

archives a key feature of the State's commemoration. A "Memorial Hall of Records" was proposed as early as 1928, and in 1931, the General Assembly appropriated funds to erect an archives building. Construction began in 1934; the Hall of Records opened to the public a year later.

The General Assembly provided for the management of the public records to be housed in the new facility. A 1935 statute created the Hall of Records Commission and provided for the collection, custody, and preservation of the official records, documents, and publications of the State (Chapter 18, Acts of 1935). The Hall of Records was created in 1935 as an independent agency of State government and remained so until its incorporation into the Department of General Services in 1970 (Chapter 97, Acts of 1970). In 1984, the Hall of Records was renamed the State Archives and became an independent agency within the office of the Governor (Chapter 286, Acts of 1984). The 1984 law defined an advisory role for the Hall of Records Commission and placed the Commission on Artistic Property under the State Archives (Code State Government Article, secs. 2-1513(b), 3-404(b), 7-213(a), 9-1001 through 9-1027, 10-604 through 10-608, 10-631 through 10-634, 10-637 through 10-642, 10-701, 10-702).

State, county, and municipal government agencies in Maryland may offer the State Archives all files, documents, and records not in current use. The records of all State agencies, boards, and commissions that are abolished or that otherwise conclude their work must be transferred to the custody of the State Archives. By law, State agencies have their records placed on retention and disposal schedules. No public records can be destroyed without scheduling and the prior approval of the State Archives.

All records that are in the courthouses of the State and that were created prior to April 28, 1788 (when Maryland ratified the U.S. Constitution) must be deposited at the State Archives.

All current deeds, mortgages, and releases recorded in the courthouses of the State are microfilmed and preserved at the State Archives for security purposes. Limited facilities are available for the filming of records of State agencies. The State Archives also serves as the official depository for the duplicate copies of subdivision plats formerly sent to the Land Office as insurance against the loss of the originals.

The State Archives shares responsibility with the Division of Vital Records of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for preservation of and access to vital records information (Code State Government Article, sec. 9-1015).

Rules and regulations promulgated in the Code of Maryland Regulations give the State Archives a

role in the establishment of archives in local jurisdictions (COMAR 14.18.03).

Publications and reports of State agencies as well as some county and municipal agencies have been collected by the State Archives since 1947. The State Archives has received State publications and reports under the State Publications Depository and Distribution Program since 1982. The State Archives also is an official depository for county charters, codes, and laws (Code 1957, Art. 25, sec. 32A; Art. 25A, secs. 3B(3), 7(b); Art. 25B, secs. 7(b)(3), 12(b)). Municipal charter amendments and annexations, after publication, are deposited annually with the State Archives by the Department of Legislative Reference (Code 1957, Art. 23A, sec. 17C).

The State Archivist is designated as the Commissioner of Land Patents and is responsible for issuing land patents and conducting court hearings (Chapter 355, Acts of 1967). In performing these duties, the State Archivist acts independently of the duties imposed as State Archivist (Code Real Property Article, secs. 13-101 through 13-504).

The land patent process is the mechanism for granting land in Maryland. Land patents were issued by the proprietors during the colonial period, and later by the State. Virtually all land in Maryland has been patented. Through survey errors or due to the inaccessibility of a tract, some land, however, may never have been included in a patent. This land, when it is discovered, may be patented, with title passing to the patentee upon payment of the fair market value of the land to the State.

An applicant for a patent must present evidence based on a title search of the property in question proving that no former patent encompasses any portion of the land. Information concerning the land patent process and an application for a patent can be obtained from the Commissioner of Land Patents.

The State Archives creates historical exhibits and produces a variety of finding aids, guides to records, historical monographs, essays, and directories. In addition, the State Archives compiles, edits, publishes, and distributes the *MARYLAND MANUAL*. The Archives also prepares, edits, and publishes volumes of the new series of the *Archives of Maryland*. Brochures describing publications and educational outreach programs, and providing guidance for research are available on request.

#### HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION

*Chairperson:* Robert C. Murphy, Chief Judge,  
Court of Appeals

*Ex officio:* Louis L. Goldstein, Comptroller of the Treasury; Lucille Maurer, State Treasurer; Martin W. Walsh, Jr., Secretary of General Services; E. Mason Hendrickson, President, Maryland Historical Society; Dr. William C. Richardson,