

Newsletter  
of the  
Illinois  
State  
Archives  
&  
The Illinois  
State Historical  
Records  
Advisory Board

**Jesse White**  
Secretary of State  
&  
State Archivist

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## Archives sponsors plan for preservation, accessibility of historical documents

Secretary of State and State Archivist Jesse White is pleased to sponsor a three-year strategic plan for document preservation compiled by the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board (ISHRAB). "Preserving the Records of Illinois' Past for the Benefit of the Present and the Future: A Strategic Plan" reviews how historical records in the state are currently being identified, preserved and made accessible to the public, and outlines a plan to promote and enhance those practices in a coordinated way.

During 1999-2000, ISHRAB members:

- Reviewed preservation plans produced by other like state boards
- Engaged a consultant to assess Illinois' historical records and make recommendations
- Analyzed results of a 1996 ISHRAB survey of Illinois archival repositories (conducted on behalf of the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators)
- Reviewed ISHRAB's 1982 "Survey and Assessment Report" on Illinois' archival situation
- Held meetings with a professional strategic planner
- Consulted with allied organizations on the draft plan
- Conducted five public meetings statewide
- Reached final agreement on a plan in February 2001

The plan identifies major accomplishments in the areas of document preservation and accessibility as well as concerns within the Illinois historical records community.

Accomplishments include the State Archives' efforts to preserve and make state and local historical records more accessible through its seven Illinois Regional Archives Depositories (IRAD) located at universities statewide.

Despite these and other accomplishments, there are several concerns that need to be addressed. Unlike many other states, Illinois has no central state historical/cultural agency charged with promoting the identification, preservation and accessibility of publicly and privately generated historical records of enduring value. There also is no adequate repository for historical records generated by the City of Chicago and Cook County. Additionally, major cultural institutions in Illinois whose missions include making historical records from private sources accessible have faced severe funding constraints, preventing them from adequately fulfilling their missions.

To ensure that Illinois citizens today as well as future generations have access to this invaluable historical information, the strategic plan identifies six major goals to address these concerns:

1. Promote the identification, acquisition and preservation of historical records in all formats.

2. Promote improved access to and increased use of historical records in Illinois.
3. Foster cooperation among individuals and institutions concerned with the collection, preservation, access and use of historical records in Illinois.
4. Promote the knowledge of and adherence to standards of professional practice in the custodianship of historical records.
5. Advocate a heightened awareness of the importance and usefulness of historical records.
6. Advocate adequate funding for the identification, preservation and access of historical records.

Following are critical steps identified by the board needed to be taken toward preserving and ensuring accessibility of Illinois historical records:

1. Identify the means to support existing Illinois historical records repositories, and encourage Illinois organizations and institutions without historical records programs to form viable archives.
2. Promote professional practices among historical records volunteers and administrators, especially those involved with non-governmental records. The State Archives' IRAD system should promote professional practices regionally.
3. Coordinate efforts among the IRAD system and other historical records repositories to expand their collection and preservation of neglected non-governmental historical records pertaining to their respective regions.
4. Advocate to government officials in the City of Chicago and Cook County the importance of establishing an archival repository.
5. Expand the role and responsibility of the ISHRAB to help address the lack of coordination among the Illinois historical records community. An expanded role for the board would require substantial additional financial support from the State Archives to ensure an adequate level of staffing.

Project funding was provided by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The ISHRAB is responsible for monitoring the plan's progress, conducting annual reviews and reporting progress to the public.

For more information, visit the Secretary of State's Web site at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com), or contact:

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# Secretary of State Jesse White

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission has encouraged state historical boards to undertake strategic planning with regard to statewide historical records preservation and accessibility. The Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board, which serves conterminously as the Illinois State Archives Advisory Board, complied with this important request by developing a three-year plan for Illinois (see story on page one).

One of the recommendations in the report is to resume publication of the Archives' newsletter, *For the Record*, to be "distributed widely in paper form, with its contents also available on the State Archives' Web page." I am, therefore, pleased to present this first issue of the newsletter since 1996. Since that time, the State Archives has relied mainly on the Internet to inform scholars, genealogists, government officials and the general public about its activities and holdings.

Whether a scholar, librarian, historian or genealogist, I hope you find this issue of *For the Record* helpful and informative in serving your archival needs. The State Archives staff welcomes any relevant information for inclusion in upcoming issues.

*Jesse White*

Secretary of State  
and State Archivist



## Marriage Index boasts 1.3 million entries

Since 1985, the State Archives and the Illinois State Genealogical Society have coordinated efforts to create the Statewide Marriage Record Index, 1763-1900.

To date, nearly 1.3 million entries have been made to the index. Because each entry contains two parties, the number of names in the database approaches more than 2.5 million. Entries also include the date of the marriage license or date the marriage took place, the name of the county where the marriage took place, and the license file number or the volume and page numbers of the relevant register. Women's names often are difficult to trace in other county marriage indexes because marriages typically are indexed solely by the groom's name. The Statewide Marriage Index, however, provides access through both the bride and groom's full names.

Data entry in the project's early years was accomplished by State Archives staff and volunteers working on mainframe computer terminals at the Norton Building in Springfield. More recently, volunteers from across the country, and one from as far away as Australia, have been able to contribute to the database via the Internet. Using a key code and password, a contributor can enter marriages directly from his/her personal computer onto the Secretary of State's Internet server. Nearly 100 volunteers have participated in this project since its inception, and millions of searches have been made since the Index went online in October 1999.

Of all 102 Illinois counties, 96 are represented in the Statewide Marriage Index. Of those, 74 are complete for the time period.

www.cyberdriveillinois.com

### Online databases dramatically increase Archives usage

Development of the Secretary of State's Web site in 1993 has allowed the State Archives to dramatically expand access to its holdings. Of the nearly 8.5 million reference requests recorded in 2000, more than 96 percent were made through the Internet. Comparatively, a total of only 83,965 reference requests were made in 1992, before the Archives went online. Reference requests more than doubled from 1999 to 2000 (see chart).

Following are some of the categories on the State Archives page at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com):

#### About the Illinois State Archives

Provides a digitized image of the Margaret Cross Norton Building in Springfield and an explanation of what the State Archives does.

#### Holdings of the Illinois State Archives

Describes state and local government records holdings and provides links to the online Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois and local government listings by county of origin.

#### Genealogical Research

Provides a narrative of where to begin your research as well as online brochures on a variety of genealogy topics and links to related Internet sites and specific Archives records holdings.

#### Search Our Online Databases

Allows access to the 49 Archives online databases, including those on Public Domain Land Sales, Illinois Civil War Veterans and the Statewide Marriage Records Index.

#### Publications

Includes ordering information for the four guides to Archives' holdings and its teaching packages, including *The Illinois and Michigan Canal, 1827-1911*.

#### IRAD Internships

Provides information on internships available at the Archives' seven regional depositories, including requirements, duties and compensation.

#### State and Local Records Management

Provides legislative information on state and local governmental records and access to downloadable state and local records transfer and disposal certificates.

#### Lincoln Documents

Provides a list of Abraham Lincoln documents housed by the State Archives, as well as several digitized images.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

Answers questions relating to genealogy and Archives' holdings as well as hours and days of operation, phone and fax numbers and address.

Inquiries regarding the Archives' Web page may be addressed to [bheflin@ilsos.net](mailto:bheflin@ilsos.net).

#### Total Archives reference requests, 1992-2000:

|                |           |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| 1992 . . . . . | 83,965    | 1993 . . . . . | 83,034    |
| 1994 . . . . . | 82,140    | 1995 . . . . . | 183,762   |
| 1996 . . . . . | 362,287   | 1997 . . . . . | 664,460   |
| 1998 . . . . . | 893,266   | 1999 . . . . . | 2,939,496 |
| 2000 . . . . . | 8,497,064 | 2001 . . . . . | 8,788,295 |

## Archives receives grant to digitize township plats

The State Archives has received a \$91,525 Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) grant for fiscal year 2002. The grant will allow the Archives to digitize its U.S. Surveyor General Federal Township Plats for Illinois, 1807-1855, record series 953.012.

The Archives' Public Domain Land Sales database, which includes some 550,000 entries of the original buyers of the federal public domain in Illinois, received millions of searches during 2000 and 2001. The township plats provide detailed geographic depictions of the land as it appeared at the time of the sale. With the proper link, database users will be able to view the plats online in digitized form. Each of the 3,478 geographical images will be made available on CDs as well.

Genealogists and professional surveyors will especially appreciate these digitized images. Surveyors often need to travel to Springfield to view the

originals or consult 35 mm microfilm copies, which frequently lack sufficient clarity. Once this project is complete, surveyors can purchase high-quality CDs of digitized images of the original survey on a county-by-county basis. Consequently, the images can be viewed on site in the field as well as in base offices throughout Illinois.

Genealogical and professional surveyors organizations were consulted throughout the project's planning, and their respective needs helped shape the proposal for the grant. A variety of vendors have supplied digitized images of sample plats, with several meeting the strictest standards of the surveyors consulted for this project. The project is expected to be complete and available online later this year.

The LSTA grant is funded through the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by Secretary of State Jesse White through the Illinois State Library.

## Records Center relocates

The State Archives Records Center relocated to a larger facility in November 2000. The new facility at 3765 Winchester Rd. in Springfield is about one block southeast of the center's previous location. The old building had reached near capacity with some 90,000 cubic feet of records in storage. The new facility is capable of housing 144,000 cubic feet of records and includes additional space for expansion. Besides the extra storage space, all new shelving



extending 22 feet high is uniform and interchangeable, allowing for future alteration or reconfiguration.

Relocation of the center was accomplished through a contracted professional mover. Because records storage boxes were moved in order and placed in corresponding locations, the automated tracking and locator system in place did not have to be altered. This was a significant factor considering the 90,000 master computer records involved in the move.

## Archives publications update

### Illinois Public Domain Land Sales

Reissued on CD ROM in 2001 (\$25).

### A Summary Guide to Local Governmental Records in the Illinois Regional Archives

265-page second edition issued in 1999, including information on 831 additional record series (\$6).

### Early Chicago, 1833-1871: A Selection of City Council Proceedings Files

Third printing of this teaching package issued in 1999. This publication received the 1987 Philip M. Hamer and Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Award of the Society of American Archivists and has been especially useful to the Chicago Metro History Education Center at the Newberry Library (\$14).

### The Illinois and Michigan Canal, 1827-1911: A Selection of Documents from the Illinois State Archives

Teaching package released in 1998, coinciding with the canal's sesquicentennial (\$12).

### Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois (Second Edition)

Reissued on CD ROM in 1998. Includes an index that can perform simple Boolean "and" searches, either by the natural language text or the controlled vocabulary provided (\$20).

### Genealogical Research Series

Updated series of genealogy-related pamphlets. Topics include researching land sales, probate records, military records, federal census records, state census records and African-American records (free). Two new pamphlets on the following topics have been added to the series:

#### Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) Microfilm Collection

Describes Archives holdings of more than 500 rolls of microfilm, which the LDS Church filmed in the private sector in various Illinois counties.

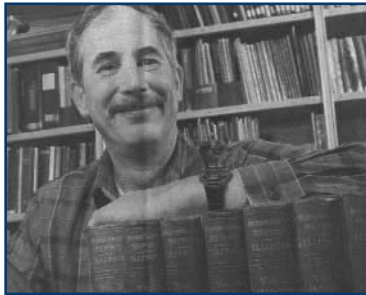
#### Prairie Pioneer Certificates Program

Describes the State Genealogical Society's commemorative certificate program for applicants who are successful in verifying that their ancestors settled in Illinois during (1) 1818 or earlier, (2) 1819-1850 or (3) 1851-1880 (free).

*For more information or to order these publications, visit the Secretary of State's Web site at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com), or write: Illinois State Archives, Publications Unit, Margaret Cross Norton Building, Springfield, IL 62756.*

## Delap shares military databases with Archives

Fred Delap of Kansas, IL has been donating databases of Illinois veterans to the State Archives since 1996. A volunteer with the Edgar County Genealogical Library, Delap has contributed more than 360,000 name entries to the Archives' online databases. Most of the information has been taken from Illinois Adjutant General publications.



The following databases are available on the Archives' page of the Secretary of State's Web site at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).

| Database  | Entries |
|---|---------|
| War of 1812   | 1,500   |
| Winnebago War   | 412     |
| Black Hawk War  | 10,800  |
| Mexican War   | 6,500   |
| Civil War (Army)  | 250,000 |
| Civil War (Navy)  | 3,000   |
| Civil War (IL residents serving in MO units)                  | 5,610   |
| 1929 Illinois Roll of Honor (from veteran burial sites)       | 72,000  |
| Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Home at Quincy (past residents) | 14,000  |

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## CD burner enhances computer tape storage

The State Archives' Micrographics Section includes a Computer Output Microform Unit, which converts state agency computer tapes to microfiche. Computer tapes are downloaded onto Micrographics computers, manipulated to produce the sorts or reports desired, printed onto microfiche and then duplicated for agency use.

In 1999, the unit acquired a CD burner to complement its operations. While each microfiche can carry 206 data pages of information, individual CDs can hold up to 500,000 pages. During 2000, of the more than 241.2 million data pages produced by the unit, nearly 24.8 million pages were copied onto CDs rather than microfiche. During 2001, some 202.5 million data pages were stored on microfiche, while nearly 125 million were reproduced on CDs.

In addition to increased storage capacity, information stored on CDs can be retrieved more quickly and efficiently than from multiple microfiche.

User demand, particularly with the Illinois Departments of Public Aid and Human Services and the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board, was the driving force behind acquisition of the CD burner.

*For the Record* is published three times a year by the Illinois State Archives Advisory Board, Office of the Secretary of State.

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