

our confidence in the degree of protection which even the most modern fireproof buildings can give to records.

It is argued, for example, that a bomb, a shell, an airplane—even a friendly one out of control—can without doubt destroy any of our archival structures along with its contents. If these contents happen to include all the local records of a State, then of course they may all perish at one fell swoop. But if we do not concentrate these records, then we should have to have twenty-four (in Maryland) separate hits in order to destroy the last vestiges of our antiquity. There can be no doubt of the weight of this argument. The reply, however, is not too difficult.

Insofar as the most important records are concerned, i.e. Property Records, the originals which are being brought to the Hall of Records are being replaced in the county seats with photostatic copies. This procedure not only gives superb protection against war hazards but it also insures against the hazards of peace which thus far have caused all record losses in Maryland. In addition, all the other county records and the State records as well are being microfilmed and the films deposited elsewhere. Therefore, the issue may be decided on its peace time merits exclusively. It is in any case vain to think of protection against the hazards of future wars—man's inventiveness is too fertile to be thus foreseen. Almost all of the measures recommended in 1942 for the protection of cultural resources against bombings, which were so carefully learned by American archivists and curators, are worthless three years later against the blockbuster and its bigger brothers, the phosphorous bomb, the oil incendiary and, of course, the atomic bomb.

In peace time, so the argument runs, there are equally patent reasons against the centralization of local records. If the older records are removed and the newer left behind, the series will be divided except in the case of records of defunct offices or in the case of records having to do with functions no longer performed by a given office. The fact that series will be divided is obvious, and that anyone wishing to use the whole series will thereby be inconvenienced. However, the creation of any archival institution implies that it has been recognized that series must be divided into current and non-current parts or into historical and administrative parts. If series are not divided