

Some copying of records was done, but by the middle of the century (1859-61) John Henry Alexander and Ethan Allen reported steady deterioration, with many of the items listed by Ridgely already lost. These two distinguished scholars prepared a *Calendar of Maryland State Papers* which is still useful. In 1866, Colonel Brantz Mayer reported in some detail on the State records and suggested a plan for their care which was later adopted.

Nothing was done at that time, but the report was used in 1878 in a renewed appeal for the care of the records by Dr. Lewis H. Steiner, an appeal which was supported by the Maryland Historical Society. This new effort bore fruit in 1882 when the Assembly ordered all the early records, covering roughly the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, to be transferred from Annapolis to the vaults of the Historical Society in Baltimore. Of great importance was the fact that an appropriation was made then for the care and publication of the records which has continued to the present time, although it is now used solely for publication.

The Maryland Historical Society became at that time, in fact, the archival agency of the state. It had already received some records in 1846-1847, a great collection came as a result of the Act of 1882, and many other lots were sent from time to time even as late as 1927. However, the Land Office had early become the depository for early Land records and for the records of the Colonial Probate Court while the Court of Appeals held its own early records and most of those of the defunct Provincial Court and General Court. County records remained in the county seats except that for a time the Charles County records had been deposited at the Land Office, and this agency also held some of the Anne Arundel County court records through 1935.

While, in a sense, the early state records were provided for at the turn of the century, the county records had for the most part continued to be ill-housed and subject to every kind of destructive agent, from the damp, the heat, the vermin, the pilferer who operated slowly but surely throughout the state, to the disastrous fires that destroyed a great proportion of the early records in St. Mary's, Calvert and Dorchester counties. Stimulated by the action of other states and the educational campaign of the American Historical Association, the Maryland Assembly, in 1904 (Chapter 282), provided