

govern trade with other nations. He also established a plan of administering public land. But, on May 7, his fellow delegates appointed him minister plenipotentiary to represent American interests abroad and he soon left for Europe. Shortly thereafter, on June 3, Congress adjourned. Again, in 1786, the Maryland State House was the scene of an event of national importance. Here in these halls, a meeting known as the Annapolis Convention took place. Represented were five states—New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia—and the groundwork was laid for a general convention the following year in Philadelphia. a meeting that was to give birth to the Constitution.

Ever since those stirring days, the Maryland State House has been a beehive of government activity. Daily, and especially during the sessions of the General Assembly, it swarms with activity as public officials go about the business of carrying on the government of the people of Maryland. It is a shrine of history, but not a mouldering museum. Over the years some modifications were made to this structure. But finally in the early part of the 20th century, the new annex was constructed and the old section faithfully restored to its former grandeur. We owe a debt of gratitude to those leaders of the early 1900's, under Governors John W. Smith and Edwin Warfield, who had the foresight to preserve and restore this noble building for posterity. In my view, it is clearly the responsibility of present day Marylanders to continue to expand the work of preservation and restoration of the State House and the historic area surrounding it so that future generations of Americans will be able to come to this shrine of history and see for themselves the place where such stirring events took place.

Before the advent of the automobile, most Americans had to learn about their history from books. But since Henry Ford introduced mass production to the auto industry, and especially since the mid-1920's, Americans have been on the move. Each year we have seen a tremendous upsurge in travel in this country. Along with this has come an ever increasing interest in visiting historic sites. This interest has been stimulated by such projects as the restoration of colonial Williamsburg and, of course, the fine program of our National Park Service in restoring and maintaining historic points around the country.

A decade ago we had about 15,000 visitors annually to the Maryland State House. Last over 100,000 people came here. The number of visitors started growing by leaps and bounds a few years ago when a certain lady in the employ of the State of Maryland became interested in the history of this building and began sending out articles to news-