

THE GERMAN PRESS OF HAGERSTOWN

John Gruber's name still appears on the imprint of his best-known production, the Hagers-Town Town and Country Almanack. It is the second almanac, in point of age, in the United States - the first being the Farmer's Almanac, established by Robert Bailey Thomas and first printed in Boston in 1792, now published by Robb Sagendorph in Dublin, New Hampshire, and now (1942) known as the Old Farmer's Almanac.¹

John (or Johann) Gruber, the first German printer of Hagerstown, was the eldest son of Dr. Everard Gruber, a physician of Strasburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (1736-1814)² and his wife, Anna Christiana Pein (b. 1738).³ The young John Gruber, born October 31, 1768, decided in favor of a mechanical trade, rather than the medical profession, which his father wished him to follow. Accordingly, at the age of fifteen, he was apprenticed to Charles Cist of Philadelphia, and it was during his apprenticeship that he had the rare privilege of following in the funeral procession of Benjamin Franklin.⁴

Gruber's health was feeble at the termination of his apprenticeship; and at the advice of his physician

1 Christian science monitor. January 2, 1942.

2 Hagers-Town town and country almanack, 1859. p. [?]

3 Eshleman, C.H. John Gruber and the Hagerstown almanack.

4 Hagers-Town town and country almanack. 1859. p. [?]