NHPRC Project #NAR10-RP-50031-10: Salvaging the Records of Baltimore City
Interim Report, July 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

We have accomplished much since the initiation of the project. We are progressing ahead of our timeline to integrate the collections of the Baltimore City Archives into the Maryland State Archives' *Guide to Government Records*. Descriptions of seventy-six record croups have been entered into the *Guide* on-line catalog.[1] Certain high-demand groups, such as the Mayor's Correspondence (RG 9), have been input to the folder level. In the case of War of 1812 Papers (RG 22), the entirety of this digitized record group may be accessed remotely from the *Guide*. Permanent stack locations have been assigned for hundreds of boxes.

Most of the cataloging work has been accomplished through the efforts of a cadre of dedicated volunteers. In August, we first brought together concerned members of the archival community, as well as interested researchers, to form our initial team of part-time catalogers. While successful, natural attrition compelled us to recruit for paid staff in December. Job announcements were posted on local college-run employment sites as well as the Maryland State Archives own homepage.[2] You may review the cataloging progress by visiting our catalog: http://guide.mdsa.net/

Digitization of previously microfilmed and original paper finding aids is also part of the on-going effort to provide better access. Commencing in September, our digitization staff of three have worked diligently to scan and place a variety of finding aids on-line such as LeFurgy's *Guide to the Baltimore City Archives* and the *Guide to Security Microfilm*. In addition, tens of thousands of index cards that comprise the topic, surname, and immigrant ship passenger files, can now be accessed and searched on-line (see: http://baltimorecityhistory.net/).

The on-going revival of the Baltimore City Archives program has generated interest in the academic community and elsewhere. Our efforts to digitize and produce on-line finding aids have helped both to publicize and provide better access to the holdings. Twenty-three individuals, some making multiple visits, have pursued research of topics such as WWII civil defense, housing segregation, civil war soldier relief activities, tuberculosis control, and War of 1812 city defenses. Other visitors have included the former director of The Johns Hopkins University Special Collections, the staff of the Jewish Museum of Maryland and the Maryland Historical Records Advisory Board.

Administration continues to promote the project and the role of the NHPRC to the larger community. Dr. Robert Schoeberlein, the Acting Deputy City Archivist, has spoken before groups at the MARAC Fall 2011 conference (October) and the Maryland History and Cultural Collaborative (October) regarding activities and volunteer opportunities at the Baltimore City Archives. He, along with Gerald Roberts, the City Records Manager, has made appraisal visits to city agencies to educate personnel on the transfer of records to the facility.

Administration, namely Dr. Edward Papenfuse, the Acting City Archivist, continues to explore ways to enable the Baltimore City Archives to become self-sustainable in a

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[1] We have created an additional 14 record groups to the original 61 found in LeFurgy's *Guide*.
[2] As of mid-March 2011 we now employ four individuals. Three have an MLS in archival administration.

budgetary sense. We have already successfully implemented an on-demand for pay scanning service for certain legal case and bill file inquiries. Preliminary work has been undertaken by staff and volunteers to prepare the Baltimore City Law Department case files for digitization under a still to be negotiated paid contract. The direct assessment of storage fees for materials transferred to the archives from city agencies is but another scenario that may form the basis for a regular revenue stream.