



CHAPTER NINE

*The Beginning of Printing in Baltimore Town—Nicholas Hasselbach—
Enoch Story the Younger—Hodge & Shober—John Dunlap
of Philadelphia and Baltimore—James Hayes, Jr.*



ALTHOUGH it had been erected and laid out in the year 1729, the town of Baltimore began to assume prominence only in the decade preceding the Revolution. In 1764, the year before the establishment of its first press, Sharpe wrote to Secretary Calvert concerning the town on the Patapsco in these words: "but as you seem to have been misinformed with respect to the Growth of Baltimore Town I must observe to you that altho there is more Business transacted there than at any other of our Maryland Towns, It is in point of both its Trade & Buildings almost as much inferiour to Philada as Dover is to London, nor do I suppose that it contains at this time more than two hundred Families, it is however increasing & will probably very soon get the Start of this City! tho the number of Houses in this place also hath increased considerably with these few years."²

The decade following the close of the Indian wars, indeed, proved to be a period of great increase of population in northern and western Maryland, an increase which brought Baltimore Town prominently forward as the natural port of the districts only then made safe for agricultural settlement. The decline of the Eastern Shore tobacco trade and the coincidental growth of the grain trade of the northern and western sections contributed further to increase the importance of the port of entry on the Patapsco, so that when the Revolutionary War began, Baltimore had become a town of about five thousand inhabitants and the most important port of Maryland. At the coming of its first printer, however, it was, as Governor Sharpe described it in the passage quoted above, still in its swaddling clothes, and it must have been with an eye for potentialities that its typographical pioneer set up his press within its bounds early in the year 1765.

¹ Annapolis.

² Sharpe Correspondence, August 22, 1764, *Archives of Maryland*, 14: 173.