
A History of the Maryland Press, 1777-1790

tation of such Books as were usually circulated among us, both for the Use of Schools, and for those of maturer Years. In short, our People are almost ignorant of the present State of Literature in the different Kingdoms of *Europe*, and the Calls of our Country prevent many among us from the Prosecution of their Studies. Such then is the present State of our Literary Affairs.—From a Consideration of these Things, and after the maturest Deliberation, the Subscribers have determined speedily to open a Printing-Office in the Town of *Baltimore*, with the professed Design to reprint, at as low a Price as possible, a Number of valuable Books, interesting to *America*, and especially to the *rising Generation*.— . . .

Surely it must be agreeable to every benevolent Reader, to see an American Edition of the Works of Addison, a Sterne, and a Goldsmith!—Surely it will please every Friend to Liberty and Public Virtue, to read the Eloquence of a Junius, and a Macaulay, on American Paper!—These with many other Writers, whose Labours have enlightened and blessed the World, will make their Appearance among us, provided the Subscribers are seconded with the Favour of their Countryman.—They mean to pay all their Attention to this Undertaking, as they will have no concern with any Newspaper, nor any Profit therefrom; for they assure the Public they renounce all Share in that Business, and only wish the Printress of the *Maryland Journal*, &c. may meet with that Encouragement from the Public, which her Assiduity and Care shall merit.

The Subscribers will have Occasion hereafter to address the Public, on the Subject of their Design . . .

[signed] W. Goddard, E. Oswald

Although none were printed, the importance of the project in the literary history of Maryland should not be overlooked, nor should it be disregarded in a study of the dependence of the United States on England and Europe during the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth century. Goddard's project was a fore-runner of such publishing programs as that which began in 1818, when James and John Harper printed Locke's *Essay upon Human Understanding* as first in the series of reprints which became famous as *Harper's Family Library*.

During the period of his comparative obscurity, Goddard was closely affiliated with the Elkridge paper mill which was probably founded shortly after the establishment of the *Maryland Journal*. After November 1775, notices appeared in almost every issue offering to exchange money, books, writing paper and stationery for linen rags which could be used in the manufacture of paper. On May 26, 1776, James Dorsett was granted by the Maryland Convention four hundred pounds common money with which to establish a paper mill whose product would compete favorably with that of the Pennsylvania mills.¹⁴ Unfortunately, no record has been found of a transaction by which the Goddard Press assumed control of the Elkridge mill, but it was only natural that the concern which consumed the largest proportion of its output should become closely allied with its management. A typical advertisement showing the close connection between the producer and the consumer

¹⁴ *Proceedings of the Convention of the Province of Maryland, . . . eighth of May, 1776*. Annapolis, Green. p. 28.