

INTRODUCTION

When Volume LXX was in preparation for the printer the Publications Committee of the Maryland Historical Society undertook a study of the *Archives of Maryland* looking at once in two directions: toward the past and to the future.

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In retrospect it was clear that this series has been one of the foremost among the documentary collections in the nation. Its preeminence rests on the importance of the archival materials reproduced and the quality of the editing. Beginning in 1883 under the editorship of William Hand Browne, the *Archives of Maryland* have unrolled through seventy volumes with the following succession of editors: Clayton Coleman Hall, Bernard Christian Steiner, J. Hall Pleasants, Raphael Semmes, and Elizabeth Merritt.

Under the direction of these editors six subordinate series have come into existence:

<i>Sub-series</i>	<i>Number of volumes</i>	<i>Inclusive dates of textual material</i>
Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly	32	1637/38-1774
Proceedings of the Council	11	1636-1770
Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe	4	1753-1771
Muster Rolls	1	1775-1783
Court Series	15	1637-1683
Journal and Correspondence of the State Council	8	1775-1784

Four of these sub-series have been completed. That is to say, the editors have exhausted, or practically exhausted, the archival material for these sub-series. (1) The Sharpe letterbooks, a mine of detail on administration of the province during the years after mid-18th century, were a finite set and all have been printed. They fill three full volumes of the *Archives* and part of a fourth, which is primarily devoted to council proceedings. (2) The largest and, doubtless, the most important sub-series, Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, ran for thirty-two volumes, extending from the legislative session of 1637/38 to the last meeting of the provincial assembly in 1774 just before the outbreak of the War for Independence. This series came to completion in 1947 with volume LXIV of the *Archives*. (3) A parallel set, the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, similarly ran for eleven volumes and reproduced material from the year 1636 to 1770. These two sets contain the bulk of