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## *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland*

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In objecting to the printing of the Lower House journals, the Upper House had in mind not so much economy, as was asserted in its message, as a dislike of publicity in connection with the Assembly's action on the English statutes. Long customary in others of the colonies, however, the regular publication of Assembly proceedings could not be postponed much longer in Maryland. On receiving the adverse report from the Upper House, disapproving their suggestion that the Lower House journals be printed each session, the delegates acted with the assertiveness customary to them in the face of opposition to their plans. The clerk recorded their defiance in these words:

"Notwithstanding which Message, It is Resolved that such of the debates and proceedings of the last Session of Assembly as relate to the Government or Judicature of this Province or other material publick Affairs thereof be printed at the Charge of the Publick And thereupon John Beale and Vachel Denton Esqrs. are appointed to Make a Collection of the Laws now in force to be reduced into one Volumn fit for the press with Marginall notes and also of the proceedings above menconed and that the printers observe their directions therein."<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from what follows that the new printer was in danger of being torn asunder by the jealousies and antagonisms of the parties. In the next session of the Assembly, he was brought to the bar of the Lower House to explain why he had failed to print the proceedings of the last two sessions in accordance with the terms of the Lower House resolution. In his defence, he answered that "his Honr the Governour ordered him not (to) print them until the Bodies of Laws were first finished."<sup>2</sup> His Honor the Governor this year chanced to be Charles Calvert, a relative of the Proprietary, a personage who would have been sure to support with all his power of negative action the policy of a family which was beginning to regard the people of Maryland as a perverse and ungrateful race. In this instance, one observes with satisfaction that the determination of the delegates to print their constitutional proceedings was equal to the ingenuity of the Governor in postponing the publication of them, for in the year 1727, after the body of laws had been published and Charles Calvert had been superseded in his governorship by Benedict Leonard Calvert, Parks issued the proceedings<sup>3</sup> of the three sessions of October and March 1725 and July 1726, collected and edited by Messrs. Beale and Denton, as had been provided for in the original resolution of March 1725/26. The victory was with the delegates; never afterwards did the Upper House gainsay their "liberty to print."

<sup>1</sup> L. H. J., March 23, 1725/26, *Archives of Maryland*, 35: 484 and 485.

<sup>2</sup> L. H. J., July 14, 1726, *Archives of Maryland*, 35: 536.

<sup>3</sup> Copy in the Maryland Historical Society probably unique. See bibliographical appendix.