





TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Mark Schaming 

SUBJECT: Preserving and Making Available Colonial Era Documents from New York's Hudson Valley

DATE: October 25, 2018

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

State Archives staff will present an overview on a project to conserve, digitize and make available for research a collection of documents from New York's colonial period that were damaged in the 1911 Capitol fire.

Reason for Consideration

For information.

Background Information

New York's Hudson Valley formed an important population center and strategic corridor in the United States' colonial period. The region was home to a number of important communities reflecting the great diversity of New York's colonial peoples and economies. Materials documenting this important period, between the Dutch and the new American republic, were destroyed or damaged in the 1911 Capitol fire. The State Archives has recently completed a multi-year project to conserve, digitize and make available for research a small portion of these materials. The work done on conservation and preservation was a pilot project which will enable the State Archives to develop a plan for addressing the complete collection of materials. Staff will report on the content of the materials, their broader context as well as the project to preserve and make this sample of materials available for the first time since 1911.

The documents that were conserved and are now available include documents of the New York Colonial Governor and Council, Council Papers and Council Minutes as well as Applications for Land Grants (so-called "Land Papers") and Letters Patent. The specific topics to which these documents relate can shed a new and interesting light on life in the Hudson Valley in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, including topics on counterfeiting in the Hudson Valley, the first licensed ferry between Poughkeepsie and Kingston, and war in Orange and Ulster counties.