

New York State Archives at 50 A review of the past and report on the present



Establishing the State Archives

- Chapter 869 of the Laws of 1971, signed on June 25, 1971 by Governor Rockefeller establishes the State Archives.
- The State Archives preserves and provides access to the records of New York colonial and state government that "warrant permanent preservation by the state."
- First state archivist was hired in 1974.
- Initial transfer of records was in 1978 with 4,000 boxes of records.





Records Preservation and Access

- By 1981 the collection had grown to over 26,000 boxes. Today the archives preserves over 175,000 boxes of records.
- In 1979 Archivists answered 1,200 reference questions. In the last 12 months our Ancestry.com collection has provided access to over 12 million records.
- The collection reflects over 7,000 unique sets of records, all are described in our online systems, available through our website.
- In 2020 Archives responded to 7,507 reference inquiries sent via e-mail.
- Since 1988 the Documentary Heritage Program has supported programs in non-government repositories.

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Articles of agreement made and concluded the twelfth day of cuty in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventeen between John Richardson of the one part and the banal bommissioners of the state of clew york of the other part, whereby it is covenanted and agreed as follows, to wit, the sais John covenants and agrees to grub clear, excavate, embank and construct in a good substantial and workmanlike manner a part of the first section of the canal which part begins on the canal line at a stake near the Fort Bull Lock fifty feet from the north side of Wood orech and runs thence easterly on the canal line about sexty one chains and fifty links to a White oak tree marked Ron it's west side reference being herein had to the surveys levels and make of Benjamin Wright Esquire Engineer; The grubbing is to be at least sexty fort wide, that is, thereby feet on each side from the middle at the courd in which shace of sixty deet, all the trees,



Records Management for Local Government

- In 1976 responsibility for oversight of local government records was transferred to State Archives.
- A new local government records law was adopted in 1989 to provide grants and increased services to local governments.
- Monthly webinars provide training on records management issues.
- New statewide general schedule for retention of local government records was issued in 2020.
- \$260 million in grants since 1989 to improve local governments have led to dramatic improvements in records management, preservation and access statewide.





Records Management for State Agencies

- In 1987 State Archives assumed responsibility for records management services for state government agencies.
- State Records Center holds nearly 300,000 boxes of temporary records for state agencies.
- State agencies rely on Archives to provide the authority for legal disposition of records and ensure that records of permanent value are retained.
- Robust program of training and hands-on assistance to agencies gives agencies the tools they need to manage records, especially electronic records.





Managing Non-paper Records

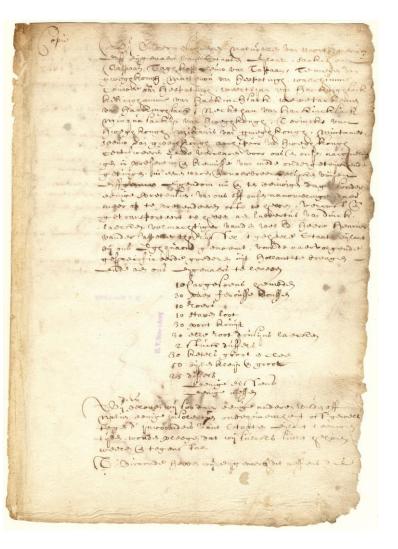
- 1986 "Special Media Records Project" identified a major challenge in managing non-paper, mostly electronic records.
- State Archives issued its first guidance on electronic mail in 1995.
- State Archives preserves over 30,000 audio visual items.
- Records in electronic form, dating to 1957, are preserved in a standards-based digital repository that ensures the protection, preservation and accessibility of electronic records.





Going Forward for the Next 50 years

- Assist agencies and local governments in managing electronic records.
- Continue to strengthen digitization to expand access to all New Yorkers.
- Update and expand descriptions of records to make it easier for researchers to locate and request materials from the collection.
- Work with repositories statewide to support inclusion of all voices in the documentary record.







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THANK YOU!

