

## FOREWORD

It was the original intention of the writer to compile a list of the county records of Maryland. For obvious reasons it became necessary to account for the counties which created the records, the courthouses in which they were housed, the peregrinations and acts of God which destroyed them. In time this introductory material became so bulky that it was published separately as *The County Courthouses and Records of Maryland, Part One: The Courthouses* (Annapolis, 1960). But the first purpose of the project was not forgotten; and here at last is the list.

At the beginning it was to be a complete list modeled after the County Record Inventories of the Historical Records Survey. Eight such Inventories were published in Maryland, and although it is now twenty years since the last one appeared, they are still useful; and had all 23 counties and Baltimore City been done, this new list would not really have been necessary, at least not to historians who are for the most part little interested in the records after 1940. At one moment we thought of reissuing the eight published volumes and preparing from the notes we had inherited from the WPA the additional 16 volumes as of 1936-1942. However these notes varied so much in quality and quantity that we had to abandon any idea of using them except as a check on our own work.

What we have done here then is to do the listing anew but using when we could the published volumes of the Historical Records Survey, the unedited notes of the same agency along with the many articles of Louis Dow Scisco and other archivists and historians. But we have made some changes in scope. The HRS was all inclusive: records of county courts, magistrates' courts, boards of education, volunteer fire associations were all treated equally well. Had we wished it we could not have done this kind of inventory again. The cost was prohibitive then and would be monstrous now. Nor did we wish it. The HRS, since it was pioneering could not be certain in advance what purpose its work would serve. It felt constrained, therefore, to provide for every possibility. We know now that historians were the chief benefactors.

Our work has put the needs of the historian first. We have eliminated certain records which we have learned in the intervening twenty years have little or no interest for him. This is a choice which ideally the archivist should not make but which practically he must.

It should be pointed out too that while the HRS listed only those records found in the counties *in situ*, we have attempted to list the county records wherever they may be and in whatever form. We have also noted where usable copies are available. For example, the land records of Dorchester County begin with the first year of the County, 1669. From that year through 1875 the original record volumes are at the Hall of Records. From 1875 through 1949 microfilm copies of the original are at the Hall of Records. The Land Office has microfilm copies from 1949 to the present. In the Dorchester County Courthouse from the beginning through 1788 there are photostatic copies; from 1789 to 1875 there are microfilm copies; from 1875 to the present the courthouse records are originals. Finally, the Utah Genealogical Society has microfilm copies from the beginning through 1850. While this enumeration is complicated we feel that it is important enough to the researcher to be justified.

The listing of the records is principally the work of Phebe Jacobsen and Gust Skordas