



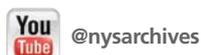
## New York State Archives

*The New York State Archives reaches every community in New York—saving community heritage, improving citizen access to important records, and enriching education and lifelong learning. A program of the State Education Department, the Archives preserves and makes accessible the essential recorded evidence, past and present, of New York's governments, organizations, peoples, and events.*

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## FROM THE State Archivist

The State Archives is in the Cultural Education Center, a very large building that is also the home of the State Library and State Museum. The building is part of the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza. The Plaza, in downtown Albany, was a major public works project that took over a decade to complete. The massive "South Mall Project" began with a ceremony dedicating the cornerstone, which is at the north end of the Plaza.

This past summer, our reference desk received a question from a resident of one of the streets that border the Plaza. The patron explained that while he has lived in the neighborhood nearly his entire life, and watched the construction of the Plaza as a boy, he always wondered "what was in that cornerstone." He explained that he has done research off and on for decades, but always came up empty. He went on to say that he never thought of contacting the State Archives, but he finally did.

It turns out that the State Archives preserves the records of the New York State Temporary Commission on the Capital City. The Commission operated from 1961 to 1974 and was created for the purpose of "cooperating with local officials and groups in developing recommendations for a realistic and fiscally sound program for the rehabilitation of the City of Albany." Our archivists used our online finding aid for this collection of records, which provides detailed descriptions of each box and folder for these specific records. Within the nine boxes of records from the Commission is box 5, folder 32, which contains photographs, transcripts of speeches, and a program for the dedication of the cornerstone. In addition, there is a single typewritten page that lists about forty items that comprise the contents of the cornerstone, which was laid on June 21, 1965. Those items include copies of local newspapers from that date, copies of the contract between the state and city and Albany County, lists of engineers who worked on the project, and many other items. We scanned the document and sent it to the researcher. He responded by saying "in one day, you provided me with an answer that I have been seeking for decades."

These kinds of stories happen every day. The records in the State Archives are here to answer questions, solve mysteries and ensure that the facts of history are available and accessible to all of us. We'll be telling more stories from our reference desk, but for now, browse our online resources ... the answers you seek may be right there!

### THOMAS J. RULLER

*New York State Archivist and Chief Executive Officer  
of the Archives Partnership Trust*

