
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

A NEW CHRONOLOGY OF AMERICAN PRINTING

If one might assume that the payment to Nuthead of five thousand five hundred and fifty pounds of tobacco in October 1686 had been made for services rendered by him throughout the previous twelve months, it would be possible to set the year 1685 as marking the inaugural of printing in Maryland, in which case the typographic beginnings of that province would be coeval with those of Pennsylvania. Indeed it is likely that, finding his press under the gubernatorial interdiction in Virginia in the year 1683, Nuthead had come immediately to Maryland, so that although the first occurrence of his name in the records of Lord Baltimore's colony was in the Act of 1686, yet it is possible that in the future there may be found documents to show that his art had an even earlier origin there than the year in which its initiator was first mentioned.

If the facts relating to the operations of the Nuthead press in Virginia and Maryland be accepted at the value which has been attached to them here, it appears at once that the received chronology of American printing has suffered alteration. In that case the order in which presses were established in the several English colonies would read, as to the first five of them, as follows: Massachusetts, 1638;¹ Virginia, 1682;² Pennsylvania, 1685;³ Maryland, 1686;⁴ New York, 1693.⁵

The order of priority as suggested in this chronology gives to Virginia the position which Isaiah Thomas conceded to it in the appendix to his first edition, and it claims for Maryland the place to which it seems to be entitled by the testimony of its records.

DINAH NUTHEAD AND THE FIRST ANNAPOLIS PRESS

Dinah Nuthead, the widow of William, was a woman of admirable courage. A few months after the death of her husband, she removed from St. Mary's to Anne Arundel County, whither, some months before, the government had preceded her. It is nowhere expressly stated that she carried with her the printing press which had come to her at William Nuthead's death, but it seems unreasonable to believe otherwise in the light of certain events which are now about to be related. Entirely without education, not

Dinah Nuthead, or to some other printers working in the Province before that year. There is not, however, the slightest trace remaining of any other Maryland printers of this period except the Nutheads.

¹ Roden, R. F., *The Cambridge Printers, 1638-1692*. N. Y., 1905, p. 11.

² *Ante*. Thomas, 1st ed., 2: 544; also Thomas 2d ed., 1: 331 and 332.

³ Hildeburn, C. S. R., *A Century of Printing, The Issues of the Press in Pennsylvania, 1685-1784*. 2 v. Phila. 1885.

⁴ *Ante*. Even if the year 1689 with its printed "Address" be taken as Maryland's inaugural year, the relative order of this list is not disturbed.

⁵ Hildeburn, C. S. R., *Sketches of Printers and Printing in Colonial New York*. N. Y., 1895.