
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

the last reference to Jones's proposal which was entered in the journal of either house. It does not appear from the obviously incomplete record which has been quoted that Jones was given authority to proceed with his publication, but the event shows that he proceeded none the less, and on the title-page of his book, he declared that the compilation had been made by order of the Governor and both Houses of Assembly.

In one sense, the compilation of laws which Jones now presented to the public is the most important collection of the statutes of colonial Maryland. As one of the last acts of her reign Queen Anne had commanded a second revision of the whole body of Maryland law. On April 29, 1715,¹ Governor Hart had communicated to the delegates the royal instructions, and on the seventh of the following month the House had proceeded with the required revision.² The body of law determined by the Assembly on this occasion, as McMahon, the historian of the Maryland constitution, wrote many years later, "formed the *substratum* of the statute law of the Province, even down to the Revolution; and the subsequent legislation of the colony effected no very material alterations in the system of general law then established."³ It was this "system of general law then established" which caused the supersession of the collection of laws published by Reading in 1707 and rendered necessary the new compilation which Jones proposed and carried into effect in the year 1718.

In this book, which was published through the Philadelphia press of Andrew Bradford in the year 1718,⁴ the editor, Evan Jones, found himself in the position of a man who thinks to please all parties, but who in the outcome contrives probably to give universal offence. In his Preface⁵ he attributed to Governor Hart all the virtues of a paragon among governors; he spoke well of the Proprietary, recently come again into his own, and voiced the most loyal sentiments in regard to Church and King. Moreover, in his opening paragraph, he expressed the mind of the Lower House when he wrote that the Maryland acts "are not expected to speak, but where the General Statutes of England are silent." He continued with the information that until the publication of this book the statutes had existed only in

¹ L. H. J., April 29, 1715, *Archives of Maryland*, 30: 105.

² L. H. J., May 7, 1715, *Archives of Maryland*, 30: 129. In Chapter Five of this narrative reference is made to the part played in John Peter Zenger's trial by the celebrated colonial lawyer, Andrew Hamilton, at one time a resident of Kent County, Maryland. He represented that county in the Maryland Assembly of 1715, and as a member of its committee on laws doubtless contributed to the success of the notable revision of that year. See Steiner, Bernard C., in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, v. 20.

³ McMahon, J. V. L., *An Historical View of the Government of Maryland*. Baltimore, 1831, p. 282.

⁴ Description in bibliographical appendix under year 1718.

⁵ Reprinted, *Archives of Maryland*, 38: 429.