

LAND PATENTS

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The State Archives became responsible for the functions of the Land Office and its collections in 1965. The Records Management Division, then a part of the Archives, took charge of recording and filing plats. When the Division was separated from the Archives in 1975, plats and other Land Office records became the responsibility of the Archives.

The State Archivist is designated as the Commissioner of Land Patents and is responsible for issuing land patents and conducting court hearings (Chapter 355, Acts of 1967). In performing these duties, the State Archivist acts independently of the duties imposed as State Archivist (Code Real Property Article, secs. 13-101 through 13-504).

The land patent process is the mechanism for granting land in Maryland. Land patents were issued by the proprietors during the colonial period, and later by the State. Virtually all land in Maryland has been patented. Through survey errors or due to the inaccessibility of a tract, however, some land never may have been included in a patent. This land, when it is discovered, may be patented, with title passing to the patentee upon payment of the fair market value of the land to the State.

An applicant for a patent must present evidence based on a title search of the property in question proving that no former patent encompasses any portion of the land. Information concerning the land patent process and an application for a patent can be obtained from the Commissioner of Land Patents.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

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Preservation of the photographic record is an essential part of the work of the State Archives. The State Archives is the repository for thousands of photographs that document Maryland's cultural diversity. These images provide an invaluable asset to understanding the historical record from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

The first major gift of photographs was received by the Archives in 1941. Today more than three hundred collections include photographs, many by the State's foremost photographers. The State Archives specializes in images taken in Maryland: outdoor scenes; city and townscapes; portraits of citizens; domestic life; commercial, agricultural and leisure activities.

Archives photographs come from many sources, both as gifts and as loans to be copied and preserved as part of the public record. Photographs from

Special Collections of the State Archives have been used to illustrate books, articles, motion pictures, and video productions. Copies of photographs may be purchased for reference, exhibition, commercial use, or publication.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICES

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Photographic Services began in 1935. This office supports all aspects of State Archives work by various forms of imaging. An in-house photo lab, Photographic Services helps preserve and make accessible copies of records through the creation and duplication of microfiche, microfilm, photocopy, photography, and digital imaging. In this way, Photographic Services assists government agencies; promotes Maryland scholarship by aiding students, historians, and genealogists; provides evidential materials for legal matters; and supports State Archives exhibits and publications.

Services to Government Agencies. Photographic Services preserves the records of State and county government agencies while providing those agencies with working copies. In some instances, the office processes and inspects microfilm from other agencies.

Services to the Public. Photocopies, photographs, microfilm, and other forms of imaging of archival material may be ordered from Photographic Services. Through this office, microfilm of records is prepared and made available for interlibrary loans.

Preservation Microfilming. Records are microfilmed to archival standards that allow for the best resolution and density. These standards are defined by the American National Standard Institute (ANSI). Duplicates are provided on diazo and vesicular film. Other media, such as aperture cards, also are available.

Digital Imaging. Photographic Services scans record material to convert images into electronic form. By this process, a document can be reproduced in many formats.

PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION

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Conservation Laboratory. The Conservation Laboratory preserves the physical integrity of archives in many forms, including manuscript papers and record books, microfilm, microfiche, photographs, published books, government publications, maps, newspapers, and electronic files. The Conservation Lab monitors environmental conditions in temperature- and humidity-controlled storage areas. Where appropriate, conservation measures are used. These include chemical deacidification, repair