



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

March 16, 2018

Dear Research Community,

Many county courts in Michigan suffer from case file storage issues. The problem is complicated by a lack of proper storage space and preservation techniques for records sometimes over 100 years old. County and court clerk's and probate register's offices are not equipped to maintain records indefinitely.

The Archives of Michigan was created in 1913 to maintain and preserve state and local government records and private manuscripts and is the only legal custodian of government records other than the creating agency. The Archives of Michigan participated in the revision of the records retention schedules in 2016. Retention schedules are legally binding and identify records created by the courts and their day-to-day or historical value. The state archivist, State Court Administrator's Office staff and representatives from various county circuit, probate, and district courts met to come to a consensus on outdated record keeping practices. The new schedules were published in 2017.

I want to assure the general public that the Archives of Michigan is tasked with *preserving* the state's documentary history and takes that role seriously. The Archives of Michigan does not, and will not, authorize the destruction of records that hold historical value. That said, there are practical decisions that need to be made after weighing certain criteria. We cannot keep everything, nor should we.

We will publish an itemized explanation of the schedule revisions (with justifications) in the near future. We appreciate the research community's dedication and enthusiasm in supporting the preservation of Michigan's historical documents. Please contact the Archives of Michigan at archives@michigan.gov or (517) 373-1414 with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mark E. Harvey'.

Mark E. Harvey
State Archivist