

that in Dr. Morris L. Radoff, who took up where Dr. Robertson left off, we have a most worthy successor.

The subject of this meeting is one of great interest to many and although my knowledge is somewhat limited, I can not fail to avail myself of this opportunity to tell you a little something about the Hall of Records of this State.

The Hall of Records of the State of Maryland occupies an unique position in this State, and is the first institution of this name to be established in the United States. Other States have concerned themselves with the preservation a fire proof modern depository which ultimately resulted in the Hall of Records. of their public papers; some have departments of archives and history, others preserve their state records under historical commissions, but it remained for the State of Maryland to establish the first and as yet the only Hall of Records in the country.

We have been backward in the preservation of our public records in Maryland. In addition to having been backward, we were also very careless of our historical documents. Little attention was given in this State to its accumulation of documentary matter, before 1926; prior to that time it had nearly all been utterly neglected and some lost. The author of the History of Maryland, Mr. Scharfe, took what material he wanted from the various depositories he found in Annapolis and gave some of it away to his friends as presents. In the first ten years of this century an order was issued to clean out some of the rubbish in the cellar of the State House and as a result, all the documents were carted away to a dump. Citizens began to find valuable documents, including letters written by George Washington. State officials, upon investigating and discovering the disposal of these valuable papers, sent out hurriedly to the dump and found, what was thought rubbish, was in reality Revolutionary War records of the Adjutant General's office. Mr. J. W. Randall, while walking around the circle of the State House found flying across his feet, a paper which turned out to be the minutes of one of the meetings preliminary to the Constitutional Convention of the United States, which was held in Annapolis. In 1926, when there was a change of Judges in the Court of Appeals, a report was made by the Secretary, about a large accumulation of Court Papers. An investigation was made and upon hearing of it, a certain banker in Baltimore donated a thousand dollars to have the Court papers catalogued; that started a good deal of talk about the State's old material. Newspaper articles and a general spirit of inquiry was begun. The material was kept in wooden cupboards everywhere about the State buildings, not at all in fire-proof surroundings.

The Tercentenary Committee started the agitation for the consideration of a fire-proof modern depository which ultimately resulted in the Hall of Records.

The late Governor Ritchie heard considerable talk about these records and went over to the Court of Appeals Building to find out what it was all about. When he was shown some of the shoe boxes and other things which contained old documents, he decided that a building must be erected. The construction was paid for in part with W.P.A. money and our Hall of Records is about the best in any of the States. It is also felt that our accumulation of papers is more complete than any other of the old States.

And now, just a word about the act which created the Hall of Records. In 1931, an act authorizing the creation of a state debt in the aggregate of \$5,663,000, the proceeds thereof to be used for certain necessary building construction and equipment was passed by the Legislature.