

may be requested from the Board of Public Works. If permission is granted, a certificate of destruction must be filed at the Hall of Records.

While many records are offered to the Hall of Records Commission at the discretion of the custodians, all records which are in the court-houses of the State and which were created prior to April 28, 1788, the date of ratification of the United States Constitution by the State of Maryland, must be deposited at the Hall of Records. The records of all State agencies, boards, and commissions which are abolished or otherwise cease to function must also be transferred to the custody of the Hall of Records Commission. The Commission is authorized to prepare certified copies of all records in its custody.

State agencies are required by law to establish a continuing program for the management of their records. The Commission provides assistance and guidance in the development and furtherance of the State Records Management Program. The program provides for the use of records retention schedules which establish the period and manner of retention of records. Such schedules must be approved by the Hall of Records Commission, and when destruction is recommended, they must also be approved by the Board of Public Works. Whenever semi-current records having no permanent historical or administrative value are scheduled to be maintained for a limited number of years and then destroyed, they may be stored for this period in the two Record Centers operated by the Hall of Records Commission. The Hall of Records staff inspects the records and records management practices of all State agencies and reviews the proposals for the purchase or rental of record equipment, storage space, and services (Code 1957, 1965 Repl. Vol., 1967 Supp., Art. 54, secs. 1-11).

The Hall of Records staff microfilms or supervises the microfilming of all current deeds, mortgages, and releases recorded in the court-houses of the State. These microfilm copies are preserved at the Hall of Records for security purposes. Copies of some of these films are also deposited with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation for use in the preparation of tax maps. Limited facilities are available for the filming of records of the various State agencies.

By several Acts of Assembly, the Hall of Records has been designated as an official depository for the publications of all State agencies (Code 1957, 1965 Repl. Vol., 1967 Supp., Art. 40, sec. 53) and for all codes published by local governments, both county and municipal (Code 1957, 1966 Repl. Vol., Art. 25, sec. 32A; 1966 Repl. Vol., Art. 23A, sec. 8B). The Hall of Records Commission also edits, compiles, publishes and distributes the MARYLAND MANUAL (Code 1957, 1965 Repl. Vol., Art. 41, secs. 104-106).

The office of Commissioner of the Land Office was abolished by Chapter 489, Acts of 1966, a constitutional amendment which was ratified by the voters at the election held on November 8, 1966. Chapter 488 of the Acts of 1966, a companion act which became effective upon the ratification of Chapter 489, transferred the functions and responsibilities and also the employees of the Commissioner to the Hall of Records Commission. This transfer was accomplished on January 25, 1967.

Under the provisions of Chapter 355 of the Acts of 1967, the procedures relating to the issuance of land patents and the conduct of caveat hearings were extensively revised. The Archivist appointed by the Hall of Records Commission was designated as the Commissioner of Land Patents and assigned the responsibility of administering these procedures. In doing so, he acts independently of the duties imposed on him as Archivist (Code 1957, 1964 Repl. Vol., 1967 Supp., Art. 54, secs. 12-26).