

Edited by WINIFRED G. HELMES, Ph.D.

# Notable Maryland Women



**Published in conjunction with the  
Maryland Bicentennial Commission**

**TIDEWATER PUBLISHERS/Cambridge, Maryland**

**1977**

*Beacon*; a circular on the Lettie Marshall Dent Scholarship for Teacher Education; and from conversations with Hope Swann, a longtime friend and colleague of Lettie Dent Gough.

## ANNE CATHERINE GREEN, 1720-1775

### Public Printer

MARIANNE ELLIS ALEXANDER

Anne Catherine Green served as the public printer of Maryland from 1767 until her death in 1775. As "Printer to the Province," she published the laws as well as the votes and proceedings of the Maryland Assembly. She also printed the *Maryland Gazette*, the only newspaper published in Maryland, until 1773.

Anne Green took over the press of Jonas Green, her husband, following his death in 1767. In the *Gazette* of April 16, 1767, she announced her plans to carry on his printing establishment and made a plea to the public for "continued patronage." She apparently had been involved in the business prior to this date because the newspaper continued to be printed without interruption and the *Acts and Votes and Proceedings* of the Assembly of 1767, left unfinished by her husband, were completed on time.

In the first year that Anne Green served as public printer, she worked without financial support from the Maryland Assembly. However, the Assembly of 1768 passed an act encouraging her to continue printing and continued to reimburse her for the work already completed. Her future support was set at 48,000 pounds of tobacco for each year that the Assembly convened, and 36,101 pounds for the years the Assembly did not meet. This was the same fee paid Jonas Green in 1765. During Anne Green's tenure as public printer, the appropriation remained the same.

In addition to the *Gazette* and government printing work, Mrs. Green published an annual almanac. Occasionally she would print a political pamphlet, and several satirical pieces came from her press. She is credited with printing the first book produced in Maryland with an engraved title page. The engraving was done by Thomas Sparrow, and the book was Elie Valette's *Deputy Commissary's Guide of 1774*. This volume was one of an "octavo" considered to be "her most ambitious work" besides her paper and government printing. She also printed *The Charter and By-Laws of the City of Annapolis*. The fifty-two pages of this publication have been praised for their "typographical nicety" which "could hardly have been surpassed by the best of her contemporaries in the colonies."

The *Maryland Gazette* printed by Anne Green played an important role in reporting news in the years preceding the Revolution. Reports of growing protest in the New England colonies against the Townshend Acts and the details of events such as the Boston Tea Party reached Maryland readers through the columns of the *Gazette*. Her journal also made John Dickinson's *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer* available to Marylanders. While attempting to maintain editorial neutrality, Mrs. Green made her paper open to a variety of points of view on the growing conflict with England. However, she generally refused to print statements which might be considered libelous. This was a continuation of a policy she followed since she began printing the *Gazette*. Soon after she took over in 1767, she rejected for publication statements by Rev. Bennet Allen, rector of St. Anne's in Annapolis, which contained attacks on individuals in his vestry who opposed him. Rev. Allen had refused to sign his essays or to post bond to protect her printing establishment in case of libel.

Anne Green's predecessor and husband, Jonas Green, was descended from a New England family which had engaged in the printing trade since the middle of the 17th Century. Green worked with Benjamin Franklin and Andrew Bradford before coming to Maryland as "Printer to the Province," a position he held for approximately 25 years. In 1745 he established the *Gazette*, considered to be the first successful public journal in Maryland. A prominent citizen of Annapolis, Jonas Green was a postmaster, city alderman, and a register of St. Anne's Church. He achieved particular political notoriety for his opposition to the Stamp Act.

The exact date and place of Anne Green's birth is uncertain, but it is believed to be around 1720 in Holland. She probably was brought to Pennsylvania when she was still a small child. In the years following her marriage to Jonas in 1738, she gave birth to six sons and eight daughters. In addition to the normal work required by raising a large family, she nursed her family through a small-pox epidemic. An enterprising woman, she sold coffee and raisins to supplement the family's income. In 1746 her "choice good coffee" was advertised in the *Gazette* for half a crown a pound and the "Very good raisins" at 18 pence a pound. When her husband died in 1767, and she assumed the job of printer, she was about 45 years old. Of her fourteen children, only three boys and three girls were still living then. Although not much is known of her as a person, the notice marking her death in 1775 described her as having a "mild and benevolent disposition," and cited her "Conjugal Affection, and Parental Tenderness" as an "Example to her Sex."

For some of her eight years as public printer, Anne Green worked in partnership with her sons. However, when listed with her son's name, her name was always printed first. From 1767 to 1768 only the name Anne Green appeared as printer of the *Gazette*. From 1768 to 1770 her name is followed by her son William's name. However, he died in 1770, and her name alone appears until 1772. From 1772 to 1775 the printers of the *Gazette* are listed as Anne Green and Son. This son, Frederick, continued to print the

newspaper after her death in 1775. Historians writing about early Maryland printers have made it clear that, despite the partnership with her sons, Anne Green was the master printer. As one author explained, "it was her energy that planned, her competence that ordered, and her skill that produced whatever entered or left the press which Jonas Green left in her hands."

The Green family was engaged in the printing business in Annapolis for over 100 years, and Anne Green has earned praise for training her sons in the printing trade so that they could follow in their parents' footsteps and continue the family tradition of printing. Indeed, Frederick and Samuel, having learned their printing skill from their mother, carried on the press and passed it on to Jonas, Samuel's son, who continued in the trade until his death in 1839. However, Anne Green deserves recognition as an excellent printer and businesswoman in her own right. As the printer of Maryland's only public journal until 1773, she further provided Marylanders with information as well as a means of exchanging ideas and conflicting views in the turbulent period prior to the Revolution. By printing reports of events and opinions protesting England's treatment of her colonies, the *Gazette*, according to historian Lois Green Carr, "no doubt unconsciously helped to push the revolutionary cause." With her journal Anne Green also performed an invaluable service to future generations by providing us with an excellent record of the events and climate of opinion in Maryland in the years leading to the Revolution.

### *Brief Bibliography*

An excellent biographical essay on Anne Catherine Green written by Lois Green Carr is included in *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, 1971. The quotations evaluating Anne Green's printing skills are attributed to Laurence C. Wroth, *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, 1686-1776*, Baltimore, 1922. Information regarding the Green family was found in Joseph Towne Wheeler, *The Maryland Press, 1777-1790*, Baltimore, 1938. The vertical file labeled Women as Printers located in the Maryland Department of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore contains an undated article by Kenneth Rede entitled, "Woman Printers of Colonial Maryland." Information on Anne Green's editorial policies came from David C. Skaggs, "Editorial Policies of the *Maryland Gazette, 1765-1783*," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 59 (March '64) 344.