

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION

A meeting of the Hall of Records Commission was held on Thursday, February 3, 1949 in the Hall of Records at Annapolis. The following members were present:

The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals,  
Honorable Ogle Marbury, Chairman

The Governor of Maryland,  
Honorable Wm. Preston Lane, Jr.

The Comptroller of the Treasury,  
Honorable James J. Lacy

The President of the St. John's College,  
Mr. John S. Kieffer

The President of the Maryland Historical Society,  
Honorable George L. Radcliffe

The President of the Board of the Peabody Institute,  
Dr. J. Hall Pleasants

The seventh member of the Commission, Dr. Detlev W. Bronk, had written to the Archivist explaining that a previous engagement would prevent his attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 P. M. by the Chairman. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting was dispensed with. The agenda for the meeting included several items subject to action by the General Assembly at its present session.

1. The Commission discussed and voted in favor of a bill providing for the abandonment of the abstract system and the substitute of microfilm copies of the land records. While the Land Office is more concerned with this problem, the Hall of Records is interested because the continued accessions of abstracts by the Land Office demands a great deal of space in the Hall of Records building. Such a bill was recommended by the Legislative Council and has been introduced as House Bill No. 1.

2. The Commission approved of a bill introduced at the request of the Archivist providing for microfilming of certain types of records which might then be destroyed and the films admitted as evidence. This measure is incorporated in House Bill No. 107. The Chairman suggested that the Archivist request an informal opinion from the office of the Attorney General as to the question of admissibility in evidence of such films.

3. The Archivist gave an account of his efforts in collaboration with the county government of Montgomery County to provide for the scheduled destruction of certain types of county administrative records. He proposed that the tentative arrangement he had made with the Montgomery County officials be incorporated in a bill and submitted to the General Assembly. Since this bill would provide for the destruction of records, it was the opinion of the Hall of Records Commission that they take no stand in the matter until the Board of Public Works has had a chance to

discuss the proposals which have already been submitted to the Secretary of the Board.

4. After consideration of the problem faced by the Archivist in employing qualified workers for the staff of the Hall of Records, the Commission decided that we should oppose the Legislative Council bill providing for the change of the staff of the Hall of Records to the Classified Service.

5. The question of whether the Hall of Records should continue to publish the Maryland Manual and to direct the new Division of Information was then discussed. Governor Lane reported that he intended to transfer the Division of Information to the Executive Office. He also reported that he had not yet decided what disposition would be made of the Manual.

6. The Archivist reported that the microfilming project conducted by the Utah Genealogical Society and sponsored by the Hall of Records Commission was nearing completion, and he asked the advice of the Commission about whether it would be a good idea to continue microfilming the probate records of the State after the year 1850. The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea because otherwise a courthouse fire or other disaster which destroyed probate records would be tragic in that these records exist in unique copy. The Archivist was urged to continue this work under the sponsorship of the Hall of Records Commission if the counties themselves were willing to defray the cost.

7. The Chairman proposed that the Hall of Records staff undertake the publication of the chancery records now in the Land Office. Dr. Pleasants moved that this work be undertaken and that the Chairman of the Hall of Records Commission consult with the Commissioner of the Land Office about the use of the Land Office original records for this purpose. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Dr. Pleasants informed the members of the Commission that this would be his last meeting, as he expected to retire from the Presidency of the Board of the Peabody Institute on February 15.

Mr. Lacy made a motion to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P. M.

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Chairman

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Secretary

February 15, 1949

On this date Dr. J. Hall Pleasants resigned as President of the Board of Peabody Institute, and Mr. William L. Marbury was appointed in his place, thereby becoming a member of the Hall of Records Commission.