

Newsletter
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&
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Jesse White
Secretary of State
&
State Archivist

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Secretary of State Jesse White



Recent budgetary constraints at the state and national levels have affected archives repositories in both the public and private sectors. As Illinois State Archivist, I am committed to finding ways that our State Archives can best perform its functions of preserving and making accessible government and historically significant documents in the most practical and cost-efficient ways. One method is to make information available on the Internet. The Archives recently added the Sangamon County Probate Case File Index (1821-1885) database to its page on my office's Web site at www.cyberdriveillinois.com. This is the 52nd searchable database made available online, and we plan to add more.

Along with providing information online, the State Archives continues to preserve local records and make them available through our Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) system. There are seven IRADs in the state, each containing records of interest from the region they serve. The Archives recently hired its 2003-2004 graduate intern class to help staff the regional depositories.

Illinois State Archives records date back to the 1700s. These records include everything from the original Illinois Constitution of 1818 to correspondence from most of our presidents. The mission of the State Archives is to preserve and protect these documents as well as make them available to researchers and the general public. I encourage you to check out the various databases on the Web site or visit your local Illinois Regional Archives Depository for your archival information needs.

Jesse White

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Secretary of State & State Archivist

Sangamon County Probate Court Case Files Index goes online

The Sangamon County Probate Court Case Files Index (1821-1885) is the latest online database addition to the State Archives page on the Secretary of State's Web site. The case files themselves (record series 4/0274/01) are housed at the Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) at the University of Illinois at Springfield. IRAD interns compiled the index of some 3,485 entries.

Index entries provide the estate name, case file number, date of death and various "remarks" on a particular file. The death date is taken from the Affidavit of Deceased whenever possible. If the word "missing" appears in the remarks column, the case file in question is missing and only its sleeve remains. The notation "disappeared" indicates that the subject of the file has disappeared and is presumed dead.

The actual case files are a rich source for historical and genealogical information, including court term dates; names of estates, probate judges and court clerks; petitions, bonds, oaths and letters of estate administrators, executors, guardians and conservators; estate inventories; appraisement bills; petitions to sell property; sale reports; accounts; receipts and expenditure reports; final reports; and court orders and decrees. Various included are lists of heirs, claims against the estate, and will records.

To access the database, go to www.cyberdriveillinois.com (click Departments, then State Archives, then Search Our Online Databases). A name search can be initiated of the specific database alone or by a broader global search of all the name databases combined.

2003-2004 IRAD interns

The Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) system has begun its 28th year with the appointment of 17 new graduate student interns for the 2003-2004 academic year. IRAD interns apply basic archival principles and skills to local governmental records held in their respective regional depositories as well as provide reference services to the public.

Following are the interns working at the seven IRADs across the state:

Eastern Illinois University

- Kara L. Long
- Andrew Roling

Illinois State University

- Loretta Lally
- Carrie A. Yana

Northeastern Illinois University

- Kevin Hogan
- Ellen Larrimore
- William Sharp

Northern Illinois University

- Melissa Hayes
- Edyta S. Wajda

Southern Illinois University

- Patricia F. Nunley
- Jaime Ricklefs
- James Smith
- Ty Solomon

University of Illinois at Springfield

- Patrick Gleason
- Justin Sweigart

Western Illinois University

- Daniel McIntosh
- Joshua Whitney



A 9-ton dehumidification unit was hoisted onto the roof of the Margaret Cross Norton Building on the Capitol Complex in Springfield on July 18, 2003. The addition of the unit is part of an ongoing project to provide a new, environmentally sound heating, venting and air-conditioning system for the building's multi-layered record storage areas.



Temporary State Archives employees (left to right) Mary Lou Johnsrud, B.J. Ross, Debra Weiner, Chelsea Talon and Mary Williams assist Archives staff in addressing a backlog of reference inquiries.

NOTICE

A \$10 prepaid, nonrefundable fee now is required for any document requests made from outside of Illinois. The new fee is the result of legislation passed by the Illinois General Assembly during the spring legislative session. For each out-of-state request submitted with the required \$10 fee, the State Archives will provide up to two (2) unofficial, noncertified copies of the governmental records that apply. Please make checks payable to Secretary of State.

Renowned archivist Thornton W. Mitchell passes away

Longtime archivist Thornton W. Mitchell died May 14, 2003, in Raleigh, N.C. at age 87. His long and accomplished career as an archivist and records manager spanned more than 40 years and included significant periods that focused on Illinois.

Mitchell earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in American History from Stanford University in 1937 and 1939, respectively. He went on to obtain his Ph.D. in American History from Columbia University in 1942. His first archival position was with the National Archives in Washington, D.C. from 1941 to 1947. He then served as a records management analyst for the Navy Department in San Bruno, California. He left government employment in 1955 to serve as a consultant for the National Records Management Council, a position he held until 1960. Later in 1960 and into 1961 he worked as a self-employed records management consultant for the Ohio Department of Mental Hygiene and Correction. The second half of Mitchell's career was spent at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History from 1961 to 1981, where he held various positions, the last of which was as state archivist.

Mitchell's Illinois connection began in January 1956 when he came to Springfield to supervise the Illinois Records Management Survey. Illinois State Archives Superintendent Margaret Cross Norton in 1955 had persuaded then Secretary of State Charles Carpentier and, in turn, the General Assembly and Gov. William Stratton, to appropriate \$200,000 for a comprehensive survey of the records of the executive branch of Illinois government. The survey was to "determine the most economical methods of creating, managing, keeping, and disposing of records."

The National Records Management Council (NRMC) of New York City was contracted to conduct the project, which ran from January 1956 through January 1957. Project staff surveyed records creation, management and retention in state agencies; prepared records disposal schedules for state offices; wrote the State Records Act of 1957; and worked with state records management analysts in implementing the provisions of the 1957 law.

As supervisor of the project, Mitchell developed a close working relationship with Margaret Cross Norton, who had earned national and international acclaim for her contributions to the then nascent American archival profession. The survey had been her idea, and it was being implemented as she was phasing out her 35-year tenure at the State Archives toward retirement.

At the conclusion of the survey contract, Mitchell moved on to other projects, but he and Norton remained in touch. After Norton retired, several of her professional friends urged her to write a book concerning the operations of archives programs smaller than the National Archives. Over the course of her archival career in Illinois she contributed various archival articles

to the State Library Association's *Illinois Libraries* and other professional journals. The task at hand was to bring together into a coherent whole what she had already written. However, in her retirement she preferred to travel and watch the wildlife from her home on Lake Springfield and never began the project.

In 1964, Ernst Posner, the adopted dean of the American archival profession, persuaded Mitchell to edit Norton's works for monograph publication. The end product was *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management* (Carbondale:

Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), which includes 30 of Norton's articles dealing with the "concepts, principles, and techniques of archival economy." The demand for the publication continues and, as a result, the Southern Illinois University Press recently reissued the volume in a soft-cover edition.

Even in his retirement, Mitchell remained active in the archives field by writing and editing. His works include *The State Library and Library Development in North Carolina (1983)*, *North Carolina Wills: A Testator Index, 1665-1900 (1987 and 1992)*, and *The Papers of William Woods Holden (2000)*.

A memorial service for Thornton Mitchell was held at the First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C. on May 17. He is survived by his wife, two sons and two granddaughters.



Margaret Cross Norton, former director of the Illinois State Archives, listens as Thornton W. Mitchell speaks at a ceremony marking the publication of her book, *Norton on Archives*, in 1975.

A Summary Guide to Local Governmental Records in the Illinois Regional Archives, second edition (1999), 265 pp. — \$6

Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois, second edition (1997), 940 pp.; or CD ROM — \$20

Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871: An Inventory (1987), 989 pp., and
Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871: An Index (1987), 93 microfiche (18,714 pp.) — \$35

Illinois Public Domain Land Sales (2001), explanatory booklet (7 pp.), and CD-ROM (538,750 entries) — \$25

The Margaret Cross Norton Working Papers, 1924-1958 (1993), 8 - 35 mm microfilm rolls with An Inventory and Index (1993), 7 microfiche (1,055 pages) — \$60

Hard Times in Illinois, 1930-1940 (2002), teacher's manual (119 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles — \$10*

The Illinois and Michigan Canal, 1827-1911 (1998), teacher's manual (115 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions — \$12*

Illinois at War, 1941-1945 (1994), teacher's manual (119 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles — \$12*

From the Ashes, 1872-1900: A Selection of Documents from the Proceedings Files of the Chicago City Council (1990), teacher's manual (123 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions. — \$10*

Early Chicago, 1833-1871: A Selection of City Council Proceedings Files from the Illinois State Archives (1986, 1999), teacher's manual (115 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions — \$14*

*** Teaching packets are available FREE to Illinois educational institutions by submitting a request on letterhead stationery. All other requests are filled for the fee listed. To order publications, please contact: Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Publications Unit, Springfield, IL 62756, 217-782-2226. Please make checks payable to Secretary of State.**