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## *William and Mary Goddard, Printers and Public Servants*

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to use his own words, "less liable to those personal Dangers, which his natural Disposition impels him to encounter," and asked finally that he be given a commission as a field officer, more specifically as a lieutenant colonel, in either one of two regiments in which changes were about to be made. The Congress passed on his memorial to the Board of War, and to this body, on July 19, 1776, Goddard addressed a letter showing exactly by what promotions and transfers of other officers his own appointment could be accomplished.<sup>1</sup> The Board referred the matter to General Washington, who, on July 29, 1776, in a letter to Congress,<sup>2</sup> expressed the belief that the induction of Mr. Goddard "into the Army as Lieutt. Colo. would be attended with endless confusion." No more was heard of Goddard's military aspirations. His desire to serve his country had been genuine, and one must sympathize with him in the succession of disappointments which befell him in his efforts to be of use in the time of national trial.

### WILLIAM GODDARD IN BALTIMORE AGAIN. HIS INTERPRETATION OF "THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS"

Following the collapse of his ambitions, his failure to receive from the Government either civil or military appointment commensurate with his services, Goddard took up his residence once more in Baltimore,<sup>3</sup> and although his name did not supplant that of Mary Katherine Goddard in the imprint of the *Maryland Journal*, there is no doubt that he concerned himself very largely in its direction. It is possible that his financial condition rendered this sheltering of himself behind his sister's petticoats the more prudent part for him to play, but whatever the cause, he remained, if one may employ such a phrase, ostentatiously in the background. There can be no doubt that from 1776 until 1779 he had a voice in the affairs of a newspaper which had become one of the most vigorous of the colonial journals. By his occasional open participation in its affairs he brought on one of those conflicts of opinion upon the issue of which hangs the establishment of principles accepted unthinkingly by later ages as having been of eternal duration. Since the invention of printing, the phrase "the Liberty of the Press" had been construed as an assertion of the right of the publisher to express his convictions with immunity from ecclesiastical or governmental interference. Goddard gave the phrase a new construction, in Maryland certainly, when on two occasions he succeeded in extending it to include the publisher's

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of George Washington with Continental Congress*, 95: 145. In Ms. Division Library of Congress. Printed, *American Archives*, 5th Series, 1: 441.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* M. III, 37. Printed, *American Archives*, 5th Series, 1: 642.

<sup>3</sup> Goddard was in New York acting as Surveyor of the Post Office as late as September 9, 1776. (*American Archives*, 5th Series, 2: 256). The exact date of his resignation from the public service is uncertain.