

hope that the individual who is sought or the problem to be resolved will be found in it. If we have the date and the county, and a case must be taken to court or a dissertation finished, we will make exceptions, but exceptions of this kind can become suicidal. In the end, so much work must be left to the individual, and there is no help for it. The doctoral students who ask for the subject index have not been properly indoctrinated in the use of primary materials, and the archival establishments which have tried to prepare such indexes have failed, without exception.

Finally, something should be said about what records are available to the searcher. The Hall of Records has followed a policy of not accepting materials which cannot be made available at once. The administration of records which may be opened in twenty years, or in thirty, is difficult, and there is a question about whether stack space is not too expensive to be used for years of dead storage. But, while everything in our possession is open to searchers, the Archivist reserves the right—not yet tested in the courts—to weigh the purpose of the researcher who asks for the records of the Maryland Penitentiary, the Baltimore City Jail, the Industrial Accident Commission, and some others. It would certainly be tragic to permit the use of our records for purposes of blackmail.

Should we do more for the individual, or have we already gone beyond the bounds of what the taxpayer should provide? If this attempt at an appraisal of this difficult problem stimulates comment from the members of the Hall of Records Commission or from other custodians of records or from the taxpayer, who is perhaps more involved than he knows, it will have served its purpose well.