
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

the public charge of the Province, Nuthead, in seven separate payments, was allowed, all told, six thousand eight hundred and twenty pounds of tobacco.¹ In this session also the Rev. Peregrine Coney had been desired by the Council to have printed the fast-day sermon which he had preached on September 26th.² It is evident that not only did Nuthead, as the French say, "exist," but as well that he occupied a position of some importance in the life of the colony.

NUTHEAD'S DEATH AND THE INVENTORY OF HIS ESTATE

William Nuthead died in his forty-first year, a few months after he had set his name to the St. Mary's "remonstrance." The exact date of his death has not been discovered, but on the seventh of February 1694/95, Dinah Nuthead appeared before the Prerogative Court, stated that her husband had died intestate and requested that she be appointed administratrix of his estate.³ One of her sureties in the bond of two hundred pounds sterling which she was required to give was John Coode, the leader of the Protestant Revolution, a personage whom we must regard, in spite of the evil name which he left behind him, as one of the first patrons of the press in Maryland.

The inventory of Nuthead's business and personal property, dated April 2, 1695, makes sad reading.⁴ The value of his personalty was only six pounds and nineteen shillings, a small amount even in that day of primitive living. On his books, however, there stood accounts in the names of some sixty persons who owed him various sums ranging from thirty pounds to three thousand pounds of tobacco, so that the total amount due the estate was nearly twenty-four thousand pounds of the current medium.⁵ Of the amount named, about nine thousand pounds of tobacco was secured by bills and bonds from ten persons who were then connected with the government, or who a year or two earlier had been employed in some one of the several capacities of county sheriff, member of Assembly, justice of a county court or government clerk. In this inventory Nuthead was described as "of the City of St. Maryes;" it was reserved for Dinah Nuthead, his widow, and a competent woman of business, to transport the printing establishment to the new center of provincial life on the Severn.

¹ Acts, Sept.-Oct. 1694, *Archives of Maryland*, 38: 33.

² Council Proceedings, September 27, 1694, *Archives of Maryland*, 19: 40. No copy of this sermon has been recorded. See bibliographical appendix.

³ *Testamentary Proceedings, 1692-94*, 15: 171, ms. in Land Office, Annapolis.

⁴ *Inventories and Accounts*, 13A: 263, ms. in Land Office, Annapolis.

⁵ Tobacco at this time was worth about a penny a pound. Twenty-four thousand pounds of tobacco would have been valued at one hundred pounds sterling. The rapid rise of prices in the last few years makes it difficult to calculate the equivalent of this sum in modern money.