

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

TO THE HONORABLE
THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Gentlemen:

Perhaps the most critical problem facing the Hall of Records is the bleak physical preservation of the records of our State in a tense unstable world. In Maryland we are doubly concerned. In World War II it was our responsibility to insure the preservation in some form of the historical records of the State, a universal archival function. But now that we have accepted responsibility through our records management program for the working records of the State we are much more seriously involved.

At the beginning of World War II we were children in a child's world of conventional weapons. We could not imagine the destructive power of the atom bomb or of the hydrogen bomb. We began with the premise that a copy of the record stored underground a few miles from a prime target area would suffice—and it did, because chance, the imagination of our scientists and British bombers gave us the atom bomb and not our enemies. In accordance with this assessment of the situation we set to work to film all of the records of value which we then held in our custody—it was fortunately very little. As soon as the film was done we removed it to the basement of the C. Burr Artz Library at Frederick. Before the project was over we had removed some 1,300 reels. They survived the war, as did the originals, and since that time copies have been made for the British Museum, the Huntington Library, The Library of Congress and the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

It is our feeling that these records, which now exist in so many microfilm copies, as well as those which have been printed need not be protected further. Following the war the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in cooperation with the Hall of Records undertook to film county records of genealogical value. When the project was over, after two years of work, the land records and the basic probate records had been completed through the year 1850. The records covered