

The New York Idea of the State Library

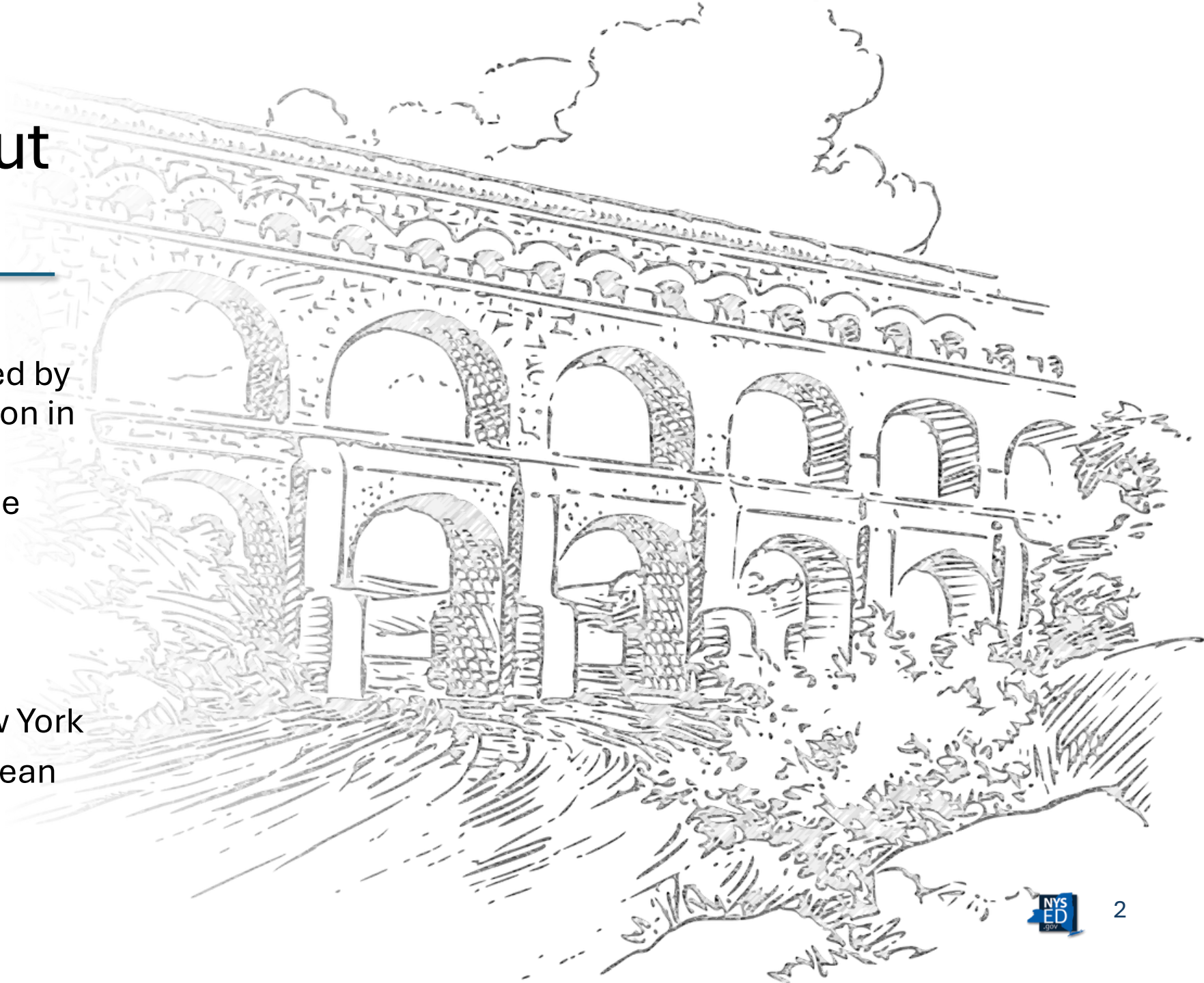
Research Library 101

September 2025
Presentation to the NYS Board of Regents



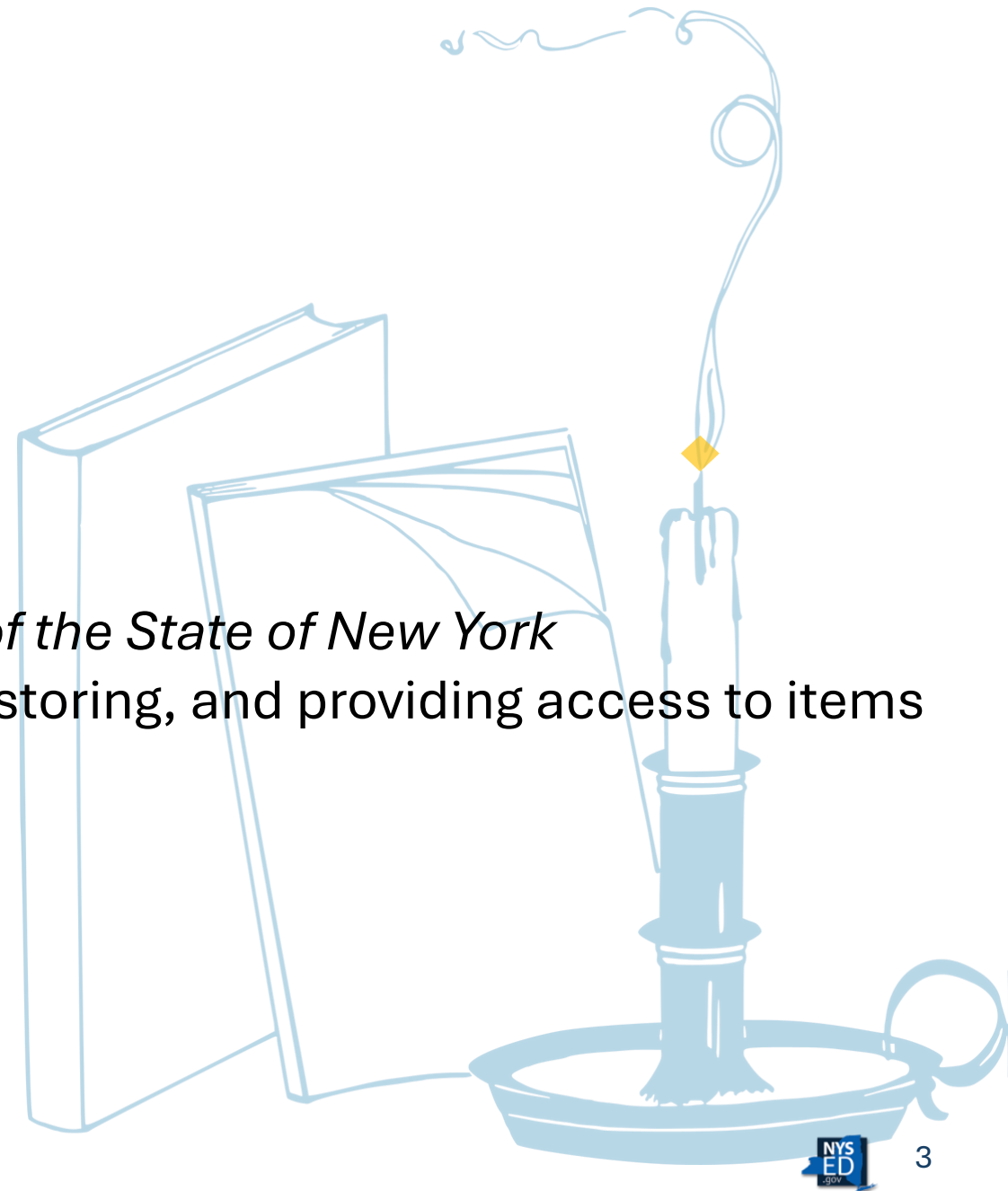
Let's Talk About Infrastructure

- NYS Library established by Governor DeWitt Clinton in 1818
- Third state library in the country
- Copies of federal law, interstate exchange of statutes
- Natural History of New York
- Exchanges with European libraries



Library Origins and Themes

- Reports and laws from new territories/states
- *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*
- At first, no formalized system for cataloging, storing, and providing access to items
- Unprecedented collection growth
- Unprecedented collection use
- “Library of Congress” for New York State





Goals and Work

- Collecting and organizing resources and creating access points for New Yorkers to connect with them. These resources:
- Support State employees working to innovate New York's services and infrastructure
- Inform all New Yorkers to be active participants in their community and government



Service Specifics

- Acquiring and cataloging materials
- Digitizing Collections
- Reference
- Stewarding world-renowned collections



Acquiring and Cataloging Materials

Over 20 million items, with strengths in:

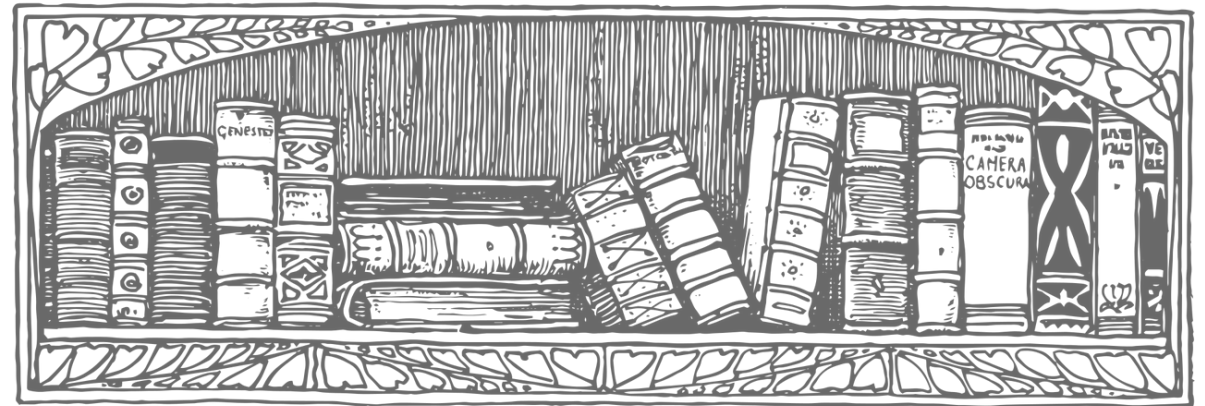
- Law
- Medicine
- Social sciences
- Education
- Genealogy
- Biological sciences
- Environmental sciences
- Technology
- History
 - American
 - NYS

Manuscripts and Special Collections (MSC) Unit holds 14,000 cubic feet of materials such as:

- Rare books
- Manuscripts
- Maps
- Prints
- Broadside
- Rare books
- Sheet music
- Much more!

Reference

- Unlike many research libraries, the New York State Library is open to the public
- Reference and MSC librarians on the 7th and 11th floors accept questions via phone, email, US mail, and in person
- Researchers are often referred to us from other state agencies, the courts, and librarians in public or academic libraries
- Patrons often report that no one else was able to find this information for them



Digitizing Collections and More



INTERLIBRARY LOAN NET
LENDER, FILLING REQUESTS FROM
LIBRARIES ALL OVER THE U.S. AND THE
WORLD



PROVIDES 100 FREE DIGITAL COPIES
PER YEAR TO ANY INDIVIDUAL AND
NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD VIA
DOCUMENT DELIVERY

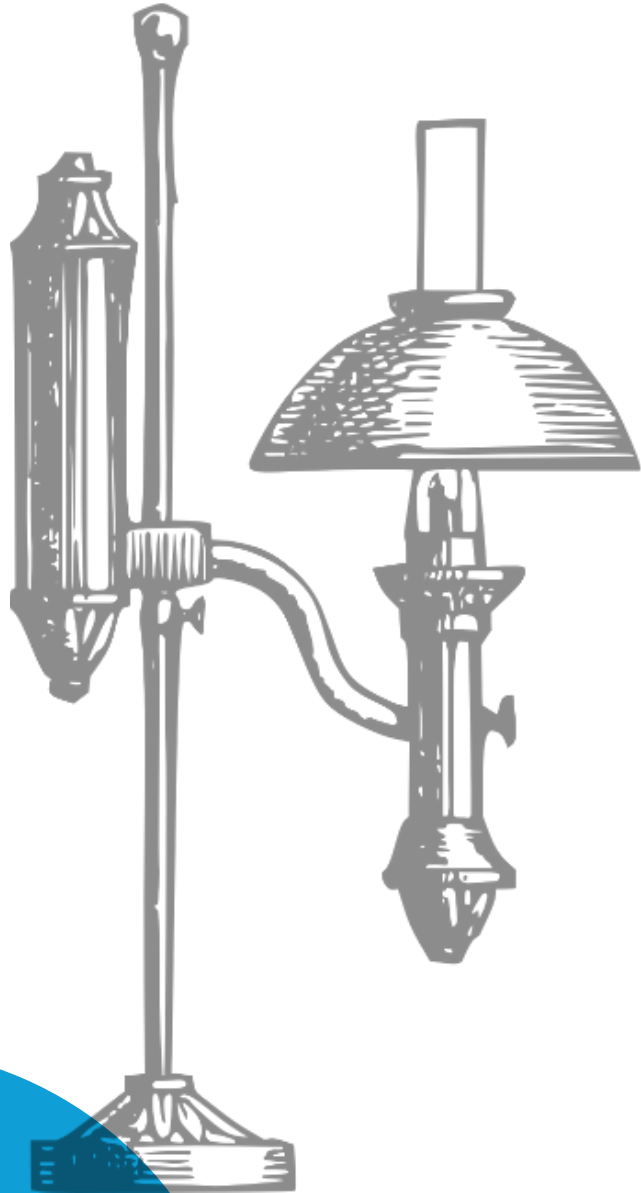


SINCE 1995, SCANNING NEW YORK
STATE GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
AND PROVIDING FREE ACCESS TO
THESE DIGITAL VERSIONS THROUGH
THE ONLINE CATALOG



HARNESS ADVANCES IN
TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE ACCESS
TO COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES





Stewarding World-Renowned Collections

- Largest collection of published NYS documents in the world
- Regional Federal Depository Library
- Preservation Steward for the U.S. Government Publishing Office (the largest publisher in the world) with pledge to keep select print collections of historical and current government publications produced by the GPO
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Resource Center since 1871
- Thousands of industry standards and specifications, or rules for making products and services compatible, safe, replaceable, and connectable

Washington Relics

Purchased in 1871, sent to Library in 1873

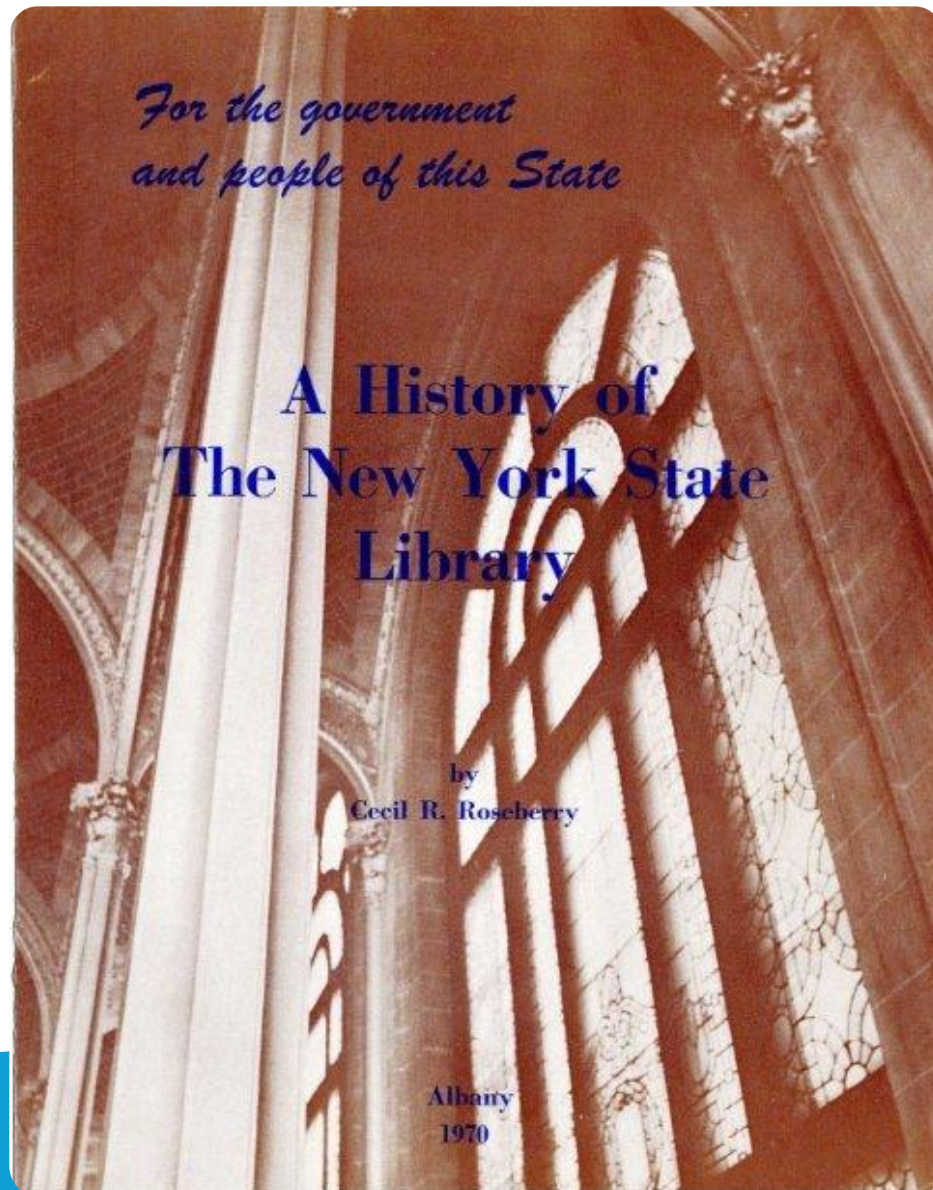
Draft Farewell Address rescued from the Capitol Fire of 1911

Damaged dress sword retrieved from the rubble and repaired

Sword with a story



Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

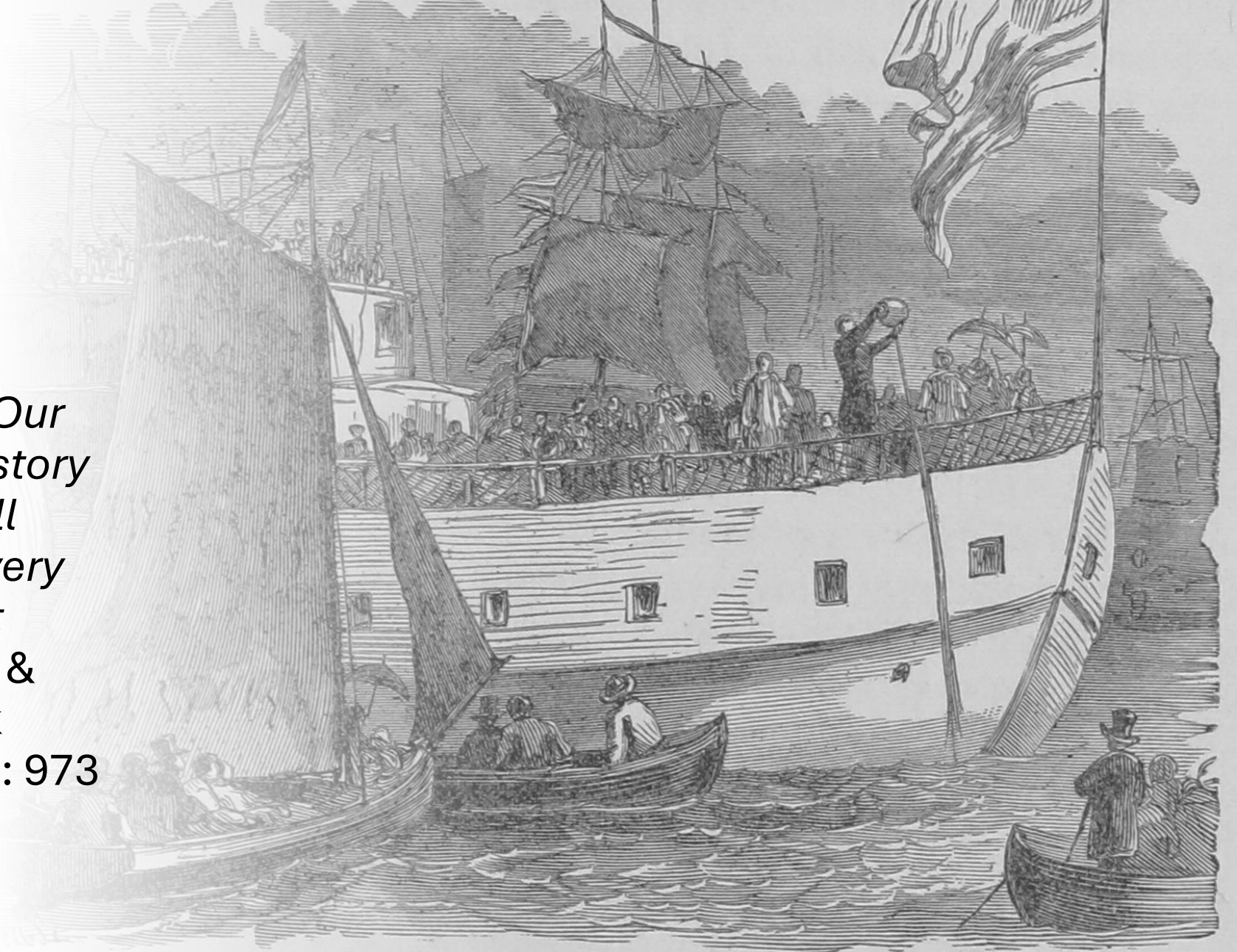


For the Government and People of this State

- The history of the New York State Library is also the history of how New Yorkers have used it.
- It describes a long-standing ethic of care for our past, present, and future selves.

Infrastructure, Again

- Lossing, Benson John. *Our Country, a Household History of the United States for All Readers, from the Discovery of America to the Present Time* (New York, Johnson & Bailey, [c1895]) New York State Library call number: 973 qL88o (3 volume) – page 1331.



WEDDING OF THE LAKES WITH THE OCEAN.