

ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT



FRANKLIN  
COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA  
\*\*\*\*\*  
- ESTABLISHED 1784 -

# 2025



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# DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS



**Courthouse Annex Photo Exhibit**

In June 2025 **Archivist, Heather Wade**, created an **exhibit in the Courthouse Annex**, featuring photographs from the 2022 Franklin County photo contest.

In October 2025, a time capsule project, **in partnership with the Archives Department**, was placed in the Judicial Center by Commissioners Horst, Flannery, and Ziobrowski. Art created by local students depicting themes related to the County, were placed inside the time capsule to be opened in 2050.



Left to Right: County Administrator, Carrie Gray, Commissioner Chair, Dean Horst, student artist, Felicity Dunkle, Commissioner John Flannery, and Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski

## Judicial Center Time Capsule Placement

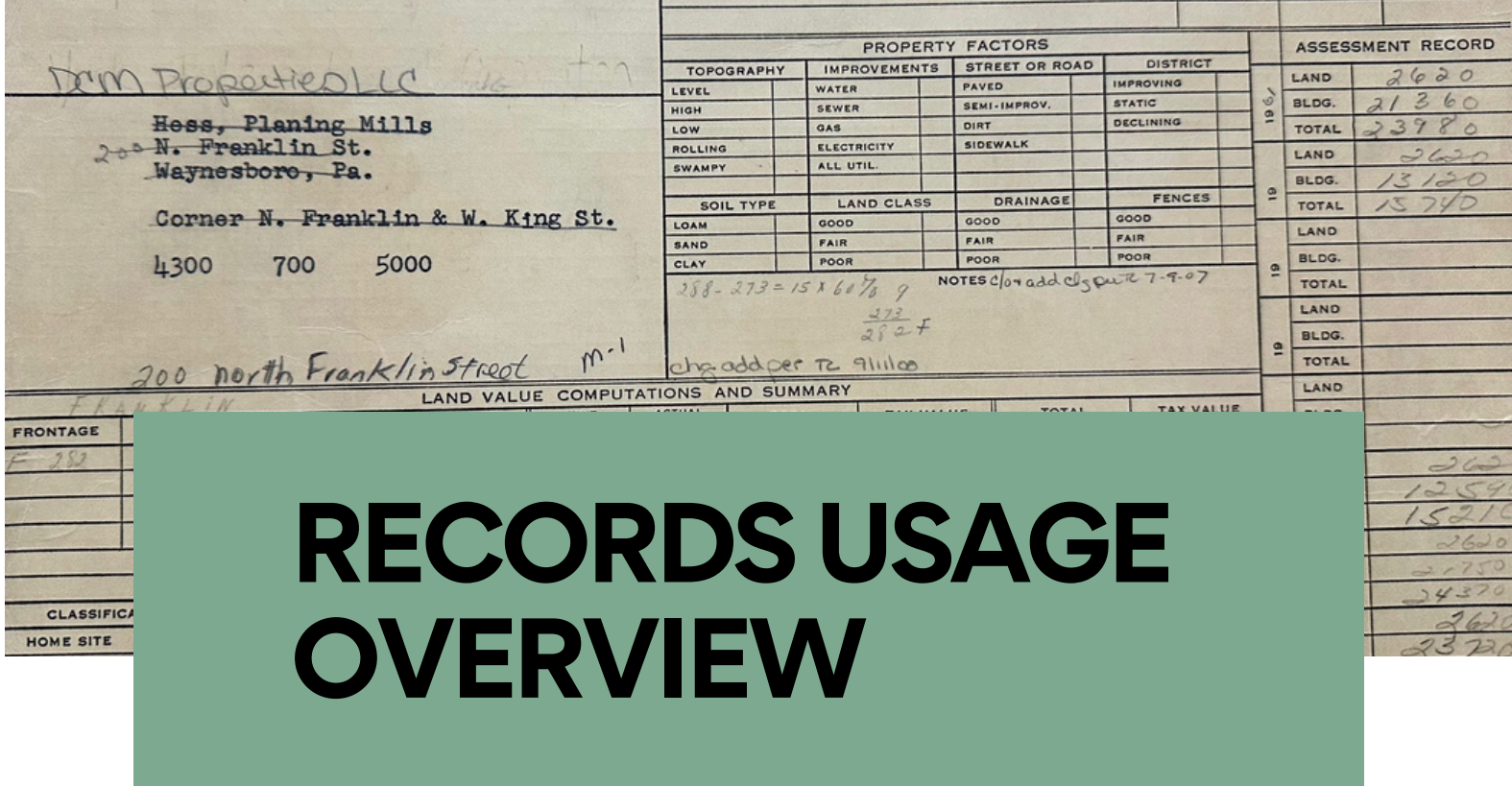


Charles Kaufmann  
May 12 · 📷

Interviewing Heather Wade, archivist of Franklin County, PA, with Fred Mayer's 1866 gilded statue of Ben Franklin in the background. Fred Mayer was the maternal grandfather and artistic mentor of [Fred A. Demmler - 1888-1918](#).

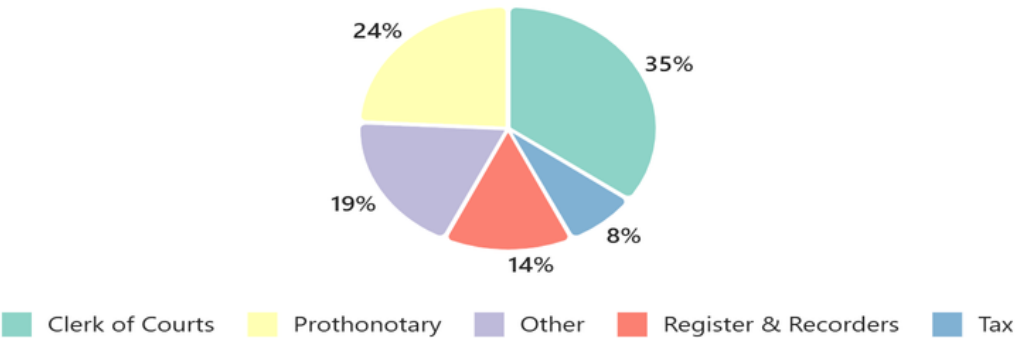
Archives and Records Management's blog on "Frederick Mayer: Sculptor of Franklin County's Iconic 'Ben' Statue" caught the attention of film maker Charles Kaufmann of Starflower Films, who is working on a documentary about Frederick Mayer's grandson and namesake Fred A. Demmler. Kaufmann sent his film crew to Chambersburg twice in early 2025 to interview **Archivist Heather Wade** on Mayer's influence on Demmler, a talented artist from Pittsburgh who was killed in combat in the last days of World War I.

**This Collapse of All Things: The Short Life of Fred A. Demmler, Artist** will be a three-part film when complete. A segment of the film won the Best Documentary Short at the London Independent Film Awards in Oct 2025.



# DEPARTMENTS

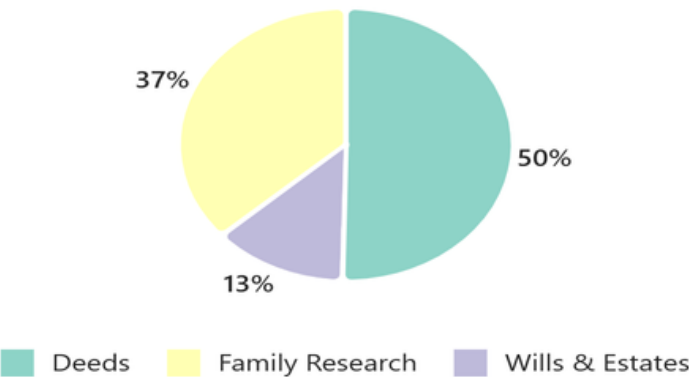
In 2025, Archives and Records Management staff fulfilled **256** department requests.



Top department requests

# PUBLIC

In 2025, Archives and Records Management staff fulfilled **338** public requests: **82** phone call requests, **134** in person requests and **122** email requests.



Top public requests





# PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

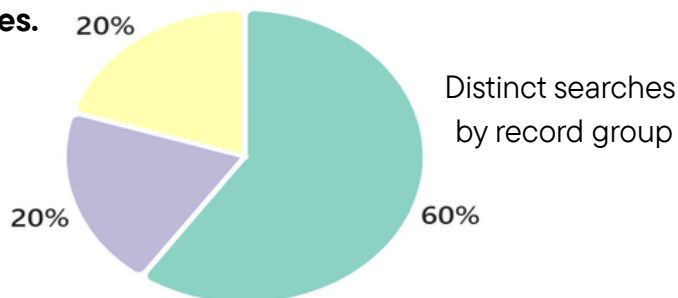
## New Initiative: Archives and Records Management Department Liaison Program

In July 2025, the Archives and Records Management Department coordinated with all departments to select a staff representative to be that department's designated **records liaison**. Liaisons are trained by Archives staff quarterly on topics related to essential records management, preservation, digital archiving, and how to manage records within office spaces. This program is now a permanent part of Archives' duties.

## New Software: PastPerfect for Archives cataloging and public use

In January 2025, a new catalog system was fully implemented for staff to quickly locate records and incorporate metadata to assist with temporary and long-term preservation based on the State Archives' County Records Manual.

A public facing catalog was also released for researchers to access digital collections. Year to date, the public catalog has had **9,225 distinct searches**.



# VISITOR STATISTICS

## IN-PERSON VISITOR ORIGIN

Alaska	Maryland	Oklahoma	Alabama
New Jersey	Iowa	Ohio	Florida
Utah	Indiana	Illinois	Texas

FRANKLIN County

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RESIDENT INHERITANCE TAX APPRAISEMENT

Estate of  
ADDISON THOMAS SULLIVAN  
Deceased.

Late of  
CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

Date of Death, DEC. 2, 1947

Appraisement Docket Vol., P

Page, 114 No. Line 4

Filed in Register's Office, AUG. 14, 19 48

Amount of tax due, \$ 54.00

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DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Received, \_\_\_\_\_

Examined and Approved, \_\_\_\_\_

Wrote about Appraisement, \_\_\_\_\_

Appeal from Appraisement, \_\_\_\_\_

Entered and charged, \_\_\_\_\_

Wm. C. Hazlett, Att'y.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In 2025, Archives and Records Management staff provided **325.25 hours** of service fulfilling public research requests. The Archives staff is dedicated to the Commissioners' goal of providing this free public service and continuing the printing fee of only \$.25 per copy. This year, staff time gave back the equivalent of **\$6,000** to visitors and community residents.



# EMPLOYEE PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Image 1: Serving the Public – Photo Captured by: No name

In 2022 Franklin County sponsored a public photography contest seeking images that represented Franklin County's unique and beautiful qualities. All **300 entries** were resized and cataloged for public access in the Archives Public database. Forty of these photographs were also selected for exhibit in the Courthouse Annex display cases. This project was completed by **Archives Specialist, Briana McNames**.

To increase traffic to our digital catalogs, **Archives Clerk, Fran Golden**, processed, scanned, and cataloged **7,383** Franklin County Naturalization records ranging from the 1838-1991. These documents are now available for researchers to access from our website.

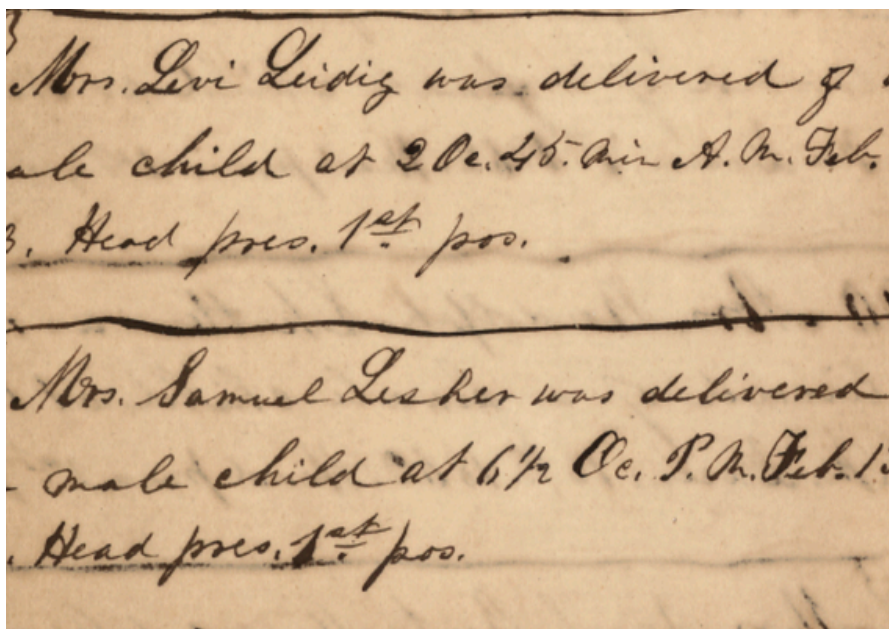


George Cawkwell (1881-1966) was born in England later immigrated to Canada before settling in the United States with his wife and children. A professional golfer by trade, Cawkwell became the head golf professional at the Waynesboro Country Club where he served from 1930 to 1941. In addition, to his teachings, he was a skilled clubmaker; golf clubs bearing the Cawkwell name are now considered collectible. He resided in Waynesboro, where he was a notable figure in the local sporting community.

# EMPLOYEE PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



The Archives holds **62,790** estate papers ranging from years 1784-2023. These records were previously housed in the Register and Recorder's Office. After the County's consolidation of records to the Archives Building, these documents have now been cataloged, boxed, and made more easily available to researchers. **Archives Public Services Assistant, Kristina Shuman**, has processed **12,000** of these estate papers since February 2025.



**Cecilia Scott, Archives Specialist**, scanned and transcribed the three journals of Dr. Jacob Lewis Suesserott, a physician and dentist practicing in Chambersburg, PA from 1851-1857 and 1862-1886.

Dr. Suesserott's journals provide valuable information on select births in the area, earlier than our existing county birth records. This will benefit researchers who are looking for their ancestors who may have been born prior to 1893. Also, these journals give us an interesting overview, from a doctor's perspective, of what births were like during and after the Civil War era.



# TEAM PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



In order to keep the most historically significant, permanent, and vulnerable records in the “212” climate-controlled space, the Archives and Property Management teams moved **3,179 books** from 212 to the larger warehouse for cataloging and permanent placement.

In November 2024, Bexx Caswell-Olsen, Director of Book Conservation of the Northeast Document Conservation Center, visited and prepared a report of the Prothonotary books and dockets that were pulled from the Human Services basement. Over 2025, the Archives team processed, cataloged, and shelved **913 of these records**.



The NEDCC site visit and report were made possible by a grant award of **\$5,858 from the National Endowment for the Humanities**.

# ACCOUNTABILITY TO DEPARTMENTS



## EXAMPLE OF DEPARTMENT CLEANOUT PROJECT BEFORE AND AFTER

As a service to departments, the Archives and Records Management team is partnering with departments to clean out digital and physical spaces. In 2025, the departments of Drug and Alcohol, Fiscal, Adult Probation, Public Defender, Elections, Voter Registration, Tax Services, Planning, and Commissioners had specific disposition projects completed to decrease the amount of records that are out of retention. In total, **240 cubic feet** of records were securely shredded and approved for disposition by the State Archives, while **662 boxes and books** were accessioned in.

## TOP SCANNING PROJECTS

### #1 - Boundaries Project - For GIS/Register & Recorder/ Planning/ Tax/ Archival/ Public

- scanned **3,237** highway and sub-division construction plans and related records dating from the 1920s-1980s for a standard dataset of boundary documentation.

### #2 - Divorce and Annulment Decrees - For Prothonotary/ Archival/ Public

- scanned divorces and annulments that occurred between 1884-1950; **1,186 total**.

### #3 - Oyer & Terminer Case Files - For Clerk of Courts/ Archival/ Public

- scanned Oyer & Terminer (Criminal) case files from 1887-1919, containing **3,138 cases (21,030 pages total)**



# FUTURE OUTLOOK

## 2026-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

### **Goal 1: Enhance Digital Preservation/Records Management Capabilities:**

- Adopt a County-wide Information Governance Plan
- Develop digital preservation policies, procedures, and workflows based on IG plan

### **Goal 2: Improve Records Lifecycle Management**

- County-wide standards implementation
- Conduct training for records liaisons
- Laserfiche Modernization Plan
- Prioritize permanent record scanning
- 212 HVAC Duct Cleaning

### **Goal 3: Increase Access and User Engagement (Public)**

- Local History/Genealogy workshop in partnership with Historical Society, Library
- Outreach to professional organizations/companies: Bar Association, Surveyors, Engineers to use records
- America250PA Celebration exhibit (2026)
- County-wide oral history project
- Continue to prioritize record series with genealogical information

## **Grant Award for 2026**

Archives and Records Management was awarded a **\$3,000 grant** from the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) for a 2026 paid internship