

ACCESSIONS

During the past year the volume of accessions was unusually large, totaling 912 volumes and 39 cubic feet of papers. At least two-thirds of the records acquired were on microfilm, thus demonstrating once again that microfilm is an extremely useful archival tool, even though it is no longer regarded as the panacea for all archival ills.

In several previous reports we have already described our program for making microfilm copies of the more important probate series; the primary purposes being to provide security copies in case the originals are lost or destroyed and to centralize all the county records to facilitate their use. Last year we filmed the inventories and the accounts of Calvert and St. Mary's Counties. This completes the program for all five Southern Maryland Counties. We also filmed the newly-completed volumes in several other orphans' courts, thus keeping our holdings current for those counties.

We made good progress on yet another long-range project. This project was conceived as long ago as 1949, when by the passage of Chapter 504 of that year, the General Assembly provided that microfilm copies of all county land records created thereafter would be deposited in the Land Office. We pointed out in the last *Annual Report* that microfilm copies of all the land records through 1850 were already stored in our stacks. These had been furnished by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in return for our sponsorship of their microfilm project in Maryland. This left a gap of one hundred years for which there were no insurance copies except the abstracts of deeds, mortgages and releases of mortgages held by the Land Office. These abstracts are too uneven both in quality and in quantity to provide adequate insurance against loss of the originals.

It was readily apparent, however, that carrying out a project of this magnitude within the limitations imposed by our small staff and budget would require many years. A check of the records remaining to be done in several counties and the actual filming of the land records of Anne Arundel County, which we undertook as an experiment, only served to confirm our misgivings. Whenever possible, therefore, we are attempting to persuade county officers to use whatever personnel and facilities are available locally to further the project.

In Queen Anne's County, for example, a member of the Clerk's staff is doing the filming on a camera owned by the Register of Wills and using film furnished by us. The Clerks of Court of Baltimore and Howard Counties are doing the work under our supervision, using their own personnel and equipment. Our own photographer is continuing to microfilm the Anne Arundel