

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION

A meeting of the Hall of Records Commission was held on Tuesday, May 17, 1955, in the Hall of Records at Annapolis. The following members were present:

The Chief Judge of The Maryland Court of Appeals,
Honorable Frederick W. Brune,

The President of St. John's College,
Dr. Richard D. Weigle,

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

The Comptroller of the Treasury,
Honorable J. Millard Tawes.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Judge Brune, at 4:20 P. M. It was moved that reading of the minutes of the last meeting, held May 12, 1954, be dispensed with. The minutes were thereupon approved in the form in which they had been circulated, subsequent to that meeting.

Under the heading of unfinished business, the Archivist reported that the raise in the salary scale of the Assistant Archivist which he requested had been granted by the State Employees' Standard Salary Board, following its meeting of May 11, 1954. He also reported that the position of senior stenographer in the Records Management Division had been reclassified upward to principal stenographer.

Attention was called to the fact that the Archivist had been authorized to microfilm the proceedings of the General Assembly of 1955 each day after adjournment. He reported that this project had been wholly successful.

The Archivist reported that his efforts to have the publications of the Hall of Records Commission issued by the Johns Hopkins University Press had failed, because it appeared that the cost of this sponsorship would be too great and that there was little prospect that sufficient additional sales to justify the added cost could be anticipated.

The following new appointments to the staff of the Hall of Records were approved by the full Commission: Mr. Rex Beach, Assistant Records Administrator, Mrs. Mary E. Martin, Principal Stenographer and Mr. Thomas Wilds, Senior Archivist, all in the Records Management Division.

A request from "The Baltimore Bibliophiles" for the loan of a small, hand press, part of the original equipment of the Hall of Records, was granted, subject to approval by the Department of Budget and Procurement. Mr. Tawes pointed out that the press would remain the property of the State and subject to recall.

The members of the Commission then examined the architect's drawings of the proposed quarters in the new State Office Building at Annapolis for the Records Center. The Commission also inspected a preliminary arrangement of this area and was advised as to the type of equipment which would be requested.

The need for additional legislation was explained to the members of the Commission by the Archivist, who reported on the failure of three bills which had been introduced for the Hall of Records Commission at the 1955 Session of the General Assembly. The members of the Commission approved the Archivist's proposal that he sponsor the same legislation at the 1956 Session, after having submitted all three measures to the Legislative Council.

The attention of the Commission then turned to the place of the Hall of Records in the new State Office Building at Baltimore. The Archivist noted that he had been asked whether the Hall of Records Commission would be willing to operate a central duplicating center there, if the final plans for the building included such a center. The Archivist pointed out that the Hall of Records expected to have 12,000 square feet of space in this building and that since a staff would have to be maintained in any case to service the records, it would not be too burdensome to operate the duplicating center. Mr. Tawes informed the Commission that he had suggested to the authorities who are planning the use of the building that the Hall of Records assume this responsibility. After further discussion, the Commission voted in favor of our assuming responsibility for the operation of such a duplicating center.

The proposal was made by the Archivist that the Hall of Records Commission undertake the microfilming of conveyance records in the county courthouses. He pointed out that microfilm copies of all land records, from the beginning of each county through the year 1850, are already in the Hall of Records; and that since 1949, the Hall of Records has provided microfilm of the same type of records on a current basis for deposit in the Land Office; that for the period 1851-1948 there are no insurance copies, and the loss of the unique records in the courthouses would be of serious consequence. He suggested that this work be done on a cooperative basis, with the Hall of Records providing supervision and, where necessary, the raw film, in those counties where there are a microfilm camera and an operator in the courthouse. In other counties, where the equipment and the operator are lacking, the Hall of Records would whenever possible undertake the actual filming of the records with its own staff and equipment. This proposal was approved by the Commission, and Mr. Tawes suggested that in certain cases where it might prove a hardship for the Clerk of the Court with his present staff to undertake a filming project of such magnitude, assistance might properly be asked of the office of the Comptroller.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 P. M., sine die.

Fredrick W. Arnone
Chairman

Maria S. Pauloff
Secretary