



*Alabama Secretary of State John H. Merrill*



*Alabama Secretary of State's Office*



## Duties of the Secretary of State

State law gives the Secretary of State over 1,000 different duties, and virtually all of them involve processing and filing documents that are public records. Many of the documents must have the Great Seal of Alabama affixed in order to make them official.

Approximately 500,000 documents are stored in the Secretary of State's Office, and they fall under four categories: Executive, Legislative, Elections, and Business.

In order to keep up with the public demand for access to these records, the office uses extensive computer and information technology. The Alabama Secretary of State's Office was one of the first in the nation to successfully store and retrieve the records on an optical disk, but today, many of the corporate and Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) records are available to businesses via the Internet.

### Executive:

Many of the executive records have both the signatures of the Secretary of State and of the Governor because the Secretary of State serves as the Governor's personal notary public. When the Secretary of State is witnessing the Governor's signature, the Great Seal of Alabama is used as the "notary" seal.

Included in this type of executive records are writs of arrest, contracts, deeds, and leases. Other executive records include listings of abandoned vehicles found in the state, information on municipal incorporations, and the names of all the notaries publicly registered in Alabama.

To help the state's fiscal issues, the Legislature was asked to remove the Secretary of State's primary General Fund Appropriation for Administrative Services, which led to an approximate decrease in state funding of \$1.3 million dollars. The office is now run with existing revenues.

### Legislative:

The Secretary of State is the custodian of the original legislative bills that become law and is responsible for assigning an act number to each. The office ensures that the acts and minutes from the legislative sessions are distributed in bound volumes called the Acts of Alabama, the House Journal, and the Senate Journal. The Secretary of State also distributes the state law books called the Code of Alabama, 1975 to Governmental agencies.

### Elections:

The Secretary of State is Alabama's "Chief Election Official." The Secretary of State is given many different election duties under state law. Election records include vote totals, certified ballots, and records showing how much money candidates and political action committees raised and spent during an election. Copies of certificates of election, commissions, and oaths of office are also on file for many elected officials.

The Secretary of State's Office has developed a new system that allows Alabamians to electronically register to vote.

With the implementation of the electronic ballot project, Alabama became one of the first states to employ an entirely secure, electronic voting system for the state's military and civilian voters who are outside the territorial limits of the United States.

### Business Records:

Business records are divided into three categories: Lands & Trademarks, Business Entities, and Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). The Lands and Trademarks Section has the original state land records dating back to the days when Alabama first achieved statehood. All of the trademarks registered in the state are also found here.

Business Entity staff members reserve names of businesses, index domestic filings, and file foreign filings for businesses that register to do business in Alabama. The state has about 500,000 business entity filings, and staff members usually receive about 300 requests each day for information in those files.

## Alabama Highlights

**Capital:** Montgomery

**Population:** 4,863,300 (2016 Census Bureau estimate)

**Counties:** 67

**Motto:** "We Dare Defend Our Rights"

**Nickname:** "Sweet Home Alabama"

**Flag:** Saint Andrew

**Bird:** Yellowhammer (Northern Flicker)

**Flower:** Camellia

**Tree:** Longleaf Pine

**Gemstone:** Star Blue Quartz

**Shell:** Scaphella Junonia Johnstoneae

**Fish:** Fighting Tarpon (state saltwater fish)  
& Largemouth Bass (state freshwater fish)

**Reptile:** Red-Bellied Turtle

**Song:** "Alabama" by Julia Tutwiler & Edna Gussen

**Bread:** Corn Bread

## The Great Seal of Alabama

The Secretary of State is the sole custodian of the Great Seal of Alabama. Use of the Great Seal is controlled by state law, and only a few staff members within the Secretary of State's Office have permission to affix the seal to documents.

The design of the seal was chosen in 1817 by William Wyatt Bibb, Governor of what was then the Alabama Territory, after he received Congressional authorization to use an official seal. Bibb designed the seal showing a map of Alabama with its rivers to reflect the importance of the river system to the state.

Custody of the Great Seal was officially transferred from the Governor to the Secretary of State in 1852. The Reconstruction Legislature abolished the use of that seal in 1868, and it's believed Secretary of State Charles A. Miller (1868-70) suggested the new seal's design, which featured an eagle and shield.

John Brandon was Secretary of State in 1939 when the Legislature passed a law that changed the seal back to a design similar to the original seal.





## Alabama's Secretaries of State

1. Henry Hitchcock.....	1818-1819
2. Thomas A. Rodgers.....	1819-1821
3. James J. Pleasants.....	1821-1824
4. James I. Thornton.....	1824-1834
5. Edmund A. Webster.....	1834-1836
6. Thomas B. Tunstall.....	1836-1840
7. William Garrett.....	1840-1852
8. Vincent M. Benham.....	1852-1856
9. James H. Weaver.....	1856-1860
10. Patrick H. Brittan.....	1860-1865
11. Albert S. Elmore.....	1865-1866
12. David L. Dalton.....	1866-1867
13. Micah Taul.....	1867-1868
14. Charles A. Miller.....	1868-1870
15. Jabez J. Parker.....	1870-1872
16. Patrick Ragland.....	1872-1873
17. Neander H. Rice.....	1873-1874
18. Rufus K. Boyd.....	1874-1878
19. William W. Screws.....	1878-1882
20. Ellis Phelan.....	1882-1885
21. Charles C. Langdon.....	1885-1890
22. Joseph D. Barron.....	1890-1894
23. James K. Jackson.....	1894-1898
24. Robert P. McDavid.....	1898-1903
25. J. Thomas Heflin.....	1903-1904
26. Edmund R. McDavid.....	1904-1907
27. Frank N. Julian.....	1907-1910
28. Cyrus B. Brown.....	1910-1915
29. John Purifoy.....	1915-1919
30. William Peyton Cobb.....	1919-1923
31. Sidney Herbert Blanton.....	1923-1927
32. John Marvin Brandon.....	1927-1931
33. Pete Bryant Jarman, Jr.....	1931-1935
34. David Howell Turner.....	1935-1939
35. John Marvin Brandon.....	1939-1943
36. David Howell Turner.....	1943-1944
37. Sibyl Pool.....	1944-1951
38. Agnes Baggett.....	1951-1955
39. Mary Texas Hurt Garner.....	1955-1959
40. Betty Frink.....	1959-1963
41. Agnes Baggett.....	1963-1967
42. Mabel Sanders Amos.....	1967-1975
43. Agnes Baggett.....	1975-1979
44. Don Siegelman.....	1979-1987
45. Glen Browder.....	1987-1989
46. Fred Crawford.....	1989-1989
47. Perry A. Hand.....	1989-1991
48. Billy Joe Camp.....	1991-1993
49. Jim Bennett.....	1993-2003
50. Nancy L. Worley.....	2003-2007
51. Beth Chapman.....	2007-2013
52. Jim Bennett.....	2013-2015
53. John H. Merrill.....	2015-

# Office Locations

Alabama State Capitol  
600 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36130

Executive Division    Elections Division  
334-242-7200            334-242-7210  
Suite S-105              Second Floor

Finance Division  
334-353-2022  
Suite E-205

Alabama State House  
11 South Union Street  
Montgomery, AL 36130

Gov. Support / Authentications  
& Trademarks Division  
334-242-7224 / 334-242-5325  
Rooms 224 & 226

RSA Plaza  
770 Washington Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104

Business Entities / UCC  
334-242-5324 / 334-353-0203  
Suite 580

Information Systems  
334-242-7222  
Suite 580



JOHN H. MERRILL  
SECRETARY OF STATE

ALABAMA STATE CAPITOL  
600 DEXTER AVENUE  
SUITE S-105  
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130  
@JOHNHMERRILL

(334) 242-7200  
CELL: (334) 328-2787  
@ALASECOFSTATE  
WWW.SOS.ALABAMA.GOV  
JOHN.MERRILL@SOS.ALABAMA.GOV

