

The attorney was Andrew Hamilton, and the prisoner in the dock, John Peter Zenger, a printer and publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal*. Zenger was a zealous, crusading newspaperman who had come into disfavor with the authorities as a result of his persistent criticism of the governor of the colony.

Incidentally, both Hamilton and Zenger had strong ties with Maryland. Hamilton had a large estate on the Chester River. For a time, he was a member of our colonial Legislature. Zenger for a few years also lived in Kent County, near Chestertown, and was the printer of the Session Laws of our colonial General Assembly.

An indentured printer's apprentice after his arrival as a boy in this country from Germany, Zenger came south after completing his apprenticeship and set up a print shop in our colony. While here, he was naturalized by an act of our General Assembly. His acquittal by a jury in New York in 1735 is generally regarded as the first important victory for the freedom of the press in America. And, incidentally, this case antedated the first English decision guaranteeing the liberty of the press by a half century.

In the quotations I have selected—and throughout the famous speech, for that matter—Hamilton dwelt not only upon a man's right to speak and write his feelings, but emphasized also his responsibility to speak and write the truth. He defended Zenger's liberty to criticize the conduct of the governor, so long as his criticism was confined "within the bounds of truth."

Our own Declaration of Rights in Maryland places the same limitation upon this liberty which has become sacred to us. A clause in the Declaration states that "the liberty of the press ought to be inviolably preserved; that every citizen of the State ought to be allowed to speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that privilege."

I like the language used by the framers of our Maryland Constitution, for it not only establishes the right but also defines the responsibility . . . .

We here in Maryland are fortunate in the quality of our press. The great metropolitan dailies here in Baltimore and the Washington newspapers circulated in our State are among the finest in the world. Excellent small dailies and weeklies are published in all parts of the State. It is foremost a responsible press, jealous of its freedom to print the truth as it sees it but aware of its responsibility and the restraints that have been placed upon that freedom.