

Scharf (with a reversion provision) in 1891 to The Johns Hopkins University Library so that it (The Johns Hopkins Library) might "become the great repository for Southern History."

Scharf who was at that time (1884-1892) Commissioner of the Land Office of Maryland had gathered a tremendous miscellaneous collection of materials both printed and manuscript in the course of writing his three-volume history of Maryland, his history of Western Maryland, and his history of the Confederacy in whose service he had been a military officer. However, Scharf was a collector and not an archivist. As collector and/or custodian of many of the records of the State while he remained in the Land Office, he was apt to confuse his two roles. In the Report of the Public Archives Commission in Volume II of the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1900 it is stated that "Many early Maryland Documents seem to have disappeared in connection with the research of Scharf, the historian of the State. The notable collections of Peter Force and Joseph (sic) Sparkes appear to have been *enriched* in the same way. Many of the Maryland papers are now in the Library of Congress." We know in addition to his confusion in ownership, — *de mortuis nihil nisi bonum* — that he actively peddled State Records to private individuals, lost others through inattention — *malfeasance* we call it today — gave others away, and finally took what he wanted. That is the reason why there are so many state government records in his collection.

The Johns Hopkins University never achieved the center for Southern Studies which was contemplated by Scharf. After keeping the records thirty years without arrangement or supplementing them further, The Johns Hopkins deposited them in the Maryland Historical Society, where they have been ever since. It is only in the last year or two that any real attention has been given them, in the meanwhile items have been lost or misplaced.

I feel, therefore, that the time has come to return them to the custody of the State. I should like at least to have the matter discussed at the next meeting of the Hall of Records Commission, or perhaps only the records, obviously fugitive from the State, should be returned.

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