



THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

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Letter from the Assistant State Archivist

The Maryland State Archives is among the largest state archives in the nation, with approximately 400,000 cubic feet of government and special collections records. These holdings span from the founding of the colony in 1634 to the present and are complemented by more than 300 million images available online.

The Archives bears the unique responsibility of preserving and providing access to these physical records while simultaneously preparing for the future transfer and management of electronic records. A recent survey conducted by our Appraisal Department offers insight into the significant growth in digital records expected in the years ahead.

The survey, distributed to state and county agencies, found that respondents anticipate transferring more than 198 petabytes of permanent record data to the Archives over the next decade. For context, one petabyte equals 1,000 terabytes of storage. Notably, this estimate reflects responses from only 25 state agencies and 12 counties. The actual volume of incoming digital records is expected to be higher and providing equitable public access to this material is a top priority.

In order to facilitate accessibility to our collections, the Archives has maintained a web presence for over 30 years. With the incredible volume of electronic records in its care, one of the most significant challenges to access has been compliance with the updated guidance provided in Title II of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For the Archives, the scope of compliance is substantial, given the age, scale and complexity of its web presence and the number of sites requiring remediation. For instance, the [MDLandRec](#) website alone receives and displays approximately 500,000 land record images each month which need to be adjusted to meet federal standards. Our IT staff have focused their efforts in this area to support the successful development of tools capable of addressing accessibility requirements on this large scale in order to fulfill our commitment to making our records accessible to all.

Through appraisal, description, and records lifecycle management, the Archives ensures that records remain discoverable and accessible. This work is supported by experienced staff who facilitate in-person and remote research and provide essential services, with each function interconnected to maintain a high standard of public access. The Archives remains committed to ensuring equitable public access, alongside transparency, accountability, and the long-term integrity of Maryland's records. This work is ongoing, and challenging, but our mission has always been centered around access and we welcome the opportunity to increase that accessibility for everyone we serve.

Corey A. Lewis, Assistant State Archivist

Access– A Definition

The ability to get to archival resources through intellectual, digital, or physical means.¹

The Archives makes Maryland's history accessible today and ensures that it will remain accessible in the future. We are committed to an accessible Maryland State Archives for all.

Staff Updates

New Staff



Andy Yamazaki joins the Archives as an Archivist I, Librarian and Government Publications Specialist. Prior to joining the State Archives, he was the cataloging and metadata librarian of the Howard County Library System. Andy earned an MLIS from the University of Maryland, College Park, following his doctoral candidacy in the Department of History and the Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science at the University of Chicago. He is currently finishing a dissertation on the natural historian and orientalist, Edward Sylvester Morse.



Brigita Sebald joins the Archives as a contractual Archival Assistant II. She worked at the Library of Congress from 2016 to 2024, most recently as a hybrid cataloging and acquisitions librarian specializing in Armenian and Georgian. She has a PhD in ethnomusicology from UCLA and taught at UCLA and California State University, Dominguez Hills. Brigita is working on the Department of Juvenile Services scanning project.



Jayvyn Wood joins the Archives as a contractual Archival Assistant II. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business from Howard University, with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in French. With background in research, data analysis, and financial modeling, he is dedicated to intersectional history and increasing public access to information for future generations. Jayvyn is working on the Department of Juvenile Services scanning project and also in conjunction with the Constituent and Interagency Services Department.

¹ <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/access.html>



Kendall Hahn returns to the Archives as a contractual Archival Assistant II. She spent two years at the Archives with the Department of Civic and Service Innovation, learning new skills through the Service Year Option program focusing on digitization. During those times working with all different records and working closely with the scanning department, she wanted to continue to serve her community, and gain more experiences for her career path. Kendall is working on the Department of Juvenile Services scanning project.



Madelyn Brown joins the Archives as a contractual Archival Assistant II. She graduated from Goucher College with a degree in Visual & Material Culture, and moved to the Baltimore area following her graduation. She is particularly interested in local history, as is anything archives or museum related. Madelyn is working on the Department of Juvenile Services scanning project.



Ronald Speight joins the Archives as a contractual Archival Assistant II. He is from Waldorf, MD and graduated from Mount St. Mary's University in 2022 with a bachelors of science in business management. Ronald will be assisting CIAS staff with record requests from the Department of Human Services. In addition, he will be assisting with the Department of Juvenile Services scanning project.



Zachary Shea joins the Archives as a contractual Archivist Assistant II. He's excited to continue working at the Archives as a state employee after years of service through a state contractor. Zach will be working on a digitization project with the Register of Wills and assist with other scanning projects.

Retirement



Brenda McKnight, Imaging Archivist with the Digital Acquisitions, Processing and Publications Department, retired from the MSA in April after 24.5 years of service. Brenda was a key staff member in the Imaging Division working on land records processing and access for her entire career with the Archives. We thank Brenda for her dedicated service and wish her well as she moves to be closer to her family, including her great grandchildren.

Service Spotlight

A Service Year in the Accessibility Corps

By Favour Ijaola, Department of Service and Civic Innovation Maryland Corps Service Year Member

For the past few months at the Archives, I have had the opportunity to spearhead a project focused on making the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) website more accessible and compliant with [ADA, Section 508, and WCAG guidelines](#).

Just to preface, this was my first accessibility project. Before June of 2025, I was not knowledgeable of the intersection of tech and compliance, let alone accessibility. Prior to what I now know, accessibility was a *physical* effort to accommodate physical impairments. Obviously, it is way more than that — it is a physical, environment, digital, and I would even say mental, effort to innovate solutions that create equity and usability for physical, mental, and situational impairments.

It took me over three months to work through the MLTRC project. AI was a great help in figuring out snags, but there is a balance. AI can assist, but it will never fully understand human needs the way humans do. Through training, I am starting to understand why usability testing and human input is so important.

Accessibility is interesting because even if something passes a guideline or standard, it may still need adjustments to be truly functional for someone. Accessibility is a pretty broad subject, and the job of an accessibility specialist is to understand the audience and figure out how the products we build help people reach the desired outcome.

Accessibility should be considered at every step of development. If not, you risk a lot of undoing and reworking later. For my knitters out there, it is like messing up part of a scarf and having to pull everything out until you reach the mistake. Sometimes it gets so frustrating you want to start over.

This specific project involved updating a website that existed long before I came onto the scene. One challenge was trying to understand the site, and three additional connected sites, from the

perspective of the original developer(s). At times, I had to undo code, and honestly, I was scared to step on any toes. I didn't want to overwrite anyone's work.

And while I can now consider it a triumph, there were many highs and lows throughout this journey. Here are some lessons I picked up:

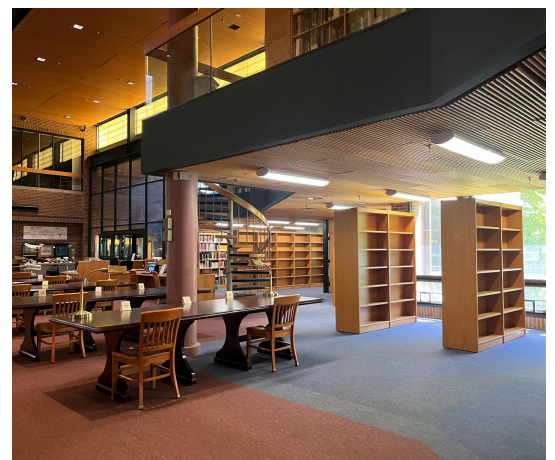
- **Plan.** It doesn't have to be elaborate, but try to understand the website, the message, and the audience before diving in. In school, it was stressed that having a plan before starting a project is important. I thought I was "better than that" and went in pretty blind. I did not realize how much it slowed me down, till two months had passed and I was still working on the same issues.
- **Asking for help doesn't make you incompetent.** I hesitated to ask supervisors for help because I was afraid of how it would look. But being vulnerable opened doors for honest conversations. They shared areas where they were struggling too. Accessibility can be overwhelming, especially for developers new to it.
- **Accessibility is not just for rule followers.** There is room for art and expression. I started focusing only on functionality, but art and design are core to who I am. Exploring layout, color, and visual harmony is what kept me going on overwhelming days.
- **Save everything. Document everything.** I kept copies of original code and versions in separate files, both to undo changes if needed and to learn from others' approaches.
- **Perfection is not the goal, accessibility and usability is.** I did not realize how much I am a perfectionist, until I started working in compliance. There are many ways to meet a success criteria. WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards allow for multiple ways to achieve accessibility as long as you exhibit the four core principles in your solutions: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR).

There were days I wanted to give up. For weeks I felt embarrassed because I thought I was taking too long. I had some sleepless nights, but now I have an artifact that is etched in time, of my efforts and expression. This experience changed how I see technology, accessibility, and the responsibility we have when building digital spaces.

Now it's on to the next project! Fingers crossed, this won't take another three months!

Book Notes

As of Monday, April 27th, the Archives Search Room boasts five new bookcases, intended to expand the self-service portion of the Library. These five additional shelving units were funded by the Friends of the Maryland State Archives, through the generous bequest of longtime Archives' patrons Charles and Ruth Stevens. The addition to shelving capacity in the Search Room will allow targeted, high demand materials to be directly accessible to researchers rather than mediated through staff pulls. The Archives Librarian has been collaborating with the Reference and Research



departments to identify materials to move, and work is already underway planning the arrangement on the shelves. While it will take some time for the shelves to be filled, we look forward to the expansion of what we can offer to the public in direct access to library materials.

The Friends of the Maryland State Archives made this purchase to support the outstanding service provided by the Archives' staff members in light of Mr. and Mrs. Stevens' many visits to our public Search Room.

Conservation Corner

Baltimore City Register of Wills Transfer

By Edward Heimiller, Conservation Archivist

The Archives recently assisted the staff of The Baltimore City Register of Wills with a rare transfer of records spanning three centuries. The Baltimore City Register of Wills has the responsibility to appoint personal representatives to administer decedents' estates and to oversee the proper and timely administration of these proceedings. In addition, the agency assists and advises the public in the preparation of all required forms for estate management, among other duties for Baltimore City and, prior to the 1852 Maryland Constitution, also Baltimore County. While the Archives is the main repository for government records of permanent value and maintains records that date from the founding of the Maryland colony in 1634 through the immediate present, record transfers of this scope and magnitude are rare.



After receiving an inventory of the material to be transferred, staff from the Appraisal and Description Department, which serve as the point of contact for government record transfers, accompanied by one of the agency's Conservators conducted a site visit on February 19th to label items preparing them for the move and to inspect their condition. Pictured left is Rachel Rabinowitz, Records Transfer and Space Management Archivist, labeling ledger in preparation for the transfer.

Identifying problematic condition issues are important to safeguard the health of the Archives' overall holdings to prevent the spread of contaminants, such as mold, for preservation purposes in the Archives' environmentally controlled storage. Records received by the Archives can come from a range of storage locations, not always ideal. In this case The Baltimore City Register of Wills had maintained an excellent environment, and, apart from inherent issues related to age, these records were in standard good health. An exciting discovery during the visit was finding out a volume was even older than it initially

appeared. The volume was labeled on the spine "1776", when in fact a closer inspection revealed the last two digits were transposed and it was actually from 1767. This highlights another benefit of inspecting these materials on site before transferring them.

The administrative registry ledgers created by the Baltimore City Registrar of Wills are a treasure trove of information, with individuals listed reading as a "who's who" of Maryland history. A quick search of the records uncovered the names of James Calhoun, first Mayor of Baltimore from 1794 until 1804; Samuel Smith, a Maryland Senator, Mayor of Baltimore and one of the "Maryland 400" from the American Revolution; George Armistead, commander of Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812; John Stricker, officer in the Maryland state militia who fought in both the American Revolution and in the War of 1812. Also of note were members of the Ridgely family of Hampton (now Hampton National Historic Site) including John Ridgely, Sr., Colonel Charles Ridgely II (1701-1772), and Charles Ridgely, Jr. (1783-1819), son of Governor Ridgely among others.

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A Registry of Administrations granted in Baltimore County

<i>The Time When the Administration was granted</i>	<i>Names of the Persons Deceased on whose Estates Letters have been granted</i>	<i>Whether the Deceased died Intestate or left a Will</i>	<i>Names of the Persons to whom the Letters were granted</i>	<i>Whether the Party be Executor or Administrator or Collector</i>	<i>Names of the Securities</i>
1819 December 11	Cunningham John	Will	George H. Stewart	Executor	James Stewart Richard Stewart
22	Carroll Charles {of Daniel of Duddington}	Intestate	Mary Ann Carroll	Administratrix	John Merryman Henry Carroll

22 December 1819 entry for Dr. Charels Carroll of Duddington (1789-1819) (MSA T644-27 JHB6)

Another interesting entry was for Dr. Charles Carroll of Duddington, a cousin of Maryland signer of the Declaration of Independence Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737-1832). His father, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, owned a large tract of land where Washington D.C. would be developed including the land where the United States Capitol and other Federal buildings now stand. Hugh Finlay is also listed several times as registering wills. While not a household name, Hugh Finlay and his brother John created the [painted fancy furniture designed by Benjamin Latrobe](#) (1764-1820) for the White House. Though lost when British forces burned the White House on August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812, and other buildings in D.C. in retaliation for the American attack on York (Toronto) the designs for this furniture and examples of other [Baltimore painted furniture by the Finlays](#) are preserved in the collection of the Maryland Center for History & Culture.

An interesting entry for the estate of St. George Peale (1745-1778) lists Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Ramsay and Charles Wilson Peale among the "Names of the Persons to whom the Letters were granted." St. George was Charles' brother and Nathaniel Ramsey's brother-in-law through his wife, Margaret Jane Peale. This offers a small insight into the world of the St. George Peale who is lesser known than his brother Charles W. Peale, noted American portraitist - whose 1784 painting of [Washington, Lafayette, & Tilghman at Yorktown](#) is in the State Art Collection.

In mid-March, the records were packed at the Elijah Cummings Building at 111 N. Calvert Street Baltimore for delivery, but due to inclement weather were not loaded on trucks and transported until the following day. The Archives routinely networks with staff at other Maryland government agencies and provides critical support for the preservation and maintenance of related permanent records. This unique record transfer required staff from several departments working in tandem to ensure a smooth and successful transfer. After the records are fully processed, they will be available for research, and some will be digitized for online access. A list of these records are online as [Baltimore City Register of Wills Administration Docket series MSA T644](#).

Research Reflections

Old Treasury Building Opening

By Robin Gower, Curator, Maryland Commission on Artistic Property



Left Image: Front Row, left to right: Senate President Bill Ferguson, Maryland State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Speaker Pro Tempore Luke Clippinger. Back Row: DGS Secretary Atif Chaudhry. Right Image: Staff from the Maryland State Archives pose in front of the Old Treasury Building at its opening on February 10, 2026. [Image credits: Maryland State Archives]

A little snow couldn't dampen the excitement on February 10, 2026 as the ribbon was cut and the Old Treasury Building was officially re-opened to the public for the first time in 30 years!

The Maryland State Archives is proud to have worked alongside our partners at the Maryland Department of General Services and Maryland Historical Trust, with the bi-partisan support of the Maryland General Assembly, to undergo a comprehensive restoration of the exterior and furnish the interior with brand new exhibits.

Built between 1735-1737, the Old Treasury Building serves as an interpretive bridge between the establishment of Maryland's first capital at St. Mary's City in 1634 and the move of the capital to Annapolis in 1695. The main focus of the exhibit is to help visitors connect with Maryland's early economy. From the use of wampum in trade with Native American communities to the establishment of paper and coin currency, visitors can see the variety of activities that took place in the building, making it the financial epicenter of Maryland through to the early 20th century.

Built originally to house the offices for the newly established commissioners for emitting bills of credit, the structure gets its name from its time as the treasurer's office, which occupied this building for 124 years, from 1779-1903. After that, the building had numerous tenants including the State Department of Education and the Maryland Historic Trust until it became unoccupied in 1993. The restoration effort, the first since the 1949-1951 effort, began in 2023 and returned the exterior to its earliest 18th century appearance. The interior interpretive exhibits were written by the Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property.

Ribbon-cutting remarks were provided by Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Senate President Bill Ferguson, DGS Secretary Atif Chaudhry, Speaker Pro Tempore Luke Clippinger, and Maryland State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann. Remarks from the event can be found on the Maryland State House webpage [here](#).

The Maryland State Archives is beyond thrilled to welcome the public back into the Old Treasury Building. Visitors may enter the building through the front steps, or via a flat entranceway on the left side of the building. It is open 7 days a week 8:30am-5:00pm, except Christmas and New Years Day.

Maryland250 Musings



On July 4, 2026, America will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence with many events, displays and activities. The Maryland State Archives serves on the MD250 Commission and will join the semiquincentennial celebrations by sharing a number of reflections and projects over the next few years. Our focus is to raise up the contributions of all people, document the untold and underrepresented stories of Marylanders, and to preserve their rich legacy for future generations.

Shattered Paper & Royal Watermarks?

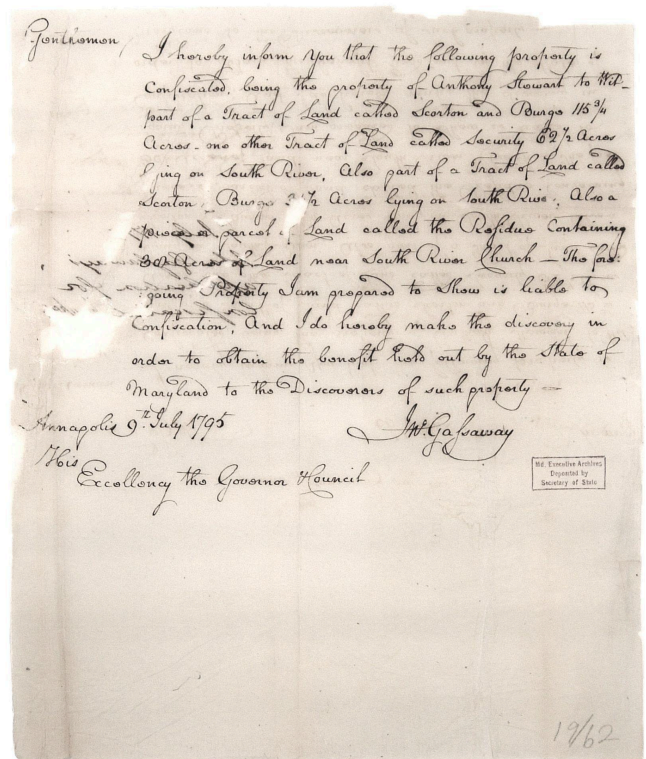
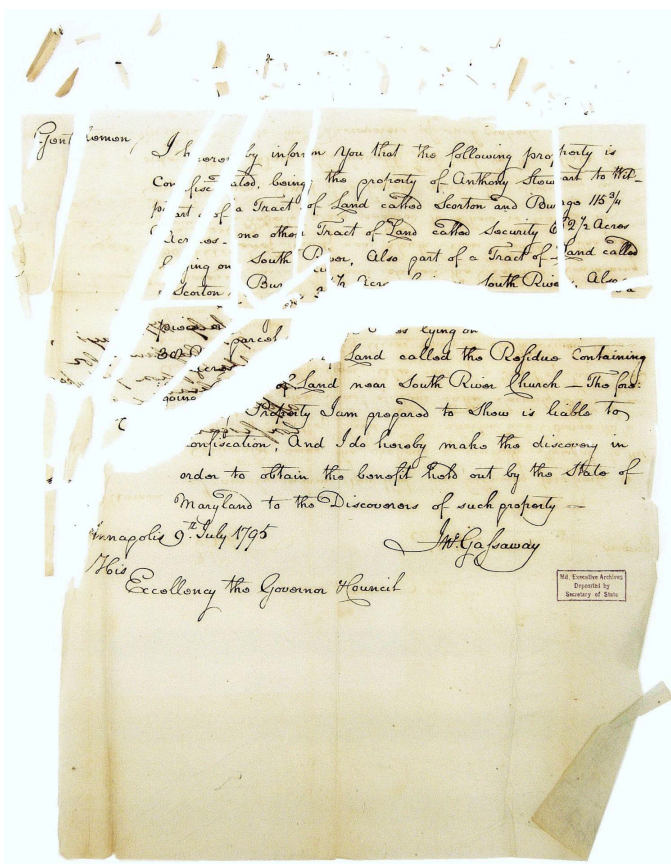
By Edward Heimiller, Conservation Archivist

In recognition of America's 250th anniversary, the Archives has partnered with the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland to digitize Revolution-Era records. The first project was the scanning of all the so-called Rainbow Books, a significant bound collection of some 7,800 colonial and Revolutionary War-era documents named for their color-coded bindings, which are currently available [online](#). The second project they have generously supported is the digitization of Maryland State Papers, Series A ([S1004](#)), Revolutionary Papers ([S997](#)), and the records included in the Revolutionary War Records Index ([S1423](#)). While still ongoing, this project has brought to light significant documents. As part of this work several of the documents have received attention from Conservation for treatment to preserve them and enable them to be digitized.

While largely in good condition a few documents required attention. Of those needing treatment, one in particular stood out. Discovered in a file was a quantity of fragments that needed to be assembled. The document pertains to the confiscation of property on the South River in Anne Arundel County from Anthony Stewart (1728-1791). A noted Loyalist to the British crown, Stewart rose to prominence

in what has become known as the “Annapolis Tea Party”. Following paying the “tea tax” on the cargo aboard his ship, the *Peggy Stewart*, in 1774, an angry mob threatened Stewart’s life if he did not destroy the ship and its cargo. Stewart gave into their demands and the scene, reminiscent of the Boston tea party that occurred the year before, was captured a hundred years later in a romanticized painting, [The Burning of the Peggy Stewart](#), by Francis Blackwell Mayer (MSA SC 1545-1111). This painting was conserved in 2009 and is currently on display in The Old House of Delegates Chamber in the State House.²

Unlike most documents that have folds, tears, or holes, the top half of this document resembled something closer to a piece of broken glass with numerous shards having crisp edges and sharp points. While unusual, this was the result of the paper being crumbled at some point. Folding or creasing paper weakens the fibers and ultimately leads to breaking along folds and crease lines. Despite being flattened and stored in a folder with the other documents, over time the paper inherently deteriorated along these creases until the paper essentially shattered in place.



Left Image: Fragment assembly during treatment document MSA S997-19-56. Right Image: After treatment document; MSA S997-19-56.

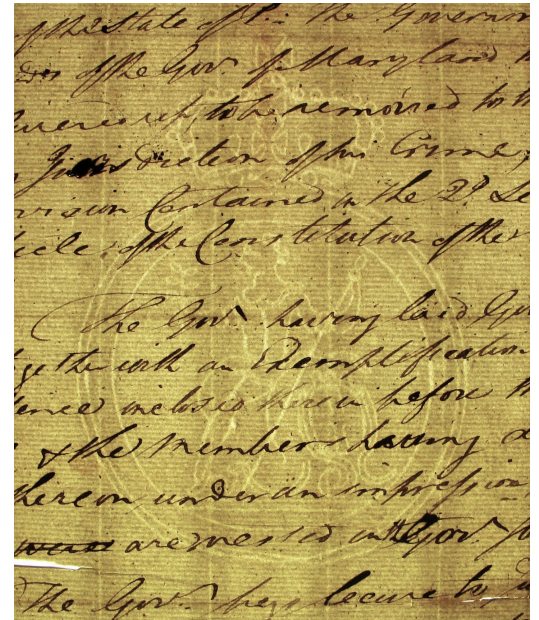
In Conservation every piece matters, regardless of size, and with this document there were pieces as small as a pin head. Areas such as the “A” in Annapolis were reconstructed from five fragments alone. There were also losses from the document being written using iron gall ink. Similar to the corrosion on an iron object, the iron inherent in iron gall ink causes weakening and breakage. A common ink during the period, iron gall ink is of purple-black or brown-black color made from iron salts and tannic acids from vegetable matter. Over time degradation of the paper where the ink has

² For more information about the Annapolis Tea Party and the burning of the *Peggy Stewart* see the [Fall 2024 issue of The Clamshell](#).

been applied occurs, creating losses in the text itself. After the arrangement of the fragments was determined, the pieces were reassembled by using a reversible archival tissue, which is coated with a heat-set adhesive on one side.

Once reassembled another unusual feature was noticed – the edges of the paper were gilded. While gilded edges are usually on three sides, as found on books, these were on all four sides. Consultation with Owen Lourie, Senior Research Archivist at the Archives, about this unusual feature led to further examination of the paper and other documents in the same series. A closer look at the other documents revealed a watermark depicting the Hanover crown and cipher of King George III of England.

Another document was found to have a watermark depicting the Hanover crown above a regal allegorical depiction of Britannia, pictured right. Despite the documents being from 1790's the paper was acquired decades earlier for use by the Royal Governor of Maryland, likely Sir Robert Eden, 1st Baronet of Maryland (1741-1784), and abandoned when he departed Maryland for England in June 1776 when Maryland broke from colonial rule. Though there are a number of documents on leftover colonial stationery preserved in the Archives, expensive gilt edge stationery is atypical and rare. Ironically, in historical context, usage of this expensive paper was a practical money saving choice that offers insight into Maryland thriftiness of using what was on hand in the early years of the democracy.



Conservation has been an important part of the digitization of American Revolution Era records projects. Preservation of this unique trove of documents enables researchers to have a better understanding of the complex history of the American Revolution. In some rare instances the paper itself goes beyond the text to offer a connection to the past.



It is through generous donors that the Archives has been able to acquire and preserve many treasures of Maryland's history. Donations support our mission to preserve and make accessible the historic records of Maryland, as well as supporting the professional development of our staff. To donate visit the [Friends of the Maryland State Archives website](#).

The Friends of the Maryland State Archives is a 501(c)3 organization and donations to it are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



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