

citizens, but many reasons, of an interesting nature, have induced me to relinquish, for some time, the printing business. I trust I have served the public with uprightness, and am persuaded that the daily publication, under my care, has been conducted agreeably to the principles of freedom, decency, and virtue. It is near twenty-four years since the commencement of the Maryland Journal - it has received the public patronage and encouragement - and it is my ardent wish that it may in future continue to do so.⁵¹

On January 2, 1797, the paper was taken over by David Finchete Freebairn. Little is known about the new editor. According to the law passed on December 24, 1795 by the General Assembly of Maryland, Freebairn was granted relief from his debts.⁵² The law gives no inkling of the business Freebairn had been persuing, or of any circumstance of the case.

In his first issue, Freebairn printed for the benefit of his subscribers "an ecomiastic address, extolling the excellence and advantage of the present undertaking."⁵³ He stressed the time during which the paper had been "a vehicle of communication to every corner of the state," and paid tribute to the efforts of the original proprietor to increase its circulation and enhance its reputation. But it had "lately been eclipsed, and suffered from a variety of impediments"; Freebairn was "determined to do his utmost towards re-

51 Maryland journal. December 30, 1796.

52 Maryland. Laws, statutes, etc. Laws of Maryland, 1795, chapter LXXXIV.

53 Maryland journal. January 2, 1797.