

in this project now exist in the original in the various counties and in two copies, one at the Hall of Records and the other in Salt Lake City. We believe that they too are reasonably well protected and that nothing further should be done about them. After 1850 the picture is less satisfying. One hundred years later, in 1949, an Act was passed requiring that microfilm copies of all deeds and mortgages recorded in the counties be deposited in the Land Office, and this has been done. Perhaps this is enough protection except that the Anne Arundel County film should be removed from Annapolis and possibly the film of Baltimore City and County and even Prince George's County ought to go with it.

But there is a great gap between 1850 and 1949 in both land and probate records which we have been working on for some years but which is far from filled. At present, the basic probate records, the *Wills* and *Orphans' Court Proceedings*, are finished on an average through 1950. The *Inventories* and *Accounts* are done for about a third of the counties. To bring all of these records up to date would require perhaps half a year of the time of one operator, a task not to be compared with that of filling the one-hundred-year gap in the land records. The magnitude of that task may be judged by the fact that for Baltimore City alone the land records for this period fill over 12,000 volumes, each of which is more than five hundred pages long. Fortunately, about half of this has been done, and thirteen of the twenty-three counties are also finished. To get it all done within a reasonably short time would be beyond our present ability. When our problem was made clear to the Board of Public Works we were granted sufficient funds to employ another photographer immediately and to provide for the cost of film and travel. This stepped-up program will begin January 1, 1962.

But it will not be the end of our problem. A single film copy, all of it in Annapolis, will not guarantee the minimum protection which we must have for the records of this period. We shall either have to remove the whole collection to a safer area and thus lose the reference use of the film or we shall have to make prints of the film. It is our hope that we shall be able to provide the prints for storage elsewhere, but the cost would be somewhere between \$80,000 and \$90,000, a high price to pay for insurance and one we shall pay only as a last resort.