

or Agent should I think keep a Book by way of Record for every mannour wherein all Leases for or Agreements concerning Parcels of such Mannour should be duly entered & also a proper and particular Description of every Tract or parcell that should be leased or Tenanted . . .⁴⁷ In his 1761 instructions for setting up the Board of Revenue, Lord Baltimore specifically provided for proper custody of his leases:

After the said Office shall be fitted up, you are to lodge therein all Counterparts of Leases (which have been granted for any Lands of mine) that are now in your Possession, and as often as our Lieutenant Governor, and you, shall for the future grant any Leases for my Manor or Reserved Lands, you shall Lodge the Counterparts thereof in the said Office, placing and titling them in such Methodical manner as that Recourse may easily be had thereto on all Occasions.⁴⁸

The apparent neglect in keeping the proprietary leases was doubtless partly due to the fact that in the early days there were not many leases held because there was so much freehold land available. Further, during the royal period the manors seem to have been much neglected and the whole system of proprietary leasing allowed to go to pieces. Under the circumstances it is not difficult to understand that orderly preservation of the leases did not prevail. After the royal period, the Proprietor's interest in the manors revived, there was a considerable increase in the number of tenants and more efficient methods of supervising the manors were adopted. In fact manor rents were at their peak and showed promise of further increase at the time when Lord Baltimore decided to sell all his manors in 1764. By far the great majority of leases in this series are dated after 1730.

Although, as we have seen, Governor Sharpe in 1756 was advocating recording of the leases, his plan was apparently never carried out by the proprietary government. The three volumes of leases as we have them were not compiled till almost a century later, when George G. Brewer, Register of the Land Office from 1827 to 1851, seems to have arranged and recorded them.⁴⁹ The first two volumes

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, IX, 62.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, XXXII, 391.

⁴⁹ In *Proprietary Leases*, Liber B. pp. 595 and 601 certain footnotes or notations concerning endorsements on leases are to be found. They are signed "Geo. G. Brewer Reg. Land Office" and there is no doubt, from the handwriting and arrangement on the page, that they were written at the time the leases were copied.