
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

right to print what he would, regardless of the more powerful censorship exerted by public opinion. It is to an examination of the conflict between Goddard and the people of Baltimore that this narrative now leads.

THE "TOM-TELL TRUTH" EPISODE

On the twenty-fifth of February 1777, there appeared in the *Maryland Journal* two short contributions which related to the recent offer of the British Ministry to discuss what some persons considered to be advantageous terms of peace with the rebellious colonies. The first of these pieces, signed "Tom-Tell Truth," with obvious irony, advised the acceptance of these terms by the Americans. In the second article, signed "Caveto," the writer warned his fellow countrymen to distrust the British tenders and to continue the struggle with all their strength. "Caveto" was ignored; "Tom-Tell Truth" became the talk of the town.¹ A delegation of the "Whig Club" visited Mr. Goddard to require him to discover the author of the offensive piece, and were received, they averred, with the "grossest and most impolite" behavior. He refused to disclose the identity of "Tom-Tell Truth" for the reason that the gentleman who was concealed behind that name was absent from town and unable to answer for himself. In this refusal Goddard displayed to his own hurt that quality of loyalty which was one of his admirable characteristics. The twice-offended and over-zealous patriots served him with a notice to attend the next evening a meeting of the Club. He ridiculed publicly the idea of obedience to the summons, and by so doing put the Club on trial before the people of the city. The issue became a personal one. Goddard was carried by force to the meeting, where, after more wrangling, he was ordered by the exasperated members of the Club to leave the town within twenty-four hours and the county within three days. With the edict of banishment he complied in a manner unlooked for by his opponents, for he went straightway to Annapolis and demanded protection from the Council of Safety. In his memorial, which this body referred to the Assembly on March 7, 1777, he said, after recounting the actions of the Whig Club, "that he, thinking himself bound in honour not to suffer the secrets of his press to be extorted from him in a tumultuous way," had "absolutely refused to comply with the demand of this self-created court;" that he had been "treated with circumstances of indignity and insult, not to be patiently endured by a freeman possessed with a spark of honor or

¹ Both "Tom-Tell Truth" and "Caveto" were Judge Samuel Chase. See annotations in Goddard's personal copy of his pamphlet *The Prowess of the Whig Club*, preserved in the American Antiquarian Society, wherein the fact is expressly affirmed. Isaiah Thomas asserted this to be the case, having learned it, probably, from Goddard himself.