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## *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland*

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delegates, there seems to be evidence that printed session laws had been the rule since the appointment of a public printer in 1704, and further, that the Assembly intended the continuance of this good custom.

In the following paragraphs, Reading's petition of 1709 and the action taken upon it by the House are given in full:

"To the Honble Robert Bradley and the other Gentl. Delegates now sitting in the House of Assembly. The Humble Petition of Thomas Reading

Humbly sheweth to your Honours; That inasmuch as the Assembly in the Year of our Lord 1704 thought meet to constitute your Petitioner Printer as may to your Honours appear upon the then Journal, and at the same Time ordered that your Petitioner should be yearly considered by the several Counties for the Annual Laws of every Assembly *the which are all ready to be produced to your Honours:*<sup>1</sup> Now may it please your Honours your Petrs Allowance is so small, together with the Inconveniencies that attend the same (as has already been demonstrated to yr Honrs) render yr Petrs Employment insignificant and not sufficient to maintain him.

Therefore your Petitioner most humbly prays yr Honrs will be pleased to take his Case into yr Honrs Consideration and make him what further Allowance your Honours shall think fit and likewise that your Honours will be pleased to make especial Order that the Secretary permit your Petitioner to have the Laws Enacted this Session so convenient to copy in Order for the Press, as to your Honours most wise Judgment may seem most methodical. And your Petitioner as in Duty bound shall ever pray &ta

Which being read and fully debated, Ordered the same be thus indorsed Vizt

By the House of Delegates Novem'r 11th 1709

Upon reading the within Petition it is Resolved by the House that Mr Secretary permit and allow Thomas Reading the Petitioner immediately after this Session to take a Copy of the Laws now Enacted in Order that for Conveniency of the Province he by all convenient Speed print the same and that the said Reading get the great Seal affixed to each Body at the several Counties Charge and transmit a particular Body to each County for which he is to be allowed and paid by each County for the same and every other Session for the future 500 lb Tobo a Body and that he prepare and deliver to the Clerk of the House one printed Copy for the Use of the Assembly and another for the Provincial Court to be paid for by the Public. Which is ordered to be done by all convenient Speed."<sup>2</sup>

From the documentary indications which have been presented here, one is able to construct a hypothetical series of printed Maryland session laws from 1704 to 1708 inclusive, and there the matter might rest in unsatisfactory state were it not that the actual sheets of one number of this series remain to render more nearly certain the supposition that the whole of it once existed. In the collection of Maryland laws printed in Annapolis by Thomas Reading in the year 1707, described in this narrative as *All the Laws of Maryland Now in Force*, the following pagination and signature sequence are to be observed: B-U,<sup>2</sup> X,<sup>1</sup> pp. 1-78; B-C,<sup>2</sup> D,<sup>1</sup> pp. 1-10; Aa-

<sup>1</sup> These italics do not appear in the original, but the phrase is deemed to possess such importance as to render this method of emphasizing it desirable.

<sup>2</sup> L. H. J., November 11, 1709, *Archives of Maryland*, 27: 461 and 462.