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## *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland*

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years. Possessing this knowledge, it was doubtless he who suggested to Zenger that he take his chances at a living in the southern Province. At any rate, Zenger appeared in Maryland, asking for employment, very soon after the expiration of his articles of apprenticeship. In the April session of Assembly of the year 1720,

“The Petition of John Peter Zenger praying that he may have the Liberty of Printing the Laws for the Severall Countys the Provinciall Court and Upper and Lower house of Assembly was read and

Resolved that the Petitioner have the Liberty of Printing the Laws for the Severall Countys Provinciall Court and a Body for the upper House and another for the Lower House of Assembly and that he bind the severall Bodies for which the Severall Counties and Publick shall pay Seven hundred pounds of Tobacco per Body.”<sup>1</sup>

In transmitting this resolution to the Upper House for its approval, the Clerk of the House of Delegates added a significant sentence, when he wrote the words, “with which we desire your Concurrence Especially Considering it will be a means to promote the Carrying on so necessary a work amongst us.” The resolution of the Lower House was concurred in by the Upper Chamber on the same day, and that the delegates had no doubt of the printer’s ability to carry out his contract is learned from a later entry in their journal. On April 22d, the last day of the session, to the question of the Upper House as to how much should be paid the Chancellor for transcribing the laws, they returned the reply that

“Both Houses of Assembly haveing agreed that John Peter Zenger should print the Laws of Each Sessions for the Severall Countys and Provinciall Courts &c we Apprehend it would be too great a burthen to the Country to pay both the Chancellor and Printer for them.”<sup>2</sup>

Well satisfied with his prospects in Maryland, Zenger applied for citizenship in the Province at the next session of Assembly, that of October 1720, when, in response to his petition there was passed “An Act for the naturalization of John Peter Zenger of Kent County Printer & his Children.”<sup>3</sup> In the title of this act is contained the only reference that exists to Zenger’s place of residence in Maryland, and on the evidence of this description, it has been assumed that at his first coming to the colony he had set up his press in Kent County near Chestertown. The county court records and the records of the Provincial Land Office contain no indication that Zenger took up land in Kent County or elsewhere, and unless he intended to carry on farming in addition to printing, it seems unreasonable that he should have

<sup>1</sup>L. H. J., April 12, 1720, *Archives of Maryland*, 33: 588, 501-502

<sup>2</sup>L. H. J., April 22, 1720, *Archives of Maryland*, 33: 639.

<sup>3</sup>Bacon’s *Laws of Maryland*, 1720, ch. 18. See also L. H. J., October 20, 1720, *Archives of Maryland*, 34: 56. The complete text of the act was printed in *Archives of Maryland*, 38: 277.