

By:
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“Accessing State Archives”

Archives:

An archive is an accumulation of historical records, or the physical place they are located. Archives contain primary source documents that have accumulated over the course of an individual or organization's lifetime, and are kept to show the function of that person or organization. Professional archivists and historians generally understand archives to be records that have been naturally and necessarily generated as a product of regular legal, commercial, administrative or social activities. They have been metaphorically defined as "the secretions of an organism", and are distinguished from documents that have been consciously written or created to communicate a particular message to posterity.

In general, archives consist of records that have been selected for permanent or long-term preservation on grounds of their enduring cultural, historical, or evidentiary value. Archival records are normally unpublished and almost always unique, unlike books or magazines for which many identical copies exist. This means that archives are quite distinct from libraries with regard to their functions and organization, although archival collections can often be found within library buildings. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archive>)

Council of State Archivists

CoSA

**Directory of State and Territorial
Archives and Records Programs**

Statearchivists.org

<http://msa.maryland.gov/>

<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/Default.asp>

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/
community/state_archives/2887](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_archives/2887)

Digitizing Records

Preservation:

Digitization can also help preserve precious materials. Making high-quality digital images available electronically can reduce wear and tear on fragile items. This does not mean, however, that digital copies should be seen as a replacement for the original piece. Digital files are not permanent and should be maintained and periodically transferred to new formats. Even after digitization, original documents and artifacts must still be cared for. Preservation remains a secondary benefit of digital projects. If preserving a collection is deemed a higher priority than increasing access to it, a better use of resources would be to purchase acid free folders, encapsulate fragile documents, or otherwise improve storage conditions.

In summary:

The Benefits of Digital Access for Collections:

Can be viewed from anywhere, at any time of the day

Can be printed from the web

Viewers can find what they are looking for quickly and independently

Can save staff reference time by answering frequently asked questions on the web

Can enhance images electronically so that they can be viewed with greater legibility

Increases use of collections and facilitates learning and scholarship

The Preservation Benefits for Collections:

Objects do not have to be reshelved or located by staff

Objects are not handled frequently which reduces wear and tear

Digital Sate Archives

<http://www.digitalstatearchives.com/>

More historical archives and research materials can be found at these excellent resources:

[Historical Newspaper Archives](#)

[Ancestry.com](#)

[Genealogy Tools](#)

[US Historical Newspapers](#)

[European Historical Newspapers](#)

[International Historical Newspapers](#)

[Court Record Searches](#)

[Public Records Searches](#)