

permit the destruction of old volumes which had been transcribed and certified. In some counties the number of such volumes was so great that they occupied an appreciable amount of valuable vault or storage space in the courthouse. Both amendments to this Act were adopted.

There were several other bills in which we were interested, although they were not introduced at our request. Not one of them seemed to be opposed but they were all held in committee. House Bill No. 18 proposed to amend Section 63 of Article 17 to eliminate the requirement that all Land Record volumes be indexed within the volume itself. Since general indexes are now universal, there is no need to maintain volume indexes. From our point of view this proposal was important because it would reduce the amount of microfilming that we are required to do for the Land Office by twenty to thirty pages per volume.

We were very much interested in House Bill No. 864 which provided that any instrument recorded by a Clerk of the Court in the counties or the Clerk of the Superior Court of Baltimore City might be destroyed after ten years. At the present time it is not possible to destroy any papers of this kind: they are never indexed and rarely used, and they occupy a large part of all available vault space. This bill was introduced by members of the Washington County delegation who, however, were unable to muster strong support for it. We believe that if the retention period were extended from ten to twenty years, especially in the case of land records, better success may be expected in the future. Our interest in this bill stems from the fact that we are consulted by Clerks of Court and by the Comptroller of the Treasury on many matters having to do with record keeping in the courthouses, chief among which are vault space and record filing equipment. Appreciable savings could be realized in space and equipment if a bill such as this one were passed.

Curiously enough, while it was impossible to get support for a general law which would help alleviate the crowded conditions of our county vaults, a local law was passed which marked what we hope will prove to be a first step in this direction. I quote from Chapter 670, Acts of 1953:

“(d) The Clerk of the Circuit Court for Allegany County is authorized to destroy all Conditional Sales Contracts three years after the date of filing in said Circuit Court.”