

ernment Information Services involves Government Publications and the Library.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS & LIBRARY

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Government Publications. Publications and reports of State government agencies date to the early 19th century. They, with the publications and reports of county and municipal governments, have been collected by the State Archives since 1947. 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).

Library. Organized in 1940, the Library is a reference source for works that supplement the holdings of the State Archives. These include published records and sources on Maryland history, government, biography, geography, and natural resources; county, city and town histories; regional studies; Chesapeake Bay; research guides; genealogies; and archives administration, conservation, and preservation.

The Library of the Department of Natural Resources transferred to the State Archives in June 1987. It includes materials collected since 1942 on Maryland natural resources, wildlife, fisheries, forestry, water resources, and the environment.

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.

Designated Commissioner of Land Patents, the State Archivist 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. The land patent process also provides a simple, convenient and prompt method of reserving vacant land for the public use of State, county or local government bodies through the issuance of certificates of reservation (Chapter 290, Acts of 1993).

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 may be obtained from the Commissioner of Land Patents.

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, the office 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 many instances, the office processes and inspects microfilm from other agencies.

Services to the Public. Projection prints, photographs, slides, 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.