

## II. BASIC COUNTY RECORDS

The functions and responsibilities of the several county offices whose records are listed in this volume are essentially the same from county to county. It is only natural therefore that the records which reflect the activities of these offices should also be similar. Thus, every register of wills has in his custody Wills, Inventories, Guardian Accounts and numerous other record series that are created in the course of settling the estates of deceased persons. In similar fashion, each clerk of court has certain characteristic records, such as, Land Records, Judgments and Court Minutes.

However, the manner and form in which such records are kept may vary from county to county. For example, Guardian Accounts may appear as a separate series in one county, may be combined with Administration Accounts in another county or may be recorded among the Orphans Court Proceedings of a third county. In each case the record is basically the same.

To describe such basic records as they occur in county after county would be needlessly repetitious. For this reason, it has been deemed advisable to describe in detail the key records of each county office included in this volume. Thus, when the records of each individual office are listed, it will be necessary to describe only those items which have unusual characteristics or which have not been previously described.

### Basic Records of the Circuit Court

#### LAND RECORDS (DEEDS)

Primarily a record of instruments pertaining to real property, such as, deeds, assignments, leases, mortgages, releases of mortgages, powers of attorney, agreements and rights-of-way. In addition, the earlier volumes served as a sort of catch-all in which various other instruments were recorded. Some of these were eventually established as separate series, as for example, chattel mortgages, bills of sale, indentures of apprenticeship, manumissions of slaves, commissions and qualifications of civil officers, vital records and incorporations of church, social and business organizations. Other instruments found recorded in this series are cattle marks, certificates of strays, records of convicts brought to Maryland as servants, certificates of importation or removal of slaves, publications of freight rates, proofs of age and election returns.

#### MORTGAGES

As indicated above, mortgages were originally recorded in the Land Records. In some counties, mortgages have been established as a separate series; in others they are recorded in separate volumes, but numbered seriatim with the Land Records.

#### LAND COMMISSIONS

Record of proceedings of commissioners appointed to reestablish the boundaries of tracts of land where the original boundary markers have disappeared. (See Chapter 45, 1715; Chapter 9, 1717; Chapter 8, 1723.) Often, a plat of the tract is part of the record. In most counties, Land Commissions are recorded in special volumes, but in some instances, they may be found in the Land Records or Judgments.