THE NEW MEMORIAL HALL OF RECORDS AT ANNAPOLIS, AS DESIGNED BY LAURENCE HALL FOWLER

not yet been worked out, for some sort of coöperation between St. John's College and the State in the use of these new facilities for historical study. On both sides there is concern to see that a qualified and experienced archivist is selected for the big but interesting job of putting in shape, keeping in shape and making available the ancient documents in the Hall of Records. Students and research workers throughout the State are hoping that a competent, technically trained staff will be placed in charge.

WHEN, over a hundred years ago, Maryland's first historian, Bozman, prepared his remarkable work, there was not available the wealth of records now known to the student. When, later, McMahon, and successively McSherry, Neill, Scharf and Browne wrote, they had access to scantier materials than the historian of today. Yet today's investigator is far from satisfied. Baffling mysteries and apparent contradictions still puzzle him. Of the first Governor, Leonard Calvert, little is known; the proceedings of the Governor's Council and of the Assembly for certain periods are missing; Margaret Brent is but a voice demanding a free vote. A host of principal actors—Claiborne, Ingle, several Calverts and others as late as the Revolution—are not yet restored to flesh and blood in the pages of history.

Since old records are notoriously incomplete, efforts are being made to save documentary evidence of the present for scholars yet unborn. At the eastern conference of the American Historical Association not long ago, emphasis was placed on the need of collecting other raw materials of history than the official records. Says the report: "While governmental archives, newspapers and the correspondence of important public figures are likely to be collected, a great variety of business and social data, especially the papers and records of obscure persons and organizations, is lost for want of any interested assembling agency. The amassing of data for social, economic and cultural history, therefore, should be systematized and coördinated."

This point was also stressed by Dr. John M. Vincent, professor of history at Hopkins, when he spoke at the dedication of the Maryland Historical Society's present home. Old letters, bills and miscellaneous papers of all sorts, he said, paint the social and economic history of the State, as yet largely untouched. Unless such material is collected, it is destined to meet the fire or mold or, perhaps, as Dr. Vincent puts it, the rats and mice of Maryland will decorate their abodes with fine old historical tapestry.

IT HAS LONG BEEN THE POLICY of certain libraries to collect files of old newspapers, especially those one hundred or more years old. Several sizable colections of this type exist in Maryand. In this tercentennial year, there has been a remarkable extension of activities in this field by the Enoch Pratt Free Library. In connection with a project calling for the listing of all newspaper files in every State of the Union, as well as Canada, financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and carried on by the Bibliographical Society of America, the Pratt Library was commissioned to make a survey of such files in libraries, newspaper offices and private collections throughout Maryland. For several months CWA workers and volunteers have been engaged in the task. The first complete list of such material ever made is now nearing completion, a list that will be of immense service to historical investigators.

Because of the value of these old newspaper runs, and because most of them are kept in publishers' offices without adequate protection from fire or other damage, Joseph L. Wheeler, librarian of the Pratt, has offered the stackrooms of the library for storage of all such private collections. A member of the library staff has visited more than the one hundred newspaper publishers of the State, examined their back files and in many instances listed them, volume by volume. Numerous lots of these county papers have been given to the library or have been deposited there by the owners. Already the Pratt has the largest State-wide newspaper collection ever made in Maryland, a collection that will rapidly increase with the receipt of current numbers of these publications.

FIRE IS THE DREAD of almost every private owner of such material. Bulky bound newspapers are too heavy to be moved in sudden emergency. Moreover, many county towns have scant or antiquated fire-fighting equipment. One publisher has been burned out twice in eighteen years, all existing files being destroyed on each occasion. Few are the towns that have not had a dangerous conflagration some time in the last fifty or seventy-five years.

Except in rare instances, Maryland publishers have not been able to provide proper care for their back files. Of sixty offices visited only five keep them in fireproof vaults. All too often the files are not bound, and they are usually exposed to dust and light—both injurious to newsprint. The publishers are far from blind to the value to the community as well as themselves of these records and usually prize them highly, but because often the editor is also advertising solicitor, copywriter and jack-of-all-trades, little of his thought is left for files to benefit posterity. In two offices there were no systematically kept files whatever. Often the files are stacked in the pressroom, where they are soon covered with an envelope of dust, or in a loft where summer heat hastens disintegration of the woodpulp newsprint.

FORMER PUBLISHERS in several county seats have been visited and many a dusty volume has been reclaimed from neglect and decay. Through such missionary work the library has received other gifts of printed materials.

As many as seven long newspaper runs, dating from before 1870, have already been located, not counting those in various libraries. One of the interesting by-products of the investigation is the discovery that many Maryland editors ran afoul of Federal authorities during the Civil War, one of them even editing his journal from prison. Needless to say, it was a well-censored sheet. Here is a field of study that will throw a floodlight on Maryland sentiment in 1861.

In one office an almost unbroken file of eighty-eight bound volumes commencing in 1852 was found. Another publisher possesses a vault so crammed that scarcely another sheet of paper, let alone a bound volume, could be got into it. When, in the near future, he unpacks the space to make room for additions to his collection, he promises some valuable gifts to the Pratt Library.

On receiving old newspapers the library arranges them in chronological order, makes a careful list of present and missing numbers, catalogues them to show their presence in the local history collections, incases them in board covers to keep the pages flat and to protect them from dust and light, and finally shelves them in alphabetical order in its roomy steel and concrete stacks.

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS to historical documentation of the modern period—pictures, pamphlets, clippings and family papers—are being constantly received by Maryland libraries and undergo such repairing, cataloguing and filing as will best preserve them permanently and make them quickly accessible to investigators. The collection and preservation of these and similar items that paint the social history of our time are part of another nation-wide effort recently launched under the direction of the American Library Association acting at the request of the Social Science Research Council. Several local libraries are coöperating in this great project which aims at systematic searching out and collecting of printed and manuscript records of local governments, chambers of commerce, civic and social organizations, religious, industrial and agricultural bodies and records of individual firms and corporations.

Meanwhile historians and librarians look forward hopefully to the time when Maryland can take the next forward step in utilizing source materials—a step begun four years ago by Virginia and since followed by New York and Pennsylvania.

This is an investigation, county by county and town by town, to find out what manuscript journals, papers and public or private records are in existence, to encourage their owners to store them in places of safety and to secure gifts for the library of the University of Virginia, under whose supervision the survey is being carried on. The undertaking was begun on the recommendation of two national learned societies, and is being financed by the Carnegie Corporation. Under a trained archivist, a group of students conduct the investigation as a part of their curricular work, and each year have covered from six to twelve counties. About one-third of the State has been surveyed with startling results.

AMONG THE THOUSANDS of items whose character, subject, extent and date are carefully listed, have been many collections of political, economic, social and religious significance, such as physicians' account books of 1878, ledgers of a horse-breeding establishment just after the Civil War, church records, fraternal lodge documents, journals of coöperative societies, mercantile accounts, private papers of both important and obscure persons, newspapers, reports of societies, colleges and schools and other published matter. A considerable amount of these various types of material, presented or deposited by the owners, has lodged in the university library.

Experience in Virginia and elsewhere has furnished one valuable conclusion—that public authorities and private owners alike are eager to deposit under the care of a public archivist the most valuable of historic papers, once there is assurance that the documents will be safe not only from fire and theft but from careless handling as well. This conclusion has not escaped the Maryland observer, and even before the Hall of Records is complete the need for some such clear assurance is apparent.

TRANSFER TO ANNAPOLIS of many official papers of the counties is probable under an arrangement which would afford the court clerks and others unrestricted access whenever they wish it, just as in their present quarters, the difference being that the new fireproof and thiefproof hall will give them complete protection.

Since the form of control of the new hall at Annapolis has not yet been designated, there is a natural hesitation on the part of legal custodians as well as private owners to commit themselves as to placing there material that has long been cherished. Interested observers anticipate early action to provide some intelligent non-political supervision, and it has been suggested that the judges of the Court of Appeals be given final authority over the collection, aided perhaps by an advisory board of Johns Hopkins and St. John's faculty members or others fitted to the task. Not the least advantage of having some such unquestioned final authority would be the freeing of the curator from harassing demands from persons professing to have special claims or influence—demands which experience shows are to be expected. Papers that will not stand handling, it is pointed out, would hardly survive if subjected to the whims of the merely curious nor would the pleas of jobseekers accord with the duties of an archivist.

SOMETIMES the search for ancient records becomes, unexpectedly, a hunt for treasure of a type more widely recognized—the greenback variety. Dr. Lester Cappon, in charge of the Virginia survey, tells a story of his call upon the owner of an abandoned mill and general store in Albemarle county. The man led him to the old store and unlocked the door. From a pile of broken furniture and rubbish he drew a rude box which was found to contain dog-eared account books. Turning the pages of one dated 1860, the visitor's eye lighted upon a $10 bill. "Probably old Confederated money," the man remarked, but a moment's examination showed it to be good United States currency of a generation ago. Another glance and they saw nine similar bills under the first. Half dazed, the property owner murmured "A hundred dollars," when the turning of a few more pages brought to light another sheaf of ten similar bills, then another and still another.

Before long every book, paper and scrap of trash in the box had been examined minutely, the final thrill being provided by a little green wad at the bottom of the box which proved to be $5. All told the search netted the bewildered descendant of the mill operator the sum of $635.

Will the Maryland treasure hunt now take on renewed life?