

The office area vacated by the Land Office made it possible for the first time to assign a desk to each staff member of the Hall of Records. Previously the research room reference staff had sat at the already crowded tables in that public room. We had shared with the Land Office the single photographic laboratory. The room was painfully crowded, not only with necessary equipment but also with ancient unused and unusable machines which the Land Office had preserved. The removal of Land Office equipment permitted a rearrangement of this room, the junking of obsolete equipment, and a thorough cleaning of the storage areas of the building.

As I pointed out in my last report, all of this was not accomplished without difficulty. The Land Office, at the end, was reluctant to move; a taxpayer's suit to prevent it resulted in a temporary injunction against the Board of Public Works and the Hall of Records Commission, but it was served too late to accomplish this purpose. An interlocutory injunction was then granted to prevent the use of the vacated area by the Hall of Records. The taxpayer's suit was heard in Anne Arundel County Circuit Court before the Honorable Matthew S. Evans in October 1958. In March 1959, Judge Evans held that the Board of Public Works was within its rights in moving the Land Office. An appeal was taken and the case was heard by the Court of Appeals October 21, 1959. On November 20, 1959, the order of the Circuit Court was affirmed.

In addition to the contest in the courts, opponents of the move stirred up some feeling in the community through letters, meetings, and newspaper interviews. The experience was especially unfortunate because the public found it difficult to understand the problem of space. It was almost impossible to explain that the Land Office land records were not deeds, as were the Hall of Records land records; and that neither in that category nor any other was there a true division of records. We readily granted that it is always more convenient for the searcher to have all the records he might need in one place, but, on the other hand, if he needs very many records this becomes, in practice, an impossibility. The Public Record Office and the British Museum both hold records for the historian, and so do The National Archives and The Library of Congress—there is no help for it.

As soon as more stack area was available to us, we began to transfer many historical county records which we had previously been obliged to refuse. I should like to call your attention especially to the remarkably fine group of county records listed in "Archival Acquisitions." I