
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

nership with Edmund Hall¹ which enabled him to extend his interests in Maryland without neglecting those newly established elsewhere. Afterwards, when in the summer or autumn of 1733 the partnership was dissolved, Parks alone carried on the paper until what was probably its last issue on November 29, 1734.²

The first Maryland newspaper was by no means a contemptible journal. While in England in 1730, Parks arranged for regular foreign correspondence for its columns,³ and close at hand in Maryland he had some of the leading men in the colony, in whose contributions, usually in the form of letters, were discussed the local and colonial politics and questions of economics and trade. Furthermore, for his department of *belles lettres* he had always nearby Ebenezer Cooke, Richard Lewis and other regular contributors, whose weekly poems and essays gave an undeniable tone to the publication, howbeit that tone was frequently stilted and self-conscious, in the manner of an age when, abhorring to write naturally, men gave themselves up to an obsession for elegance and urbanity. It is unnecessary to remark on the value to the historian of the remaining copies of Parks's *Maryland Gazette*, for in that mirror is reflected the life of the Province during a period of years which were representative of the first half of the century. One resists with difficulty the temptation to philosophize the matter of its yellowed pages.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF PARKS IN MARYLAND, AND HIS DEPARTURE FOR VIRGINIA

To the activities of Parks as publisher and printer were added, as was customary in America at this period, those of bookseller and bookbinder.

¹ Little is known of this Edmund Hall who appeared in the imprint of the *Maryland Gazette* and elsewhere in 1732 and 1733 as the partner of William Parks. On July 13, 1732 (L. H. J.), "Mr. Edmund Hall a printer in Partnership with Mr. Parks is Allowed to print the Votes of this Session for the Usual Allowance," and again on March 14, 1732/33, a similar permission was granted Mr. Hall, "Conditionally that he print them Daily." The partnership must have been dissolved soon after this, for Hall's name disappeared from the imprints of the Parks establishment and, as before, Parks printed alone. He may have been retained as manager of the Annapolis establishment, however, for on April 27, 1737 (L. H. J.), Mr. Hall again was authorized to print the Lower House proceedings. Nothing is heard of him after this, and his name only was known to Isaiah Thomas. Even less than this, however, is known of Mr. Webb, who in 1736, "agreed to print the Votes of the Lower House of Assembly this Session at the usual Allowance." This may have been Parks's foreman or the manager of the Annapolis branch of the establishment. When Parks went to Virginia to petition the Assembly in 1727, George Webb, Gent., was appointed to prepare the laws of that colony for the press. He was employed by the Virginia Assembly for similar tasks for several years afterwards. It is possible that he and Parks formed a connection. There was also a George Webb, journeyman printer, in Philadelphia in 1728, but he is supposed to have returned to England before the date named above. John Webb, bookseller and publisher of Philadelphia a decade later, is the only other person of the name who seems in any way to have been connected with printing or the allied trades in this time and place.

² Evans, No. 2899; Brigham, C. S., *Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820*. (Part III.) In *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, April 1915.

³ Advertisement, *Maryland Gazette*, June 9, 1730. Evans, No. 2899.