

was a major weakness of our records retirement program. The need for such depositories was recognized from the beginning and, in fact, Records Engineering, Inc., in a survey of State records made just prior to the initiation of the records management program, recommended that the State erect a records center of approximately 12,000 square feet of storage space. Since the State had already made plans for two new State office buildings, one in Annapolis and the other in Baltimore, it was decided to provide records storage space in the basements of these buildings, rather than erect a separate structure. The Records Center in Annapolis was opened in August, 1958, and the one in Baltimore began receiving records in June of 1959. In the meantime, make-shift storage was provided, in a few critical cases, in the Department of Budget and Procurement warehouse. In other cases, relief was afforded to the agency by the substitution of microfilm copies for the original record, but for the most part agencies were obliged to maintain non-current records in their offices or storage areas.

The two Centers are as similar in design as the areas allocated and the funds available permitted. The one in Annapolis occupies an area of 5700 square feet and includes an office, microfilm room, search room, and stack area. The Baltimore Center is larger, containing 7100 square feet, with the microfilm and research facilities located between the two sections of stacks. Together, the Centers contain sufficient shelving to house 20,117 cubic feet of records. Air conditioning, asphalt tile floors, fluorescent lights, and a smoke detector and fire warning system add to the utility and convenience of these areas.

The operation of the Records Centers is governed by rules established by the Archivist and the Assistant Records Administrator. Records must be controlled by schedules before they will be accepted for deposit. Since the records of all but a few agencies were already governed by schedules, it was necessary to establish only a few additional ones, but some of the early schedules had to be amended to indicate what record series were to be transferred and at what time. Center personnel service the records from the time they are received until they are destroyed according to schedule. This service includes shelving the records, maintaining the necessary control forms, micro-filming records to be preserved on film, providing the records or information from them upon request, and supervising their destruction.

The acquisition of the two Records Centers has been of major importance in reducing the cost of maintaining non-current records and in establishing more effective control over them. First, these Centers have made possible the removal of inactive records from prime office space and filing equipment, releasing the equipment for re-use, and contributing to more efficient office operations. Second, they have enabled us to eliminate most of the individual storage areas of agencies where conditions were far from desirable and effective control almost