
Thomas Reading and the Issues of his Press

given us what seems to be a transcript of the title-page of a volume which he asserted that he had by him at the time of writing.

As in the case of the body of Maryland law printed by Reading in the year 1700, there remains, as far as is known, only one copy of this edition which he printed in 1707. This copy, as did also that which Bacon had in his possession, lacks its title-page,¹ but its contents and a note by the printer at the foot of its last page of text enable one to establish its identity with the work described in the foregoing paragraphs and given by Trott the title and imprint of *All the Laws of Maryland Now in Force*, Annapolis, 1707. The volume contains, under separate session headings, the acts of the session of April 1704, the revised body of September 1704, and the acts of December 1704, May 1705, April 1706 and March 1707, as well as "Several Acts of Assembly formerly made declared to be in force." In this feature it answers the description given by Bacon and Trott, and the following note, on page 113 of the compilation, completes the information necessary to its identification as an Annapolis imprint of Thomas Reading:

"The Reader is hereby desired to take Notice that in the Assembly made Auno (*sic*) 1706 the Pages are Folio'd 1 2 3 &c. by reason the Laws made that Sessions were ordered to be first Printed so that they could not be truly ascertained, and instead thereof add 80 81 82 &c. otherwise the Index will be false.

These are to give Notice to all Gentlemen &c. that are any ways interested in private Acts of Assembly, that they may have them printed at lnrge (*sic*, for 'large'): And may likewise be furnished with blank Bills, Bonds, Writts Bills of Exchange, Bills of Lading, Administration Bonds, Testamentary Bonds, Letters of Administration, Letters Testamentary, Warrants for Appraisers &c. with any other Matters printed at reasonable Rates by Thomas Reading living in the Town and Port of Annapolis."

In spite of the absence of a title-page, there seems no reason, bibliographical or historical, why the copy of laws which has been referred to

1878, although the title has been added in Mr. Lee's handwriting to the manuscript of his work preserved in the Maryland Historical Society. Mr. Lee had not seen a copy, however, nor any record of one beyond that contained in Trott's preface.

¹The copy of *All the Laws of Maryland Now in Force*, referred to in these pages, is believed to be unique. It belonged originally to Robert Goldsborough, Esq. of "Ashby," Talbot County, a practising attorney and a member of the Lower House at the time of its publication, whose notes are preserved on the margins. It has remained in the possession of his descendants ever since, and has now been deposited for safe keeping in the Peabody Library of Baltimore. As long ago as 1765 Bacon spoke of the copy in his possession as being the only one he had met with, and since his reference to it no one has recorded having seen a copy of this edition. About ten years ago a descendant of Robert Goldsborough showed the "Ashby" copy to certain students of Maryland history, but no note was made of its contents, nor of its ownership, so that it had disappeared entirely from general knowledge when it was offered to the author for examination and description. During the years that he was employed on the period of Maryland legislation covered by this collection, Bacon was living at Dover in Talbot County not many miles from "Ashby" where, it is likely, he was a frequent visitor. It is not improbable that the "Ashby" copy, which "has lost its title-page" also, was that which he refers to as being in his possession and the only copy known to him, but if this be true it is difficult to understand his ignorance of its place of publication, a fact which he might easily have learned from the printer's note at the foot of page 113, present in the "Ashby" copy.