

Washington Stories Fund Recipients

2018

Confluence (Vancouver)

Confluence Story Gathering

“Confluence Story Gatherings” were designed to collect and archive first-person narratives of indigenous Columbia River peoples, as a way to deepen public understanding of the cultural and historical context surrounding Confluence's art/landscape installations.

Confluence will present a public forum in early 2019 at WSU Vancouver, to bring together people who are connected to the Columbia River, including students, residents, tribal members, educators, and scholars, to learn about and participate in the Confluence Oral History Project.

A catalyst for discovery, Confluence creates spaces that promote moments of insight about the intersection of history, culture, and ecology throughout the Columbia River system. The task is to create a welcoming forum that features the stories of Native elders, told in their own voices, in a culturally sensitive context. Only through the words of those connected to the river can Confluence attempt to understand and open a dialogue with the broader community about how Native people view their homelands as part of an ongoing continuum.

Ultimately, the moments of insight captured at this gathering will be used for Confluence Online, a digital resource library that connects the six Confluence sites along the Columbia River for visitors and teachers.

More information can be found at

<http://www.confluenceproject.org/news/confluence-story-gatherings-honor-indigenous-voices/>.

Living with Conviction (Seattle)

Sentenced to Debt for Life in Washington State

“Living with Conviction” is a multi-media storytelling and civic engagement project that explores how legal sentencing results not just in prison time, but in a lifetime of debt. In partnership with formerly incarcerated individuals, Living with Conviction will document and share the struggles of Washington State's Latino community as they struggle to survive and thrive under legal financial obligations (LFOs)—that is: fines, fees, costs and victim restitution that courts impose on criminal defendants at the time of sentencing. The project will include first-person narratives presented online and alongside photography exhibits, as well as community conversations.

More information can be found at <https://www.livingwithconviction.org/>.

Nordic Museum (Seattle)

Interwoven: The Blended Heritage of Nordics and Native Peoples

Interwoven is a cooperative oral history project developed to record, preserve, and present personal stories and histories of individuals in Washington State with blended Nordic and Indigenous cultural identities.

The *Interwoven* project will include recording interviews of individuals, and public symposia, held with support from several cultural institutions including the Suquamish Foundation, Tulalip Tribes, and the Washington State Historical Society. Through this project the Nordic Museum will create a more open and cooperative dialogue about, and raise awareness of, the diverse cultural identities of Washington State residents.

More information can be found at: <https://nordicmuseum.org/events/interwoven>.

The Wing (Seattle)

Stories Across Generations: Burmese Americans in Western Washington

Stories Across Generations: Burmese Americans in King County will bring to light untold and little-known histories of the Burmese American refugee community through research, oral history workshops and gathering, and a community digitization event for artifacts, photos and archival materials. The project will culminate with a public presentation, pop-up display, and online resource to share the stories and further connect youth, families, and their community with the broader public.

The exhibit, *Stories Across Generations*, will be on display from December 6, 2019 to November 8, 2020, and will be accompanied by several public programs.

Online information is not yet available.

2017*

Washington State Historical Society (Tacoma)

Unlocking McNeil's Past

From its beginnings as a territorial prison through its tenure as a federal and state penitentiary, the story of McNeil illuminates how incarceration in the U.S. has changed over time, as seen through the evolution of the prison facility itself. "Unlocking McNeil's Past" focuses on the personal stories of those incarcerated there, their families, as well as those who lived on the island to support its operation.

Washington Stories Fund support enabled the museum to create digital materials and in-person events to enhance the exhibit, including six podcasts produced in partnership with KNKX Public Radio, and an in-

person panel discussion on the legacy of McNeil Island, the ethics of incarceration, and what constitutes “cruel and unusual punishment.”

The exhibit is open January 26 through May 26, 2019. More information can be found at <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/visit/wshm/exhibits/McNeil/>. The podcast series was launched in January 2019 and is available for listening here: <https://www.knkx.org/programs/forgotten-prison>

WSU and Clark County Historical Museum (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, Washington in recent years, WSU Vancouver and the Clark County Historical Museum engaged audiences in identifying a new, shared vision of the emerging community and the challenges recent changes present.

Clark County, WA’s early history – Native basketry, the Hudson’s Bay Company, WWII shipyards – was 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 and is rapidly changing. 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?” “

Washington Stories Fund support enabled the Museum to present a series of outreach and community-building workshops and conversations featuring residents whose experiences have been underrepresented in past CCHM exhibits: urban Indians, Latina/o, African American, Asian, Muslim, LGBTQ, blind, and deaf communities. The workshops have trained participants to explore their histories, encourage conversations between Clark County residents about the changing landscapes of the region, and resulted in the development a new professionally designed exhibit that opened in October 2018.

More information can be found at <http://www.cchmuseum.org/category/current-exhibits/>.

**Two grants rewarded in lieu of 2015 grant.*

2016

UW 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 deepens 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 that documents the trauma and resilience of the homeless as well as the role of public policy and charity health care in Washington.

Washington Stories Fund support enabled project organizers to mount a multi-media public art project from Skid Road which was displayed at several locations in King County and a series of presentations on the Skid Road project at public libraries, universities, and community colleges throughout Washington State.

On an ongoing basis, Skid Road is available free of cost online, to be used as a resource for policymakers, students, teachers, health care providers, and the general public.

More information on the project can be found at: <https://www.humanities.org/blog/skid-road-intersection-health-homelessness/> and <https://josephineensign.com/skid-road/>.

2014

Jack Straw Productions

Through the Light: Profiles in Blindness

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. Many assume blindness means someone can't see anything or cannot do such things as ski or cook a meal. However, these assumptions are far from true. 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 the unique challenges he/she faces.

Through the Light collected stories rarely heard from blind individuals, and worked to dispel some of the false assumptions about blindness. Project organizers introduced blind adults and blind youth to each other as well as to the general public. Blind students interviewed blind adults about their professions, the hurdles they needed to overcome barriers, and how they were able to do it. Blind adults, in turn, talked with youth about issues that concerned them. Project organizers brought blind individuals and their little-known stories to public libraries for conversations with the general public and create a webpage with content recorded and produced during the project.

More information on the project can be found at: <http://www.jackstraw.org/programs/ed/blindprograms.shtml>.