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Public Search Room open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (On Saturdays only: closed for lunch hour, 12:00-1:00 p.m.)

The origins of the State Archives can be traced to the State's tercentenary celebrations in 1934. As the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Maryland colony approached, the Maryland Tercentenary Commission made a modern, centralized archives a key feature of the State's commemoration. A proposal to create a "Memorial Hall of Records" was mentioned as early as 1928, and in 1931 the General Assembly passed an appropriation of funds to erect an archives building. Construction began in 1934, and the Hall of Records opened to the public a year later.

The General Assembly made provision for the management of the State's permanent records that would be housed in the new facility. A 1935 statute created the Hall of Records Commission, prescribed its powers and duties, and provided for the collection, custody, and preservation of the official records, documents, and publications of the State (Chapter 18, Acts of 1935). The Hall of Records was created in 1935 as an independent agency of State government and remained so until its incorporation into the Department of General Services in 1970 (Chapter 97, Acts of 1970). In 1984, the Hall of Records was renamed the State Archives and became an independent agency within the office of the Governor (Chapter 286, Acts of 1984). The 1984 legislation defined an advisory role for the Hall of Records Commission and placed the Commission on Artistic Property under the State Archives (Code State Government Article, secs. 2-1513(b), 3-404(b), 7-213(a), 9-1001 through 9-1027, 10-604 through 10-608, 10-631 through 10-634, 10-637 through 10-642, 10-701, 10-702).

In July 1986, the State Archives moved into the new Hall of Records building on Rowe Boulevard across from the Courts of Appeal complex.

The State Archives is the historical agency for Maryland. It serves as the central depository for governmental records of permanent value. Among its holdings are colonial and State executive, legislative, and judicial records; county probate, land, and court records; church records; business records; State publications and reports; and special collections of private papers, newspapers, and

maps. Records are stored in a humidity- and temperature-controlled stack area, and preservation requirements, including deacidification, lamination, mylar encapsulation, and archival bookbinding are carried out by the staff of an in-house conservation laboratory. Records are made accessible to the public in a search room open six days each week, through photocopies produced by an in-house photolab, and through the interlibrary loan of microform.

State agencies, counties, cities, and towns in Maryland are authorized to offer for deposit at the State Archives all files, documents, and records not in current use. By law, State agencies are required to have their records placed on retention and disposal schedules. No public records can be destroyed without scheduling and the prior approval of the State Archives.

All records that are in the courthouses of the State and that were created prior to April 28, 1788 (when Maryland ratified the U.S. Constitution) must be deposited at the State Archives. The records of all State agencies, boards, and commissions that are abolished or otherwise conclude their work must also be transferred to the custody of the State Archives.

All current deeds, mortgages, and releases recorded in the courthouses of the State are microfilmed and preserved at the State Archives for security purposes. Limited facilities are available for the filming of records of State agencies.

The State Archives shares responsibility with the Division of Vital Records of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for preservation of and access to vital records information (Code State Government Article, sec. 9-1015).

Rules and regulations promulgated in the Code of Maryland Regulations give the State Archives a role in the establishment of archives in local jurisdictions (COMAR 14.18.03).

In 1947, the State Archives began to collect publications and reports of State agencies. Since 1982, the State Archives has received State publications and reports under the State Publications Depository and Distribution Program. The State Archives also is an official depository for county charters, codes, and laws (Code 1957, Art. 25, sec. 32A; Art. 25A, secs. 3B(3), 7(b); Art. 25B, secs. 7(b)(3), 12(b)). Municipal charter amendments and annexations, after publication, are deposited annually with the State Archives by the Department of Legislative Reference (Code 1957, Art. 23A, sec. 17C).