

records revealed that a few of them, such as the minute book and ledger, were of permanent value. Some of the other records were of doubtful value; but, as all of them were less than three years old (the Commission was created in 1947) and therefore not eligible for destruction, the Archivist agreed to accept all of the records. They are listed in the section on accessions.

### MICROFILMING OF COUNTY RECORDS

In my last report to you I pointed out that the microfilming project of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had come to an end. Some of the film had not yet been reeled and this was done by our staff in the course of the fiscal year covered by the present report. We concentrated our efforts this year, too, on the task of cataloguing this great collection of film—over 130,000 feet—and in the course of the cataloguing we found some omissions in the various series that we could be sure of and some others which we suspect. The work of finding the gaps and filling them is still going on.

The interest of the Mormon group extended only to the year 1850. For the period after that year there are few security copies of our county records. The abstracts of deeds, mortgages, and releases of mortgages in the Land Office would be useful if the originals in the counties were lost, but they are by no means complete or full enough to recreate the records exactly. Beginning this year, however, the abstract system has been abandoned and all these county records are being microfilmed and the films deposited in the Land Office. This is a great step forward in record keeping and while the administration of this filming project is a function of the Land Office, I thought it worthwhile to mention it here because of the long sponsorship of such a program by the Hall of Records culminating in the passage of the necessary legislation in 1949.

Much still remains to be done to insure our records against further loss. We have had many courthouse fires in Maryland resulting in serious losses of records. I need call your attention only to the burning of the St. Mary's County Courthouse in 1830 with the loss of many records and to the Calvert County Courthouse fire of 1880 when no records were saved. At the present time only a minority of our courthouses are fireproof or have vaults which might be considered fireproof. Somehow these records should be protected and the filming of insurance copies is by far the cheapest and most effective way to do this. At the last meeting of the Hall of