
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

Foley (*Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, London, 1878, v. 3) nor Father T. A. Hughes (*History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, London, 4 v., 1907-17) give the impression that Father White's catechism was printed. Indeed in a letter to the author, dated from Rome, August 13, 1920, Father Hughes, after commenting upon the dispersion of the archives of the Professed House among several Jesuit houses of Europe, goes on to say that, "There is not a jot or tittle in them (*i.e.* the European Jesuit Collections), as far as they concern America, which I did not take down . . ." He says further that throughout the entire course of his research he "never lighted upon the catechism or McSherry's 'report' on it," and finally that he was unable to conceive of the existence of a printing press among the Maryland Jesuits in Father White's time. In Carlos Sommervogel's edition of De Backer's *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*, 8: 1092, is given a list of Father White's printed works followed by the entry of a "Grammar, Dictionary and Catechism, in the Indian language," to which is appended this note, "Mr. Shea dit que cette grammaire est restée en MS. à Rome."

Among writers contemporaneous with Father White whose evidence is of interest in this connection are the anonymous author of the *Florus Anglo-Bavaricus*, Liège, 1685; the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Jesu*, 1643; and Nathaniel Southwell's edition of the same work, Rome, 1676, in all of which the titles of Father White's Maryland writings are given, but no mention is made of any of them being in printed form. Certainly one of these writers, if the catechism had been a printed work, would have given such bibliographical details as place and date of publication, etc. In opposition to this strong negative evidence exists Scharf's statement alone, unsupported by any reference as to when or where Father McSherry had said that the catechism was in printed form. Finally, even if one accepts Scharf's statement to the extent of believing that Father McSherry saw a printed catechism in the tongue of the Maryland Indians, there is yet no evidence that it had been printed in Maryland. If printed at all, the probability is that it was printed on the continent of Europe.

The habit which Colonel Scharf had of jumping to his conclusions is well illustrated by his relation of the story of a later press (*circa* 1660), based upon an "act for the publication of all the laws within this Province," passed in the Assembly of 1660. He assumes that the word "publication" as used here meant *printed* publication. Mr. James Walter Thomas has pointed out (*Chronicles of Colonial Maryland*, 2d ed., p. 58) that if Scharf had read more than the title of this act, he would have seen immediately that publication by voice proclamation was specifically prescribed.