there, as well as those who lived on the island for its operation.

Washington State University, Vancouver

Clark County Stories: How We Came to this Place

The collective experience of individuals creates the community in which we live. By exploring shared narratives of growth and change in Clark County in recent years, we can engage our audiences with a new, shared vision of the emerging community and the challenges we face together. Clark County, WA's early history – Native basketry, the Hudson's Bay Company, WWII shipyards – is well represented in the exhibits of the Clark County Historical Museum (CCHM); yet the county's population is one of the fastest-growing in the nation, about 500,000—double the number of residents in 1988. This rapid growth includes the descendants of early settlers and new arrivals from other states and nations, each with their own stories of “how we came to this place,” though these are not always mutually understood. How we came to this “place” is both literal – a story of waves of migration – and metaphorical: “How is our present shaped by our pasts?” “Clark County Stories: How We Came to this Place” is a series of outreach and community-building workshops and conversations featuring residents whose experiences have been under-represented in past CCHM exhibits: urban Indians, Latina/o, African American, Asian, Muslim, LGBTQ, blind, and deaf communities. The workshops will train participants to explore their histories, encourage conversations between Clark County residents about the changing landscapes of the region, and develop a new professionally designed exhibit to open in October 2018.

Two grants rewarded in lieu of 2015 grant.

2016

University of Washington, School of Nursing

Skid Road: The Intersection of Health and Homelessness

How does a large, socially progressive urban area like King County respond to homelessness? A work of narrative history, Skid Road will deepen our understanding of the historical roots of poverty and homelessness through a digital collection of photographs, videos, essays, and audio and video recorded oral histories with people working, or living, at the intersection of health and homelessness in King County Washington. This collection will document the trauma and resilience of the homeless as well as the role of public policy and charity health care in Washington. Skid Road will then be available free of cost online, to be used as a resource for policymakers, students, teachers, health care providers, and the general public. In addition there will be a multi-media public art project from Skid Road on display at various King County locations and a series of presentations on the Skid Road project throughout Washington State, at public libraries, universities, and community colleges. Our project partner is the University of Washington library.

2014

Jack Straw Productions

Through the Light: Profiles in Blindness

Many blind people have successful careers and happy lives, but not all of them. According to the American Foundation for the Blind, 128,047 Washingtonians live with vision loss, 70% of adults who are blind in the United States are unemployed, and one third live at or below the poverty line. Blindness is a bit of a mystery to most of us. We don't really know what it means to be blind, nor how a blind person is able to perform simple, everyday activities. We assume blindness means someone can't see anything and that blind people can't possibly do things like ski or cook a meal, but these assumptions are far from true. We will collect stories rarely heard from blind individuals which will work to dispel some of the false assumptions about blindness. Blindness can be isolating, especially in smaller, more rural communities. A blind student can easily be the only blind student in the school and also in the town, with no one to talk to about issues of blindness. We will introduce blind adults and blind youth to each other as well as to the general public. Blind students will interview blind adults about their professions, the hurdles they needed to overcome, and how they were able to do it. Blind adults, in turn, will talk with youth about issues that concern them. We will bring blind individuals and their little known stories to public libraries for conversations with the general public. We will create a webpage with content recorded and produced during the project.