

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

TO THE HONORABLE
THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Gentlemen:

The Hall of Records in 1965 passed its thirtieth birthday. We received as a birthday present the Distinguished Service Award of the Society of American Archivists, which is inscribed as follows: "For outstanding Service to the American People and for Exemplary Contribution to the Archival Profession." Last year we received the Waldo Gifford Leland award of the Society of American Archivists for the second volume of *The County Courthouses and Records of Maryland*. It is good to have our work recognized by our peers. But it is equally important to know our failings to the profession and to the State of Maryland.

We have contributed minimally to the growth and improvement of our profession. We have failed to draw young people of high caliber and good preparation into it, and we have failed to design courses and find institutions suitable for the granting of advanced degrees to ambitious specialists. At the same time the first generation of American archivists has disappeared from the scene and the second generation is now being decimated. And we must ask, "who will replace us?" There is already a painful shortage of trained archivists everywhere, and there are vacancies in every archives. It is even difficult to get untrained graduates in history or government to fill our vacant positions.

From the time the Hall of Records was established, the Archivist has striven to reunite the historical records of Maryland under one roof. He has had but mediocre success. To be sure, the county records are now here as are the non-current records of State Agencies, but the large number of valuable records in other depositories are still there and give little indication of ever being brought home. The Library of Congress through gift and bequest, has come into possession of a large number of them. There they have been kept and preserved and because of this the Library has seemingly given itself title to them. It is the case of the caretaker appropriating the house.