
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

had been the first practitioner of typography. It was because of this scarcity of trained printers in the colonies that, during the five years which followed Reading's death, the Maryland laws were transcribed upon parchment or good paper and distributed among the counties, where they were published by the primitive method of voice proclamation. In the year 1718, however, a way was found out of the position of embarrassment in which the colony had been placed by the cessation of Reading's press. In this year Evan Jones of Annapolis, a Welshman and the Provincial man-of-all-work, made proposals to the Assembly in regard to the printing of its laws which resulted in the publication of a work of great importance in Maryland legal history.

The reference to Evan Jones on the title-page of the Bray "Sermon" of Annapolis, 1700, where he is described as "bookseller," contains the earliest knowledge that we have of the existence of this individual. There also, for the last time, he was described specifically as "bookseller," but in the years to come he took part frequently in the Provincial business in capacities not essentially different from that of his first description. He seems to have been a ready and cheerful factotum in the public life of Maryland, and the journals of the Assembly evidence the extent of his participation in its affairs. In the year 1704 his Excellency in his address to the Assembly asserted that he had never seen "any publick Buildings left solely to Providence but in Maryland," and straightway "Mr. Evan Jones of this Towne a Sober Person" was engaged at ten pounds a year to look after such of the offices as had been spared by the fire which, earlier in that year, had destroyed the State House. In 1708 Jones acted as Clerk of the Upper House for an entire session, and in the November session of 1713 he held the position of "clerk assistant" of the Lower House. In the year 1713 he was spoken of as Deputy Collector of the Port of Annapolis, and three years later he was promoted to the office of Deputy Collector of the District of the Patuxent with jurisdiction of the Port of Annapolis. In June 1717 the committee of the Lower House for the repair of public records employed him to be the chief undertaker for examining and transcribing the records at the rate of four pounds of tobacco a "side," a unit of measurement which was to be considered as containing fifteen lines of seven words each. For his faithful performance of this task, Major John Bradford, his brother-in-law,¹ gave bond to the amount of one thousand pounds sterling, a sum of such mag-

¹The will of John Bradford of Prince George's County, probated May 11, 1726, left certain lands to his sister, Mary Jones, with reversion to her two sons, Evan and John Jones. See *Maryland Calendar of Wills*, 5: 217. This John Jones seems to have been the second child of Evan and Mary Jones who was given the name "John." In removing the debris after the burning of St. Anne's church in 1858, a tombstone bearing the following inscription was discovered: "Here lyeth the body of John the eldest son of Evan Jones and Mary his wife who dyed the 2d