

Remarks by the State Archivist, Elaine Rice Bachmann, upon the opening of the Old Treasury Building

February 10, 2026

As the secretary of the State House Trust, and in guiding the work of the Archives Commission on Artistic Property for the past thirty years, I've had the honor of working alongside our partners at the Department of General Services and the Maryland Historical Trust to implement the State House Visitor Experience Master Plan, adopted in 2007 in collaboration with C&G Partners. Today's opening of the Old Treasury Building is the realization of the last portion of that plan, and I want to acknowledge Mr. Chip di Paula, Governor Ehrlich's chief of staff, who believed in this plan and ensured that it received its crucial initial funding. This plan has guided four gubernatorial administrations, culminating now through the support of Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller, (who also serves as Chair of the State House Trust) in committing to incremental work to realize what we knew could be a first class visitor experience for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to this National Historic Landmark. We could not be here today without the support of the late Senate President Mike Miller, and the late Speaker of the House Mike Busch, who deeply believed that the state should invest in preserving and interpreting its history. This commitment has been inherited and continued by President Ferguson, and Speaker Emerita Jones, and will now surely be carried forward by Speaker Peña-Melnyk.

In being able to again open the Old Treasury Building, we have a place to tell the story of Maryland's earliest history and the move of the capital to Annapolis from St. Mary's City—with this building being the physical connection to that time period. We've been able to bring original iron chests, purchased by the legislature in the 1730s, back into the building where they once stored the "treasure" of the colony of Maryland making this building the center of Maryland's economy in the 18th century.

And in telling that story we also have a venue for shedding light on the story of those whose names will never be known—the thousands of enslaved people upon whose labor Maryland was built. Quite literally they built the wealth of the planters whose money was stored here, and built the buildings around us, including the magnificent State House celebrating its 250th anniversary.

I want to acknowledge the curatorial staff of the Archives for their dedication and scholarship in creating these exhibits: Director of Artistic Property Chris Kintzel, and Curator of Artistic Property, Robin Gower. I also want to thank the research, special collections, and digitization staff at the Archives who have provided the foundation for all the information that you are about to see inside. I speak for all of us at the Archives

when I say how proud we are to work in Maryland, where archivists, historians and curators are supported in our commitment to presenting all the truth of American history—and where our leaders believe that we must strive to understand and honor our past as we endeavor to move forward together.

Thank you.