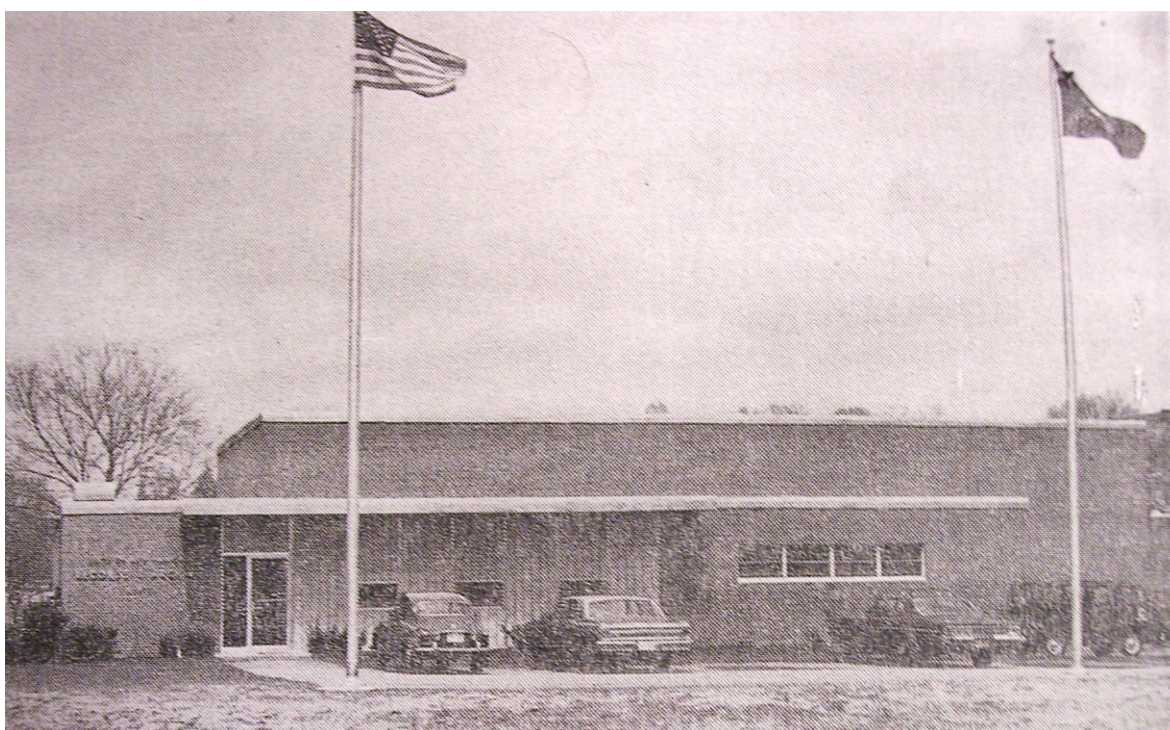


The New Hampshire State Archives Turns 50

On January 2, 2013, the New Hampshire State Archives was fifty years old. The story of the archives goes back to 1955 when the New Hampshire legislature passed an act to study the need for an efficient way to manage state records. At that time, every state agency managed their own records however they could. Historical papers were sometimes sent to the State Library, and in a few cases to the NH Historical Society. In 1961, the legislature created the Division of Records Management and Archives as part of the Department of Administrative Control. The act stated a clear need for the efficient and economical management of state and local records, and the preservation of historical documents for posterity. Edwin A. Hunt of Deering was appointed the Director, and \$143,352 was appropriated for the building. Construction on the building was started in 1962 and completed by January 1963. The building could hold 19,000 boxes of records.



The Front of the Archives Building in 1967 (Photo by Linnea Staples, NH Sunday News, May 7, 1967).



An aerial photo taken in 1953 showing the New Hampshire Hospital grounds. North is up in the picture, and Pleasant Street runs from the upper right corner of the photo to the upper left. Concord High School is seen at the upper left corner at the corner of Pleasant, Fruit and Warren Streets. Clinton street runs near the bottom of the photo. The site of the future archives is located just below the middle of the picture, to the right of the bend in South Fruit Street. (US Dept. of Agriculture photo DQV-9M-13 9/24/1953)

In 1979, the Division was made a part of the Department of State, and the position of Archivist was created. The first state archivist, Dr. Frank C. Mevers, served from 1979 to 2010. The building was expanded in 1975, 1989, 1997, and 2007, growing to a capacity of of 83,000 boxes. Besides the storage of records, the building also has a technology wing for microfilming and imaging, offices for two other divisions (Vital Records, and HAVA) and a large research room. In 2003, the Division was renamed the Division of Archives & Records Management.

A sampling of the estimated 12 million documents stored in the Archives include:

the 1789 ratification document of the United State Constitution;
a 1631 invoice;
the state constitution of 1792; town records; civil war enlistment papers;
the log of prisoners at the NH State Prison in the 1800s; and
papers of the first President of the state, Meshech Weare.

The State Archives is located at 71 South Fruit Street, Concord and the website is (http://sos.nh.gov/arch_rec_mgmt.aspx). The archives is open to the public from 8:30am to 4pm, Monday through Fridays.



The State Archives Building in December 2007.



A few of the 83,000 boxes of state agency records stored at the State Archives building.

Geo: Thng'le

Precept of } Pursuant to this Precept to me directed I would
 New Hamp^{sh}. } have hanged the within named Ruth Blay on
 the 24th Day of November as I am therein com-
 -manded but she being by three different Precepts
 to me directed under the Seal of said Province
 reprieved & the Execution of said Sentence deferred
 until the thirtieth Day of December last signed
 by his Excellency the Governor on the same thirtieth
 Day of December aforesaid I carried her the said Ruth
 to the Place of Execution & there viz't in Portsmouth in
 said Province between the Hours of Twelve Ten o'clock
 in the forenoon & ~~Two~~ ^{Two} o'clock in the Afternoon of the same
 Day I caused the said Ruth Blay to be hanged by the neck
 until her Body was dead
 Jan^y 3. 1769 Thos. Packer Sheriff

Sheriff Thomas Packer's return dated January 3, 1769, "Pursuant to this Precept to me directed I would have hanged the within named Ruth Blay on the 24th Day of November as I am therein commanded but she being by three different Precepts to me directed under the Seal of the said Province reprieved & the Execution of said Sentence deferred until the thirtieth Day of December last signed by his Excellency the Governor on the same thirtieth Day of December aforesaid I carried her the said Ruth to the Place of Execution & there viz't in Portsmouth in the said Province between the Hours of Ten o'clock in the forenoon & Two o'clock in the afternoon of the same Day I caused the said Ruth Blay to be hanged by the neck until her Body was dead."