

ARCHIVAL ACCESSIONS

Generally speaking, the municipal records of Maryland have not been very well preserved, so we were very pleased to acquire the records of Charlestown in Cecil County. The town was originally laid out under the provisions of Chapter 23 of the Acts of 1742 and subsequently incorporated by Chapter 32 of the Acts of 1786. Located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the town was a shipping point of considerable importance during the Revolution. Thereafter, the rapid development of the port of Baltimore diverted all but a trickle of shipping from Charlestown and its once brilliant prospects faded. Today it has a population of less than a thousand. The town served briefly as the county seat of Cecil County from 1782 to 1787.

Some of the minutes of the Town Commissioners are missing, but the record is sufficiently complete to give historians a fairly good insight as to what the town government did and how it functioned. Conveyances of town lots were recorded in special volumes kept for that purpose by the Clerk of the Circuit Court. By arrangement with the Clerk, the originals were transferred to our custody and replaced with microfilm copies.

The assessment records of Dorchester County that are listed below have been microfilmed by our Records Management Division. The originals, which are fairly complete from 1852-1911, were considered of sufficient importance to be transferred to our Archival Division. The earlier Assessment Books may be presumed to have been lost in the Courthouse fire of May 9, 1852. By some chance a number of the Alphabetical Lists, which furnished only the name of the taxpayer and the amount he was assessed, survived the fire. The early lists, which date back to 1831, are incomplete, but from 1849 through 1905, there is scarcely a break in this series.

In our *Thirty-second Annual Report*, we announced the transfer of a number of valuable records from two basement rooms below the county jail of St. Mary's County in Leonardtown. Subsequent explorations of these subterranean depths have produced additional material, which is listed below. The long delay between transfers was planned in order to allow the local authorities time in which to give the rooms a much-needed spraying with pesticide. The pesticide was effective in destroying the roaches and other insects making their homes among the records. Unfortunately, it was almost equally effective on the two