

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

January 17, 1957

TO THE HONORABLE

THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Gentlemen:

It is with genuine satisfaction that the Archivist transmits to you this report of the activities of the Hall of Records for the fiscal year 1956, that is July 1, 1955 through June 30, 1956. It is his hope that after examining this account you will find his satisfaction to be justified. None of the *desiderata* for a good year were lacking: there were no changes in the membership of the Hall of Records Commission and hardly any in the staff, so that we could not have asked for better auspices. Moreover, we were well, if not lavishly, furnished with the funds which we needed for efficient operation. Again, the General Assembly approved of two measures which we badly needed to clarify and further our usefulness. One Act provided for the orderly disposition of the records of agencies of government which ceased to function and the other permitted fuller development of our records disposal program by authorizing the destruction of certain records—hitherto especially prohibited—after microfilming.

We were unfortunate only in the extraordinary amount of time which was lost due to illness; but in spite of this, production in every archival activity which can be statistically measured remained approximately the same as the year before. Binding was exactly the same, repairing a little better; in photography we did less microfilming but more photostating; we circulated fewer documents to a smaller number of searchers, but we wrote more letters to a larger number. Our accessions were not so great quantitatively as they have been for some years in the past, but we have never received more valuable or more difficult records to handle than the fine collection of early church and court records which you will find listed herein.

Especially gratifying was the steady development of the Records Management Program. By the end of the year, we had not only made good progress in the State agencies, we had also begun an intensive program of ordering the records in our county courthouses. As you are aware, part of this county program calls for the preparation of insurance microfilm copies of all the important land and probate series in the counties and in Baltimore City. We had already finished the great probate series of Wills and Orphans' Court Proceed-