
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

troverſy which well-nigh had ſhattered the foundation of the Pennsylvania hierarchy. Since that time he had kept the various colonial preſſes hot with the iſſue of his pamphlets. Becauſe of his advocacy of Keith, William Bradford, the firſt Philadelphia printer, had been compelled to remove his preſſ to New York, where he had continued occaſionally to iſſue pamphlets by or in ſupport of his former friend. In controverting Keith's attacks on the Puritans, Cotton Mather and others had made free uſe of the preſſes of the New England colonies. The Maryland preſſ alone had not been called upon either by Keith or by his enemies, but at this time, having ſecured ordination in England and returned hither with John Talbot as the repreſentative of the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts, it befell that he became a patron of the only preſſ in the colonies hitherto not requeſtioneſ in the ſervice of his controverſial zeal.

THOMAS READING BECOMES PUBLIC PRINTER AND TAKES A WIFE

In the year 1704 we come again into touch with Thomas Reading in the pages of the Provincial records. In the September ſeſſion of that year, it was moved in the Lower Houſe that Reading print the Governor's ſpeech, delivered at the opening of the ſeſſion, and in reſponſe, it was

“. . . reſolved he be lycenſd ſo to doe likewise propoſd that he may be conſtituted publiq printer to print all laws and other publiq matters Which being debated this houſe Reſolves he be conſtituted printer firſt Giving bond with Security to behave himſelfe in that Office.”¹

The next recorded action by Reading is his marriage on December 11, 1705, to the “Widdow Gittins.”² Evidently the journeyman printer whom Bladen had brought to the Province was ſufficiently well ſatisfied with his proſpects there to wiſh to ſettle himſelf comfortably in its capital.

THE BODY OF LAWS OF ANNAPOLIS, 1707

In April of the year 1706, there was read in the Lower Houſe “The humble Petition of Thomas Reading conſtituted Printer of the Province of Maryland,” in which that perſonage prayed that their Honors would

“. . . order the Laws of this Province to be printed and this Houſe would give him Encouragement for the ſpeedy finiſhing the ſame; and That your Honours would pleaſe to ſettle ſome Annual Salary for his Support and Encouragement for which he will be obliged

¹ L. H. J., September 12, 1704, *Archives of Maryland*, 26: 129. In this ſame ſeſſion (cf. U. H. J., September 25 and October 2, 1704) the ſermons preached at the opening of the new St. Anne's church, in the morning and afternoon reſpectively, by the Rev. Meſſrs. Wooten and Cockſhute, were ordered printed, both Houſes concurring. No copies of theſe ſermons have been recorded. See bibliographical appendix.

² “Births, Marriages and Deaths” in “Parish Register,” St. Anne's Parish, Anne Arundel County. Copy in the Maryland Historical Society.