



Illinois

STATE ARCHIVES



November 27, 1936

Jesse White
Secretary of State and State Archivist



Margaret Cross Norton was a pioneer in the archival profession, winning a national reputation in her 35 years as superintendent of the Illinois State Archives.

But perhaps Norton's crowning achievement was construction of the Archives Building in Springfield, which was built to her specifications. It is at the Margaret Cross Norton Building where you will find some 250 years of our state's history, including Illinois Constitutions, militia rolls, poll books and other governmental and historical documents.

Whether visiting the State Archives in person or requesting information online, by mail or by telephone, the Archives staff is here to help you open a window to Illinois' past.

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BUILDING THE STATE ARCHIVES

The Margaret Cross Norton Building was constructed from 1936 to 1938 as the official repository of state documents of permanent value. Prior to its construction, valuable military records were kept in the State Arsenal, located at the site of the present State Armory in Springfield.

In February 1934, a 10-year-old boy set the Arsenal on fire, destroying many of the military documents and records.

Following the fire, Secretary of State Edward Hughes supported legislation to construct the State Archives Building. The limestone-faced building was designed to protect the state's records of enduring value from the hazards of fire, humidity, heat, vermin, theft and exposure.

The Archives Building was named in honor of Margaret Cross Norton in 1995.

SHARING LOCAL RESOURCES

Working with the Local Records Commissions and local officials, the State Archives transfers valuable local records to seven state universities through the Illinois Regional Archives Depository System (IRAD). Relocation of local records to regional archival facilities across the state makes the records more accessible to researchers and prevents loss or physical deterioration.

IRAD centers are located at Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, Western Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Springfield. Records stored at each depository reflect the history and traditions of that particular region.



PRESERVING ILLINOIS HISTORY

The State Archives provides reference services to more than 16 million requests annually. Each year, restoration technicians treat some 200,000 documents that have deteriorated from age, use or mistreatment. Through its efficient management, security and restoration procedures, the State Archives is preserving and immortalizing Illinois' past. This careful preservation gives the public access to thousands of government documents, including those pertaining to:

- Banking and state finance
- County histories
- Education
- Federal and state censuses

- Internal improvement and public works projects
- Labor issues
- Law enforcement and corrections
- Mental health and social service agencies
- Persons who served in the Indian Wars, Black Hawk War, Mexican War, Civil War and Spanish-American War
- Public land sales
- The Illinois and Michigan Canal
- The Illinois Territory
- Transportation
- Veterans and military affairs
- Vital statistics





DOCUMENTING 250 YEARS OF ILLINOIS HISTORY

Through its legal mandate to preserve governmental records of historic or archival value, the State Archives offers archivists, historians, genealogists, state government employees and others access to a wide variety of documents dating back 250 years.

Archives publications include guides to state and local records holdings, finding aids for specific record series,

and free teaching packages for Illinois educational institutions.

In addition to the resources available at the Norton Building, Internet users can access online searchable databases, guides to state and local records holdings, digitized records, teaching tools, and genealogical research guides at www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click Departments, then Archives).



Illinois State Archives
Margaret Cross Norton Building
Springfield, IL 62756
217-782-4682 • 217-524-3930 (fax)

WWW.CYBERDRIVEILLINOIS.COM

HOURS:

Monday-Friday — 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

The State Archives is closed on all state holidays.