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Much has been written about the need to manage records and information and to provide systematic programs for the identification, preservation, and use of historical records, and to do both efficiently. Most of this literature, starting with the unfortunate schism between the archivists and records managers in the mid-1950s, has stressed the positive aspects of a full records program. However, perhaps more attention needs to be paid to the unfortunate results of records programs skewed one way or another. After all, learning by mistakes is often more effective.

The Baltimore (Maryland) records program is a good case in point. Extending back over thirty years, it has limped along, never providing either total records management or a full archival program because of generally poor leadership and a lack of recognizable priorities. At present, an effort is being expended to develop a complete records program in this city. This essay examines why the original records program failed and why it has been resurrected within the past few years. Furthermore, it is written in the conviction that the success of local government records programs is possible only with an inseparable connection of records management and archives administration.

Until the 1940s there were few attempts to manage the records of Baltimore's municipal government. These early efforts were restricted to historical records, although there never was logical criteria for determination of the term historical. The creation of a city library in 1874 produced some
primitive cataloging of older records, exhibitions, and collecting of records and artifacts documenting the history of the city and its government. This agency led to an underfunded Bureau of Archives in 1927 which seems to have accomplished little until the Historical Records Survey (HRS) a decade later. The HRS surveyed records and indexed by name and subject numerous so-called historical documents but neglected the questions of storage, provenance, inventories and administrative histories, and a general guide. For three decades, however, the HRS efforts constituted Baltimore's municipal archives.2

An article in a local newspaper in 1947, only a few years after the HRS labors, revealed to the public a horrible panorama of "dirt-covered, water-soaked, tattered" records strewn about the basement and attic of city hall, itself a structure badly needing maintenance. This article prompted replies by officials of the Maryland Historical Society, the state archives, and various citizens' groups. Interestingly, the state archives offered to care for these records in Annapolis but never pursued the matter further.3 With the exception of the selective preservation of the records of Annapolis--Maryland's first major urban center and state capital--the state archives has provided few guidelines for the care of municipal records.

The response of the municipal government was slow. At the beginning of June 1948 the mayor established a committee consisting of the city comptroller, president of the city council, director of public works, city solicitor, and director of legislative reference to review all records and to formulate a "plan for putting order and system in the keeping of records."4 Under the leadership of Dr. Horace Flack, director of legislative reference, the records committee sent out a questionnaire to all departments soliciting recommendations for retention periods and ascertaining what records were in existence. This committee, however, never proceeded beyond seeking useless records for destruction, mainly cancelled checks and outdated
bonds. Flack spent much of his time contesting the notion that the cost of an independent survey was justified (one consulting firm, Records Engineering, Inc., suggested $42,000). He believed that an ordinance of 1941 enabling the destruction of records older than five years with the approval of the city solicitor and himself was satisfactory, that municipal officials were the most qualified to make judgments regarding the value of records, and that a thorough weeding of the municipal records would reduce their volume as to provide easy storage. Flack, overzealously endeavoring to save money and obviously trying to protect his authority for the maintenance of records given him in the earlier ordinance, headed a committee that faded gradually into inactivity and had no real results. A confusion of destruction with management was the only legacy of this committee.

The outbreak of the Korean War nearly revived the dormant records committee with a new slant towards microphotography. The city treasurer wrote a letter to the mayor in late 1950 suggesting the appointment of a "Committee for Safeguarding City Records" in order "to determine what city records should be microfilmed or placed in safekeeping as a matter of precaution in the event of war." At this time no committee was organized but funds were shifted from civil defense for the purpose of purchasing a camera, storage equipment, supplies, and hiring staff for the filming of essential operating records. This program was initially under the direction of Flack who continued to block the formation of a new committee and survey efforts.

While the city's records were being filmed piecemeal, a plan was introduced to move tons of records from city hall to a temporary storage area several miles away. This idea attracted the attention of several members of the city council who argued for a centrally located records center with a specialized staff. When the matter of funding such a move of records came before the Board of Estimates, it reactivated a records committee. This committee was not under Horace Flack but J. Neil McCardell, the
city comptroller, a change because of Flack's earlier failure regarding the records survey and solution to the records problem. McCardell immediately contacted Records Engineering, Inc. and urged that such private consultants be hired to conduct a survey. Local newspapers immediately picked up the story and encouraged matters to continue to proceed thusly. In the meantime the microphotography unit was shifted from legislative reference and placed under the city auditor, Horace C. Beck, Jr. Beck soon called for a separate, permanently established microphotography unit with full-time staff, a regular budget, and its placement under the city comptroller, not legislative reference, since "experience has shown that this has not been complete satisfactory." Sentiment now dictated that an outside consultant be employed in order to gain proposals quickly for the records work. 8

On 22 May 1953 the Board of Estimates considered the recommendation of the Committee on Safeguarding City Records to engage Records Engineering, Inc. to do a city-wide survey at a cost of $55,000 and in four phases to ensure the municipal government's satisfaction with the firm's work. The objective of the survey was to determine "economical and efficient methods and procedures in the management and retirement of current and noncurrent records involved in the conduct of the business of the city." Records Engineering would identify records, propose retention schedules, develop procedures for an ongoing records program, determine records suitable for microfilming, and suggest a scheme for the establishment and maintenance of a records center. 9 The first phase was completed by the end of August 1953, and the pleased city officials funded the remainder of the study. 10 In March 1954, the entire survey was completed, reports issued, and the debate over its findings begun.

Overall, the efforts of Records Engineering, Inc. were a major success. Not only did the firm survey the records of twenty-nine agencies holding about forty thousand linear feet of records, but its prime recommendation for the establishment of the position
of records management officer and the Records Disposal Committee was adopted with few modifications. However, several aspects of the survey were extremely poor and continued to plague the creation of an effective program for the municipal government's historical records. It was quite obvious from the tone of the reports and the actual recommendations of retention schedules that the consulting firm was emphasizing the notion of an effective management program as that which would destroy as many records as quickly as possible. Over eighty percent of nearly six hundred recommended schedules called for the retention of records for five years or less; only thirty-four schedules, or less than six percent, called for permanent retention and only two of these because of historical significance. Records Engineering, Inc. made no specific proposals for an archival program except that the Records Management Office would be under the city comptroller, and historical records, only vaguely defined, would continue to be sent to the Department of Legislative Reference which had already been declared as being not appropriate for their preservation. The reduction of records and the proportionate reduction of records storage cost was reiterated and was the theme of the reports. Furthermore, Records Engineering, Inc. seemed little aware of or interested in the records identified by the HRS.

Events between the end of the survey in March and the passage of the ordinance in June establishing the Records Management Division somewhat modified the neglect of historical records. The recommendation that the records management agency be placed under the city comptroller was not heeded; instead, this function was placed under the Department of Legislative Reference, giving a single agency responsibility for both the current and historical documents. This development was predictable with the retirement of Flack a year before and the cooperation and leadership of his successor, Dr. Carl Everstine, since early 1953. More important was the intervention of Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr., director of the municipal museum, who proposed first to his own trustees and then, with their
approval, to the city council an amendment to the pending legislation that historical records could be loaned to the museum and the director of the museum would be a member of a records disposal committee. Hunter, since his involvement with the museum, had seen it as an official repository for such records and urged that it, not legislative reference, be the "proper permanent depository for those historical records which have no further immediate connection with the official activities of the various city departments." With the exception of this last item, the legislation incorporated Hunter's suggestions.

It is clear from examining the 1954 ordinance that the possibility of beginning a comprehensive records program was within grasp. Providing explicit details on the nature of records and their creation, maintenance, and disposition and having a procedure (albeit, a weak one) for the care of historical records, the success of such a records program was dependent upon proper financial support by the municipal government and the hiring of an individual capable in current records management and sensitive to the potential historical importance of all records. It was in both of these areas that the municipal government failed, and the fledgling records program floundered.

Getting the records management operation started in 1954-55 was difficult for Everstine, who frequently appeared before the Board of Estimates pleading for new funds or the transfer of funds to purchase office and records storage equipment. These first years also witnessed bitter battles over obtaining secretarial help and microphotographers. By the end of 1956, however, because of the improvements in the physical appearance of the stored records, funds were being obtained regularly for records storage and the size of the staff was starting a gradual growth. The establishment in 1958-60 of a separate microfilming program for vital records by the new records management officer, C. Frank Poole—similar to what had been tried a decade earlier—was made possible with a relatively easy acquisition of funds above the
normal budget. 17

Despite the early growth of staff and annual reports boasting of successes in gaining control of records, especially through microphotography, the Records Management Office was rapidly losing ground in its purported duties. Even in the area reflecting the largest proportion of staff, microphotography, the demands on this service outstripped its capabilities. By 1962 the records management officer was complaining of not being able to keep up with the necessary microphotography and that municipal agencies were establishing their own microfilming units without any supervision resulting in duplication and the destruction of records without proper authorization. 19 This problem was never brought under control and, as a result, is a problem still plaguing this division.

Even more illustrative of the city's lack of concern for an effective program were the repeated failures to obtain a proper facility for a records center. In its early years records were scattered about rooms in city hall and in portions of other buildings sharing space with other agencies; this arrangement not only caused great difficulty with the management of the records but created animosities with the other departments because of the competition for space. 20 There were at least five attempts between 1958 and 1971 to persuade the city to provide better facilities for its records and to eliminate a serious restriction to successful completion of its responsibilities. 21 The nearest success was in 1965 when the Department of Legislative Reference endeavored to have a records center incorporated into the proposed plans for the Inner Harbor redevelopment. Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin even supported the concept of a center with fifty thousand square feet of space for administrative offices, a reference library, microphotography, and records storage with temperature and humidity controls. This plan, like the others, never proceeded beyond preliminary planning stages. 22 After this failure no serious efforts were made again.

Perhaps even more crucial for the development of a municipal records program than city staff and finan-
cial support were the interests and qualifications of the person selected to fill the position of records management officer. C. Frank Poole held this position from 1955 until his retirement in 1977 and brought no experience regarding historical records and only a limited vision of a total records program. This, of course, was the fault of the city and reflected their emphasis on the destruction of records. Still, at least initially, Poole endeavored to do something about the historical records. In 1956–57 he worked out a plan for the sampling of a massive set of tax records extending back to the eighteenth century seeking the advice of Hunter; the staff of the Maryland Historical Society; and Morris Radoff, the state archivist. Although Radoff urged that all the records be maintained, the sampling procedure was put into motion; the years have proved Radoff to have been correct with much historical information lost forever. Several years later Poole also investigated the lamination process of records preservation and had several hundred documents preserved in this manner.

But such efforts were few and often produced more harm than good. More indicative of the true state of affairs was Poole's effort in 1961 to destroy completely the files of the mayor's office going back to the beginning of the city government in 1797 because these were only a "curiosity," infrequently consulted, and would be too costly to maintain. Only with the intervention of Hunter and the offended sensibilities of the incumbent mayor was this stopped. Modest funding from surplus funds within the agency were used for the hiring of two graduate students from Johns Hopkins University for a weeding and sorting project under the direction of Hunter.

Without question the additional hiring of a trained archivist in the early years of the records management program would have planted the seeds of an effective program for the municipal government's historical records. Frank Poole readily admitted that and summarized the problem in a letter of 1968 to his supervisor asking for an investigation of the
maintenance of the historical records:

Notwithstanding the limited assistance given to me in the area of historical records, there is no planned program for enhancing the use of such records. Researchers attempting to make use of them become discouraged very quickly because of the condition of the records and poor accessibility to them. Although Records Management has a special interest in the historical value of all records, our primary function during the last thirteen years has been in the area of microfilming, storage of records having a relatively short retention period, the retrieval of information and the disposition of records not classified as historical. Moreover Records Management does not have the personnel qualified to properly evaluate records of historical value.

But the problem was more complex. The chief city official interested in the historical records continued to be Wilbur Hunter, director of the Peale Museum. Hunter was not an archivist, had little knowledge of the fundamentals of such work, and often made mistakes in the selection of what documents should be retained for historical value. Beyond Hunter, Poole relied on the opinions of heads of municipal agencies regarding the value of their records, often creating inconsistent and ridiculous schedules. This continued to be the situation until the mid-1970s.

The retirement of the records management officer in late 1977 provided an opportunity to change three decades of the municipal government's neglect of its permanent records. It must be stressed, however, that such an opportunity was available only because the public's awareness of the city's past had been heightened within recent years. From the late 1940s until the late 1960s, when the municipal records of historical significance continued to deteriorate and were being lost and abused, there was little interest in these materials. The Baltimore Sun articles had aroused interest briefly, but in the absence of a
strong, dedicated group of individuals concerned with
the unearthing of Baltimore's history, the momentum
soon dissipated. Wilbur Hunter's concerns and
efforts, despite his mistakes, were usually solitary
endeavors. By the early 1970s, however, it was
obvious that a flourish of research was underway on
Baltimore's past through new efforts in historical
preservation, published histories, historical
conferences, the work of archivists and librarians,
and the popularity of genealogy and commemorative
festivals.

The events which led up to the appointment in
early 1978 of the city's first professional archivist
stem directly from this renaissance. Baltimore's
municipal government has had, of course, a significant
role in the history of the city—a role that had been
almost completely neglected until the late 1960s and
the new historical investigations; an 1899 monograph
from the Johns Hopkins Press remained the main his­
torical study on the municipal government until a
political study of 1968. In the past decade in­
creasing interest has been focused upon the municipal
government and the value of its records for re­
search. Recognizing this fact, a newly established
Baltimore archival repository, the Baltimore Region
Institutional Studies Center (BRISC), endeavored to
assist the municipal government in establishing a vi­
able archives program. Dr. Theodore Durr, director
and founder of BRISC, had first become interested in
the records of the city's planning department because
of their affinity with collections already at his re­
pository. In 1973 he made an agreement with that de­
partment to catalog their records with an ARCHON
automated retrieval system, providing the form of
access that planning department staff believed neces­
sary to continue its work. In this endeavor the
records management officer cooperated fully and even
discussed the prospects of other historical records
being sent to BRISC. Spurred on by the removal of
the administrative offices and their records from city
hall in 1975 for its renovation and the recovery by a
local junk dealer of some miscellaneous nineteenth
century bills and receipts inadvertently tossed out, staff of BRISC and other institutions formed the Baltimore Congress for Local Records and History and formulated a large grant to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for the full development of a municipal archives program. Submitted in early 1977 the grant was rejected primarily because of the lack of a professional archivist on the municipal payroll. However, the junk dealer's activities embarrassed a government sensitive to portraying a positive image continually, and the background efforts by outsiders to preserve its records led to a search for a professional archivist for the post of records management officer vacated in the fall of 1977.

Having been the curator of manuscripts at the Maryland Historical Society for five years, the author was aware that the municipal records were not being properly cared for and researchers not encouraged to use them; he was not, however, prepared for what he discovered in mid-January 1978. Arriving at the late nineteenth century warehouse partially utilized as a records center, he found confused, mistreated historical records, a lack of finding aids to any of the records with the exception of the HRS index, a staff totally unequipped and insensitive to historical records to the degree that ordinary mending tape was being used for repairs, and evidence everywhere indicating that these records had been neglected for an extremely long time. Examination of the management of the current records revealed a program that had not advanced much beyond that established in the mid-1950s, but which was, at least, functioning and which still provided potential for improvement.

After discussions with the acting director of legislative reference, the budget analyst, and other municipal officials, it was readily apparent that the city's new commitment to an archival program went little beyond the employment of the archivist. A short time later this was clarified when a number of historians, archivists, and librarians wrote to the mayor asking that more financial support be given to
the records program; the mayor's response was that the city had hired a professional archivist. This response was not surprising. There had been virtually no communication for years from or about the records program. Many municipal agencies did not even realize that this division existed and proceeded to attempt to solve their records problems completely on their own. To suddenly appear before the mayor and the Board of Estimates and request thousands of dollars for a program they had no cognizance of and in a time of severe fiscal restraint would not only bring a negative response but could damage future requests for assistance.

The direction taken was to bring attention to the importance of the records program. The first endeavor was to apply for a grant from the NHPRC as seed money. The records agency had never received a grant before, and the contacts already made with the NHPRC through BRISC and the efforts of just a year before made this a logical road to follow. Receiving an NHPRC grant would bring some attention to the historical records and show municipal officials that such records were important enough to receive funding from an outside agency. A grant was made in 1978 for the arrangement and description of the mayoral and city council records, the largest record group in the records center and also the most important for the administrative history of the municipal government. Upon the completion of the project another grant for a records survey of municipal agencies was obtained. Both grants have been beneficial in subsequent budget requests and, more importantly, smoothed the way for the creation of two new assistant archivist positions.

Developing these new positions was one of the other areas initially emphasized. In a staff of eight there was only one professional archivist, the others having only limited involvement with records management and microphotography and none having the proper educational background or experience that would enable retraining. One person could not arrange and describe all of these records and also
spend time on administrative matters necessary to enhance the program. Student interns were acquired almost immediately through contacts made at the historical society, but here it was obvious also that few could be utilized effectively if dependent upon one individual's attention. With the vacating of a microphotographer's position and the momentum gained by the NHPRC grant, a new position was created and filled in late 1979. The combination of this permanent position, the grant position, and the capability of hosting a greater number of student interns has enabled the cataloging of numerous records—over fifty record groups encompassing more than four thousand cubic feet. Another part-time position for continued surveying of records became permanent in 1982.

The NHPRC grant also helped the partial revision of the original 1954 ordinance to strengthen the archives aspect of the total records program. By this 1978 amendment the title records management officer was changed to city archivist and records management officer; the agency likewise to the City Archives and Records Management Office, and the Records Disposal Committee to just the Records Committee. It was with the Records Committee that another avenue of work also appeared. This committee had been established in 1954 to oversee the approval of records schedules and the program in general but had not met since 1955. Consisting of the auditor, solicitor, comptroller, treasurer, director of public works, director of the municipal museum, and director of legislative reference, the potential for acquiring assistance and influencing municipal policy seemed limitless. Four of the seven are appointed by the mayor and constitute a majority of the Board of Estimates. Showing them the condition of the records and communicating with them on a much more frequent basis has gained their assistance in the seeking of grants, the revision of the ordinance, and in slight increases to the budget when the majority of agencies are facing cuts or being forced to maintain the same level of spending.

Another goal was the building of a constituency
for the use of the historical records. In early 1978 these records were virtually unused, mainly because of the general lack of finding aids. Almost from the start lectures to genealogical groups, historians, and area undergraduate and graduate classes were prepared along with articles and other publications about the records in the Baltimore City Archives. Presently, the archives has a solid image with Baltimore residents and others that provides good material for arguing for the maintenance of the records. In 1978 there were only slightly over eight historical researchers a month; in 1979 this increased to over thirty, and in 1981 to nearly fifty. Such usage has helped to make a case that the municipal government has a responsibility to maintain these records properly for their use by the public.

Utilizing a fairly established records management program to benefit the historical records has been another area of emphasis. Through contacts with agencies about the microfilming or storage of current records, inquiries were made about other records; in a few cases this has led to accessions of valuable permanent records. This has also involved reevaluating records schedules and revising a few to provide for the screening of these records—especially administrative correspondence files—to salvage items of historical significance. Another method has been the usage of funds slated for other peripheral functions to buy equipment and supplies in order to start arrangement and description of these records. Most of the first orders of acid-free boxes and folders, map cabinets, and chairs and desks for researchers were acquired in this manner. The budget is now adequately balanced for the management of both historical and current records.

The progress of the reorganization of the Baltimore City Archives has been substantial when compared with what existed prior to 1978 but meager when contrasted to what remains to be done. To have a full-fledged municipal archives, Baltimore needs a modern, climate-controlled records center, a much larger staff enabling constant supervision of
municipal records and a survey of all records, an in-house conservation program or funding for conservation, and a published guide to the records. Such momentum is now there. Shortly, a comprehensive guide to the historical records and a general records manual for the administrative use of the city will be published—only two of a number of projects scheduled for completion and the result of a balanced, cost-efficient local records program. The future of this program is still uncertain, as are most such programs in the current economic and political climate; but the author is convinced that the only logical, effective manner to continue is to stress a comprehensive records program that supports the efficient management of local government, the cost-savings of current records management, and the cultural benefits of an archives program. There is no other way to reverse three decades of lost opportunity in Baltimore.  

NOTES


4 Baltimore Evening Sun, 7 June 1948; Baltimore Sun, 8 June 1948.


6 John J. Ghingher to Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., 21 December 1950, Mayor's Records, RG9, Series 23, box 296, folder 251, BCA.

7 Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 19 September 1951, p. 1774; 17 October 1951, p. 1920; 7 May 1952, pp. 831–32, RG36, Series 1, BCA.

8 Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 7 May 1952, pp. 831–32 and 4 June 1952, pp. 1056–57, RG36, Series 1, BCA; Baltimore Sun, 5 June 1952 and 18 October 1952; Baltimore Evening Sun, 6 June 1952; Howard C. Beck, Jr. to John J. Ghingher, 26 January 1953, Mayor's Records, RG9, Series 23, box 296, folder 251, BCA.

9 Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 22 May 1953, pp. 955–57 and 10 June 1953, pp. 1124–25, RG36, Series 1, BCA. A complete copy of the 10 June 1953 contract is in City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

10 Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 26 August 1953, p. 1610, RG36, Series 1, BCA; Minutes of the Records Committee, 26 August 1953, City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.
The two sets of records declared to be of historical significance were a set of old survey records purchased by the city in the early twentieth century and old arrest dockets, going back to the mid-nineteenth century, scattered about in the Police Department. The schedules, 592 in total, consist of 263 recommending retention one year or less, 224 recommending two to five years, 34 recommending six to ten years, 37 over ten years, and 34 permanent. All of these are based upon the unpublished reports in City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 3, BCA.

Minutes of the Committee for Safeguarding City Records, 12 May 1953, City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA; Minutes of the Committee on Records, 23 March 1954, 20 April 1954, also in RG29, Series 2, BCA.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Municipal Museum, 11 May 1954, RG21, Series 1, BCA.


Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 4 April 1956, pp. 595-97; 27 February 1957, pp. 420-21; 4 February 1959, pp. 225-26, RG36, Series 1, BCA.

C. Frank Poole to Frank Milani, 12 August 1958; C. Frank Poole to John R. Kerstetter, 24 November 1958; C. Frank Poole to John J. Ghingher, 15 December 1958, all City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA. Minutes of the Board of Estimates, 21
January 1959, pp. 125-26, RG36, Series 1, BCA.


19 C. Frank Poole to George B. Brain, 27 September 1962 and C. Frank Poole to Joseph Allen, 1 May 1964, both City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

20 William M. Kinnersley, Jr. to C. Frank Poole, 10 January 1956, City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA. Carl Everstine to J. Harold Grady, 21 April 1961 and Esther Lazarus to J. Harold Grady, 25 April 1961, both Mayor's Records, RG9, Series 24, box 332, folder 127, BCA.

21 Philip Darling to Carl N. Everstine, 3 December 1958; C. Frank Poole to William Boucher III, 10 October 1963; Philip Darling to C. Frank Poole, 27 August 1964; C. Frank Poole to Thomas J. D'Alesandro III, 9 February 1968; and C. Frank Poole to H.A. Pressman, 8 January 1971, all City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

22 Theodore R. McKeldin to C. Frank Poole, 30 July 1965; C. Frank Poole to Theodore R. McKeldin, 28 July 1965; C. Frank Poole to Philip Darling, 26 July 1965; C. Frank Poole to William H. Potts, Jr., 10 June 1965, all City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

23 Poole had spent twenty years working with the records of the General Motors plant in Baltimore. Carl N. Everstine to the Records Disposal Committee, 7 June 1955, 29 August 1955, both in City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

24 C. Frank Poole to the Records Committee, 10 February 1956; Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr. to C. Frank Poole, 29 February 1956, 27 November 1956, and May
1957, all in City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.


27 C. Frank Poole to Leon A. Rubenstein, 23 August 1968, City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.


30 A copy of this agreement is in the City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA. BRISC also
obtained a small grant from the NHPRC for this project.

31 W.T. Dürr to C. Frank Poole, 5 June 1973, City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

32 Baltimore Sun, 1 February 1976; Baltimore Sunday Sun, 24 October 1976; Baltimore Sun, 1 March 1977, 4 January 1978. A copy of the proposal is in City Archives Administrative Files, RG29, Series 2, BCA.

33 The author had written an article with Patricia M. Vanorny about Baltimore's records and was somewhat familiar with the situation. See "Records of a City: Baltimore and Its Historical Sources," Maryland Historical Magazine 70 (Fall 1975): 286-310.

34 Ord. (1978). The author is working upon a complete revision of this ordinance.


36 Total of the historical researchers are as follows: 99, 1978; 363, 1979; 397, 1980; 580, 1981.
The minutes of the Civil Service Commission going back to its creation in 1919 were found in a routine administrative visit to one of its offices and acquired several months later.

The files of the Board of Estimates were being systematically destroyed after twelve years. Now they are screened for records of permanent value, and tremendous amounts of information on important municipal projects not available from other departments are being found.

Although not discussed in this article, the author is convinced that some local government records programs, especially those of the larger municipalities, must be established on the local level to have any reasonable chance of succeeding. See Richard J. Cox, "Reappraisal of Municipal Records in the United States," Public Historian 3 (Winter 1981): 49-63.