

materials would fill some two hundred forty volumes of the printed *Archives* and would require the next two and a half centuries to bring to completion. The value of these proceedings—volume after volume—for scholars seems, moreover, open to question. Do we not already have in print representative samples?

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The second of the unfinished series offered a more hopeful avenue for exploration. The Journal and Correspondence of the State Council had run through eight volumes covering the years 1775 to 1784. In retrospect the evolution of this sub-series is curious, not unlike the groping toward new forms of government by our forebears during the revolutionary period.

The first volume, issued in 1892 as Volume XI of the *Archives*, reprints the Journal of the Maryland Convention, July 26 to August 14, 1775 and the Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, August 29, 1775 to July 6, 1776. These two bodies represented in an approximate way the legislative voice and the executive arm respectively. One must speak carefully in labelling these functions, for they are never defined with perfect clarity in a revolutionary situation. Nevertheless in a sense the Convention carried on the representative duties of the colonial assembly and the Council of Safety continued the supervisory and enforcement obligations of the former council. Understandably the latter had the greater variety of day to day work. A succeeding volume, XII of the *Archives* printed in 1893, continued the Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Safety from July 7 to December 31, 1776. The materials in these two volumes, covering a critical year and a half of the revolutionary period contain much—but not all—of the basic documentary evidence of an official sort for the transition from colony to commonwealth. One item not included is the journal of a newly elected convention which met between August 14 and November 11, 1776 to draw up a state constitution. This document, the fundamental law of the new state of Maryland, went into effect without the formality of ratification by the electorate. During the weeks between approval of the final draft by the convention in November and the inauguration on March 21 of officials to administer the new constitution the Council of Safety continued to act as the executive of Maryland.

Accordingly, the editors of the *Archives* included in the third volume of the sub-series (Volume XVI of the *Archives*) the Journal and Correspondence of the Committee of Safety from January 1, 1777 to Thursday, March 20, the day that body expired. The remainder of the volume is taken up by the first installment (March 20, 1777-March 28, 1778) of the Journal and Correspondence of the State Council, established by the constitution. Thus the archival material printed in these first three volumes of the sub-series accurately illustrates the devolution of authority from the extra-legal Committee of Public Safety, an *ad hoc* revolutionary makeshift, to the properly constituted State Council.

Succeeding volumes in this series have appeared irregularly since the first installment of the Journal and Correspondence of the State Council in Volume XVI (1897). In 1901 Volume XXI (No. 4 of the sub-series), in 1924 Volume