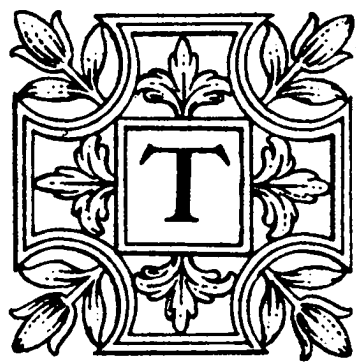


P R E F A C E



THE fifteen years which have elapsed since the publication of Lawrence C. Wroth's *History of Printing in Colonial Maryland* have witnessed a notable increase in interest in the history of early American printing. Numerous special studies have been made of the output of the presses of the individual colonies and states, but many of them, unfortunately, have not been printed. The much needed general survey of American printing by Douglas C. McMurtrie is now being published. There still remain, however, many neglected fields which merit intensive study.

The present work was undertaken as a continuation of Dr. Wroth's investigations in Maryland printing. Though it covers a very short period of time, the history of the Maryland Press from 1777 to 1790 should be particularly interesting. During this fourteen year period the Revolution was fought and won, the Articles of Confederation were accepted and, after a trial under difficult circumstances, gave place to the Federal Constitution. It was a period of equally great importance in the history of the state. The decline in tobacco raising and the growth of a grain trade with the western parts of Maryland and Pennsylvania changed Baltimore from a small settlement of two hundred and fifty inhabitants in 1750 to a flourishing port with a population in 1790 of over thirteen thousand. Printers were encouraged to set up their presses in this prosperous community and there was such a demand for news that two papers were soon published twice weekly. Dancing societies were established, concerts and lectures on literature and science were given in the large rooms of the taverns, bookshops and circulating libraries were opened where imported as well as American publications could be had, schools were started for the children of the more wealthy families, and, in 1782, a permanent theatre was founded where performances were given once and sometimes twice a week. During this period the agitation started for the removal of the state capital from Annapolis to Baltimore and has continued at intervals to the present day. In 1770 the only well established printing firm in the colony was at Annapolis. Twenty years later there were presses at Georgetown on the Potomac, at