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CONTACT: Anna Sventek (Fay), Communications Director
Anna.Sventek@sos.nh.gov / (603) 731-2286

State Archives & Records Management Celebrates 60 Years

The Secretary of State's Archives Division houses some of New Hampshire's most precious historical documents.

CONCORD, NH (January 3, 2023): Sixty years ago, the New Hampshire State Archives opened to the public. The Division of Records Management and Archives was created in 1961 by the NH Legislature under RSA 8-B. Prior to then, state agencies managed their own records. Related documents were often separated between the State Library, storage rooms in state buildings and the New Hampshire Historical Society, complicating efforts to preserve and share them with the public.



Brian Burford

“Ten years ago, I popped a can of ginger ale in my office at 5:00 pm on a Friday afternoon in January to celebrate 50 years. I was by myself, but I felt the milestone needed celebrating. The institution has changed a great deal in the last 10 years, not to mention the past 60,” Brian Burford, State Archivist.

After RSA 8-B was passed, Edwin A. Hunt of Deering was appointed the director of the division, and construction of the building began the following year. It was completed in 1963 and became a part of the Department of State in 1979. Dr. Frank C. Mevers served as the first state archivist from 1979 to 2010.

An estimated 12 million documents are stored in the complex on 9 Ratification Way, which is also home to the Vital Records and Elections Divisions. Although the Division of Archives is only sixty years old, many of its contents date as far back as 1631. Members of the public can visit the Archives Research Room to view old maps, historic NH State Prison logs and Revolutionary and Civil War Records, among other intriguing documents.

For State Archivist Brian Burford, preserving New Hampshire's history and sharing it with the public has been his livelihood. He retired at the end of 2022 after 15 years as the State Records Manager and 12 years as State Archivist.

Brian Burford: "It has been a profound honor to serve as the custodian of such treasures, great and small, and to preserve and share them with the public. I have enjoyed hearing the many questions from researchers and then hunting for documents that illuminated those issues."

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