

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 deacidification of paper, repair and restoration, mylar encapsulation, phase boxing, and archival bookbinding.

Preservation and Access. The State Archives preserves information with microfilm and digital imaging to expand access to historical documents. Sophisticated computer-scanning technology and microfilm produced to national preservation standards preserve images of original materials. These procedures help individuals who are not able to use originals at the Archives, and they preserve the information value of fragile manuscripts, maps, newspapers, and photographs.

Preservation Outreach. The State Archives participated in the work of the Task Force to Initiate Preservation Planning in Maryland and has assumed a leading position in promoting preservation to organizations and individuals across the State. The State Archives was designated by the Task Force to coordinate public information, workshops, and low-cost conservation services. The goal is to ensure preservation of significant collections of books and documents in Maryland libraries, museums, historical societies, government offices, private organizations, and private homes. At the State Archives, conservation staff conducts preservation workshops each spring.

REFERENCE SERVICES

Patricia V. Melville, *Director*
(410) 974-3914

Records are made accessible to the public and government agencies through the search room and by telephone, fax, and mail. The search room is open Tuesday through Saturday. Telephone, fax and mail reference services are available Monday through Friday.

Records are used for historical research, title searches, geographical information, vital record research, legal documentation, and genealogy. Copies of records can be produced on paper as photographic images, or through scanning, as image files. Self-service copying from film and xeroxing of some materials also is available. Records on microforms may be borrowed through interlibrary loan.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Nancy M. Bramucci, *Director*
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The State Archives is authorized to collect public and private records and other information relating to the history of the Province and State of Maryland from the earliest times. At the discretion of the State Archivist, the State Archives also is authorized to acquire collections of private records as permanent gifts (Code State Government Article, sec. 9-1010).

Special Collections supervises the care, preservation, accessioning, and description of private records. Usually, they are given to the State Archives by private donors and generally consist of personal letters, diaries, photographs, maps, church records, architectural plans, and other manuscript documents. Maps, for example, date from 1565 to the present. They serve as an important resource for scientists, historians, and citizens interested in the Chesapeake watershed. Photographs illustrate a cross section of Maryland life and culture, including agriculture, architecture, family life, government, nautical and naval affairs, recreation, and sports. In addition, the State Archives has microfilmed records of nearly 300 churches of various denominations, and more than 250 newspapers from across the State.

With the exception of collections of fine arts, the Director, in conjunction with the State Archivist, reviews offers of materials as gifts to Special Collections. Offers of gifts of fine arts are reviewed by the Curator of Artistic Property and the State Archivist. Materials are accepted on the basis of their relevance to the holdings of the State Archives, their condition, and the need to provide for their proper storage and care.

While collections generally are offered as gifts to the State Archives, occasionally materials are accepted on deposit. The decision to accept a collection of original materials as a deposit is made by the Director in conjunction with the State Archivist based upon the relevance of the collection to the holdings of the State Archives, its condition, and the historical value of the collection. A collection may be placed on deposit if its contents are to be photographed or microfilmed as a reference collection at the Archives and the original materials returned to the owner.

STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Kevin J. Swanson, *Director*
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State and Local Government Records supervises the appraisal, description, transfer, storage, and retrieval of the permanently valuable records of Maryland government. State, county and municipal government agencies in Maryland may offer the State Archives all files, documents, and records not in current use.