

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

TO THE HONORABLE
THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Gentlemen:

As this Annual Report is being written the Hall of Records completes its first twenty-five years of life. It is the hope of the Archivist that the members of the Hall of Records Commission will welcome a brief review of this first quarter century in this space which is normally reserved for a summary of the accomplishments of a single year.

When Dr. James A. Robertson, the first Archivist of Maryland, opened the doors of the Hall of Records, October 1, 1935, he had four assistants—three more were appointed shortly thereafter—a budget of \$10,000, the handsome furniture provided by the architect, and some scanty equipment including one typewriter, and little else. Some few records were already in the vaults. Judge Carroll T. Bond, the first Chairman of the Commission, had transferred the older records of the Court of Appeals itself, as well as the records of other agencies, mainly defunct, which the Court had in its custody: the original Acts of the General Assembly, the Proceedings and Judgments of the Provincial and the General Courts.

Soon other records came from the Land Office and the Maryland Historical Society, records which had been entrusted to their care formally as well as informally by Act and Resolution of the General Assembly, by Executive Order and otherwise: the Colonial Prerogative (probate) Court records, The Rainbow Series of State Papers, the earliest Proceedings of the General Assembly and of the Governor and Council. All of these records, and some others which were added during Dr. Robertson's lifetime and shortly after his death in 1939, are listed in Publication No. 2 of the Hall of Records Commission, *Catalogue of Archival Material, Hall of Records* (1942). While all of these records are of prime interest they formed only a small collection, filling altogether perhaps a single stack level. Moreover, they had been gathered together from other depositories rather than from the offices of origin (excepting some records of Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties).