MARYLAND SOIL SURVEY OFFICIALLY COMPLETED

With a hank of fanfare and communal handfuls of soil passed among soil scientists, Maryland's final acre of land—exclusive of certain military bases and Baltimore city—was officially mapped in a "last-acre" ceremony October 16 on the old state house grounds in southern Maryland's ancient St. Marys City.

About 65 representatives of county and state government agencies, the University of Maryland at College Park and the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture were on hand under sunny skies for the historic occasion.

The Tuesday noon fete marked Maryland as the third state in the U.S. to complete mapping of every acre under the modern inter-agency cooperative soil mapping program which has been operating since 1938.

Maryland had also been one of the first states to complete its mapping in the early 1930s under the first national soil survey program begun in 1899, a veteran SCS worker, Merl F. Hershberger of College Park, reported in informal, unscheduled remarks to the assembled group.

A native of western Maryland's Garrett county, Hershberger retired in 1968 as state soil scientist for Maryland and Delaware. During the 1930s and 1940s he had been a soil surveyor or soil scientist in Washington, Howard and Baltimore counties in Maryland. He also worked at Upper Darby, Pa., and Woodbury, N.J.

Hershberger predicted that Maryland would need to have another soil survey program completed within 30 to 40 years, since mapping techniques, environmental conditions and technical knowledge of soils are constantly changing.