

COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE

J. Randall Walcroft, Commissioner, 1963
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The Commissioner of the Land Office is appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, to hold office during the term of the Governor (Const. 1867, Art. VII, sec. 14). The Land Office keeps records pertaining to boundaries of land, including records of all warrants, certificates, and patents for land from the settlement of the Province of Maryland in 1634. Every clerk, after he records any deed, mortgage, release of mortgage, or lease of real estate, must make or have made a 35 mm. microfilm copy of every such record and transmit it to the Commissioner of the Land Office at the end of each year. The Commissioner hears and determines all disputes which may arise concerning the validity of surveys. The Land Office is now engaged in making, filing, and recording plats for current subdivisions of land; copies of such plats are sent to the Supervisors of Assessment upon request. All plats filed with the Clerks of Courts before June 1, 1945, have been microfilmed by the Land Office (Code 1957, Art. 17, secs. 57, 58, 61, 62; Art. 54, secs. 1-53).

All land now included in the limits of the State of Maryland was granted to Cecil, Lord Baltimore, in 1632. In 1680, the Proprietor established a Land Office, and four years later "The Land Council." This body was authorized to hear and determine all matters relating to land. Four years later, when Maryland became a crown colony, the Land Office closed. In 1715, after a long contest with the Governor, Council, Secretary, and Assembly, the Lord Proprietor emerged with his rights restored, and the Land Office reopened. After the Revolution, the State assumed control of the Land Office (Acts Feb. sess. 1777, ch. 15). From 1781 until 1841, there was a Land Office for the Western Shore and another for the Eastern Shore. The Constitution of 1851 created the office of the Commissioner of the Land Office.

Appropriations	1959	1960
General Funds	\$27,380	\$28,870
Staff: 6.		

WAR RECORDS DIVISION

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Under delegation of authority from the Board of Public Works, the War Records Division of the Maryland Historical Society was established in 1945 to assemble and publish data about Maryland's participation in World War II (Acts 1945, chap. 728). The Division maintains and services a small specialized library of such materials, including a file of the military service records of each Marylander who served in the armed forces during World War II. Five books have been published and one other is in preparation. The appropriation for the War Records Division is part of that made for the Maryland Historical Society.

Appropriations	1959	1960
General Funds	\$11,025	\$11,025
Staff: 3.		