community history but also strengthen ties among community members. Digital community archives have become increasingly prevalent, but present new complexities as they require significant infrastructural investment to ensure that platforms are developed and supported over time.

Some community archives may resist bureaucratization as a political principle, preferring to remain informal grassroots efforts. Established community archives may decide to integrate collections into a more formal repository (e.g., a public library or a university archives). Other community archives efforts emerge from or develop within larger institutions and their community partners, as is the case of the Community Archives Center for Tacoma. Archivists and librarians give their professional skills, whether as employees, partners, or volunteers, advocates, or activists of all such organizations. Wherever they are situated, community archives frequently foreground issues of community control and autonomy even if they welcome partnerships or emerge with support from more formal heritage bodies or trained professionals. Working with and within large information institutions is an important way for communities to raise public profile and strengthen ties, and can crucially build capacity for access, fundraising, development, and community engagement activities. As Caswell (2014) notes, however, many community archives work carefully to maintain the balance between relying on well-established institutions to provide stability and resources and the desire to remain community-driven.
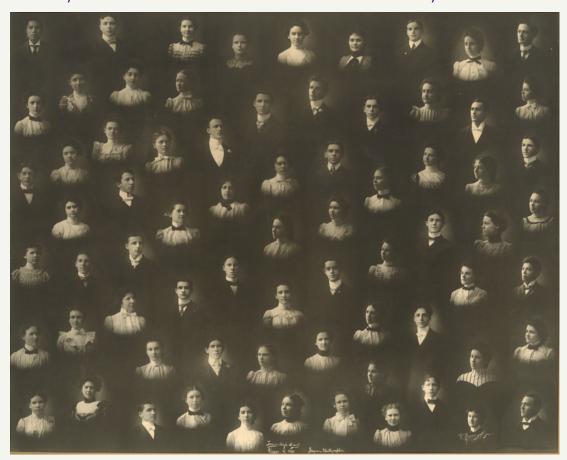

Figure 2. A photo of the Tacoma High School Class of 1900 was digitized at a community event. (Community Event Collection, CAC0003, Community Archives Center at Tacoma Public Library).