

## Case study

# Relocating the story of Pennsylvania

With 250 million assets to manage and migrate, the Pennsylvania State Archives chose Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services for trusted and experienced support.

The Pennsylvania State Archives, part of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), is a 120-year-old institution that houses and preserves vital historical and legal assets. This includes founder William Penn's original 17th-century charter and the state's ratification of the US Constitution. The archives serve as a research library, welcoming the public to access and explore its more than 250 million assets.

In a process that began as far back as the 1990s, the PHMC advocated for a new home for the Archives' collection of historical assets. With an increasing need for modern preservation amenities and better accessibility for the public, leaders began planning the monumental move from an outgrown and outdated building to the Archives' new 145,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art public facility. The team at the Pennsylvania State Archives includes State Archivist, David Carmicheal, and Chief of the Archives Division, David Schoff.

"This was just a huge move. Logistically, it is the equivalent of moving a three-bedroom house 78 times," says Carmicheal. "But it's not

just a bunch of stuff, it's the most historical documents in the state that protect the legal and civil rights of the people and tell their story. ***It had to be moved safely.***"

Because many of these assets were quite fragile, including glass slides and glass plate negatives, the team wanted a partner who would appreciate the value of the collection and respect how it needed to be handled. For these reasons, they selected Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services to manage and move collections of assets over a period of three months.

"We didn't want any surprises," adds Schoff. "We wanted to be prepared and we planned as much as possible. Having a partner with this type of experience was very helpful."

"Our role is to preserve the legal and civil rights of the people of Pennsylvania. And to preserve their story as a community."

**David Carmicheal, State Archivist of Pennsylvania**



## Industry

Libraries and archives

## Challenge

Relocating valuable historical collections while improving collection management and patron accessibility

## Solution

Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services

## Results

- Expert librarian and archival support during project planning and execution
- Safe relocation of historical collections from an aging facility to a secure, +145,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility with public access
- Used the move as an opportunity to implement a modernized inventory system



## A partner who understands archives

The move's success relied on the dedication of the PHMC archival team and the flexibility of their moving partner, Iron Mountain. The archivists at the Pennsylvania State Archives spent years carefully planning and preparing the collections for a move.

"Having archivists and librarians on your team means a lot to us—these are people who speak my language, who understand the importance of what I do, and won't just pay lip service to the idea. They understand we're moving a lot of important stuff," says Carmicheal.

Schoff also praised the team's ability to pivot and adjust to challenges throughout the move, including a delay in receiving the certificate of occupancy for the new building, noting excellent management and leadership throughout the collaboration.

Ultimately, all 250 million of the Archives' assets, meticulously organized by collection, were safely moved to the new location in Harrisburg, PA.

"We were looking for a partner who could appreciate what the collection meant, what its value was, and how it had to be handled."

### David Carmicheal, State Archivist of Pennsylvania



Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services were integral in moving collections from the old location to the new.

The move also presented an opportunity for PHMC to modernize the state archives, particularly in using technology to improve inventory and tracking. The team barcoded boxes before the move and used an automated system to track everything, helping properly plan shelving and storage in the new location.

## New possibilities for patrons

**"Our new facility reflects a brand-new attitude. We want people to come into this building and enjoy themselves," says Carmicheal.**

As a result of the move, visitors to the Pennsylvania State Archives have better opportunities for access and interactive experiences while researching their own history. The Archives' collections are stored and displayed safely in a climate-controlled, secure, and accessible manner, inviting the public to learn and work while protecting its valuable assets.



The new building welcomes patrons to view, access, and interact with millions of historical and legal assets.

## Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services: Innovative solutions for unique collections

From the historical to the digital, the Iron Mountain Library and Archival Services team has the expertise and passion to manage your collection with care, precision, and integrity. We have resources from coast to coast to help make your next expansion or move a success.

Talk with a library logistics expert today:  
[www.ironmountain.com/contact/library](http://www.ironmountain.com/contact/library)

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