



CHAPTER THREE

*Eleazer Oswald, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Revolution,
Printer in Baltimore and Philadelphia, Soldier of
Fortune in the French Revolution*



ALTHOUGH Eleazer Oswald's name does not appear in the imprint of any issue of the Goddard press, he occupies an important position among the early printers of Baltimore through his association with William Goddard during the latter years of the Revolution. In the annals of Maryland printing it would be difficult to find an individual whose career embraced as many diversified interests and exciting incidents as his. Patriot, while at the same time confidant of Benedict Arnold and Charles Lee, ardent defender of "the Liberty of the Press," prominent Antifederalist, controversialist and duelist, and soldier of fortune under the banners of Revolutionary France—his whole life may be summed up as a militant defense of the rights of man.

He was born at Falmouth, England, in 1755, the son of a sea captain engaged in trade with Jamaica. After his father's disappearance he left his mother and, at the age of fifteen, set sail for the New World where he hoped to make his fortune. Arriving in New York about 1770, he was fortunate to become an apprentice to John Holt, printer of *The New-York Journal, or General Advertiser*. His industry as well as his other personal qualities soon endeared him to the Holt family and he achieved that fondly hoped goal of every ambitious apprentice—marriage to his master's daughter. In writing about him to Samuel Adams, his father-in-law proudly said:

"He has Youth, Health, Hardiness, Activity, Courage & Perseverance. He is skilful in the Manual Exercise, a very good Penman Accomptant & Arithmetician, with some knowledge of Navigation, above all his Honour & Integrity may be safely relied on."

Soon after his arrival from England, he was converted to the American cause by Holt who was an active critic of the British government, particularly of the administration of the Colonial post office.