

ing circumstances the project was wasteful and the Archivist recommended that it be disapproved. He was influenced in making this decision by the fact that the cost of the project was to be \$43,000.

MICROFILMING OF COUNTY RECORDS

When my last annual report to you was being written, we had just begun to microfilm the recorded Wills in the offices of the Registers of Wills of the several counties. You will recall that the interest of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints extended only through the records of the year 1850 or thereabouts. I had asked the Hall of Records Commission at its last meeting to permit us to film the Wills from that time up to the present, and permission was given with the condition that the funds be provided by the county officers themselves. I can now report to you that the Will series has been completed, and as our project for the second year we have chosen to do the records of the Proceedings of the Orphans' Courts.

The only funds available to the Registers of Wills were the fees of their offices. In the case of the larger and wealthier counties it proved to be relatively easy to persuade the Registers of Wills of the value of our project. They were, of course, influenced by the fact that there were ample funds for every purpose and it made little difference whether their excess fees were spent for microfilm or whether they reverted to the general funds of the State. In the counties where it could not be predicted that there would be any excess fees it was sometimes difficult for the Registers to make up their minds. After all, the film became the property of the Hall of Records, but a new filing cabinet or a typewriter was a tangible addition to the convenience or efficiency of a local office. It is to the credit of these officers that they decided in every case in favor of the film. Finally, there were some few of the smaller counties which never have excess fees of office and in these cases the Comptroller of the Treasury helped to pay for the film by the use of special funds of the State at his disposal.

Anne Arundel County was cared for in a little different way. As an experiment to determine quantity and cost of film for the project, we filmed the Will Records of that County with our own equipment and staff. In Prince George's County we are now carrying on an experiment which may prove of much value in the future. After we had completed filming the Wills of this County we exchanged most of the film for the original