

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

BALTIMORE, *December 1, 1931.*

To the Maryland Historical Society:

GENTLEMEN:

This volume of the Archives of Maryland is the forty-eighth of the general series and the eighth of the sub-series dealing with activities during the Revolutionary period of the Council of Safety and its successor, the State Council. It covers the Journal and Correspondence of the State Council for the three years from November 19, 1781 to November 11, 1784, thus furnishing a complete record of the proceedings of the Governor and Council, and the letters emanating from them, during the last two years of the Revolution and the year following the conclusion of the peace. This volume is a direct continuation of the Proceedings of the Council which appeared in Volume Six of the State Council sub-series (*Archives of Maryland*, Volume XLV).

With the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, October 19, 1781, and the cessation of active hostilities on a large scale, the volume of business handled by the Council began to decline, but until the news was received of the signing of the preliminary articles of peace at Paris, November 30, 1782, the Council found its hands more than full with matters relating to the war. In addition to the civil administration of State affairs, it was called upon to furnish and expend the funds needed to keep the Maryland troops supplied with food and clothing, to stimulate recruiting, to guard effectively the British and German prisoners captured at Yorktown and imprisoned at Fredericktown, to send money and food to the wretched Maryland prisoners confined in the British prison ships at New York, to suppress the incessant depredations of small enemy vessels in the bay, to conciliate the disbanded soldiers clamoring for their pay, and to do all these and innumerable other things, not with "hard money" which was well nigh unobtainable, but with bills of credit, dubiously secured, and paper currency, rapidly depreciating in value.

The great bulk of the entries are orders from the Council to the treasurers of the Eastern and Western shores to pay sundry individuals for their services or for supplies furnished, the orders specifying whether payments are to be made in bills of credit, in paper currency, or in specie. Payments in specie were rarely ordered, for "hard money" was scarce, and consisted of gold and silver foreign coins circulating at fixed ratios of value as determined by the Assembly. There was no State or Confederation coinage, and the silver coins issued in 1783 from the private mint of John Chalmers, an Annapolis silversmith, apparently with the tacit approval of the State authorities, probably did not have a wide circulation.

The journals of the Council also record the issuance of commissions to various county officials, such as justices, judges of the orphans courts, sheriffs