





THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Mark Schaming 

SUBJECT: Genealogical Resources in the State Archives

DATE: November 30, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Department staff will present an overview of the genealogical resources available from the State Archives and will review the impact of online access to images and indexes, highlighting the Archives' relationship with Ancestry.com.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Arts and Cultural Affairs Law §57.05 mandates the State Archives to preserve and make available those official records of State government that have been determined to have sufficient historical value or other value to warrant their continued preservation.

Background Information

The State Archives holds over 250 million documents, photographs, maps, drawings and other materials of long term value. The Archives makes these materials available through a variety of methods, including online access through the Archives website and through a unique partnership with Ancestry.com.

Records in the New York State Archives document functions and activities of State government; none of the records were created for the purpose of genealogical research. However, many records in the Archives contain information on individuals. Among these records are indexes to vital records (births, marriages, deaths); records of war service

(War of 1812 through World War I); land records (mostly transactions involving the Colony or State of New York); court records (including colonial wills and early nineteenth century civil cases); and records of some correctional and custodial institutions. Many Archives records of genealogical interest have been digitized and indexed by Ancestry.com.

Use of genealogical resources continues to be one of the most popular services of the State Archives. During the first nine months of 2017, over 56,000 unique users accessed genealogical resources on the State Archives website. During the same period, images of State Archives records containing genealogical information available through Ancestry.com were accessed a total of 5,186,020 times.

The unique relationship with Ancestry.com enabled the State Archives to digitize, index and make available records from 51 different records series, including nearly 600,000 service records from New Yorkers who served in World War I, records of the sales of Loyalist land 1762-1830, New York Censuses from 1892-1925, Civil War muster rolls, and pension claims of disabled Revolutionary War veterans. These materials are available free of charge to New Yorkers through a contractual agreement with Ancestry.com.