

## COURTHOUSES AND COURT RECORDS

The construction of a new courthouse at Leonardtown in St. Mary's County made it necessary for the staff of the Hall of Records to assist in the reconstitution of a proper seal to be set above the porch. We were glad to assist the architect and the artist who made the final design. We were also asked to comment on the text of the historical plaque containing a chronological list of earlier St. Mary's County courthouses.

As part of the Tercentenary celebration of Charles County scheduled for 1958, the Hall of Records has been asked to do considerable research on the problem of the location of Port Tobacco and the location and form of several of the early courthouses of that County. It is hoped that a replica of the courthouse of 1674 can be built as part of the celebration to stand as a permanent museum and point of interest at Port Tobacco.

Elsewhere (Opinions of the Attorney General) I have described an example of one facet of our work in the county courthouses as advisors to the Comptroller. In that case, the reindexing of Cecil County Land Records, our advice was not taken; but in other cases during the year we have had more success. In Cecil County, we made recommendation for the repair of index volumes and duplication of plat records; in Worcester County we considered the need for an index to judgments; in Talbot County we recommended filing equipment for the new office of the Register of Wills. Other recommendations concerning the Talbot County Courthouse were made to the Architect in the hope that better fire and theft protection might be given the records, but unfortunately the plans could not be altered.

In addition to investigating such requests for assistance which come through channels, we visit as many of the county recordkeeping agencies as possible in the course of the year to advise and take counsel with the record custodians. Because of this procedure only relatively few requests for help reach the formal stage.

## VISITS AND VISITORS

The year brought an unusually large and distinguished group of visitors to the Hall of Records. Some, including all of those from abroad, came to study methods and procedures; the others, to do research:

Amando Alba, President of the Geographical and Historical Society of Bolivia; Frederick H. Arterton, Canon of Washington Cathedral; James H. Brady, Book Review Editor, *Baltimore Sun*; Robert D. Bass, author; J. Ninian