

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The efforts of the Hall of Records to provide an effective records management service for State and local agencies of government made steady progress during the year. Encouraging results were achieved at the State level and progress was made in our program for the better management of county records.

The present county records program was undertaken, not as the result of legislative mandate, but because the proliferation of governmental records had created a crisis of the first order in the procedures of local governments and it became necessary for some central service agency to provide them with guidance and assistance. It has developed over a period of twenty-five years from a program directed toward the preservation and centralization of the older county records to one which now includes advice and assistance to county officers on almost all phases of records administration. Participation in the program is for the most part voluntary, but county officials in ever-increasing numbers look to the Hall of Records for help in controlling the growth of records, providing adequate storage facilities, and insuring the disposal of useless records while assuring the preservation of those of permanent value.

Emphasis in the program has been placed on the control of county records by schedule for two reasons: first, so that records which should be preserved may be identified and either transferred to the Hall of Records or otherwise secured against loss; and second, so that the space and equipment occupied by unneeded records may be returned to the agency for re-use. The critical shortage of space in most county offices has made officials increasingly cognizant of the need for improved records control and eager to cooperate. In the course of the year fifty-two schedules governing 324 separate records series were established and 6,174 cubic feet of filing and storage space released under the authority contained in these schedules and those established in previous years. In addition, we began an intensive program of ordering the records in Montgomery County, one of the most populous counties in the State. A record center in that county was established to house non-current records and the task of bringing the records of all county agencies under the control of schedules was being pushed toward completion. At our suggestion, provision was made in the 1962 budget for