

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

TO THE HONORABLE
THE HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Gentlemen:

The past year was a period of turbulence at the Hall of Records. Air conditioning of the entire building was begun in January 1967. It was our hope that it would be done by the summer, but this hope was disappointed. The work was completed in January 1968, long after the end of the fiscal year, and too late to give the new system a fair trial under summer conditions of heat and humidity. During this operation, the noise of drilling through the walls for duct space was hardly tolerable and coupled with the heat and the dust, we were barely able to stay open. I am grateful to the members of the staff who tolerated this without too much illness, and to the clients of the Hall of Records who spent the summer demonstrating their interest in the records despite the fact that each volume was covered with dust and the heat in the building was insufferable.

When the air conditioning was done, we then turned to repairs of the roof. We had had leaks in the roof which had spoiled the paint in four rooms and had damaged the plaster work in the beautiful Public Search Room. This job produced different kinds of odor and dust but they were equally unpleasant. Fortunately, it occurred in the winter time and by closing the windows we could exclude most of it. At this writing, the building is being painted and the furniture is being repaired and reconditioned, and we have already contracted to repair the floors which are of asphalt tiling now loose and scattered and random-width Georgia pine which cannot be replaced and which suffered very much from the spike heels of our female clients and employees. When this is all over, the building will be in pristine condition.

Almost to the day that the air conditioning job was started, we were scheduled to take over the records and functions of the Land Office. We had misjudged their work. For example, we were aware that there had not been a caveat hearing during the eight-year term of the last Commissioner, and from this we concluded that none was needed. We soon found out that the reason for the lack of hearings was due to the interminable postponements on the part of the Land Commissioner and the continuances which had to be granted to counsel.