
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

made for the "Payment and Assessmt of the Publique Charge of this Province." Therein, among many others, is found this item, "To Wm. Nutthead Printer five Thousand five Hundred and fifty pounds of Tobaccoe."¹ In view of his earlier history in Virginia, and of his later history in Maryland, the simple and natural assumption in reading the item which has been quoted is that when the Province paid William Nutthead for services rendered, and designated his trade in the act of payment, those services had been performed in the practise of the trade therein specified.

In the following month, November 1686, "William Nutthead of St. Marys Citty Printer" took up three hundred acres of land, known thereafter as "Nutheads Choice," lying in Talbot County and "to beholden of the Manor of Baltemore." The annual quit rent for the property was named as twelve shillings sterling, but the conditions under which the warrant had been granted were not specified in the certificate of survey. A short six months after the date of his warrant, on April 4, 1687, for a sufficient sum, the amount of which was not disclosed, "William Nutthead of St. Marys Citty Printer" sold or made perpetual assignment of his plantation in Talbot to one Edward Fisher, and with its sale "Nutheads Choice," together with its new owner, becomes of no further interest in this narrative.²

THE FIRST RECORDED ISSUE OF THE MARYLAND PRESS, THE "PROTESTANT DECLARATION" OF 1689

William Nutthead's earliest printing activities have not been kept in remembrance. In spite of the fact that he was a resident of St. Mary's City and in the pay of the Provincial government certainly as early as 1686, it is necessary to pass over the ensuing three years to the riotous days of the "Protestant Revolution" before there is found an issue of his press which has been recorded by name. The circumstances out of which arose the publication in question give it a singular interest in Maryland political history. After overturning the Proprietary government in July 1689, Colonel John Coode and seven others of the leaders of the Revolution drew up a manifesto entitled "The Declaration of the Reasons and Motives for the Present Appearing in Arms of their Majesties Protestant Subjects in the Province of

¹ *Archives of Maryland*, 13: 131. The assumption will be permitted that William *Nulhead*, a printer, compelled to forego his trade in Virginia in the year 1683, and William *Nutthead*, a printer in the pay of the Maryland government in 1686, were one and the same individual. Whether the assumption be allowed, however, is of comparatively small importance in the ensuing relation of the activities of William Nutthead, the first Maryland printer. It should be said too, that although he is variously known as *Nulhead*, *Nutthead*, *Nutthead* and *Nothead*, his name certainly was not "Roughhead" as it is given in the number of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* previously referred to.

² *Land Records*, Liber 22, folio 295, ms. in Land Office, Annapolis, Md. The parcel of land described lay in what is now Caroline County, then a part of Talbot.