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### Cover Page Footnote

The author would like to thank Larry Howard, Bill Phillips, Linda Carlson, Werner Janssen, Kerstin Ringdahl, Ellen Gamrath, Anna Trammell, and Julia Stringfellow for their assistance with the research that contributed to this paper.

# The Archival Challenges and Choices of a Small Non-profit Organization Attempting to Preserve Its Unique Past

Mattias Olshausen

## ABSTRACT

Holden, located in Washington's Cascade Mountains above the West side of Lake Chelan, originated as a copper-mining company town in 1937. In 1960, three years after the operation shut down, it was transformed into a non-profit Lutheran retreat center, now known as Holden Village. Both the mining and Lutheran communities have generated substantial archival collections, the three largest of which are currently housed at the University of Washington, Pacific Lutheran University, and Holden itself. Making use of finding aids, reports and summaries written by past and present Holden archivists, and the personal recollections of former residents, this paper traces the history of these collections, including episodes of both institutional neglect and concerted preservation efforts. To some extent, this history serves as a case study for the archival challenges faced by small, remote communities, but it also demonstrates ways in which Holden may be unique.

## Introduction

Over the last century, Holden, Washington, has existed as a rough mining camp, a cutting-edge company town, a ghost town, and a Lutheran retreat center. Holden Village, as the last of these is officially known, remains in operation today. Located in the North Cascades above the westside of Lake Chelan, Holden is one of the most isolated continuously occupied locations in the state, if not the contiguous United States. It can only be reached by water, air, or foot trail. With guests and seasonal workers, its population peaks at between 400 and 500 during the summer, but drops to fewer than 100 during the off-season.

The current residents are surrounded with reminders of the miners' legacy. With one exception, all of the existing buildings in the townsite are 1930s-vintage originals. Howe Sound Company built the town to support a copper-mining operation on the

opposite (south) side of Railroad Creek; the operation spanned 1937-1957. A recent multi-year remediation (cleanup) project removed the skeleton of the ore-processing mill structure, contained the flooded mine shaft, and graded the massive piles of waste rock (known as tailings), but the operation's visual impact on the local environment remains evident. Holden Village has maintained ties with surviving members of the mining community, and has hosted their reunions in the past. The present community also celebrates and treasures its own history and lore. At the beginning of this decade, there were multi-part festivities marking the 50th anniversary of the Lutherans' acquisition and restoration of the townsite in 1961-1962.

Despite this historical awareness, Holden's preservation of its records and other documents of historical value has often been haphazard. Being a small non-profit organization, Holden lacks the resources to employ a full-time archivist or museum curator, or to physically preserve its materials in a modern, devoted facility on site. Off-site storage has been employed in some significant instances, but a large volume of archival material from different Holden eras currently resides in the attic loft of one of the largest buildings in the townsite, the gymnasium and rec hall facility. This building is now primarily used for worship services during the summer. The scarcity of space for expansion in this location, the lack of climate control, the minimal protection afforded the materials against potential rodent or insect infestations, and the vulnerability of the 80-year-old wooden building to fire all combine to create a worrisome situation for those who care about the archives' fate.

These challenges surely reflect those faced by many other small non-profit organizations attempting to preserve their records, although they are amplified in Holden's case due to its remote location. What makes Holden more unusual is that its history is essentially that of two distinct communities that have happened to occupy the same location at different times. These communities have generated largely separate archival collections. Thus, as a case study, Holden's story is not merely one that highlights preservation issues, but one that raises questions of provenance and accessibility, among them whether the collections' common geographical origin or the social contexts in which they came into being are more important for the purposes of how they are grouped, housed, and made available to researchers. The ultimate consideration remains which institutions and individuals have the resources, will, and dedication to preserve records of archival value on a long-term basis, but this should not cause Holden Village or similar organizations to lose sight of other factors that may influence how and where this is achieved.

The author is not a professional archivist, but rather an academic librarian and a local historian on a modest scale. In 2013, he completed a thesis on the social history of Holden since 1937 as part of earning a master's degree in History from Portland State University. Since then, he has visited the village several more times, and has corresponded with former residents from the mining era, conducted interviews and oral history recordings, and assisted with cataloging and organizing the localized archival materials.

## Literature Review

A secondary issue this paper explores is the preservation, or lack thereof, of business records in the mid-20th century. As the next section will illustrate, the originators of the Howe Sound Holden operation records treated them poorly, and a review of the literature, limited though it may be on this topic, helps to explain why.

The contemporary literature on business archives indicates that deliberate long-term records retention for archival purposes was at best a developing idea in this era. Firestone launched the first corporate archives program in the United States in 1943, which was followed by programs at several other major companies over the next decade.<sup>1</sup> However, in a 1954 *American Archivist* article, Oliver W. Holmes still writes of company archives “appearing on the horizon.” Holmes mentions a 1941 publication by business historian Ralph Hower, *The Preservation of Business Records*, as being influential.<sup>2</sup> In this volume, Hower urges businesses to not only preserve their financial records, but also detailed personnel information and managerial correspondence, the latter on a permanent basis. He offers practical advice on setting up an archival program, including which types of ink and paper are best for preservation purposes.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, though, Hower mostly argues his case from the point of view of one interested in business records for historical purposes, rather than from that of an executive for whom the primary consideration would most likely be whether archiving would be a worthwhile use of the company’s resources.

In a 1961 article, business historian Arthur M. Johnson writes that a survey he and a colleague conducted “of about a hundred large companies revealed that a distressingly large proportion regarded business histories as a form of public relations effort, if deemed to have any value at all. Naturally the type of material that is selected and preserved for a public relations effort will differ greatly from that to be used in a scholarly and objective history.”<sup>4</sup> The overwhelming bulk of the Howe Sound Holden records that have survived to the present would have been of limited use for supporting a business history crafted with public relations in mind, except perhaps if it had been specifically concerned with the Holden operation itself. The author does not know whether the company even considered such an undertaking, but this provides one possible explanation for why Howe Sound made so little effort to preserve the records after shutting down the mine in 1957.

1. Elizabeth W. Adkins, “The Development of Business Archives in the United States: An Overview and a Personal Perspective,” *The American Archivist* 60 (1997): 10-11.
2. Oliver W. Holmes, “Some Reflections on Business Archives,” *The American Archivist* 17 (1954): 295, 300.
3. Ralph M. Hower, *The Preservation of Business Records* (Boston, MA: The Business Historical Society, 1941).
4. Arthur M. Johnson, “Identification of Business Records for Permanent Preservation,” *The American Archivist* 24 (1961): 331.

Literature on the archival practices of non-profit organizations has been more difficult to find, and the existing case studies present few obvious parallels to Holden Village. David C. Hammack's 1989 article, "Private Organizations, Public Purposes: Nonprofits and Their Archives," for example, mostly focuses on the archives of large philanthropic and social service-oriented organizations located in the Eastern United States; none of the organizations mentioned are remotely similar to Holden in either scale or nature.<sup>5</sup> However, David J. Klaasen's 1990 article, "The Archival Intersection: Cooperation Between Collecting Repositories and Nonprofit Organizations," is relevant to this paper. Klaasen discusses the importance of committing non-profit organization records to repositories to achieve a "critical mass for archival preservation." Holden Village's successful partnership with the Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) Archives and Special Collections department, which will be described in the next section, supports his argument. Klaasen also notes that even in the case of wealthy organizations, it sometimes requires the will and expertise of an archivist from outside the organization to initiate an effective preservation program. While Holden has historically not been short on community members willing to volunteer their time to help save its records, the involvement of outside archivists or historians has often proven invaluable.

A final applicable point Klaasen makes is that sending materials to a repository is not without a certain risk. Doing so may lead an organization to have a diminished appreciation for those materials; as Klaasen writes, "Physical distance can easily become out-of-sight-out-of-mind, robbing the organization of access to evidence about its past and limiting the archives' understanding of the records it holds."<sup>6</sup> Especially given Holden's remoteness and the transitory nature of its population, this could be an important consideration as its leaders decide what to do with the archival materials on site in the years to come.

## History of the Holden Archives

When the mining operation shut down in 1957, both Howe Sound Company and the residents themselves left many things behind. Holden lore from the early 1960s includes stories about clothing found hanging on the line and tables in abandoned homes still set as if for a meal. Some of these stories may well be apocryphal. But some objects found by the Lutherans, such as the cafeteria's immense coffee urns, have been preserved, giving testimony to the situation that must have greeted the eyes of the first generation of villagers.<sup>7</sup> The most likely explanation for this legacy is that amid the upheaval of dissolving a community of several hundred people in a

5. David C. Hammack, "Private Organizations, Public Purposes: Nonprofits and Their Archives," *The Journal of American History* 76 (1989): 181-191.

6. David J. Klaasen, "The Archival Intersection: Cooperation Between Collecting Repositories and Nonprofit Organizations," *The Midwestern Archivist* 15 (1990): 27, 34.

7. Linda Powell Jensen, Holden Village, guided tour, June 28, 2010.

relatively short period of time (weeks to months), the company and residents decided that some items and supplies were simply not worth the expense of shipping down the lake.

Howe Sound also left behind a considerable volume of records, including correspondence between the Holden operation's long-time general manager, J.J. Curzon, and his superiors at company headquarters. The correspondence is a gold mine of information on social and work conditions in the community (albeit from a managerial perspective). The records also include maps and diagrams of the mine and surface buildings, survey data, insurance documents, payroll records, medical claims, technical reports, and fire reports; some of these were of interest to the agencies involved in the remediation project.<sup>8</sup>

Why did the company neglect these materials? Howe Sound apparently did not even attempt to retrieve the records after donating the townsite to the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle (later of Issaquah, Washington), under whose auspices the transformation of Holden began, despite the fact that some of the records contain somewhat personal information about people who were still very much alive in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Were the records at least left in a sealed-off building, or in a locked filing cabinet?

The answer to the second question is a clear no. Werner Janssen, the longtime Holden Village manager, described to the author the state in which he found the records during his first visit to Holden in September 1961. They were located in a "warehouse/office" building on the level of the main mine portal.<sup>10</sup> Wind and snow had torn off some of the roof panels in the four years since the shutdown, leaving the records exposed to the elements. Janssen writes, "I was amazed at the volume of records laying around, some in drawers, maps left on drafting tables and some that had blown around and on the ground outside the building. It again appeared as if on the last day of work they just left."<sup>11</sup> This discovery suggests that Howe Sound had no ulterior motive for abandoning the records. The company, or at least its Holden office employees, simply did not care what happened to them.

8. Mattias Olshausen, "From Company Town to Company Town: Holden & Holden Village, WA, 1937-1980 & Today" (M.A. thesis, Portland State University, 2013). While conducting research for this work in the University of Washington archives, the author encountered a professional researcher contracted by one of the companies involved in the remediation project to inspect the Howe Sound collection for useful technical documents.

9. The Lutheran Bible Institute eventually changed its name to Trinity Lutheran College. It relocated its campus to Everett in the 2000s, but closed in 2016.

10. This is known as the "third" level. The "second" level roughly corresponds to what was the lower end of the mill structure, and is now where the Holden Village vehicle garage and maintenance facilities are located.

11. Werner Janssen, email communication, November 16, 2018.

Another authority on Holden, Bill Phillips, who spent most of his childhood there during the mining years, reminded the author that the surviving collection includes very few documents from the final years of the operation, so the company most likely did retain the most up-to-date materials, if only for financial reasons.<sup>12</sup> While Curzon's correspondence is present, that of his successor as general manager, Daniel "Jack" Roper, is not. For at least some of the surviving documents, there probably were copies at the Howe Sound Company corporate office in New York. This is suggested by the fact that the Curzon correspondence includes copies of both outgoing and incoming letters.

The corporate office records have proven difficult to trace. Howe Sound Company became Howmet Corporation sometime in the 1960s, at which time the company left the mining business altogether, eventually becoming a producer of components for gas turbine engines. Howmet was acquired by a French company, Pechiney, in 1970. A complicated series of transactions and reorganizations has followed since then—the two companies that inherited responsibility for the Holden operation's environmental impact, Intalco and Rio Tinto (which led the cleanup project), never owned or operated the mine themselves.<sup>13</sup> Anaconda, another copper-mining company, acquired some of Howe Sound's properties, but it too no longer exists as such.<sup>14</sup> Howe Sound's direct successors would have had little use for any but the most concise or technical records on a defunct mine in a remote corner of the Pacific Northwest. What Howe Sound documents have survived, besides the Holden collection, are to be found in archives at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The former collection includes copies of annual reports from Holden.

Fortunately, Janssen and others took an interest in saving the records left on site. Under the direction of geologist Rudy Edmund, who became the first Holden Portal Museum curator, volunteers moved the records to the townsite, where they were put in a storage locker in the basement of the Hotel building (which includes the kitchen and dining hall). Later in the 1960s, Nigel Adams, who also spent his childhood at Holden, became interested in the records in the course of working on a doctoral dissertation at the University of Washington (UW) about the "pre-production" years of the site. Adams initiated the process by which the records were donated to the UW

12. Bill Phillips, email communication, November 10, 2018. Mr. Phillips also reminded the author that privacy concerns in the 1950s were not what they are in the 2010s.

13. "Howmet Corp. History," Funding Universe, <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/howmet-corp-history/> (accessed November 18, 2018).

14. Nigel Adams, *The Holden Mine: From Discovery to Production, 1896-1938* (Wenatchee, WA: World Publishing Company, 1981), 77.



archives in 1968. There, whether at the University itself or in off-site storage, the records have remained ever since. The collection is contained in 68 file boxes.<sup>15</sup>

Despite knowing from the literature that corporate archival programs were in their infancy when Holden shut down, it is difficult to determine how representative Howe Sound's cavalier treatment of its Holden records was of common practice, whether in the company or the mining industry itself in the mid-twentieth century. Part of this difficulty stems from the uniqueness of Holden's situation and fate; few true ghost towns experience the kind of rebirth that allows the successor community to salvage and document so much of what came before. Most other company towns in the Pacific Northwest either became incorporated as conventional towns and cities or faded away entirely. An exception whose story bears a passing resemblance to Holden's is Seabeck, located on Washington's Kitsap Peninsula, a former mill town that became a Christian conference center. However, there was a gap of 50 years between when the mill burned in 1886 and when the center was established, and during that time the site was not entirely neglected.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, Holden stood empty for a little more than three years.

Some historical comparison is possible; the finding aid for the Howe Sound Company and Britannia Mining & Smelting Co. collection at the University of British Columbia notes that those documents were similarly left on the site of the Britannia Beach copper mine (outside of Squamish, British Columbia) after that operation closed in 1974, though perhaps under somewhat better conditions.<sup>17</sup> The Trinity mine was a copper-mining operation owned by the Royal Development Company, located some 10 miles southwest of Holden, which closed in the 1940s. The finding aid for the operation's document collection, now preserved at Western Washington University, notes that the documents were "found scattered on the floors throughout the Trinity Mine complex in the mid-1970s."<sup>18</sup> This sounds quite similar to Janssen's description of his discovery of the Holden records.

15. Janssen, email communication; Adams, *The Holden Mine*, 76. Adams was working on a volume about the production years at the time of his death; University of Washington, "Howe Sound Mining Company Records Inventory" accession no. 1014-001, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/static/public/specialcollections/findingaids/1014-001.pdf> (accessed February 11, 2019).
16. "The History of Seabeck," Seabeck Conference Center, <https://www.seabeck.org/history> (accessed January 7, 2019). The author would like to thank Linda Carlson, author of *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*, for this reference.
17. University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections, "Howe Sound Company Britannia Division Fonds," accession no. RBSC-ARC-1259, <http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/index.php/howe-sound-company-britannia-division-fonds> (accessed February 7, 2019).
18. Western Washington University, "Royal Development Company (Trinity Mine) Records, 1896-1946," accession no. XOE\_CPNWS0019royaldev, <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv36261/op=fstyle.aspx?t=k&q=trinity+copper+mine> (accessed February 20, 2019).

By the time the Howe Sound collection found its home at UW, Holden Village had been producing its own records of future archival value for several years. Though they too have been left to languish under less than ideal conditions at times, this has been more a reflection of the Lutheran community's limited resources than of an institutional lack of regard for their value. At least since 1985, there has been a board-appointed volunteer archivist/historian. Bill Dierks, a former Holden Village board member, occupied this role until about 1998, at which time he was succeeded by Ellen Gamrath, a former board president. Larry Howard, a retired Boeing engineer and husband to a former Holden pastor, succeeded Gamrath in 2009.<sup>19</sup>

As recorded by Gamrath, beginning in the 1980s, it was Holden's archival practice to keep one set of board records in the village, entrust a second to the board president, and assign the archivist to maintain a third off-site. An unused freezer in Dierks' home became the off-site "storage unit." When Gamrath took over as archivist, she initiated the process by which the Holden Village collection at Pacific Lutheran University in Parkland, Washington, was established. Gamrath consulted with the PLU archivist, Kerstin Ringdahl, and the head archivist at the University of Washington Special Collections, Karyl Winn. According to Gamrath's notes, Winn was not interested in assuming responsibility for the Holden Village documents, and she actually hoped to transfer the Howe Sound Company holdings to wherever the former collection ended up. However, PLU apparently did not have sufficient storage space to accommodate them.<sup>20</sup> Had this transfer occurred, it would have been possible to conveniently research both main eras of Holden's history in great depth in one location. Whether it would have been desirable from other points of view will be addressed in the next section.

Ringdahl, Gamrath, and the Holden board eventually agreed that PLU would become the long-term home of the off-site village archives. As part of the requirements of establishing the formal relationship between Holden and the PLU archives, Gamrath furnished the latter with a mission statement in December 1998. This document notes that PLU houses the official archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Region 1 (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and

19. Bill Dierks, "Fall 1985 Report to the trustees re: historical documents project"; Ellen Gamrath, "History of Archives," 2004.

20. Gamrath, "History of Archives"; Ellen Gamrath, "Holden Village Archives Report to the Board," July 21, 1999; Ellen Gamrath, email communication, January 17, 2019. Ringdahl retired in 2018 after 53 years of service with PLU; Pacific Lutheran University, "PLU Honors Retirement of 53-Year Archivist, Longest-Serving Employee with Well Deserved 'Hullabaloo'," <https://www.plu.edu/marcom/news/2018/02/20/ringdahl-retirement/> (accessed January 11, 2019). Winn died in 2017, having worked for UW for 42 years; University of Washington, "UW Librarian Karyl Winn was a Guardian and Champion of Northwest History," <https://magazine.washington.edu/karyl-winn-preserving-history/> (accessed January 11, 2019).

Washington). In view of this status, and of Holden's extremely close association with the church, PLU was a logical home for the village records.<sup>21</sup>

Over the course of 1999-2000, Gamrath, Dierks, and several other volunteers organized the documents stored in Dierks' freezer, guided professionally by Ringdahl, who then transported them to PLU in phases. Following this, in February 2001, members of the same group and others worked to organize and transfer files stored in the Hotel attic.<sup>22</sup> The painstaking labor performed by these volunteers formed the basis of the existing Holden collection at PLU today. As the finding aid for "The Holden Village Papers" shows, the 31 file boxes are divided into seven series, each corresponding to the tenure of one or more village executive directors (some of whom have worked as a team). The files themselves are diverse in nature, including the directors' correspondence, records of the original gift of Holden from Howe Sound to the Lutheran Bible Institute, newspaper clippings, songs, promotional pamphlets, utilities and operations documents, financial records, food lists, board materials, films, registration data, maps, tapes, and more.<sup>23</sup>

The third major archival collection associated with Holden is that which remains in the village itself. Its materials derive from a number of sources, including the former Portal Museum. This entity, historically separate from the archives, was created to preserve and educate Holden guests and residents about the mining legacy, house geological exhibits and samples, and serve as classroom space. The building was located on the south side of the creek, along the road leading from the maintenance garage to the mine portal. In the fall of 2009, it was decided to relocate the museum collections, as the building was to be demolished in the course of the then-upcoming remediation project. Larry Howard oversaw the relocation effort. The contents were moved to three or four locations around the village, including the basement of one of the "chalets" or former mining employee staff houses, where they were eventually joined by several boxes of unrelated administrative files.

Unfortunately, during a spring thaw in 2012, the basement was flooded, damaging some of the materials from both sources. After these had been salvaged and dried as much as possible (a process probably aided by Holden's otherwise dry environment), it was decided to move the archives to their current location in the attic loft of the rec hall building, now known as the Village Center. This put them in close proximity to

21. Ellen Gamrath, "Statement of the Purpose of the Holden Village Archives," December 1, 1998; Pacific Lutheran University, "Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) Region I Archives," <https://www.plu.edu/archives/elca/> (accessed January 11, 2019). It is worth noting that Holden Village predates the 1988 formation of the ELCA; the year before, its board included representatives from five distinct Lutheran church bodies (including the Lutheran Church of Canada), as well as two Methodist individuals. Of the four American Lutheran church bodies represented on the board, only the Missouri Synod (LCMS) did not join the ELCA (Olshausen, "From Company Town to Company Town," p. 73).

22. Gamrath, "History of Archives."

23. Anna Trammell, email communication, November 14, 2018.

the few displays and other components from the Portal Museum that remain public-facing, which are located on the second floor of the same building. The on-site collection currently consists of 120 numbered file boxes and assorted artifacts, in addition to well over 100 more boxes that have yet to be numbered or inventoried.<sup>24</sup> Over the last decade, chief among the additions has been administrative material related to the remediation project, which lasted approximately from 2011 to 2017, with an interruption in the summer of 2015 due to a forest fire that led to the evacuation of Holden.<sup>25</sup>

These are not the only archival collections associated with Holden. The Audio Archive, accessible through the Holden Village website (<http://audio.holdenvillage.org/>), consists of digitized recordings of talks, events, services, and oral histories going back to the late 1970s; it serves to balance somewhat the managerial perspective prevalent in the document collections. The Lake Chelan Historical Society has materials stemming from the mining era, reflecting the fact that Howe Sound Company and its employees had a presence in “downlake” Chelan. At least a couple of former residents have relevant private collections of documents and photographs. The author attempted to locate records of the Holden workers’ union, Local 379 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (which later merged with the United Steelworkers), but only found a copy of its constitution and bylaws in the archives of the University of Colorado, Boulder.

### Future of the Collections

There is perhaps no space in Holden Village today that could be described as ideal for archival storage purposes. Nearly all that are of adequate size are needed for the more pressing concerns of staff housing, office or meeting space, or storage for items and materials of immediate use. The Village Center attic loft is probably among the best possible solutions for the time being. It has the advantages of being out of the way, reasonably spacious, and relatively secure against water ingress. The collections are partially covered in plastic sheeting, and a data logger has been installed to monitor temperature and humidity levels; as noted, the latter are fortunately never high at Holden.<sup>26</sup>

However, the space also has drawbacks. Because Holden’s hydroelectric facility does not generate enough power during the winter to heat the Village Center, a large

24. Larry Howard, “Holden Village Archives History Update,” October 19, 2018; Larry Howard, email communication, January 14, 2019; Larry Howard, email communication, February 9, 2019.

25. This was known as the Wolverine Creek Fire. It burned most of the lower half of Railroad Creek Valley, and may well have destroyed Holden itself had firefighters not employed back burning and other countermeasures. A previous fire in 2007 also led to a village evacuation, but was halted a few miles down the access road.

26. Howard, “Holden Village Archives History Update.”

building that is generally not needed for programming purposes at that time of year, true climate control is impossible. The space is accessed through a steep, narrow stairway, discouraging use by potential researchers with mobility issues. There is limited room for expansion of the collection. One wall is merely an incomplete partition separating the space from the rest of the attic (mainly consisting of a catwalk above the rec hall ceiling), leaving an easy means of access for rodents and insects. And like practically all the village structures, despite the presence of modern fire detection and suppression systems, the old wooden building is vulnerable to fire; in an actual blaze, it is conceivable that firefighting efforts would do considerable damage to the archives even if the smoke and flame did not.

At some point in the future, the Portal Museum will likely be housed in a new, purpose-built facility, probably at a location nearer to the townsite than the original building. However, the current plans do not include archival space (for unclear reasons), and even if this were not the case, this facility would also remain unheated during part of the year due to power limitations.<sup>27</sup> This leaves removal to off-site storage and digitization as the only two reliable long-term solutions to preserving and creating user-friendly access to the collection. The former is dependent on the availability of space in the PLU archives. The latter may be possible as an ongoing project, but is somewhat inhibited by the high rate of turnover among Holden's volunteer staff (sometimes complicated by staff shortages in critical areas at busy times), and might call for a platform, such as Omeka or CollectiveAccess, which the village would probably lack the funds, server space, and consistent technical expertise to adequately maintain.<sup>28</sup>

Continued off-site storage at PLU clearly is desirable from the point of view of physical preservation and the Holden materials already housed there, but is not without potential drawbacks. As suggested by Klaasen, transferring an organization's records to a repository may lead them to become forgotten, perhaps even when the repository in question belongs to an institution with which the organization has a positive, communicative relationship at the time of the transfer. This becomes especially valid as the individuals who managed the transfer at both ends retire and institutional priorities change with new leadership. Additionally, although PLU is a more accessible and more secure location for any potential Holden researcher based outside Holden itself, it is through spending time in the village that a person is most likely to become interested in its history in the first place, and thus there is a case for keeping some archival materials readily available on site, or at least copies thereof. The author began researching Holden's history for his master's thesis in earnest during a 14-month stint as a member of the village operations staff in 2011-2012.

There is also a question of provenance. A limited number of the documents and artifacts that remain on site date back to the mining era, and thus do not fall within

27. Howard, email communication, February 9, 2019.

28. Ibid.

the scope of the PLU archives collection development priorities except by virtue of association with the present Holden community. Arguably, these would retain more meaning if they were to find a home at the University of Washington alongside the Howe Sound collection, where they would also add to a broader collection of materials of similar origin. The UW archives include the records of other companies that founded, owned, or had very close relationships with other small industrial towns in Washington, such as the Pacific Coast Coal Company (Black Diamond), the Northern Pacific Railway Company (Roslyn, Melmont), and Weyerhaeuser (multiple towns).<sup>29</sup> The university is also home to the Labor Archives of Washington. For this same reason, the author believes it would not necessarily be desirable to combine all the Holden collections in one location, as was at least briefly considered in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

## Conclusion

Holden Village and other organizations that are rich in records but lacking in the resources needed to maintain them on a long-term basis are always wise to consider forming relationships with one or more archival repositories to achieve this end. Physical preservation must be the main goal of such an effort, but it should not be the only goal. The organization's records should be preserved and made accessible in such a way that those for whom the organization's present forms a major part of their daily lives will have less cause to lose sight of its past. Ideally, the records will be regarded with an appreciation for the social context, not just the geographical context, in which they were created, informing where they are bestowed. A final consideration should be for what happens to old records after the community of people who gave rise to them dissolves or fades away. Holden Village will not endure forever, but if it tends to its archival legacy, the many facets of its unique story will be available to researchers to study for a long time to come.

29. Linda Carlson, *Company Towns of the Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 213-241.

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