

This personal reference is made to show how continuous has been the editorial policy of the *Archives* from the beginning to the present day. The present editor, furthermore, had the care of preparing volume 18 of the *Archives*, containing the Revolutionary muster rolls, and so is not now taking up the work for the first time. That he may carry on the series as successfully as his predecessors and make the future volumes as useful to students as the former ones is the hope with which the work has now been assumed.

The method of publication has been in general the same as in the past. A new typography places a little more matter upon a page without making it difficult to read. The days of the session have been added as side notes for greater clearness. The topical index has been constructed so as to show the session in which the various subjects were discussed, and the legislative history of every act. Messages and other documents occurring in the Proceedings of either house are printed only once, in the Upper House Journal, a reference thereto being made in the Lower House Journal at the proper place. This enables much more material to be placed in a volume and will not seriously inconvenience scholars.

In general, we possess good manuscripts for this period. The Lower House Journal for 1727 is an exception. Of it we possess two fragments, the one contains the first and last few pages of the Proceedings; the other lacks the pages altogether and, at some distant period, was used as a base for a flower pot, the grains of earth from it still adhering to the paper in some places. The paper of most of the upper half of the manuscript has, in consequence, rotted away and entirely disappeared, so that the manuscript is quite fragmentary.

In 1718, Andrew Bradford, in Philadelphia, printed for Evan Jones, the Annapolis bookseller, a Body of the Laws, and in 1719 the same persons prepared and printed the Session Laws. In 1726, William Parks settled in Annapolis and published his compilation of Statutes. This he followed by an annual publication of Session Laws beginning with 1727. In these publications the text of no private Acts is included. Both of the previous editors failed to consult these sources. The manuscript volumes which contained the Statutes of the period have been lost, and in the recent volumes of the *Archives* only such Statutes are printed as were in force in 1765, and were, therefore, accessible in Bacon's great compilation. An examination of these additional sources discloses the text of a large number of additional Statutes, which are printed as an appendix to this volume. Our thanks are due to the Library of Congress for permission to have photostatic copies made of the volumes of Statutes which are in that Library.