Aprons Instead of Uniforms: The Practice of Printing, 1776–1787

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WE DO NOT think of a master printer as primarily a businessman. Because he controls a major channel of communication, our tendency is to romanticize him while we forget that essentially his chief concern is the same as that of his fellow tradesmen—the bottom line of his balance sheet. In time of war, his hazard is doubled. Then all businessmen face the problems of scarcity, financing, possibility of dislocation, perhaps survival, but the printer also has the government and the public closely involved in his activities. The government uses some of his work and needs all of his support; the public assiduously heeds the opinions expressed in his publications. When the war is a civil war, such as the American Revolution was in part, his predicament is even more hazardous. Maintaining a printing shop despite changes in civil authority requires ingenuity as well as tenacity and, if one holds to one's principles, courage. After all, the printer is a businessman whose stock in trade consists of twenty-six lead soldiers.

It is impractical to describe all the aspects of the practice of printing during this period in one chronological narrative. So it is preferable to select those topics which best depict the activities of the printers between 1776 and 1787. These topics include the relationship between printers and the Continental Congress and the relationship between printers and the state legislatures. The expansion of the press must be considered

as well as the impact of the Revolution on the equipment and personnel of the shop. Finally, there are the printers who came under the fire of the enemy. Such are the salient features of the temporary disturbance of the craft between the time of the colonial printer, calmly composing type or pulling the bar of his press, and the time of the Federal printer enjoying the new peace.

The Printer and the Continental Congress

Confronted by so many problems of greater urgency, the Continental Congress interested itself in printing only when constrained to do so. Therefore the number of major documents it ordered printed varied greatly during the establishment of the new nation. According to J. H. Powell, between fifty and sixty major identified documents were ordered published each year in 1776 and 1777; about forty in 1778. In 1779, the number reached the low eighties, declined to the low thirties in the following year, and was only twelve in 1781. In 1782, 1783, and 1784, the number ranged in the twenties and then more than doubled in 1785 and 1786.[1] Ordering the printing of these documents was an automatic procedure, but other matters relating to printing also entered into deliberations from time to time.

One of the earliest congressional appropriations in 1776 entailed a modest sum, but Congress was still hearing about it sixteen years later. Benjamin Franklin, foreseeing the usefulness of a French printer in proselytizing the Revolution among the French in Canada, had encouraged Fleury Mesplet to emigrate to Philadelphia about 1774.[2] When the commissioners to Canada were appointed in 1776, it was stipulated that a printer should be sent to establish a press. On February

[1] J. H. Powell, *The Books of a New Nation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 70.

[2] R. W. McLachlan, 'Fleury Mesplet, The First Printer at Montreal,' *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2d ser. 12 (1906), sec. 2:200.

26, Congress resolved that 'Mons[r] Mesplet, Printer, be engaged to go to Canada, and there set up his press and carry on the printing business, and the Congress engage to defray the expence of transporting him, his family and printing utensils to Canada, and will moreover pay him the sum of 200 dollars.'[3]

Mesplet, borrowing about $4,000 as working capital from a friend, paid off his debts of $560 and purchased new type, 180 reams of paper, as well as other supplies for a total of $786.[4] He exchanged the remainder of his money for Continental currency and departed for Canada in March.[5] Five wagons carried Mesplet, his wife, a servant, an editor, two journeymen, and his printing equipment to Lake George. The expensive and perilous expedition over land and then, on five boats, over water ended in May when Mesplet set up the first press in Montreal.[6] Within a month the Continental army withdrew, but Mesplet remained, hoping to continue in business with the help of his staff. But the loyalists, regarding the group as knaves, imprisoned them for twenty-six days. After release, Mesplet opened his shop and continued a troubled career as printer until his death in 1794.[7] His life was marred by his fights with Congress over the money due him for his extra expenses in the move to Canada. In 1783, his petition for relief was discharged in committee and, in the following year, another memorial from Mesplet was tabled.[8] Deciding to tackle Congress himself, he borrowed money to go there in 1785. The Commissioners of the Board of Treasury considered his detailed claim for £3,543 12s., Penn-

[3] *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 1774–1789, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al., 34 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904–37), 4:173 (hereafter cited as *Journals*).

[4] McLachlan, 'Fleury Mesplet,' p. 203.

[5] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *A Memorial Printed by Fleury Mesplet* (Chicago: Ludlow Typograph Co., 1929), pp. 10–11; McLachlan, 'Fleury Mesplet,' p. 204.

[6] McLachlan, 'Fleury Mesplet,' pp. 203, 254, 259.

[7] Ibid., pp. 205–20.

[8] Ibid., pp. 251, 253.

sylvania currency, following which Congress approved their recommendation granting Mesplet only 426.45/90 Spanish dollars for transportation expenses.[9] He submitted another protest to Congress, where it was filed.[10] Finally, in 1792, he gave John Jacob Astor of New York power of attorney to collect the balance due on condition that Astor would receive nothing for expenses, but would keep half the amount collected. This was one of the few Astor business transactions which yielded no money; the agreement was eventually cancelled.[11] The attitude of Congress toward Mesplet is easy to understand. The commissioners of the Board of Treasury felt that the unpaid claims were 'neither warranted by any resolutions of Congress nor supported by vouchers.'[12]

At the beginning of 1776, some American printers, facing ruin because of a growing shortage of help, were aided by the Congressional resolution that 'no apprentice whatsoever be inlisted within the colonies of New Jersey, Pensylvania, the counties on Delaware and Maryland, as a soldier in the army or navy of the United Colonies, without the consent of his master or mistress first obtained in writing; and that all apprentices now inlisted as soldiers in said army or navy, without such consent, be immediately discharged from the service, on the application of his master or mistress, upon payment of all just and reasonable charges of their inlistment.'[13] Even with this exemption, Congress could not get its Journal printed on time. The work of William and Thomas Bradford who had been printing the 1775 Journal was disappointingly slow and, on March 21, 1776, Congress took action. A committee of three was appointed to superintend the printing of

[9] Ibid., pp. 215, 258–59; *Journals*, 28:305–6.

[10] McLachlan, 'Fleury Mesplet,' pp. 260–61.

[11] R. W. McLachlan, 'Some Unpublished Documents Relating to Fleury Mesplet,' *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3d ser. 14 (1920), sec. 2:85–86.

[12] *Journals*, 28:305–6.

[13] Ibid., 4:103.

the Journals and, the resolution states, 'if the present printer cannot execute the work with sufficient expedition, that they be empowered to employ another printer.'[14] The Bradfords must have been dismissed because Robert Aitken began to print the 1776 Journal in monthly parts. He had printed the parts for the first four months when Congress decided that the typography wasted too much space for a time of paper shortage.[15] Aitken noted this rejection in his waste book: 'I was ordered to print no more in this large type, and to begin a new edition beginning with the session of Congress, which rendered the sale of the above abortive, meantime, I sold 80 copies. I also sold 14 reams of this edition to Benjamin Flower, for the use of the army for cartridges at 30s. per ream.'[16] His waste book also records the bill to Congress, under date of January 2, 1779:

> To printing Journal of Congress from Feb. 1, 1776 to April 29— inclusive on a pica type containing 15 sheets 8vo. at £4 10″ p sheet—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | | £67—10 |
> | To 30 Rms Demy for do. at 40 | 60 |
> | | £127—10[17] |

For first-rank documents, Congress carefully supervised the process of publication. Those authorized to prepare the Declaration of Independence were told to take on the job of seeing it to the press:

> *Ordered*, That the declaration be authenticated and printed.
> That the committee appointed to prepare the declaration, superintend and correct the press.[18]

This, as Powell observed, 'explains what Jefferson, Adams,

[14] Ibid., p. 224.

[15] Herbert Friedenwald, 'The Journals and Papers of the Continental Congress,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 21 (1897): 174.

[16] Ibid., p. 174n.

[17] Ibid.

[18] *Journals*, 5:516.

Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston did after Congress adjourned that evening: they went to Dunlap's printing house.'[19]

Secret matter received more detailed and precise regulations. Before printing the draft of the Articles of Confederation, Congress

> *Resolved*, That eighty copies, and no more, of the confederation, as brought in by the committee, be immediately printed, and deposited with the secretary, who shall deliver one copy to each member:
>
> That the printer be under oath to deliver all the copies, which he shall print, together with the copy sheet, to the secretary, and not to disclose either directly or indirectly, the contents of the said confederation:
>
> That no member furnish any person with his copy, or take any steps by which the said confederation may be re-printed, and that the secretary be under the like injunction.[20]

The printers of the Articles, John Dunlap and D. C. Claypoole, signed a sworn statement that they would deliver all printed copies as well as the copy sheet to the secretary of Congress and that they would not disclose the contents.[21] Resolutions similar to the one above preceded the printing of other secret documents.[22]

Aitken's issues of the Journals apparently satisfied Congress for, on September 26, 1776, they ordered him to reprint all of them 'from the beginning' and promised to purchase 500 copies of the set.[23] He produced this 'New Edition' in 1777, but, in the meantime, the approach of the British forced Congress to leave Philadelphia for Baltimore in December

[19] Powell, *Books of a New Nation*, p. 55 (Julian P. Boyd thinks that Thomas Jefferson and Charles Thomson may have been the only officials at the printing office ["The Declaration of Independence: The Mystery of the Lost Original," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 100 (1976): 451–52]).

[20] *Journals*, 5:555–56.

[21] Ibid., 6:1123.

[22] Ibid., 5:594, 689; 12:933.

[23] Ibid., 5:829.

1776.[24] Two undated motions reveal the anxiety of Congress after arrival in Baltimore. One directed the committee superintending printing to send an express to find out Aitken's whereabouts, to move the printed Journals to Baltimore, and to move Aitken's equipment there at public expense provided Aitken would continue printing for Congress. The other directed the committee to write to Aitken requesting that he come to Baltimore with his press and the printed Journals, all expenses paid by Congress.[25] Aitken remained in Philadelphia. Documents of December, printed in John Dunlap's Baltimore shop, exemplify Dunlap's alertness in securing the patronage of Congress.[26]

Even as the war intensified, two different items relating to printing came before Congress. On July 25, 1777, the Board of War recommended that General Washington be supplied with a portable printing press.[27] This motion was tabled, but a report, submitted two weeks later, from the committee inquiring into the condition of Washington's army, reintroduced the subject. It recommended that a printer, journeymen, and printing equipment accompany Washington.[28] A motion to authorize this was later postponed.[29] The other item elicited notably speculative responses from some of the major printers.

In July 1777, Congress received a memorial, signed by three ministers in Philadelphia, asking Congress to sponsor the printing of a Bible.[30] Regulations were proposed. They

[24] Charles Evans, *American Bibliography*, 14 vols. (Chicago and Worcester: Privately printed and American Antiquarian Society, 1912–59), 15683–84 (hereafter cited as Evans). Citation is to item number, not page number; Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' pp. 175–76.

[25] *Journals*, 6:1030.

[26] Evans 15175, 15177–79.

[27] *Journals*, 8:581.

[28] Ibid., pp. 581, 608, 613.

[29] Ibid., 10:20.

[30] National Archives, Record Group 360, PCC Item 42, 1:35–36. Mr. George C. Chalou assisted me in locating the documents in the National Archives.

stated that since there were about 500,000 families in need of Bibles, Congress should order a Bible to be printed and sold at a moderate price.[31] The regulations proposed also stated, in part, that Congress should import the type and some paper for the printer, that the printer undertake the work at his own risk and expense, and that the text be carefully corrected. It was proposed that Congress, not King James, be mentioned on the title page and in the dedication. Then, 'after the Bible is published, no more Bibles of that Kind be imported into the American States by any Person whatsoever.'[32] The committee receiving the memorial, aware that it knew little about printing, called for expert opinion by asking at least five Philadelphia printers to supply advice on the practicability and cost of producing a Bible. A summary of the replies has been printed by William H. Gaines, Jr., but some of the more salient data deserve attention here.[33] Robert Aitken submitted grandiose calculations for an edition of 200,000. He planned a nonpareil duodecimo containing thirty-four sheets, requiring 5,496 pounds of nonpareil at a cost of £1,374 sterling. Untroubled by the problem of importation, Aitken recommended that the type be purchased from Wilson in Glasgow. Paper at seventy-three reams per thousand copies could come from Germany or France at '12/ p Ream although I have allowed 3/ more to each Ream, allowing myself to be rather over the price than under.'[34] Thirteen presses (one for proofs) would cost £10 sterling each in Glasgow, £42 each in Philadelphia. The eighty-four chases which could be obtained for, at the most, 15s. sterling each in Glasgow would cost £3 each in Philadelphia. Composition could be completed in three months by six compositors earning a total of £489 12s. currency.

[31] National Archives, Record Group 360, PCC Item 46, 1:163–64 (hereafter cited as NA).

[32] NA, p. 164.

[33] William H. Gaines, Jr., 'The Continental Congress Considers the Publication of a Bible, 1777,' *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950–51): 274–81.

[34] NA, pp. 153–54.

Twenty-four pressmen working twelve presses could print the 200,000 copies in twenty months for £11,680 currency.[35] Thomas Bradford reckoned that he could do the Bible in forty-five sheets.[36] The 10,000 pounds of type would cost £2,000 sterling.[37] He recommended that the paper come from France or Holland, preferably Holland, at 6s. or 8s. sterling per ream. If it could be procured in this country, it would cost 25s. to 30s. per ream. Bradford figured composition at £14 currency per sheet, presswork at £20 currency per sheet, and 1,080 reams of paper at 30s. currency for 20,000 copies.[38] John Dunlap estimated that for 100,000 copies 'it would be necessary to have about Four Thousand Pounds Sterling laid out in Paper and Types in Europe and to have a Sum not exceeding Five Thousand Dollars advanced when these materials arrive to enable the Printer to carry on the Work with dispatch.'[39] Henry Miller calculated that a nonpareil Bible could be printed on thirty-five sheets with type costing £1,687 10s., but he thought that 'paper for such a Work ought to be made by one Master papermaker & by the same Workmen, which will hardly be possible in this Country at this present Time.'[40] William Sellers proposed 6,000 pounds of type costing £1,500 sterling.[41] He said that two men could set the type in about nine months and two presses might print 10,000 copies in about the same time. Dunlap, Miller, and Sellers were vague when discussing prices. Their inability to come up with the hard facts is indicated in Sellers's answer to the question: 'What would be expected

[35] Aitken calculated sterling into currency at an exchange rate of 66⅔ percent (NA, p. 153).

[36] NA, pp. 167–69.

[37] Bradford calculated sterling into currency at an exchange rate of 75 percent (NA, p. 167).

[38] An unsigned note on John Dunlap's proposal states that William Sellers thought that Bradford should estimate the paper at 10s. per ream (NA, p. 161).

[39] NA, p. 157.

[40] NA, p. 171.

[41] NA, p. 173.

from the Congress to carry on this work, that it might be well done & sold nearly as cheap as common School bibles?'[42] He replied, 'From the Uncertainty of the Price of Materials, as Paper, Leather, &c. and the Price of Labour encreasing, cannot readily answer this Question.'[43] These bids show the state of the art of estimating printing prices in those years.

The committee reported gloomily

> That they have conferred fully with the printers, &c. in this city, and are of opinion, that the proper types for printing the Bible are not to be had in this country, and that the paper cannot be procured, but with such difficulties and subject to such casualties, as render any dependance on it altogether improper: that to import types for the purpose of setting up an entire edition of the bible, and to strike off 30,000 copies, with paper, binding, &c. will cost £10,272 10, which must be advanced by Congress, to be reimbursed by the sale of the books:[44]

The committee recommended that if Congress did not think it expedient to import type and paper, Congress should order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere. A resolution to import 20,000 Bibles was first approved, then, on second reading, postponed.[45] But Howe was on his way to Philadelphia and Congress hastily fled to Lancaster after adjourning on September 18, 1777.

One of the final actions of that day's session attempted to rescue printing facilities from the enemy. Congress resolved that 'Major General Armstrong be directed, forthwith, to cause all the printing presses and types in this city and Germantown, forthwith to be removed to secure places in the country, excepting Mr. Bradford's press in this city, with English types.'[46] The task was too ambitious to be accom-

[42] NA, p. 178.
[43] NA, p. 173.
[44] *Journals*, 8:733–34.
[45] Ibid., pp. 734–35.
[46] Ibid., p. 754.

plished so swiftly, even if all of the printers would have been willing to have their shops removed. Those who felt impelled to leave did so; others remained.

Congress moved beyond the Susquehanna to York at the end of the month only to find that there was no printer in town. On October 17, the Committee of Intelligence was authorized 'to take the most speedy and effectual measures for getting a printing press erected in this town for the purpose of conveying to the public, the intelligence that Congress may, from time to time, receive.'[47] Hall & Sellers, who had ceased publishing the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in September, came from Philadelphia to set up the first press in York and to print for Congress.[48] While at York, they published the *Pennsylvania Gazette* between December 1777 and June 1778. This they regarded as a temporary project; the issues appeared without numbering and the Philadelphia numbering was continued when publication was resumed there in January 1779.[49] John Dunlap also printed for Congress after moving his shop and the *Pennsylvania Packet* from Philadelphia to Lancaster. Although some of Dunlap's 1778 Congressional documents bear a York imprint, Douglas C. McMurtrie found no other evidence that Dunlap printed there while his newspaper was printed at Lancaster.[50] He, too, returned to Philadelphia when the British moved out.[51]

Dunlap, managing to be on the scene when needed, secured much of the Congressional printing business. At the beginning of 1778, Congress paid him $1,174.69/90, the balance due for printing 'sundry resolves' from October 31, 1776, to

[47] Ibid., 9:817.

[48] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The First Printers of York, Pennsylvania* (York, Pa.: Maple Press Co., 1940), pp. 5–6.

[49] Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820*, 2 vols. (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), 2:984 (hereafter cited as Brigham).

[50] McMurtrie, *First Printers*, pp. 7–8.

[51] Brigham, 2:942.

September 10, 1777.[52] The prime job came in May 1778 with Congress voting to employ him as printer of the Journal in place of Robert Aitken.[53] Of the other printers who also worked for Congress, Henry Miller, in 1778, received twenty dollars for printing, in 1776, 6,100 copies in German of the proposals to Hessians.[54] Similarly, in 1778, Benjamin Towne received thirty-two dollars for printing 3,000 copies of an address dated December 10, 1776.[55] Dunlap soon found that he had overreached himself: the 1777 Journal, for example, did not appear until 1779.[56] Before it did appear, Congress, in February 1779, decided to expedite by instructing the committee superintending printing to employ Aitken to print the 1778 Journal and 'to take of him as well as of Mr. John Dunlap, so many of each future volume printed by them respectively as shall equal the number of the 1 and 2d, already received.'[57] For reasons unknown, the committee took no action.[58] What with the non-appearance of the 1777 Journal and the 1778 Journal not yet given to the printer, Congress, in March 1779, impatiently

> *Resolved*, That, from the first of January last, the journals of this house, except such parts as have been or shall be ordered to be kept secret, be printed immediately; and that, for the future, the journal, except as above, be printed weekly and sent to the executive powers of the several states, to be by them laid before their respective legislatures; and that a printer be engaged to print for Congress; and also a printer or printers be employed to bring up the journals from the time of their present publication to the said first of January.
>
> *Resolved*, That three members be added to the committee appointed to superintend the publication of the journals.[59]

[52] *Journals*, 10:158.

[53] Ibid., 11:416.

[54] Ibid., 12:893.

[55] Ibid., p. 1209. Evans 15173 attributes the printing to John Dunlap.

[56] Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' p. 177.

[57] *Journals*, 13:179–80.

[58] Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' p. 178.

[59] *Journals*, 13:395.

As a result, David C. Claypoole was 'appointed to print for Congress.'[60] Some political machinations probably occurred before this appointment. Congress, in the previous January, had summoned Dunlap and Thomas Paine to account for two articles in the *Pennsylvania Packet*.[61] Claypoole had been Dunlap's apprentice and, it will be recalled, had been a close associate in Dunlap's shop.[62] In 1780, they would publicly become partners.[63] Although the 1779 Journal did appear over Claypoole's name only, this may have been, as Alfred M. Lee suggested, 'a mere dodge with which to keep the printing in the Dunlap and Claypoole plant or the result of a separate venture by Claypoole.'[64]

Hit by ruthless inflation, Congress blew hot and cold over the bills of some of the printers. In March 1779, Aitken's bill of $3,483.45/90 for printing the Journals and 'sundry other contingencies' was approved at once.[65] But, at the same time, the commissioners of claims rebelled at another bill:

> That there appears to be due to John Dunlap by his account for printing &c., from September, 1777, to February, 1779, Eight thousand two hundred Twenty two and 60/90 Dollars.
>
> We beg leave to observe that the charges for printing appear to us very enormous, especially that for printing General Lee's tryal, but as no terms has ever been made before the work was done, and it is a business we do not esteem ourselves competent judges of, especially in these unsettled times when it is difficult to ascertain the value of either labour, materials or money, We are under the necessity of recommending it to further consideration.[66]

[60] Ibid., p. 484.

[61] Ibid., p. 30.

[62] William McCulloch, 'William McCulloch's Additions to Thomas's History of Printing,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 31 (1921): 110 (hereafter cited as McCulloch).

[63] Brigham, 2:942.

[64] Alfred McClung Lee, 'Dunlap and Claypoole: Printers and News-Merchants of the Revolution,' *Journalism Quarterly* 11 (1934): 171.

[65] *Journals*, 13:295–96.

[66] Ibid.; 100 copies of the proceedings of Major General Lee's trial were printed for Congress, four sheets of which were printed by Aitken for Dunlap (Evans 16140).

Payment was delayed while this report was tabled. In the following month, the commissioners reported that they had re-examined Dunlap's accounts and consulted several printers respecting the price for printing Lee's trial. The printers seem to have been elusive about committing themselves to a precise charge. Therefore, 'from the circumstances attending the work of striking one hundred copies only and the rapid depreciation of paper money since it was done,' the commissioners recommended that the whole amount be paid.[67] Congress agreed. When Steiner & Cist submitted a bill of $2,986.60/90 for printing 1,300 copies of *Observations on the American Revolution*, payment was immediately approved.[68] Seven months later, another of their bills was questioned in a report which reveals the helplessness of Congress in determining the proper prices for printing. Resorting to competitive printers, they realized, was not the best method. The commissioners of accounts, in this report of October 30, 1779, stated

> That they have examined the account of David C. Claypoole, and from the best information they have been able to procure from other Printers, as to the different prices charged for Printing done by him; they find that he has overcharged in almost every article, but still they are at a loss how to settle the account, and can only give it as their opinion, that the Public would get their Printing Business done better and at a much cheaper rate, should the Honorable Congress authorise the Committee appointed to superintend the Press, or any other Person or Persons, to receive written proposals from the different Printers every three Months, or any other limited time: and the preference given to the most reasonable. In the meantime they beg leave to recommend that there should be advanced to David C. Claypoole, Twelve thousand Dollars on account, until said proposals shall be given in, from which the Commissioners expect they will be enabled to do justice to the Public and the Claimant.

[67] *Journals*, 14:516–17n.

[68] Ibid., 13:421; Evans 16625.

> They have likewise examined the account of Styner & Cist for printing a Circular Letter in German, and finding their charge extravagant beg leave to recommend that two hundred Dollars should be advanced to them on account until some method be fixed on to enable the Commissioners to settle such accounts with certainty.[69]

Congress ordered that $12,000 be advanced to Claypoole, $200 to Steiner & Cist, and that the rest of the report be referred to the committee appointed to superintend the printing of the Journal.[70] No one was dependable; the scarcity of printers had created a seller's market. And so Claypoole, fastening his hold on the bulk of the work, received about $30,000 during the following year.[71]

At the beginning of 1782, Congress radically reduced the procedure for ordering printing to its essentials. The committee ceased to exist; thereafter it would be the task of the secretary 'to superintend the printing of the journals and publications ordered by Congress.'[72] This shift in procedure meant that printers needed to cultivate only one man instead of several. The necessity of a sweetened trade relationship is illustrated by an incident in one of the departments. According to Dwight L. Teeter, 'Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris complained bitterly that printer Eleazer Oswald was impertinent and forced Oswald to humble himself before receiving a printing job.'[73] However, the new system did save time in making decisions.

Again a plan to sponsor a Bible was introduced in Congress. Before the Revolution, no Bible was printed in English in America, primarily because of the crown copyright and the

[69] *Journals*, 15:1462–63.

[70] Ibid., p. 1241.

[71] Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' p. 363n.

[72] *Journals*, 22:57.

[73] Dwight L. Teeter, 'Press Freedom and the Public Printing: Pennsylvania, 1775–83,' *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (1968): 445n.

availability of imported editions. Beginning with Aitken's edition in 1777, New Testaments were produced here, but the Bible was too formidable an undertaking. Toward the beginning of 1781, Aitken decided to print a Bible at his own financial risk. During the time his Bible was in preparation, he presented a memorial to Congress in which he asked for sanction of an authorized edition. He concluded the memorial with these words:

> That he hath begun and made considerable progress in a neat Edition of the Holy Scriptures for the Use of Schools, But being cautious of suffering his copy of the Bible to Issue forth without the sanction of Congress, Humbly prays that your Honors would take this important Matter into serious consideration & would be pleased to appoint one Member or Members of your Honorable Body to inspect his work so that the same may be published under the Authority of Congress, And further, your memorialist prays, that he may be Commissioned or otherwise appointed & Authorized to print and vend Editions of the Sacred Scriptures, in such manner and form as may best suit the wants and demands of the good people of these States, provided the same be in all things perfectly consonant to the Scriptures as heretofore Established and received amongst us.[74]

When read on January 26, 1781, the memorial was referred to the 'committee on the motion for printing the old and new Testament.'[75] The committee, on September 12, 1782, reported that the Bible was finished, that the committee had, from time to time, watched the progress of the work, and that it had asked the two chaplains of Congress for their opinions. Rev. Dr. William White and Rev. Mr. George Duffield, the two chaplains, appreciated the difficulties inherent in this project. They told the committee that the Bible was 'executed

[74] National Archives, Record Group 360, PCC Item 41, 1:63.

[75] *Journals*, 19:91. The committee had been appointed on Oct. 26, 1780, to consider a motion to recommend that states take measures to procure new and correct editions of the Bible and that printers be regulated by law in order to secure correct texts (*Journals*, 18:979–80).

with great accuracy as to the sense, and with as few grammatical and typographical errors as could be expected in an undertaking of such magnitude.'[76] They rejoiced in the prospect of a supply and hoped that it would be as advantageous as it was honorable to the printer. With the reports of the committee and the chaplains before it, Congress

> *Resolved*, That the United States in Congress assembled, highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion as well as an instance of the progress of arts in this country, and being satisfied from the above report, of his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorise him to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.[77]

For this reason the 1782 Congress is sometimes called 'The Bible Congress.'

Aitken printed the reports and the resolution immediately after the title page in his Bible. Regrettably, the imprimatur of Congress could not prevent this daring project from becoming a financial disaster. The timing was improvident, for soon after the Bible was published peace was proclaimed and the influx of cheaper imported Bibles resumed. McCulloch said that Aitken maintained his high price of 17s. 6d. or half a guinea and even declined an offer of 10s. each for the whole stock. Eventually the major part of the edition was sold at 4s. 6d. each.[78] Aitken, in 1789, claimed that he had lost 'more than three thousand pounds in specie' on the publication of his Bible and memorialized Congress for a patent giving him the exclusive right to print the Holy Scriptures for a term of fourteen years.[79] It was not granted.

[76] *Journals*, 23:572–73.

[77] Ibid., p. 574.

[78] McCulloch, p. 96.

[79] John Wright, *Early Bibles of America* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1894), p. 64.

The on-again, off-again partnership of Dunlap and Claypoole proved to be a very advantageous maneuver. In 1780, they were co-publishers of the *Pennsylvania Packet*; in 1781, Claypoole became sole publisher.[80] Hence Dunlap was available in 1783 when Congress was displeased by the appearance of a letter from Guy Carleton to Elias Boudinot in the *Pennsylvania Packet*.[81] Dunlap replaced Claypoole as printer to Congress with the provision that 'Congress expects he will keep his office at the place where they may reside.'[82]

After more than a decade of using Journals printed in diverse formats by different printers, Congress attempted to produce a new, correct, and complete edition of the set. In 1785, the secretary was ordered to advertise nationally for bids on 1,000 copies in folio, bound in boards.[83] Edmund P. Dandridge, Jr., has summarized the proposals received from nine printers and, as with the Bible proposals of 1777, they give an insight into methods of estimating jobs.[84] When called upon to estimate the cost of printing a Bible, the printers, knowing that a Bible could be printed on approximately thirty-five sheets, costed their work on that basis. But there had been no previous complete edition of the Journals and casting-off all the printed volumes would have required the availability of a complete set. Therefore, in estimating the Journals, they could only give the price per sheet for an edition of 1,000 copies. The prices submitted were:

[80] Brigham, 2:942.

[81] *Journals*, 25:539.

[82] Ibid., p. 772; Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' p. 365.

[83] *Journals*, 29:663n, 895.

[84] Edmund P. Dandridge, Jr., 'Proposals of Nine Printers for a New Edition of the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 1785,' *Studies in Bibliography* 2 (1949–50): 189–96.

	Sheet	*Paper*
John Dunlap, Philadelphia	$12.00	$6.00 (law folio)
Isaac Collins, Trenton	$18.00	Included
Charles Cist, Philadelphia	£6 10s. (Pa. curr.)	Included
Francis Childs, New York	£6 (N.Y. curr., pica type)	Included
	£5 10s. (N.Y. curr., English type)	Included
Samuel Loudon, New York	$8.00 (English type)	$4.25 (law folio)
	$8.00 (English type)	$5.50 (demy size, best paper)
	$15.00 (pica type)	Finest paper, demy size included
Shepard Kollock, New York	$10.00	Included (demy size)
Bennett Wheeler, Providence	$8.00	Included[85]

Rather than submit a price for printing a thousand sheets, Eleazer Oswald, of New York and Philadelphia, stated his prices, in Pennsylvania currency, for printing single sheets: law folio, 3 farthings, demy folio, 7/8d., royal quarto, 1½d., all with paper included. James Adams, of Wilmington, gave no definite prices, but declared that he would work for less than the lowest bid received provided that the work be done in Wilmington. The broad range of prices should not be interpreted as evidence that some printers did not desire to win the bid. In the replies, they made every effort to obtain the patronage of Congress. Collins and Kollock stretched themselves to the extent of printing their proposals. Adams and Cist included letters of recommendation. Childs and Kollock boasted that they would use Benjamin Franklin's type. Wheeler and Dunlap reminded Congress of their previous work

[85] NA, 1:179–270.

by enclosing samples of earlier official documents they had printed. When received, the proposals were referred to a committee and the committee 'made report on which no decision is come to.'[86] This edition of the Journals never appeared.

A less ambitious attempt to reprint the Journals followed in September 1786 when Congress ordered the secretary to have printed and bound 500 copies of the Journals for 1777, 1778, 1780, 1781, and 1782.[87] It has been suggested that the editions of the Journals for 1777 and 1781, printed by John Patterson, of New York, may have resulted from this directive.[88]

Although Dunlap continued as printer to Congress and was paid for the work, some jobs were farmed out to other shops. Congress, sitting in New York in 1787, needed copies of the new Constitution for transmission to the states for ratification. Dunlap, having no press there, contracted with John M'Lean for the printing.[89] A minor item was billed to Congress by Dunlap with his certificate stating that John Swaine printed it 'by my direction.'[90] Such a monopoly required tough and unrelenting defense against the tactics of printers lobbying for the position. Certainly some competitors tried to dislodge Dunlap. At the session on October 3, 1787, a motion to discharge the printer and employ another elicited instructions to the secretary 'to take Order when he shall find it necessary or judge proper.'[91] Perhaps it was Dunlap's Irish understanding of intrigue which helped him fend off the opposition as long as the Continental Congress existed. Probably he could not have known it at the time, but federal and state government printing was to become the source of his fortune. William McCulloch told Isaiah Thomas how this came about:

[86] *Journals*, 29:663, 30:29–30.

[87] Ibid., 31:650.

[88] Friedenwald, 'Journals and Papers,' pp. 369–70.

[89] Powell, *Books of a New Nation*, pp. 65–66; Evans 20791.

[90] *Journals*, 33:754.

[91] *Journals*, 33:606.

> The lots in Market Street and its vicinity which he had received from government, in pay for printing, were little worth at the time; but during his lengthened period of years, the city had extended out to his property, and greatly encreased their value. One square (which you perhaps know) extending from Market to Chestnut Street, and from Eleventh to Twelfth, and which he obtained for printing at a few hundred pounds, he sold in 1809 to Stephen Girard, for 100,000 or 120,000 dollars.[92]

The printer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution became, eventually, a very wealthy man.

Official Printing for the States

Many documents relating to official printing still repose unexamined in the archives of the several states. The comparatively few published records show that war prevented some state legislatures from establishing a routine for issuing printed matter. Maryland, for example, had only one state printer, Frederick Green, who held the position throughout the Revolution while at least six firms printed for Pennsylvania during the Revolution.[93] Other states shifted, by choice or necessity, from one printer to another, or occasionally insisted that other printers also be employed. And some states, at times, could not find satisfactory printing facilities within their boundaries.

New York

The documents about the official printers of New York provide a glimpse of adventurous men in a hazardous time. Violence underlies the bland fabric of these documents. Ten days before Washington decided to evacuate New York City, Samuel Loudon, Whig owner of the *New York Packet* and printer for the Committee of Safety, announced the removal of his printing office to Fishkill (Beacon), 'where the Provin-

[92] McCulloch, p. 107.

[93] Joseph Towne Wheeler, *The Maryland Press, 1777–1790* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1938), pp. 66, 80–182; Teeter, 'Press Freedom,' pp. 447–48.

cial Congress now reside.'[94] After an interval as a dealer in books, prints, and maps at Norwich, Connecticut, he began printing official documents and other items in Fishkill at the end of the year.[95] A grant of £200 from the Committee of Safety to print any acts they wished to appear in his newspaper enabled him to resume publication of the *New York Packet* in January 1777.[96] Loudon signified that this was a temporary removal by continuing the volume numbering of the New York edition; when he brought the *New York Packet* back to New York City in 1783, he continued the volume numbering of the Fishkill edition.[97]

Loudon's presumptive spirit sometimes overshadowed his love of country. Six days after the first issue of the *New York Packet* in Fishkill, the Committee of Safety asked him to explain his printing of extracts from Hugh Gaine's newspaper. Loudon replied that an official had warned him not to publish them and he started to alter the page, but some of the sheets had been taken by visitors and some completed copies had already left his office. Loudon also told the committee that the extracts were printed 'with no evil design but merely to satisfy the curiousity of those who might wish to see what stuff was published at New York.'[98] The committee reprimanded him, reminded him of the funds he was receiving, and shortly thereafter appointed John Holt as 'Printer to the State of New-York.'[99]

Holt, once the owner of the popular *New-York Journal*, had

[94] Brigham, 1:675; Evans 14925; Alexander J. Wall, 'Samuel Loudon (1727–1813),' *New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 6 (1922): 80.

[95] Wall, 'Samuel Loudon,' pp. 80–81; Robert W. G. Vail, 'A Patriotic Pair of Peripatetic Printers,' in *Essays Honoring Lawrence C. Wroth* (Portland, Me., 1951), p. 392.

[96] Wall, 'Samuel Loudon,' pp. 81, 83–85.

[97] Brigham, 1:570–71.

[98] Alfred Lawrence Lorenz, *Hugh Gaine* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), p. 125.

[99] Ibid., p. 126; I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, 6 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915–28), 5:1046; Evans 15478.

experienced the loss of his property when he fled to New Haven before the advancing British.[100] As Isaiah Thomas had remarked, he was a 'firm whig' and the *Journal* 'a zealous advocate for the American cause.'[101] Obviously he would be more satisfactory as state printer of New York than the less successful Loudon, whose newspaper was so disappointing.[102] A committee was appointed by the New York Provincial Congress

> to treat with Mr. John Holt, about setting up a printing office in this State; and that they be authorized to offer him two hundred pounds for one year as a State Printer of this State, provided he will print a public newspaper, and on like terms as Samuel Loudon. And
>
> *Resolved,* That the said committee be and hereby are authorized and directed to seize and secure all the printing types formerly belonging to Hugh Gaine, now in the county of Dutchess and in its neighborhood.[103]

With the offer in hand, Holt, accompanied by his family, left New Haven for Kingston (Esopus), New York. On the road, at Danbury, Connecticut, the enemy pillaged or burned much of their effects, but this did not deter the Holts.[104] At Kingston, in July 1777, John Holt resumed publication of the *New-York Journal,* continuing the numeration of the New York edition.[105] He also obtained a share of the official printing previously given to Loudon.[106] As October began, military intelligence informed the government of the enemy's approach.

[100] Vail, 'A Patriotic Pair,' p. 391; Layton Barnes Murphy, 'John Holt, Patriot Printer and Publisher' (PH.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1965), p. 18.

[101] Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America,* 2d ed., 2 vols. (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1874), 1:303, 2:118 (hereafter cited as Thomas).

[102] Murphy, 'John Holt,' p. 19.

[103] Hugh Gaine, *The Journals of Hugh Gaine, Printer,* ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1902), 1:58n. Gaine's type came into possession of the government after he abandoned his Newark shop (Vail, 'A Patriotic Pair,' p. 391).

[104] *Dictionary of American Biography,* s.v. 'Holt, John.'

[105] Brigham, 1:592–93.

[106] Evans 15478–79.

The Council of Safety assured Holt that in the remote event of hostilities at Kingston, he would be given enough wagons to remove his shop, his family, and his possessions. When the event became an actuality, there was no plan of escape. In Holt's own words:

> No Carriages were to be had, except four Waggons, when the Enemy were just at Hand, sent me by the President of the Council, which enabled me to remove about a Sixth part of my Effects, Viz One wearing apparel, three Beds, my Account Books, most of my Paper and the two best Fonts of printing Letter belonging to the State, which I preserved in preference to my own, the whole of which, together with my Press, all my printed Books, parchment &c. all my Household & Kitchen Furniture &c were totally destroyed or plundered by the Enemy, and my Family and Workmen obliged to take Refuge among the Neighbouring Inhabitants.[107]

An appropriation of £200 from the Council of Safety as well as some borrowed money enabled Holt to take his entourage to Poughkeepsie and collect materials for a new shop.[108] In the meantime, Samuel Loudon boldly took advantage of Holt's misfortune when he needed stock for his attempt at getting the official printing lost to Holt. While ordering paper from one of Holt's former suppliers, Loudon reminded him that Holt would not be needing paper since he 'lost his press in Kingston, tho' he got his Types saved.'[109] With the competition eliminated, Loudon recaptured the official printing for a very short time.

At Poughkeepsie, Holt surmounted many difficulties before he could begin to print. He possessed type, but had to acquire a press and procure the appurtenances. By February 1778, he found himself 'still unable to do my Press Work, for Want of a Blanket, which I have, without Effect, used my utmost En-

[107] Victor Hugo Paltsits, 'John Holt—Printer and Postmaster,' *Bulletin of The New York Public Library* 24 (1920): 496.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Wall, 'Samuel Loudon,' p. 83.

deavours to obtain.'[110] The blanket did turn up soon after. He resumed printing for the state and, in May, sufficient staff and finances permitted him to recommence the publication of the *New-York Journal* which, because of the paper shortage, was reduced to a half-sheet.[111] He used the title of 'Printer to the State of New-York,' but it did little to mitigate the problems facing him and every other printer. Inflation, delayed payment, and shortages could not be eliminated by any legislature. Lack of paper and financial support forced suspension of the newspaper between November 1780 and July 1781. In January 1782, it was again suspended so that the state laws could be printed.[112]

Holt and Loudon returned to New York City after the British evacuation in 1783. Although the state owed Holt a sizeable amount of money, he kept the office of state printer until his death in 1784.[113] His wife, Elizabeth, succeeded him, but her short tenure ended in 1785. The title then went to the man who had been standing in the wings for seven years—Samuel Loudon.[114]

The wonder is that Holt and Loudon, whom R. W. G. Vail called 'a patriotic pair of peripatetic printers,' carried on their shops under such terrible conditions.[115] They were distant from any source of supplies and had to scrounge and make a go of it with what they could find. The stern and patient character of these men deserve our respect when it is understood that even printers working in a major city had difficulties in producing legislative documents.

[110] Paltsits, 'John Holt—Printer and Postmaster,' p. 496.

[111] Evans 15931–37; Brigham, 1:724; Charles M. Thomas, 'The Publication of Newspapers During the American Revolution,' *Journalism Quarterly* 9 (1932): 360.

[112] Brigham, 1:725.

[113] Victor Hugo Paltsits, 'John Holt, Public Printer of New York,' *Bulletin of The New York Public Library* 26 (1922): 942–43; Murphy, 'John Holt,' p. 23. The inventory of Holt's shop at the time of his death is in Paltsits, 'John Holt—Printer and Postmaster,' p. 498.

[114] Evans 19130–31.

[115] Vail, 'A Patriotic Pair,' p. 391.

Massachusetts

At Boston, the General Court of Massachusetts was constantly pestered by reports of the printers' hardships during the Revolution. In October 1776, Powars & Willis agreed to print 500 copies of the 1776–77 House Journal for 27s. per sheet.[116] Nineteen months later, the 1776 Journal had not yet been completely printed.[117] During the interval, Thomas and John Fleet received the job of printing succeeding Journals and the House extended itself to making a grant to a papermaker 'to enable him to carry on the Paper-making Business, and to devise some Way of supplying the Printers of the General Court with Paper.'[118] The papermaker may have supplied some, but not enough. In February 1779, the General Court directed the Board of War to import a limit of 1,000 reams of printing and writing paper.[119] With or without the aid of the General Court, the Fleets apparently obtained sufficient paper, only to find that inflation had turned projected profit into loss. They appealed to the House for help in their petition of April 20, 1779:

> That on the 30th of May 1778 they engaged to print your Honors Journals, and the Resolves of the General Court, on the same Terms they were printed the Year before, viz. at £5—per Sheet for 500 Sheets, and to have an Allowance in case Paper should rise.—That the Price of Paper at that Time was 30/, per Ream, which left £3.10. per Sheet for the Labor of the Printers, Use of the Press, Types, Ink, Firing, Rent, &c. &c.—That since that Time the Price of Labor has risen so high, and the Necessaries of Life so exceedingly enhanced, that the amount of Journeyman's Wages only for printing one Sheet is upwards of £10 —exclusive of Paper. . . . It will take three Hands two Days to compleat one Sheet, which at 36/. per Day each is £10.16—[120]

[116] *Journal of the House of Representatives* (Boston: various pub., 1720–), Oct. 29, 1776 (hereafter cited as JHR).

[117] JHR, May 30, 1778.

[118] JHR, Oct. 17, 1777, May 30, 1778.

[119] JHR, Feb. 27, 1779.

[120] Massachusetts Archives, 222:161 (hereafter cited as Arc.).

The House responded with patchwork sympathy; it allowed them £10 10s. per sheet 'including the rise of paper and the Five pounds per sheet already granted.'[121] One month later, the House received bids for the printing of the 1779 session. The Fleets and John Gill offered to print 500 copies of the Resolves and Journals, respectively, at £13 per sheet and Benjamin Edes offered to print the Laws on the same terms.[122] The acceptance of these prices by the House did not conclude the transaction, for by the end of the year the House advanced £200 each to Thomas Fleet and John Gill to enable them to buy paper.[123]

Costs were becoming almost prohibitive. At the time when the order for printing the 1780 Resolves went out, the price of £54 for 500 sheets was considered too high to permit printing the Journal.[124] Five months later, the House resignedly decided to print the Journals 'so far as they relate to the organization of this House.'[125] It awarded the job to Nathaniel Willis at 'nine Shillings L. M. of the old emission for each Sheet.'[126] When Willis petitioned to have his accounts settled because he needed the money for paper, the resolution for payment distinctly cautioned the treasurer: 'if he pays the Memorialist in paper money, to pay him in Bills of the New Emission on which no Interest has been paid.'[127] By 1782, some prices finally became so intolerable that the session voted to print the Acts and Resolves only.[128] Benjamin Edes & Sons agreed to print the Laws at 4d. per sheet.[129] Nathaniel

[121] JHR, Apr. 28, 1779.
[122] JHR, May 31, 1779.
[123] JHR, Dec. 18, 1779.
[124] JHR, June 1, 1780.
[125] JHR, Nov. 10, 1780.
[126] JHR, Nov. 28, 1780.
[127] Arc., 234:103.
[128] JHR, June 6, 1782.
[129] Arc., 142:373.

Willis contracted to print the Resolves and give them immediate distribution:

> Also, the Resolves in his News-Paper as they are deliver'd him, and send one of his said weekly News-Papers to the Town-Clerk of each Town in this Commonwealth—on the following Terms —The Resolves at four Pence per Sheet—those put in his News-Paper at usual Prices of Advertisements—the Papers sent to the Towns being gratis.—The Resolves to be printed as fast as a Sheet can be filled—Six hundred & fifty of each Sheet to be printed, and to be deliver'd to the Clerk of the House of Representatives, or as the General Court may order—[130]

Thomas Adams and John Nourse printed the Acts and Resolves of the next year at 1½d. per sheet.[131] With the acquisition of the *Independent Chronicle* from Nathaniel Willis in 1784 they were able to become strong enough to secure a very good share of official printing until Nourse's death in 1790. Selling to the government demanded constant vigilance in those years. It was always done on a temporary basis; competitors stood ready to undercut; payment was slow and there were persuasive hints from the government to look sharp or else. At one point, in 1786, the printers certainly understood the threat implied when the committee considering proposals was 'instructed to consider the expediency of governments providing themselves with a press of their own.'[132] A review of prices confirms the intuition of the General Court. In 1784, the price was 1d. per sheet for the Acts and Resolves, 3/4d. for the Journals.[133] In 1786, Adams & Nourse agreed to do the General Court's printing for 3/5d. per sheet although they first offered 2/3d. per sheet.[134] The House had agreed to the higher amount, but when the Senate

[130] Arc., 142:372.

[131] JHR, June 5 and 10, 1783.

[132] JHR, June 7, 1786.

[133] JHR, June 9 and 14, 1784.

[134] JHR, June 6, 1786; Massachusetts Archives. Legislative Records of the Council, June 20, 1786.

proposed the idea of a government press, the price was reduced.[135]

In 1787, the terms were radically changed: Adams & Nourse agreed to print sets of the Acts and Resolves gratis in return for the privilege of all other government printing as well as for official printing in their newspaper (at 3s. per square).[136] This comprehensive arrangement soon became too expensive for both the printers and the government. After the contract was renewed for the following year, Adams & Nourse found themselves unable to collect their bills. Their petition frankly stated that 'unless some speedy relief is afforded them they must be inevitably ruined.'[137] The General Court, itself short of money, knew that it could delay no longer. It directed the Treasurer 'to borrow the sum of *one thousand pounds* especially for the purpose of paying the same to the said Adams & Nourse.'[138]

Connecticut

Connecticut, since 1714, had always appointed a member of the Green family as official printer.[139] And so Timothy Green III, of New London, 'Printer to the Governor and Company,' automatically became 'Printer to the State of Connecticut' in 1777.[140] He held that office until the General Assembly, in 1785, decided that the Acts and Resolves must be printed in the place where the Assembly met.[141] This policy of restricting government printing to a single trustworthy firm seems to have worked well for Connecticut. On occasions when the government ordered more work than Green could

[135] JHR, June 7, 1786.

[136] Massachusetts Archives. Legislative Records of the Council, June 23, 1787.

[137] Ibid., Nov. 21, 1788.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Mary Louise Dunham Meder, 'Timothy Green III, Connecticut Printer, 1737–1796' (PH.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1964), p. 123.

[140] Evans 15258, 15625.

[141] Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' p. 123.

produce, the excess was given to other Connecticut printers. Thus, Green's brothers, Thomas and Samuel, of New Haven, and Ebenezer Watson, of Hartford, also turned out government work.[142] Green's bills, as transcribed by Meder from the Connecticut Archives, include a series for printing 1,100 copies of the state laws. The charge per sheet increased in the familiar inflationary manner: in 1776, it was £3 15s.; in 1777, it rose to £4; in 1778, to £6 11s. 3d.; in 1779, to £30 and then to £67 10s. After the currency changed, the price in 1782 and 1783 was about £4 per sheet.[143]

Rhode Island

In the neighboring state of Rhode Island, John Carter's desire to be the only state printer was frustrated both by his inability to produce work promptly and by aggressive competitors. Carter, in Providence, did enjoy the monopoly for a while after Solomon Southwick had been compelled to abandon his Newport press and flee to Massachusetts in 1776. However, within a year or two, Southwick, still in Massachusetts, was printing documents for Rhode Island.[144] The probable cause for this appears in a resolution of the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1778 which directed the secretary of state to 'employ as many Printers (if Mr. Carter cannot do the Business) as will be necessary.'[145] When Southwick returned to Rhode Island in 1779 and established a press in Providence in partnership with Bennett Wheeler, Carter's distress was too great to suppress. In his *Providence Gazette*, an attack on the new competition declared that Southwick 'sat up his Printing-Office in Rehoboth [Massachusetts], a few miles from Providence, and has ever since done, and continues to do, one half of the Printing-work for the Honorable Gen-

[142] Ibid., p. 92.

[143] Ibid., pp. 269–309.

[144] John Eliot Alden, ed., *Rhode Island Imprints, 1727–1800* (New York: Pub. for The Bibliographical Society of America, R. R. Bowker Co., 1949), pp. 616–21.

[145] Ibid., p. 283.

eral Assembly of this State, which afforded his Press full employ.'[146] After Southwick moved back to Newport in 1779, Wheeler retained a share of Rhode Island's printing. In 1786 and 1787, the patronage enlarged to include other firms.

New Jersey

The legislature of a state which had an official printer but no newspaper within its boundaries soon found that a patriot newspaper was indispensable. To fill this need, Governor Livingston of New Jersey asked the Assembly in 1777 to sponsor a weekly newspaper by guaranteeing 700 subscribers.[147] The proposal was referred to a committee which met with Isaac Collins, of Burlington, formerly 'Printer to the king, for the Province of New-Jersey,' and at that time public printer.[148] Collins wisely insisted upon certain terms, saying that he would issue the *New-Jersey Gazette* as a weekly in four folio pages at 26s. per year, half paid at the time of subscribing, provided that the legislature guarantee 700 subscribers within six months. He also specified that a cross-post from his office to the nearest post office be established at state expense, and that he and four workmen be exempted from service in the militia, 'liable however to be taxed as other Exempts.'[149] The legislature agreed, granting Collins additional aid by giving military exemptions to his papermaker, William Shaffer, and Shaffer's two employees. Then the members of the Council and the Assembly began to canvass subscriptions for the *New-Jersey Gazette*.[150]

Collins printed the first issue, December 5, 1777, at Bur-

[146] Ibid., p. 615.

[147] William Nelson, 'Some New Jersey Printers and Printing in the Eighteenth Century,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 21 (1911): 28.

[148] Ibid.; Evans 14911; Richard F. Hixson, *Isaac Collins* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 68.

[149] Hixson, *Isaac Collins*, p. 68.

[150] Ibid., p. 69.

lington; in March 1778, it was moved to Trenton.[151] State sponsorship, he found, did not assure a steady production system. Shortages of paper, of help, of subscription payments, and a constant inflation of prices were beyond control. There was no improvement when, in 1778, the legislature again tried to help Collins by exempting from military service any papermaker in the state and four of his employees.[152] Nor could the legislature force the subscriber to pay. Despite an offer to accept produce instead of money, arrears became so great that Collins suspended the *Gazette* for three weeks in July 1779. As official printer, he continued to print documents and currency, and, of course, he was paid for official notices in his newspaper. Besides this, he sold the state writing supplies which came from his general store where he dealt in such merchandise as produce, liquors, and bank notes.[153]

While the governor and legislature were extending all possible support to the *New-Jersey Gazette*, another New Jersey newspaper was founded under what might be called semiofficial auspices. As the legislature had planned, the *Gazette* was a counteraction against British propaganda coming out of New York. But the *Gazette* had its greatest circulation in the southern part of the state and a patriot newspaper was also needed in northern New Jersey, especially when Washington's army spent the winter of 1778–79 near Morristown. This explains why Shepard Kollock founded the *New-Jersey Journal* at Chatham on February 16, 1779.[154] Kollock, a printer, had been serving as a lieutenant in the camp near Morristown. It has been said that Brig. Gen. Henry Knox, convinced of the necessity of starting a newspaper, asked General Washington to permit Kollock to resign for that

[151] Brigham, 1:493, 519.

[152] Warren E. Stickle III, 'State and Press in New Jersey during the American Revolution: Part I,' *New Jersey History* 86 (1968): 167.

[153] Warren E. Stickle III, 'State and Press in New Jersey during the American Revolution: Part II,' *New Jersey History* 86 (1968): 238–41.

[154] Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part I,' p. 161.

purpose and that Washington 'readily agreed.'[155] If this actually occurred, Kollock was probably delighted. He officially resigned on January 3, 1779, but a request for permission to resign, dated May 15, 1778, has been found by Sidney I. Pomerantz.[156] In it, Kollock made bold to complain that less able men had been preferred to him for promotion to the rank of captain.[157] Why Kollock resigned is uncertain, but there is no doubt that the *New-Jersey Journal* had some kind of semi-official sponsorship. During 1780, the army commissary at Morristown furnished Kollock with paper and the materials for making paper. The receipts contain such items as 'Nine Hundred W^t^ of old Tent Unfitt for service,' 'Fourteen quire common & four quire large Post Paper,' 'One ream Common paper' for 'printing returns,' 'Eight Hundred Three Quarters & Twelve pound old Tent Cloath,' 'Two Bundles Old Tent Rags w^t^ Two Hundred One Quarter.'[158] (The present-day scholar reading those 1780 issues of the *New-Jersey Journal* may be handling the fibers of the tents of Washington's army.) At Chatham, Kollock's problems duplicated those of Collins at Trenton. He could not obtain enough paper, apprentices were scarce, subscribers defaulted.[159] Like Collins, Kollock sensibly ran a general store for added income.[160]

Virginia

New Jersey's ability to produce a sponsored newspaper as well as official printing was in contrast to the harsh situation

[155] North Callahan, *Henry Knox* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1958), p. 154.

[156] *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. 'Kollock, Shepard'; Sidney I. Pomerantz, 'The Patriot Newspaper and the American Revolution,' in *The Era of the American Revolution*, ed. Richard B. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 327.

[157] Shepard Kollock to Col. John Lamb [?], May 15, 1778, Lamb Papers, New-York Historical Society.

[158] Nelson, 'Some New Jersey Printers,' p. 31.

[159] Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part I,' pp. 165–66; Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part II,' pp. 236–38.

[160] Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part II,' p. 240.

in Virginia. In 1777, Alexander Purdie, of Williamsburg, owner of the *Virginia Gazette*, had been allowed £600 per annum for his services as public printer.[161] But his shop was so depleted that when the legislature wanted a new edition of the laws, he declared that he would need about £2,000 sterling for the purchase of equipment.[162] This engendered one of the most interesting sales in the annals of American printing. On July 15, 1777, Patrick Henry wrote to Richard Bache that he knew of no place where he could get type and asked for a quantity of Benjamin Franklin's type sufficient to print a new edition of the laws. Henry offered to buy, borrow, or eventually replace the type.[163] Three more documents reveal that Virginia acquired more than type: a letter from Richard Bache to Franklin mentioning the sale of Franklin's press to the state of Virginia; a request, written in 1789, by Franklin's representative for payment 'of printing Tipes, Presses, and other Materials supplied the State by his [Franklin's] Attorney, during the War'; and a statement by John Dixon, Purdie's former partner, that he heard that Purdie had received printing materials from Philadelphia which Franklin identified to Dixon as his own, 'sent to Virginia by Mr. Bache, at the request of Mr. Henry.'[164] The date of arrival of these supplies is difficult to determine because Purdie's output continued to lag. At the end of 1777, Purdie, who was unable to print the Journals of the Senate and House 'with proper dispatch,' lost the Senate's printing to Dixon & Hunter.[165] Soon the House of Delegates became so impatient that Purdie felt

[161] Earl G. Swem, 'A Bibliography of Virginia, Part II,' *Bulletin of the Virginia State Library* 10 (1917): 1064 (hereafter cited as Swem).

[162] Swem, p. 1063.

[163] Patrick Henry to Richard Bache, July 15, 1777, Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society.

[164] Swem, pp. 1073–74. In a letter of June 12, 1975, Prof. William B. Willcox kindly informed me that, in a 1778 letter to Franklin, Richard Bache referred to the type sold to Virginia as 'Types you brought over with you from England.' This was probably part of Franklin's purchase, at a 1773 auction, of type from the James foundry and was brought to America when Franklin returned in 1775.

[165] Swem, p. 8.

constrained to justify himself. A disheartened communication, submitted to the House in October 1778, itemized the causes of his plight: 'Notwithstanding my most assiduous Endeavours to procure printing Ink, and a good Journeyman (both of which I am entirely at a Loss for) I have been unfortunately disappointed. . . . Paper is now risen to an enormous Height. That which before I could have purchased for ten Shillings a Ream is now charged at £8 the Ream, and Gazette Paper £9 pr. Ream. . . . Journeymen's Wages are now more than doubled; and they expect an Augmentation, Board being so high.'[166] This statement was followed, four days later, by Purdie's estimate:

October 14th, 1778.

A state of Expenses which will attend the printing of the Journal of the House of Delegates, and the Acts of Assembly, supposing two sessions in a year.

For Paper for the above Purposes, 200 Reams, at £8 pr. Ream	£1600
Two Compositors, at £200 pr. Ann. each	400
One half of a good white Pressman's Wages	100
Two Negroes, at £50 each, for Pressmen	100
Bookbinding expenses	100
Printers Ink, Parchment, &c., &c	100
Paper for the different Inspections, for Tobacco Notes, Paper, &c. 50 Reams, at £8 pr. Ream	400
	£2800

The above is the present Price of Paper, but if the Assembly direct it to be imported, with a few other Articles, they may be had immensely cheaper. For instance, 250 Reams of Paper might be got for £500 and that would allow full 300 pr. ct. upon first cost. Ink, Parchment, &c., would be merely trifling.[167]

The Senate allowed Purdie £1,500 per annum for his services as public printer, but Purdie did not live long enough to print the Journal for the October session. He died within seven months and, in 1782, the House Journal noted that the

[166] Swem, p. 1064.

[167] Swem, pp. 1064–65.

Journal for the October session had not been printed.[168] At Purdie's death, his nephew and apprentice, John Clarkson, and Augustine Davis, one of his journeymen, issued the *Virginia Gazette*.[169] With the firm of Dixon & Nicolson, they shared the public printing.[170]

When the capital was moved to Richmond in 1780, Clarkson & Davis could not find a shop to occupy.[171] In consequence, all of the public printing went to Dixon & Nicolson, who had been successful in establishing a Richmond office.[172] Almost immediately, as the legislature realized that Dixon & Nicolson's meager shop could not turn out the work given them, the Assembly voted that 'a good printing press, well provided with proper materials, is indispensably necessary for the right information of the people: Be it enacted, That the Governor, with the advice of council, be authorized . . . to engage with, and employ, at the public expense, and for the public service, a good and able printer, of firm and known attachment to the independence of the United States, who may be willing to bring a good and well provided press into this commonwealth.'[173]

It must have been with a cheerful spirit that Gov. Thomas Jefferson started negotiations by writing to the Virginia delegates in Congress. They transmitted a proposal from John Dunlap, of Philadelphia, to bring or send a printing press, supplies, and a manager who would issue a weekly newspaper as well as produce the public printing.[174] Dunlap selected James Hayes, Jr., formerly printer in Baltimore and Annap-

[168] Swem, pp. 10–11.

[169] Brigham, 2:1162; Douglas C. McMurtrie, *A History of Printing in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1936), 2:290.

[170] Swem, p. 1082.

[171] Swem, pp. 1069–70.

[172] Swem, p. 1082.

[173] Swem, p. 1065.

[174] Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950–), 3:579–80.

olis, as his resident partner for the Richmond firm of Dunlap & Hayes. After collecting and packing the contents of a printing office, they shipped it to Richmond on board the *Bachelor*, 'a ship belonging to Philadelphia,' but as the *Bachelor* sailed into Chesapeake Bay, it 'was driven on shore by stress of weather, and taken by the enemy.'[175] Undaunted by the total loss, Dunlap & Hayes petitioned the House of Delegates for 'such relief, as may enable them again to make an effort to engage in the public printing business of this state.'[176] The House responded in two directions: it authorized the governor, with advice of the Council, to settle the amount of the loss by payment from the treasury and, reminded of Franklin's sale, it ordered that 'inquiry ought to be made whether the printing press at Williamsburg is public property.'[177] Evidently it was not, for the unconquerable Dunlap & Hayes assembled another outfit in Philadelphia and this time three wagons carried the printing equipment to Virginia. On the bill for transportation, Governor Jefferson commented that the 'expence of transporting the printing materials of Mr. Hayes from Philadelphia *here* by land was taken on the state rather than run the risk of their being lost a second time if brought by water, and that to be again made good.'[178] By the time the wagon train arrived, the British invasion had forced the government to leave Richmond. The press had to be set up temporarily at Charlottesville until moved to Richmond in the fall of 1781.[179] Dunlap & Hayes, as public printers until 1785, experienced the common pressures of deferred payment, shortages, and the government's insistence on prompt publication. Obdurate men though they were, they felt that they were finally being destroyed by an accumulation of anxi-

[175] Ibid., p. 580n.; Swem, p. 1065.

[176] Swem, p. 1065.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Jefferson, *Papers*, 5:158.

[179] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:298–99.

eties. In a 1783 petition to the House of Delegates, they saw their future as dismal:

> Without meaning either to impeach the honor or the credit of the State, they humbly remark, that of £300 voted them by the last Session of Assembly as absolutely necessary for the immediate procuring of Paper and other necessaries, they have received Thirty Pounds only, added to which, one of their principal workmen whose services had been long withheld by a lingering illness, lately died, another was obliged to leave the State for his health, and others have been also disabled by sickness, the purchase of materials from Philadelphia altogether prevented for the want of money voted them, and their former losses bearing heavy upon them at a time the most difficult of any in which the Public Business has been in their hands.[180]

In 1788, Dunlap was still waiting for the state to pay him for the captured printing equipment.[181]

A succession of various firms followed Dunlap & Hayes as official printers.[182] Sometimes these offices needed to share the work, as seen in a 1787 letter from John Dixon about the act to repeal the act for incorporating the Protestant Episcopal Church: the 'sheet which contained that Act was composed in Mr. Davis' office, examined by Mr. Beckley, and worked off at our Press.'[183]

North Carolina

Where there was no competition, a legislature could do little but fume about delayed publications. North Carolina, frequently discontented with James Davis, of New Bern, ever since his appointment over a quarter-century before, tried to replace him in 1777 by bringing John Pinkney, bankrupt printer of Williamsburg, to Halifax as public printer.[184] Gov-

[180] Swem, p. 1067.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid., p. 1082.
[183] Ibid., p. 1072.
[184] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:342–44.

ernor Caswell's letter tells what happened: 'The Assembly thought proper to remove an old servant (the printer) for neglect of duty and appoint one who resided in Virginia, who after long delay, removed to Halifax about five or six weeks ago, where he died.'[185] Davis, apparently sure of his position, began to print the Laws at his own expense. Soon he was again appointed public printer at £500 per annum in 1777, at £1,200 in 1778, and at £2,500 in 1779. During these years, the balance of power between legislature and printer remained fairly constant. When the state delayed paying his salary, Davis threatened to resign, then reversed himself on special request and the promise of extra money. In 1781, he defended himself against inflation by inducing the state to pay him in specie and to buy the paper for printing the Laws. Yet there is evidence that in these years his publications were as slow as before. His son, Thomas, who succeeded him in 1782 at a salary of £600, exclusive of the cost of paper, confronted a legislature which had printers promising better service and lobbying for the job. In 1785, the Davis monopoly ended when election after nominations was required instead of a resolution or bill designating the printer. Under the new system, Abraham Hodge won the election and held office with successive partners until 1797.[186] Hodge made a habit of getting a partner and control of a press near the place where the Assembly met.[187]

Georgia

Of all the states, Georgia had the most difficult problem in issuing official documents, largely because of its remoteness from printing centers. A dilemma of moral conduct was involved when James Johnston, the loyalist printer, closed the

[185] Mary Lindsay Thornton, 'Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749–1815,' *North Carolina Historical Review* 21 (1944): 190.

[186] Ibid., pp. 190–93.

[187] George Washington Paschal, *A History of Printing in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Co., 1946), p. 16.

only printing shop in Georgia in February 1776 to hide in the countryside with his family. Immediately the patriots seized his type and looked for another printer, but, as there was none to be had, they offered Johnston protection if he would return to Savannah and print for them. Johnston refused and, fearful of what might happen, took his family to the West Indies.[188] It took a year or less for a printer, William Lancaster, to come to Georgia. Little is known about that man who printed at least four pamphlets in Savannah in 1777 and 1778.[189] One was *The Constitution of the State of Georgia*; another, *An Act for the Better Settling of Intestate Estates.*[190] Lancaster also published a newspaper for a short time.[191] The Assembly, meanwhile, had not forgotten about Johnston who, in March 1778, was attainted of high treason.[192] By August, criticism of Lancaster's work led to demands for his removal. The Executive Council, on receiving a 'petition from a number of persons . . . for the establishing Edward Welch in the printing business in Savannah,' appointed a committee 'to make enquiry concerning the said Welch and also in what manner Types and other utensils can be had for him.'[193] After the committee's report was read, William Lancaster was asked to appear 'to shew cause why the Types and other printing utensils purchased by the public and intended for him, should not be again returned to the public at what they cost, the said William Lancaster not having complied with his engagements respecting the said Types and utensils.'[194] Lancaster appeared, but refused to give up the equipment, a

[188] Alexander A. Lawrence, *James Johnston, Georgia's First Printer* (Savannah: Pigeonhole Press, 1956), p. 18.

[189] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:383.

[190] Evans 15307–8.

[191] Brigham, 1:126–27.

[192] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:385.

[193] Allen D. Candler, comp., *The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia*, 3 vols. (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Co., 1908), 2:89.

[194] Ibid., p. 98.

refusal which, as Douglas C. McMurtrie surmises, may have been based on lack of pay for his work.[195] In reply, the Executive Council ordered the press, type, and apparatus impressed for public use and turned over to Welch. The Council also ordered that a fair price be paid to Lancaster if it be determined that he, not the public, was the owner.[196] A later order of the Council, on November 25, 1778, that a resolve 'be duly published in the next Gazette' is one shred of evidence that Welch reestablished the newspaper.[197] Welch had little opportunity to prove himself as official printer because the capture of Savannah by the British in December disrupted all government operations. For approximately three years, the Revolutionary government, having no printing facilities, purchased essential printing outside of the state.[198]

James Johnston happily returned to Savannah from exile in the West Indies. A grant of £200 from the British government helped him to refurbish his shop and take over the *Royal Georgia Gazette*, which had already been established.[199] His resumption of printing for the loyalists was not to be forgotten by the patriots when they grew stronger. The patriot Assembly, in May 1782, banished Johnston forever, thereby making it necessary for him to leave Savannah when the British moved out in June. While he was marking time all summer in a now unknown location, the patriots started proceedings against him by confiscating his house and selling it.[200] Johnston, perhaps hoping for an eventual reconciliation, notified the House of Assembly that the 'Printing Materials belonging to this State' were left in the hands of his wife who had remained in Savannah.[201] On hearing this, the Executive

[195] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:387.

[196] Candler, *Revolutionary Records*, 2:101–2.

[197] Ibid., p. 121.

[198] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:388.

[199] Lawrence, *James Johnston*, p. 19; Brigham, 1:131.

[200] Lawrence, *James Johnston*, pp. 22–24.

[201] Candler, *Revolutionary Records*, 3:125; Lawrence, *James Johnston*, p. 24.

Council directed the sheriff to take possession of the press and type.[202] The chips in the game were now evenly distributed; both state and printer knew well that each needed the other. Johnston's gesture of surrendering his shop was matched in August when the state, removing his name from the list of banished loyalists, reduced his punishment to a fine of eight percent of his property. By September, he was once more in Savannah and assured he would not be molested if he would 'print for the public.'[203] So anxious was the state to retain its printer that it employed questionable tactics to cancel the sale of Johnston's house. With press and house again in his possession, Johnston, now a beneficiary of the Revolution, waited for the next session.[204] As planned, the House of Assembly, in January 1783, appointed him to print the Laws and Journal.[205] At the end of the month, he began publication of the *Gazette of the State of Georgia*.[206] The former Tory, without apology or explanation, eventually succeeded in becoming a respected Whig who printed for the state until the seat of government was moved to Augusta in 1786.[207]

When the need arose, some states, by unconventional measures or dubious and ingenious schemes, contrived to publish their documents. Journals of the legislatures record these efforts to obtain adequate printing facilities, but the struggles of the official printer are not recorded in as much detail. His small shop was understaffed and understocked. Large debits on the state's account kept him on the verge of bankruptcy for years at a time. He was one of the soldiers of the Revolution who wore an apron instead of a uniform.

[202] Candler, *Revolutionary Records*, 2:344.
[203] Lawrence, *James Johnston*, pp. 24–25.
[204] Ibid., p. 25.
[205] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:393.
[206] Brigham, 1:125.
[207] McMurtrie, *History of Printing*, 2:394.

The Expansion of the Press

The years between 1776 and 1787 witnessed an expansion of the press in all horizontal directions. It expanded externally into the outer regions of the new country; after the peace, it also expanded internally within the regions which already owned presses. As will be seen, it temporarily expanded eastward on the coastal waters. During the war, the printing press was too powerful a war machine to be mothballed because of shortages of manpower, materials, and money. It continued to do its work and then expanded with the mounting strength of the American republic.

Vermont

At the time Vermont declared itself an independent state in January 1777, there was no printer within its boundaries and the controversy arising from the New Hampshire Grants had not been settled. In March of the following year, Eleazar Wheelock, president of Dartmouth College at Dresden, Vermont (now Hanover, New Hampshire), realized that his political party, the College party, required a printer if they were to campaign against the Bennington group. He wrote to his Connecticut brother-in-law, Benjamin Pomeroy, saying in part, 'We have been long wishing for a good Printer in this Vicinity, and since the forming of the State of Vermont, in which we expect this College will be included, we apprehend the motives to induce a Printer to come will be very strong and inviting—as He may serve both the State and the College; but we have lately heard that endeavors are vigorously rising, to obtain a State Printer on the other side of the Mountains about Eighty Miles from us, which will wholly defeat the desire as well as purpose of the College.'[208] The letter went on to ask Pomeroy to interview John Trumbull, printer at Norwich, and tell him that 'there is now a door

[208] Harold Goddard Rugg, *The Dresden Press* [Hanover, N.H., 1920], p. 3.

open for him in this vicinity.' Pomeroy replied that the most likely possibility, Mr. Hough who would soon finish his apprenticeship with Trumbull, was hesitating for several reasons: he had to consult with his father, he had no type, and paper would be scarce in Vermont.[209] Wheelock waited about a month and then in exasperation sent his son, John, to Connecticut in search of a printer. At New London, John found Timothy Green III willing to establish a press at Dresden.[210] Green's speedy acceptance of this invitation to remove printing apparatus into sparsely settled Vermont during one of the worst years of the Revolution was not as reckless as it may appear. His shop at Norwich, Connecticut, in partnership with his brother-in-law and former apprentice, Judah Padock Spooner, yielded little, if any, profit.[211] If Spooner and the equipment went to Dresden, the partners would be assured of receiving official and college work.

Illness may have prevented Judah Padock Spooner from going to Dresden, but his younger brother, Alden, also a former apprentice of Timothy Green III, arrived there and was printing state documents by October 1778.[212] He received official recognition in the resolution which appointed Judah Padock Spooner and Alden Spooner printers for the General Assembly.[213] This press was the first press in the State of Vermont only until the following February when Dresden and other towns east of the Connecticut River returned to the jurisdiction of New Hampshire. Once more Vermont searched for a printer. A committee of the General Assembly in October 1779 approached the logical choice, Alden Spooner, who told them that he would remove to Westminster and serve as

[209] Ray Nash, *Pioneer Printing at Dartmouth* (Hanover, N.H.: George T. Bailey, 1941), p. 11.

[210] Rugg, *Dresden Press*, p. 4.

[211] Nash, *Pioneer Printing*, p. 13; Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' pp. 99–100.

[212] Marcus A. McCorison, comp., *Vermont Imprints, 1778–1820* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1963), p. 532; Rugg, *Dresden Press*, p. 5.

[213] Rugg, *Dresden Press*, p. 4.

printer providing that he could obtain Green's permission to move the type. Five months later, the committee reported that Spooner, having received permission, 'would move to Westminster as soon as the Court House might be repaired so as to make it convenient for his business and he could procure paper.'[214] The legislature, dissatisfied with the delay or with Alden Spooner, at first requested the governor and Council to find a printer, then asked at least two men to continue the search. One of them, Stephen R. Bradley, a member of the Vermont Council, succeeded in finding a printer in New London in July 1780. There Bradley signed an agreement with Timothy Green III that he send his son, Timothy IV, and Judah Padock Spooner to print for the state.[215] When the governor and Council ratified this agreement in August, they also resolved that 'M^{r}· Ezra Stiles be and he is hereby appointed and impowered to repair as soon as may be to New London to inform M^{r}· Green of the Ratification [of the agreement] made between Stephen R. Bradley Esq^{r}· & M^{r}· Green aforesaid, & Facilitate as much as possible the moving of the Types and other apparatus for the purpose of Printing agreeable to said agreement.'[216]

Toward the end of 1780, Judah Padock Spooner and seventeen-year-old Timothy Green IV commenced printing state documents at Westminster where they also issued the first Vermont newspaper, the *Vermont Gazette, and Green Mountain Post-Boy*, beginning on December 14.[217] In accordance with the Bradley-Green agreement, Vermont paid Spooner and the elder Green for establishing the Westminster press. Spooner received 'forty pounds in silver, in lieu of one hundred and sixty bushels of wheat' and 'credit for the sum of

[214] Ibid., pp. 15–16.

[215] Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' pp. 107–8.

[216] E. P. Walton, ed., *Records of the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont*, 8 vols. (Montpelier: J. & J. M. Poland, 1873–80), 2:38–39.

[217] McCorison, *Vermont Imprints*, pp. 10–11, 502; Brigham, 2:1096–97.

fifty pounds silver money towards any grant of land he may procure from this State.'[218] Green's recompense has not been ascertained. Mary L. D. Meder summarized the possibilities: 'the number of times the name Timothy Green appears in the documents relating to the town of Greensboro would seem to indicate that he received a right to land in that town and, perhaps, a lot of land in Kingston, Vermont, in addition to a sum of money for his efforts.'[219] Which press, Dresden or Westminster, was the first press in Vermont? Lawrence C. Wroth makes the distinction clear when referring to the Dresden press: 'The geographical area known as Vermont, therefore, has no claim upon this press, though the political entity of that name may rightly call Spooner her first printer and Dresden, New Hampshire, the seat of her earliest press.'[220] And the Westminster press can be said to be the 'first press on the soil of Vermont, as now constituted.'[221]

Florida

Expansion of the press southward into Florida was a loyalist venture, undertaken by a man whose scientific achievements in England would overshadow his participation in the history of American printing. William Charles Wells and his elder brother, John, were the sons of Robert Wells, a staunch loyalist bookseller, printer, and newspaper publisher of Charleston, South Carolina.[222] Robert Wells had emigrated from Scotland in 1753 and within a decade became rich enough to send his sons back home for their education. William, born in 1757, went to grammar school at Dumphries in 1768 be-

[218] *State Papers of Vermont*, 9 vols. (Bellows Falls: P. H. Gobie Press, 1918–55), 3:62.

[219] Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' p. 109.

[220] Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, Lawrence C. Wroth, and Rollo G. Silver, *The Book in America*, 2d ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1951), p. 10.

[221] Ibid., p. 11.

[222] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The First Printing in Florida* (Atlanta: Privately printed, 1931), p. 6.

fore attending the university at Edinburgh in 1770. On returning to Charleston in 1771, he served a three-year apprenticeship with a physician.[223] The father's loyalist opinions finally became so offensive that he prudently returned to Great Britain in 1775. William soon followed him, going to Edinburgh where he studied medicine and resumed his intimate friendship with his former fellow drawing student, David Hume. After continuing medical studies in London and a year as military surgeon, he studied medicine in Leiden and received his degree at Edinburgh in 1780. Charleston was then in the possession of the British, so William, at his father's request, again returned to America in 1781 to see his brother and help him salvage the family property. William accomplished as much as possible before suggesting that he remain in Charleston while John visited their father in England.[224] John accepted the proposal and 'I,' wrote William, 'in consequence became a printer, a bookseller, and a merchant.'[225] Then, at the end of 1782, orders to evacuate Charleston were received from the Commander-in-Chief at New York. William thereupon decided to join the Tory refugees in Florida. His own account of the first press in Florida is so little known that it is worth quoting at length:

> I embarked in December, 1782, for St. Augustine, in East Florida, carrying with me as much of my brother's moveable property as I could; amongst other things, a printing press, and a considerable quantity of printers' types. When I arrived at St. Augustine, I determined to put up the press there, and print a newspaper. But here a considerable difficulty arose; the press had been easily taken to pieces in Carolina, and I naturally thought that it might be readily put together again; more especially as I had brought with me a regular pressman: but to my surprise he told me that he knew nothing of the matter; that he could work

[223] *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. 'Wells, William Charles.'

[224] William Charles Wells, *Two Essays* (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1818), pp. vii–xviii.

[225] Ibid., p. xviii.

> a press as well as any person, when it was put together, but that the putting it together constituted the particular business of a press-joiner. In this dilemma I recollected that there was amongst my brother's books, one entitled 'the Printer's Grammar,' containing rude cuts of a printer's press.[226] I studied this book for several days with the greatest diligence; and at length by means of the information derived from it, and with the assistance of a common negro carpenter, completely succeeded in my attempt to put the press in working order. Immediately afterwards, I began to publish a weekly newspaper in my brother's name; the first thing of the kind ever attempted in that country.[227]

The numbering of the earliest extant issue of the *East-Florida Gazette*, 'Printed by Charles Wright for John Wells, jun.,' indicates that it first appeared on February 1, 1783.[228] During midsummer, when William Charles Wells returned to Charleston to look after his father's affairs, a hostile reception included a three-month incarceration because he, claiming to be under a flag of truce, refused to give bail in a private suit. He sailed back to St. Augustine at the beginning of October. Within a few months, John arrived from England and, apparently, took charge of the press.[229] A contemporary newspaper reference proves that the *East-Florida Gazette* was still being issued in March 1784.[230] Furthermore, at least two books of the same year bore the imprint of John Wells.[231] They probably appeared during the first half of the year, before the cession of Florida to Spain caused John to move to Nassau where he published the *Bahama Gazette* and printed for the government.[232] In May 1784, William Charles Wells once again embarked for Great Britain where, in London, he

[226] Probably John Smith, *The Printer's Grammar* (London: W. Owen, 1755).

[227] Wells, *Two Essays*, pp. xx–xxi.

[228] Brigham, 1:109; McMurtrie, *First Printing in Florida*, p. 6.

[229] Wells, *Two Essays*, pp. xxiii–xxviii; Brigham, 1:110.

[230] Brigham, 1:110.

[231] Evans 18392, 18490.

[232] Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer* (Portland, Me.: Southworth-Anthoensen Press, 1938), p. 52.

engaged in the practice of medicine as well as scientific investigations.[233] For his study of dew which first determined the dew point, he received the Rumford Medal of the Royal Society.[234] His other scientific contributions are duly recorded in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in the memoirs published after his death in 1817.[235] Although he was buried in St. Bride's, the church of printers, the memorial tablet praised his work in natural science, but made no mention of his association with printing in America.

Maine

Establishment of a press in Maine completed the extension of printing into all of the present-day Atlantic coastal states. The District of Maine was a part of Massachusetts in 1784 when Thomas B. Wait, a Boston newspaperman, moved to Falmouth (Portland) with two purposes in mind: to open a stationer's shop and to issue a newspaper in partnership with a Boston printer, Peter Edes. At the last moment, Edes decided to remain in Boston. Wait, twenty-two years old, luckily found a Falmouth resident who possessed the qualifications for partnership.[236] He was Benjamin Titcomb, Jr., a twenty-three-year-old printer, recently returned to Falmouth after finishing his apprenticeship at Newburyport, Massachusetts.[237] On January 1, 1785, the two young men, under the firm name of Titcomb & Wait, published the first number of the *Falmouth Gazette*.[238] In later life, Titcomb told and retold the

[233] Wells, *Two Essays*, pp. xxviii–xli.

[234] *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. 'Wells, William Charles.'

[235] William Munk, *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 2d ed., rev. and enl., 3 vols. (London: Royal College of Physicians, 1878), 2:379–83; *Memoirs of William Charles Wells* (London: T. Kelly, 1818).

[236] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in Maine* (Springfield, Ill., 1932), p. 2; Philip M. Marsh, 'Maine's First Newspaper Editor: Thomas Wait,' *New England Quarterly* 28(1955):533n.

[237] Joseph Griffin, ed., *History of the Press of Maine* (Brunswick, 1872), pp. 33–34.

[238] Brigham, 1:201.

story of the day he had struck off with his own hands the first sheet ever printed in Maine.[239]

The West

In its westward expansion, the press arrived in Pittsburgh in 1786 and in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1787. Whether the Pittsburgh press was the first press west of the Alleghenies is a question still debated by those who regard Pittsburgh as being *within* the mountain range.[240] From that 'shabby little river port, with less than forty log-houses, sheltering a population not exceeding three hundred,' the rivercraft of 1786 carried the immigrants down the Ohio.[241] Hugh Henry Brackenridge had settled there in 1781 to pursue his political and literary career.[242] 'One of the earliest things which I thought of on going to reside in the western country,' he recalled, 'was the encouragement of a public paper' which was 'accomplished after some time, and a good deal by my exertions.'[243] He did not elaborate upon these exertions, which most likely lured two young printers, John Scull and Joseph Hall, from Philadelphia. On a press, probably purchased from Andrew Brown, of Philadelphia, they printed the first issue of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* on July 29, 1786.[244]

The Lexington, Kentucky, press owes its origin to the movement for statehood. When, in 1784, the inhabitants of the district of Virginia known as Kentucky first convened to consider separate statehood, they resolved to encourage the

[239] Griffin, *History of the Press*, p. 34n.

[240] Herschel (Pete) Wilson, 'How Far West Is West?,' *Journalism History* 1 (1974): 24–25.

[241] Reuben Gold Thwaites, 'The Ohio Valley Press before the War of 1812–15,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 19 (1909): 310.

[242] *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. 'Brackenridge, Hugh Henry.'

[243] H. H. Brackenridge, *Gazette Publications* (Carlisle, Pa.: Alexander & Phillips, 1806), p. 23.

[244] J. Cutler Andrews, 'The Pittsburgh Gazette—A Pioneer Newspaper,' *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 15 (1932): 294–95.

introduction of a printer into the district.[245] The second convention, in the following year, appointed a committee to find one.[246] After a lengthy search failed to bring a printer to the district, John Bradford, a Cane Run dealer in land claims, volunteered to set up a press if public patronage was assured.[247] His proposal was accepted and Lexington, in 1787, granted him the free use of a lot as long as the press continued in the town.[248] Bradford, knowing nothing about printing, may have bolstered his own mechanical talent by sending his younger brother, Fielding, to learn how to print in John Scull's Pittsburgh shop. Press and type, ordered from Philadelphia, probably came via Pittsburgh, down the Ohio to Limestone (Maysville), thence by packhorses along a dangerous trail. Paper, too, arrived.[249] The first number of the *Kentucke Gazette*, August 11, 1787, was a small, rough sheet, without a heading, containing two short articles, one advertisement, and this apology: 'My customers will excuse this, my first publication, as I am much hurried to get an impression by the time appointed. A great part of the types fell into pi in the carriage of them from Limestone to this office, and my partner, which is the only assistant I have, through an indisposition of the body, has been incapable of rendering the smallest assistance for ten days past.'[250]

Sea-presses

Little is known about the presses aboard ships sailing along the Atlantic coast. Only a few of the items printed on them

[245] Thomas P. Abernethy, 'Journal of the First Kentucky Convention,' *Journal of Southern History* 1 (1935): 73.

[246] William Henry Perrin, *The Pioneer Press of Kentucky* (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1888), p. 9.

[247] J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *John Bradford, Esq.* (Lexington, Ky.: Winburn Press, 1950), p. 5; Samuel M. Wilson, 'The "Kentucky Gazette" and John Bradford Its Founder,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 31 (1937): 110–14.

[248] Coleman, *John Bradford, Esq.*, p. 6.

[249] Wilson, ' "Kentucky Gazette," ' pp. 116, 123.

[250] Ibid., p. 117.

have survived and identification is doubly difficult because the presses were sometimes moved from one ship to another. The story of one ship's press begins in 1775 at Norfolk, Virginia, when John H. Holt's *Virginia Gazette* printed some opinions about Lord Dunmore's ancestors. Dunmore, then governor of Virginia, ordered a raiding party to seize Holt's printing equipment and bring it on board a ship in Dunmore's flotilla off Norfolk.[251] Along with the equipment went two loyalist printers, Alexander Cameron and Donald MacDonald.[252] This printing office on the ship *Dunmore* issued a loyalist *Virginia Gazette* during the last months of 1775 and the early months of 1776.[253] It also printed official documents for the governor, before being delivered to Lord Howe in August 1776.[254] The press was used in New York and Philadelphia as well as on a transport.[255] In 1780, James Robertson, Cameron, and MacDonald printed at least one item on board the *Palliser*.[256] Another British press, on board the *Phoenix* in New York harbor, in 1776, printed counterfeit Continental currency for distribution by Tory agents.[257]

Our ally, the French, also carried sea-presses. The first French fleet sailed to Newport and Boston with a press and two printers on board the *Languedoc*. Upon arrival at Boston, the printers struck off a *Déclaration adressée au nom du Roi à*

[251] Paltsits, 'John Holt—Printer and Postmaster,' pp. 487–89. An inventory of the captured equipment is in Fred S. Siebert, 'The Confiscated Revolutionary Press,' *Journalism Quarterly* 13 (1936): 180.

[252] Siebert, 'Confiscated Revolutionary Press,' p. 179.

[253] Brigham, 2:1129–30. Evans 15210 states that the *Virginia Gazette* was printed on board the ship *William*.

[254] Evans 15196; Siebert, 'Confiscated Revolutionary Press,' p. 181.

[255] Siebert, 'Confiscated Revolutionary Press,' p. 181.

[256] Roger P. Bristol, *Supplement to Charles Evans' American Bibliography* (Charlottesville: Pub. for The Bibliographical Society of America and The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, University Press of Virginia, 1970), B5184 (hereafter cited as Bristol-Evans). Citation is to item number, not page number.

[257] Kenneth Scott, 'A British Counterfeiting Press in New York Harbor, 1776,' *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 39 (1955): 117–20.

Tous les Anciens François de l'Amérique septentrionale on October 28, 1778, which is said to be 'the first record of a printing press furnished to a French vessel of the line.'[258] A signal code book, *Signaux de l'Escadre du Roi*, came from the *Languedoc* press while it was still in American waters in 1779.[259] Another French fleet, crossing the Atlantic in 1780, carried a press on board the *Neptune*. This press, 'l'Imprimerie Royale de l'Escadre,' was removed to shore at Newport where it was used to print a newspaper, the *Gazette Françoise* (November 17, 1780 – ca. January 2, 1781), a French almanac, and the often-reprinted *Voyage de Newport a Philadelphie* by Chastellux.[260] If it is true that space on a ship-of-war was always at a very high premium, these sea-presses must have been considered as important as ammunition.

An approximation of the expansion of the press internally is obtained by searching the major bibliographies for localities which had at least one press.[261] Undoubtedly further research will add more but probably not significant data. For example, Stephen B. Weeks, referring to presses attached to the armies of Cornwallis and General Greene, supplies no additional information.[262] Therefore:

[258] Samuel J. Marino, 'French-Language Printing in the United States, 1711–1825,' in *Books in America's Past*, ed. David Kaser (Charlottesville: Pub. for The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, University Press of Virginia, 1966), p. 53; Bristol-Evans B4681.

[259] Howard M. Chapin, 'More About Sea Presses,' *American Collector* 3 (1926): 86; Bristol-Evans B4877.

[260] Chapin, 'More About Sea Presses,' pp. 86–87; Brigham, 2:995–96; Evans 17110–11.

[261] Roger Pattrell Bristol, *Index of Printers, Publishers, and Booksellers Indicated by Charles Evans in His American Bibliography* (Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1961); Roger Pattrell Bristol, *Index to Supplement to Charles Evans' American Bibliography* (Charlottesville: Pub. for The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, University Press of Virginia, 1971), pp. 145–91; Brigham, 2:1367–1508.

[262] Stephen B. Weeks, *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century* (Brooklyn: Historical Printing Club, 1891), p. 35.

Cities and Towns Having at Least One Press

Year		*Year*	
1776	33	1782	32
1777	34	1783	34
1778	30	1784	36
1779	29	1785	46
1780	31	1786	51
1781	30	1787	58

As with most statistical studies, the results confirm the obvious. After being inhibited by war, growth accelerated so rapidly that by 1787 the number of localities was almost double that of 1782.

The Wartime Printing Shop

The passerby, looking into a printing shop in 1780, would have noticed little change from what he had seen ten years before. The wooden press, the lead type, the method of printing were the same, and the shop would have appeared to be doing business as usual. In this glance at the physical plant, there was no indication of the impact of the Revolution. That could only be seen in observing the business transactions of the printer during a period of inflation, scarcity, and the turbulence of war.

Some printers affirmed their political allegiance in terse graphic statements. Soon after the British evacuated Boston, the Fleets took down their shop sign, the 'Crown and Heart,' in order to put up their new sign, the 'Bible and Heart.'[263] In the same year, the royal arms disappeared from the masthead of such newspapers as the *Providence Gazette* and the New London *Connecticut Gazette*.[264] Royal arms replaced the arms of the Province of New York on Hugh Gaine's *New-York*

[263] Joseph T. Buckingham, *Specimens of Newspaper Literature*, 2 vols. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 1:153.

[264] *Printers and Printing in Providence, 1762–1907* (Providence, 1907), p. 15; Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' p. 93.

Gazette after the British arrived and when they evacuated, his imprint, 'at the Bible and Crown,' became 'at the Bible.'[265] James Rivington, another switch-printer, gave his newspaper a succession of titles: *Rivington's New-York Gazette* (1777), *Rivington's New York Loyal Gazette* (1777), the *Royal Gazette* (1777–83), *Rivington's New-York Gazette* (1783).[266] Such adjustments to political reality, the printers hoped, would help them to remain in business.

In his private battle to make his business survive, the printer's major opponent was inflation—a condition which still defies the investigator. Ruth Crandall, in her study of wholesale commodity prices in Boston during the eighteenth century, deliberately omitted the period between 1775 and 1781 because of 'paucity of data and the practical impossibility of determining in what currency prices were quoted. The advent in 1776 of Continental paper money, which lasted until after 1780, added a third form of currency to the two already in use, and in view of extremely scanty data any attempt to disentangle these quotations seemed scarcely worth the effort.'[267] Despite the lack of data for Boston, some facts may be cited to prove the rottenness of money. Anne Bezanson, in her work on Pennsylvania prices, found that 'the value of continental money continued to sink until the median reached a peak at 16,502 [percent] in April 1781, the month of its final acceptance as a medium of exchange.'[268] During this rise, the 'largest month-to-month increases occurred in the fall and early winter of 1779 when, in a single month, prices soared more than 45 per cent over the previous month, followed by three months of further rapid expansion. . . . Aver-

[265] Gaine, *Journals*, 1:44, 64.

[266] Brigham, 1:686–89.

[267] Ruth Crandall, 'Wholesale Commodity Prices in Boston during the Eighteenth Century,' *Review of Economic Statistics* 16 (1934): 125.

[268] Anne Bezanson, *Prices and Inflation during the American Revolution, Pennsylvania, 1770–1790* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951), p. 14.

age prices at the close of 1779 were more than seven times their level at the beginning of this critical year.'[269]

Wage and price controls in various parts of the country failed to curb the inflationary spiral.[270] At Boston in August 1779, a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants established a code including a clause that 'Printers, rope-makers, boat-builders, coopers, cordwainers and tinmen, shall reduce their prices at least twenty per cent from the present rates.'[271] Another and larger convention representing 121 towns, assembling at Concord, Massachusetts, in July and October, agreed to a horizontal reduction of all prices.[272] Within two months, this notice, signed by five firms, in the Boston newspapers concisely presented the case for the printers:

> *THE Subscribers, Publishers of the* Boston *News-Papers, having hitherto strictly complied with the regulations of the Convention at Concord, at length find it of no effect for them to stem the torrent of avarice alone, therefore, in justice to themselves and families, they are obliged to advance the price of their Papers to £6 per half year, (exclusive of postage). Should this price appear too high, the Printers would be happy in supplying any gentlemen with News-Papers at the regulated price, they receiving their pay in any kind of country produce, at the same rate.*[273]

The Concord convention could not stem the 'torrent of avarice.' Ralph V. Harlow concluded that the 'most striking commentary on this experiment is to be found in the prices for October, 1780, when depreciation had reached its limit. They were five times higher than those quoted a year before.'[274] At

[269] Ibid., pp. 12–14.

[270] Richard B. Morris, 'Labor and Mercantilism in the Revolutionary Era,' in *The Era of the American Revolution*, ed. Morris, pp. 76–137.

[271] *Boston Gazette*, Aug. 30, 1779; *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), Aug. 19, 1779.

[272] Ralph V. Harlow, 'Economic Conditions in Massachusetts during the American Revolution,' *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 20 (1920): 182.

[273] *Boston Gazette*, Nov. 29, 1779; *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), Nov. 25, 1779.

[274] Harlow, 'Economic Conditions,' p. 182.

Providence, similar price controls did not prevent John Carter from raising the price of the *Providence Gazette*.[275]

The experiences of two patriot printers show what could happen when a printer believed too implicitly in the good faith of his government. Isaiah Thomas grieved about the fate of Solomon Southwick:

> His pecuniary concerns were greatly impaired by the rapid depreciation of the paper currency, before the establishment of peace. He, like many others, cherished a belief that the nominal sum specified in the bills would eventually be made good in specie. The impracticability of the thing was not considered, even when one hundred dollars in paper would purchase but one of silver. The delusion was not discovered by some till they found themselves involved in ruin. The government of the union were indebted to Southwick both for his services and for money loaned. This debt, like others of the kind, was liquidated by notes known by the name of final settlement. In the course of some months after they were issued, they were sold in the market for one-eighth part of their nominal value. To this depreciated state was national paper reduced before the assumption of the public debt by the new government; and, when it was in that state, Southwick was compelled to sell his final settlement notes for the support of himself and family. He was engaged in the cause of his country in the times of her adversity and danger, but he had no portion of the benefits resulting from her prosperity. Assailed by poverty, and borne down by infirmity, he lived in obscurity from the year 1788 to the time of his death [1797]; and, being unable to provide for his children, he left them to make their own way in the world.[276]

Benjamin Edes, one of the best-known patriot printers, summarized his own career in the final issue of his *Boston Gazette*. The concluding paragraphs are still impressive and inspiring:

> But, alas! the cause of Liberty is not always the channel of preferment or pecuniary reward. The little property which he acquired has long since fell a sacrifice;—the *paper evidences* of his

[275] *Printers and Printing in Providence*, p. 15.

[276] Thomas, 1:199–201.

services were soon consumed by their rapid depreciation, and the cares of a numerous family were too powerful to be resisted, though he fed them with property at *four shillings and six pence in the pound*, which he faithfully and industriously earned at *twenty shillings*.

HOWEVER, it is beneath a patriot to mourn his own misfortunes.—The INDEPENDENCE of America, being obtained, he enjoys the pleasing contemplation, that the *same virtuous sentiments* which led to the *acquisition* will not cease to operate for its *continuance*. That his fellow citizens will ever revere the FIRST PRINCIPLES of their Revolution, and it is his earnest prayer to Heaven, that the RISING GENERATION will remember the exertions of THEIR FATHERS, in opposing the lawless attempts of BRITAIN for their subjugation.

Let the citizens of America REVERENCE THEMSELVES—Let them strive to maintain the REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES of their own Constitution; and while practising these duties, we may trust to the GUARDIAN ANGEL which has conducted us through dangers, the most alarming, and distressing.

And now my Fellow-Citizens, I bid you FAREWELL,—MAINTAIN YOUR VIRTUE—CHERISH YOUR LIBERTIES—and may THE ALMIGHTY protect, and defend you.[277]

Varieties of currency as well as inflation impede any investigation of the economics of printing. Between 1776 and 1781 bills for merchandise and services were written in one of three currencies (specie, state paper, Continental notes); between 1781 and 1787, in one of two (specie, state paper), but bills seldom stated the currency. Values of state paper differed and, to further complicate matters, in Pennsylvania a Spanish milled dollar was worth ninety pence, making the division of the dollar into ninetieths. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to extrapolate prices.

Subscription rates and appeals for payment offer striking evidence of the impact of wartime inflation on the printing business. In 1777, the rate of Mary K. Goddard's *Maryland Journal* was 20s. per year, double the rate of 1773. By Octo-

[277] *Boston Gazette*, Sept. 17, 1798; Buckingham, *Specimens*, 1:203–4.

ber 1778, it was 52s. and doubled six months later. In October 1779, a year's subscription cost £10.[278] Isaac Collins, among others, tried to keep pace by charging quarterly rates, some of which were: July 1779, $5.00; March 1780, $13.00; April 1780, $15.00; July 1780, 'one-third of a dollar in produce or half a dollar in gold or silver.'[279] If not controlled, delinquent payments in a period of depreciating money could easily lead to bankruptcy. In February 1780, Shepard Kollock told readers of the *New-Jersey Journal* that '*all* the money he has received, for the last year's news-paper, being now inadequate to purchase the paper *alone* which he expended during the period.'[280] Seven months later, he told them that the previous year's subscription 'which by the depreciation of the money, if now paid, is of so small value that it is hardly worth receiving.'[281]

Printers, constantly encouraging payment in produce, sometimes specified amounts. John Holt's *New-York Journal* contained this notice in July 1779:

> And the printer being unable to carry on his business without the necessaries of life, is obliged to fix the following prices to his work, viz.: For the newspapers 13 weeks, that is one quarter of a year, (rated at three shillings per quarter), 12 pounds of fresh beef, pork, mutton, lamb, or veal, or one bushel of Indian corn, or four pounds of butter, or half a cord of wood, or one hundred fifty wt. of hay, or any other article of his work, or of the necessaries of life he may want, in the like proportion.[282]

Many printers used payment in kind as a means of replenishing the stock of their retail stores. Behind the counter, the printer exercised his skill in merchandising, offering for sale

[278] Ward L. Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), p. 166.

[279] Nelson, 'Some New Jersey Printers,' pp. 51–52; Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part II,' pp. 238–39; *Printers and Printing in Providence*, p. 15; Thomas, 'Publication of Newspapers,' pp. 360–61.

[280] Stickle, 'State and Press . . . Part II,' p. 237.

[281] Ibid.

[282] Murphy, 'John Holt,' p. 21.

such items as books, food, medicines, liquor, clothing, saddles. Collins and Kollock were among those printers who also sold slaves.[283] Samuel Loudon, it has been said, was 'a speculator in wartime supplies or captured British equipment—a Revolutionary black marketeer.'[284] It may be assumed that these stores were usually profitable operations and contributed to the survival of the printing business. Otherwise they would not have continued through the Revolution.

The store, the printing shop, and perhaps a post office, too, kept the printer so occupied that bookkeeping was reduced to a minimum. In the few extant account books, paucity of data makes interpretation difficult. For example, John Carter's account book listing the wages he paid to his journeymen does not, as Marcus A. McCorison found, always specify if board was included.[285] Carter's pay scale for a six-day week, as summarized by McCorison, is for the wages of one journeyman:

Date		*Shillings per Week*
14 July 1776		15
18 Dec. 1776 – 14 June 1777	John Dabney	18
Dec. 1776	Bennett Wheeler	21
26 Jan. 1777		20
13 July 1777		26
23 Aug. 1777		36
22 Nov. 1777		42
28 June 1778		72
18 Oct. 1778, including board		180
13 Dec. 1778		162
16 Jan. 1779	John McCarty	168
30 Jan. 1779, less 60s. for board from March 28		180
8 May 1779, less 60s.		216
23 July 1779, less 60s.		240
24 Aug. 1779, less 60s.?		216
6 Nov. 1779, less 60s.		276[286]

[283] Nelson, 'Some New Jersey Printers,' pp. 51–52.

[284] Vail, 'A Patriotic Pair,' p. 392.

[285] Marcus A. McCorison, 'The Wages of John Carter's Journeyman Printers, 1771–1779,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 81 (1972): 275.

[286] Ibid., p. 279.

Another Rhode Island scale, the charges for printing the Acts and Resolves of the General Assembly extracted from John E. Alden's bibliography, shows the declining prices of the postwar depression:

Date	*Printer*	*Price per Sheet*
Sept. 1776	John Carter	13s. 6d.
Dec. 1776	John Carter	18s.
June – Dec. 1782	Bennett Wheeler	28s. 4d.
Nov. 1782 – April 1783	John Carter	39s.
Jan. – April 1785	Bennett Wheeler	27s.
March – April 1785	John Carter	27s.
April 1786	John Carter	27s. 'as per agreement in the year 1784'
Feb. – June 1787	John Carter	27s.
April – June 1787	Bennett Wheeler	27s.[287]

Estimating the cost of printing a book, as always, required many calculations. A clear demonstration of the method was sent to Jeremy Belknap while he was arranging for the publication of his history of New Hampshire. At Philadelphia, his good friend Ebenezer Hazard assembled the prices and prepared a detailed explanation:

> Hazard's new calculation, June 24, 1783.
>
> The volume is to contain, say 400 pages. Each sheet makes 16 pages. Then 16 in 400 – 25 times, or 25 sheets in a book (or volume).
>
> In a ream there are 18 quires, deducting the two outside ones, which are usually spoiled by the cord, but serve to paste on the inside of the covers, and for fly-leaves.
>
> 18 quires of 24 sheets each, 432 sheets in a ream.
>
> We propose to print 1000 books, which at 25 sheets per book will require 25,000 sheets.
>
> How often 432 in 25,000? Answer, 57 reams, 15 quires, 16 sheets; say 58 reams.

[287] Alden, *Rhode Island Imprints*, pp. 256–404.

Then we shall want 58 reams paper at 20*s.*	£58	0	0
Printing 25 sheets at £5 10*s.*	137	10	0
Stitching 1000 books, say at 1*s.* each	50	0	0
Whole cost of the edition	£245	10	0

20

Equal to . . shillings 4910

12

or pence 58,920

Pence.

Number of copies 1000 in) 58920 (58 pence.

5000

8920

8000

920

4

1000) 3680 (3 farthings.

3000

680

Then, according to the above calculation, each book, in boards, will cost 4*s.* 10¾*d.* Pennsylvania currency. Say that it costs 5*s.* If you dispose of the whole edition at 10*s.* (the price proposed), you will just double your money.[288]

These prices, it must be remembered, were quoted just before the 1784–88 depression. Ironically, peace did not restore a normal market to the printer; for four more years he contended with declining currency and low demand. Prosperity arrived only after the Constitution was ratified and the European wars had stimulated the growth of American trading.

The Revolution also hampered the printer's ability to obtain new equipment or supplies. According to Isaiah Thomas, the impact was immediate: 'The war broke out suddenly, and few of any profession were prepared for the event. All kinds of printing materials had usually been imported from England; even ink for printers had not, in any great quantity,

[288] *The Belknap Papers*, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 5th ser., 2 (Boston, 1877): 223–24.

been made in America. This resource was, by the war, cut off; and a great scarcity of these articles soon ensued.'[289] Presses requiring repairs or new components could usually be restored to use by the printer himself with or without the help of a craftsman. One particular repair job deserves mention in the history of American printing. In 1776, the post office at Worcester, Massachusetts, was in the printing office of Stearns & Bigelow, two young men who knew little about printing but had leased the *Massachusetts Spy*. When the postmaster general visited the office, he noticed that the press was not in working order and that Bigelow and Stearns were unable to fix it. Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin quickly repaired the press before continuing his tour.[290]

Obtaining a whole press, other than by an occasional auction, depended upon location or importation. Anthony Haswell's statement, in 1778, that 'printing utensils are no where to be procured in this country at present,' if at all true, may have been true for that year.[291] Bits and pieces of evidence prove that, soon after, it was certainly possible to procure printing equipment in some localities. William McCulloch told Isaiah Thomas that, in Philadelphia, 'Lewis Fuhrer made, during the war, the iron work of presses; and Wm. Collady was his press joiner.'[292] In 1781, James Hayes travelled from Richmond, Virginia, to Philadelphia where he was able to purchase a press to replace the press lost on the *Bachelor*.[293] Printers resorting to importation waited a very long time for the arrival of their shipments. Equipment with which William Goddard and Eleazer Oswald intended to open a printing office, hourly expected in December 1779, had not arrived in

[289] Thomas, 1:137.

[290] Clifford K. Shipton, *Isaiah Thomas* (Rochester, N.Y.: Leo Hart, 1948), p. 38; Brigham, 1:415.

[291] John Spargo, *Anthony Haswell* (Rutland: Tuttle Co., 1925), p. 22.

[292] McCulloch, p. 210.

[293] Wheeler, *Maryland Press*, p. 51.

December 1780.[294] It was probably British equipment shipped, as most British goods were shipped, from Amsterdam.[295] This method, by the way, was utilized by individuals as well as business firms: the Reverend William Gordon imported English goods via Amsterdam.[296] In this country, imported British printing equipment was probably sold to patriot printers by loyalist merchants. Most likely the printing supplies sold by Hugh Gaine in occupied New York to upstate patriot printers came from England.[297] Enough facts were gathered by Robert A. East to conclude that 'hazardous English trade was carried on by many American merchants,' and there is no reason to believe that all printers shied from products of Great Britain.[298] The quantity of these imported printing supplies may not have been large, but it was desperately needed. Imported printing ink was gradually replaced by ink of local manufacture as in New England, where imported printing ink had been chiefly used, the supply of domestic ink increased to the point of being advertised for sale.[299]

Of all supplies, the most heavily consumed was the most difficult to procure. Scarcity of paper became such an acute and national problem that it is the best-remembered hardship of printing practice during the period. Even those few printers who owned paper mills could not be sure of an adequate supply.[300] Bad weather or shortages of rags or of skilled workers prevented full production at the existing mills.[301] State legis-

[294] Ibid., pp. 24–26.

[295] Robert A. East, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 32.

[296] Ibid., p. 34.

[297] Timothy M. Barnes, 'Loyalist Newspapers of the American Revolution, 1763–1783: A Bibliography,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 83 (1973): 226.

[298] East, *Business Enterprise*, p. 31.

[299] *Boston Gazette*, Feb. 16, 1778.

[300] Among the printers who owned paper mills were Hugh Gaine [Gaine, *Journals*, 1:44–46], William Goddard [Wheeler, *Maryland Press*, pp. 6–7], and Thomas Green [William C. Kiessel, 'The Green Family,' *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 104 (1950): 88].

[301] *Belknap Papers*, p. 317; Miner, *William Goddard*, pp. 165–66.

latures exempted papermakers from military service and appropriated funds for the establishment of new mills, but the new mills were inadequate to the demand.[302] As in recent wars, paper was an essential commodity, hard to come by. Lack of paper sometimes caused a reduction in size, a closure of subscription lists, or suspension of a newspaper. That so many copies of newspapers, books, pamphlets, and broadsides did come from the presses is a tribute to the efficiency of the printers.

The sturdy equipment of the printing office, acquired before the war, did not require immediate replacement when hostilities ceased. There was no buying spree for presses; most printers awaited the return to normal conditions. When Mathew Carey wanted a used press at an auction in 1784, his only opponent bid him up out of spite, not of need.[303] New domestic presses were soon available in at least two cities. In 1786, Isaac Doolittle, of New Haven, offered to build two presses for Isaiah Thomas at £25 each and, in the same year, John Goodman began press-building in Philadelphia.[304] Postwar Philadelphia prices for equipment and repair appear in the Mathew Carey Papers at the American Antiquarian Society. During Carey's first month in operation, January 1785, William Rigby, a cabinetmaker, sold him three galleys for £1 2s. 6d., a dozen sidesticks for 6s., and seventeen yards of reglet for 17s. In 1787, John Sidleman, a stonecutter, charged £2 6s. 10d. for an imposing stone and £1 6s. 10d. for a stone for the press. Other 1787 suppliers and prices are: Daniel Dawson, whitesmith, a frisket for 10s. and, for mending a frisket, 1s. 6d.; Hall & Adgate, a pair of 'Letter cases' for 17s. 6d., a sink and water trough for £1 13s. 9d., and '1

[302] Eugenie Andruss Leonard, 'Paper as a Critical Commodity during the American Revolution,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 74 (1950): 488–99.

[303] Rollo G. Silver, 'The Costs of Mathew Carey's Printing Equipment,' *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1966): 86–87.

[304] Thomas Green to Isaiah Thomas, June 10, 1786, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society; McCulloch, pp. 210–11.

paper & 1 Letter Board' for 6s.; John Cushing, ten pairs of cases at 16s. 8d. per pair and three composing sticks for 3s. 9d.; Joseph Rogers, 'parchment-maker, glue boiler,' parchment skins for tympans at 3s. 9d. each; Jacob Wayne, cabinetmaker, reglet at 4d. per yard.[305] Similar supplies and repairs would have been necessary in a colonial printing shop. And if the passerby of 1780 had looked in again in 1787, he would not have noticed any external change.

Collective Action

In the United States, printers were among the first to realize that the principle 'in union there is strength' could be applied to their own trade. Their temporary groups of journeymen and of proprietors, organized for a particular objective, foreshadowed the later development of unions and trade associations. The objective of the journeymen was always the same —adequate wages; the proprietors joined forces as a buffer to governmental action. In the few surviving documents, they stated their case simply and concisely, far different from the obfuscations turned out by present-day public relations specialists.

The journeymen of occupied New York united in 1778 despite the British resentment of 'combinations.'[306] Five days after they prepared a carefully worded address, this notice appeared in Rivington's newspaper:

New-York, Nov. 9, 1778.

Gentlemen,

'AS the necessaries of life are raised to such an enormous 'price, it cannot be expected that we should continue to work 'at the wages now given; and therefore request an addition of 'Three Dollars per week to our present small pittance: It may 'be objected that this requisition is founded upon the result of a 'combination to distress the Master Printers at this time, on

[305] Silver, 'Costs,' pp. 91–93.

[306] Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 197.

'account of the scarcity of hands,; but this is far from being the 'case; it being really the high price of every article of life; added 'to the approaching dreary season. There is not one among us, 'we trust, that would take an ungenerous advantage of the times '—we only wish barely to exist, which it is impossible to do 'with our present stipend.

'There is scarcely a common Labourer but gets a Dollar per 'day and provisions, and the lowest mechanicks from 12 to 16*s.* 'per Day.

'We wait the result of your determination.

The JOURNEYMEN PRINTERS.'

To the MASTER PRINTERS, NEW-YORK.

I do consent to the above Requisition.

JAMES RIVINGTON.[307]

One year later, proprietors also worked with each other to ameliorate a distressing condition. As discussed in the section on the wartime printing shop (p. 166), Boston newspaper publishers collaborated in a refusal to obey price control regulations.

Some master printers hesitated to participate in current increases. At Philadelphia, Thomas Bradford's journeymen had to present a formal reminder to him:

Sir,

We doubt not of your having heard of the Rise of Journeymen's Wages from Six *nominal* to Six *real* Dollars Per Week, or the full Exchange thereof, to commence from this Day. As our Labour must certainly be as valuable to our Employer as that of our Fellow Journeymen is to their's, we have a Right to expect a like Encouragement with them—

William Miller.
Wm Coles

Philadª March 26, 1781.[308]

Newspaper publishers again cooperated, twenty years after the Stamp Act of 1765, when Massachusetts tried to liquidate part of the war debt by placing a tax of two-thirds of a penny

[307] *Royal Gazette* (New York), Nov. 14, 1778.

[308] Bradford Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

on newspapers and a penny on almanacs, to be stamped. Extensive opposition, including a petition signed by sixteen printing firms, forced repeal before the law went into effect.[309] Instead, a new law of July 1785 placed a tax of 6d. on each advertisement of twelve lines or less, 1s. on an advertisement of twenty lines or less, continuing to increase in proportion. The opposition to this 'Bostonian Stamp Act' which seriously impaired the newspaper publishers has been discussed in detail by John B. Hench.[310] Isaiah Thomas called the law 'a shackle which no legislature but ours, either in British or United America, have laid on the Press, which, when free, is the acknowledged great bulwark of Liberty, and the boast of a Free and Independent People.'[311] Rather than defy the law, he suspended the *Massachusetts Spy* and in its place issued the weekly *Worcester Magazine* for two years beginning April 1786.[312] Benjamin Edes, in Boston, and Samuel Hall, in Salem, avoided some taxes by using editorial and correspondence columns for stating that certain publications were for sale at a specified address.[313] At the end of the first year of working under the law, twelve Massachusetts newspaper firms signed this statement:

> To the Public.
>
> MONDAY next, the 31st instant, will complete one year since the Tax on News-Papers commenced. We have severely felt the injurious *Restraint*; and, respecting the size, in imitation of the diminutive Gazettes of Spain and other arbitrary governments in Europe, we must now reduce our's. Accordingly, after the last day of the present month, we shall be obliged to print our respective Gazettes on a smaller scale, excepting those published twice in the week, the prices of which will be enhanced propor-

[309] Thomas, 2:79; Harriet Silvester Tapley, *Salem Imprints, 1768–1825* (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1927) p. 62; *Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 29, 1785.

[310] Tapley, *Salem Imprints*, p. 62; John B. Hench, 'Massachusetts Printers and the Commonwealth's Newspaper Advertisement Tax of 1785,' below, pp. 199–211.

[311] *Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 29, 1785.

[312] Thomas, 2:79; Shipton, *Isaiah Thomas*, p. 42.

[313] Buckingham, *Specimens*, 1:197–98, 226–27.

> tionably. As *Necessity* alone is the cause, we hope for the sympathetick acquiescene [*sic*] of our good Customers. Those of them who are citizens of the neighbouring States, while they are enjoying the full exercise of the darling privilege of a free PRESS, will, it is humbly hoped, not suddenly withdraw the aid which their custom has hitherto afforded us. We are preparing, and shall soon publish, a respectful address to our fellow citizens, which will contain such observations on the act in question, and such a narration of the doings of the Legislature, as, we doubt not, will prove satisfactory to every honest friend of the revolution.[314]

Neither this protest nor a temporary reduction in size persuaded the legislature to cancel the tax. Within three months, the fifth Massachusetts newspaper discontinued publication because of the law, which was not repealed until 1788.[315]

At the mid-point of the 1784–88 depression, printers worried about the long-run prospects of their shops. In response to a letter from Hudson & Goodwin, of Hartford, telling him that business was at a low ebb, Isaiah Thomas said that it was 'bad enough' in Massachusetts. He suggested that if printers would draft a 'general plan for the good of the whole' and if the printers would religiously adopt it, 'it would be greatly to the advantage of all.'[316] This idea of a trade association was a little before its time.

In Philadelphia, master printers tried to remain solvent by lowering the wages of their journeymen. The masters had good reason: declining profits required a reduction in expenses, particularly in a city where competition was keen. As word of the reduction spread through the trade, an increasing number of journeymen became convinced that collective action was necessary. They arranged for a meeting, after which twenty-six journeymen signed this declaration:

[314] *Exchange Advertiser* (Boston), July 27, 1786.

[315] Evans 19730; Thomas, 2:79.

[316] Isaiah Thomas to Hudson & Goodwin, May 8, 1786, Miscellaneous MSS., New-York Historical Society.

> At a meeting of journeymen printers of Philadelphia held at the house of Henry Myers on Wednesday evening, the 31st ultimo, the following resolutions were unanimously entered into and ordered transcribed for publication. In consequence of an attempt having been made by some of our employers to reduce our wages to 35 shillings per week:
>
> *Resolved*, That we, the subscribers, will not engage to work for any printing establishment in this city or county under the sum of $6 per week.
>
> *Resolved*, That we will support such of our brethren as shall be thrown out of employment on account of their refusing to work for less than $6 per week.
>
> PHILADELPHIA, *June 7, 1786*.[317]

According to Ethelbert Stewart, the conflict probably lasted for some time.[318] The document, signed by a majority of the Philadelphia journeymen, contains a clause which, stated Richard B. Morris, is probably the first recorded provision for a union strike-benefit fund in this country.[319] The clause strengthened the position of the journeymen and may have discouraged the masters from making any further attempts to reduce the scale. Although the strike-benefit fund was to become a characteristic of trade unions, there are no indications that these journeymen intended to have a formal organization. The first known printers' union did not appear until 1794 in New York.[320] In the same year, the master printers of Philadelphia did what Isaiah Thomas had hoped to do: they organized a trade association.[321]

[317] Ethelbert Stewart, 'A Documentary History of the Early Organizations of Printers,' *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* no. 61 (Nov. 1905): 860. Although this document was also seen by Nelson ['Some New Jersey Printers,' p. 46], neither stated the location.

[318] Stewart, 'Documentary History,' p. 860.

[319] Morris, *Government and Labor*, p. 201.

[320] Rollo G. Silver, *The American Printer, 1787–1825* (Charlottesville: Pub. for The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, University Press of Virginia, 1967), p. 15.

[321] Ibid., p. 85.

Printing Type

At the beginning of hostilities, printers had no sudden need for printing type because they continued to use the type already in the shop. And, if they happened to be in the area of Philadelphia, they could avail themselves of the only two American typefoundries, both in Germantown, one conducted by Justus Fox for Christopher Sower II, the other owned by Jacob Bay.[322] After a few years, when type showed signs of wear, printers began to search for new fonts while they kept on printing. Isaiah Thomas printed Joseph Buckminster's *A Brief Paraphrase* (1779) even though he apologetically noted in the copy that he later gave the American Antiquarian Society that 'in this part of the country no good paper or types to be had.'[323] Better type probably arrived at the time this work was being set. Recalling the period after he resumed printing at Worcester in 1778, Thomas said that in a few months he 'was fortunate enough to purchase some new types which were taken in a vessel from London.'[324]

Apart from the rare good luck of capture, imported type could also be obtained through Amsterdam or from France. Some of the more imaginative printers tried a political expedient: Capt. Robert Niles sailed to France in 1778 carrying a letter from Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut to Benjamin Franklin, asking Franklin to help the bearer to procure a small font of type 'for the use of Some Printers in this State.'[325] Livingston thought it practically certain that Franklin bought the type for the printers.[326] In another letter in the captain's pouch, James Watson, of New London Harbor,

[322] Wroth, *Colonial Printer*, pp. 104–8.

[323] Evans 16215.

[324] Thomas, 1:181.

[325] Trumbull to Franklin, May 30, 1778, Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society.

[326] Luther S. Livingston, *Franklin and His Press at Passy* (New York: Grolier Club, 1914), pp. 122–23.

asked Captain Niles to make inquiries about typecasting, to take the advice of Franklin and Silas Deane about the practicability and expense of establishing a typefoundry in America, and to ascertain if an operator could be persuaded to come to Connecticut.[327] Boston printers, too, thought of Franklin as a possible agent. Writing to his niece at Boston in 1779, Franklin offered his good offices:

> I thank you for the Boston Newspapers, tho' I see nothing so clearly in them as that your Printers do indeed want new Letters. They perfectly blind me in endeavouring to read them. If you should ever have any Secrets that you wish to be well kept, get them printed in those Papers. You enquire if Printers Types may be had here? Of all Sorts, very good, cheaper than in England, and of harder Metal.—I will see any Orders executed in that way that any of your Friends may think fit to send. They will doubtless send Money with their Orders. Very good Printing Ink is likewise to be had here.[328]

Few printers found it necessary to undertake the lengthy task of importation. Some of the others purchased type from printers who possessed an excess of fonts acquired by import or domestic manufacture. One such transaction is tantalizing for its incomplete information. In October 1780, Isaiah Thomas offered to buy type from George Goodwin, printer at Hartford. Thomas's letter begins: 'I have just received your favour of the 13th inst. and have had a view of the Long Primer Italick. The types are much inferiour to English, and the price high, but my necessity is very great. I should think 6/ hard money price enough.' The postscript reads: 'I should be glad to purchase the whole of the Long Primer, and I conclude there will be an odds in the price of that and the Brevier. The Brevier I am told is much the best Letter, and can I make out

[327] J[ames] Watson to Capt. [Robert] Niles, May 6, 1778, Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society.

[328] Benjamin Franklin, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert Henry Smyth, 10 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1905–7), 7:394.

about payment, I shall be glad of a part of it.'[329] What did Thomas mean by 'English'? Was he referring to the size of type or to the country of origin? If he intended country of origin, Goodwin's type did not come from England. The description of the long primer as 'much inferiour' suggests the remote possibility that it may have been cast at Abel Buell's typefoundry at New Haven. In Lawrence C. Wroth's thorough study of Buell, the issue of the *Connecticut Journal* for April 19, 1781, is cited as containing the first known appearance of Buell's type after he resumed typefounding.[330] The type happens to be long primer, though not italic. Also, Thomas, when writing about Buell, noted that in the course of a few years he completed several fonts of long primer, which were tolerably well executed, and some persons in the trade made use of them.'[331] 'Tolerably well' in a memoir may be equated with 'much inferiour' when discussing price. Although the long primer italic may have been a trial run for Buell, there is greater probability that Goodwin's long primer and brevier were cast at another foundry. It is certain, at least, that these fonts were for sale in 1780. In the next year, Thomas announced the acquisition, at great expense, of new and elegant type, but did not state the source.[332]

Thomas and Samuel Green, of New Haven, and Timothy Green III, of New London, acquired type from Buell after he resumed typefounding.[333] The chief asset of Buell's thin-faced, poorly aligned type was availability in an area where battered, worn type prevailed. When the *Connecticut Journal* needed new type in 1781, Buell produced it in New Haven. In the same year, Jacob Bay cast the type with which Francis

[329] Thomas to Goodwin, Oct. 19, 1780, Miscellaneous MSS., New-York Historical Society.

[330] Lawrence C. Wroth, *Abel Buell of Connecticut* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1958), p. 53.

[331] Thomas, 1:27.

[332] Shipton, *Isaiah Thomas*, p. 41.

[333] Wroth, *Abel Buell*, p. 54.

Bailey commenced the *Freeman's Journal* in Philadelphia. Bay's type, too, was far from perfect; at the end of the war, Bailey imported new type.[334]

William Goddard tried to reduce the expense of replacing the worn type of his newspaper by searching for type captured from loyalist printers. At Goddard's request, George Lux, of Baltimore, wrote to Gen. Nathanael Greene, then in command at Charleston, South Carolina, asking that type left behind by loyalist printers be sold to Goddard. Unfortunately for Goddard, William Charles Wells, the Charleston printer, took his type with him when he went to St. Augustine. Albeit, a part of the letter from Lux to Greene is still of especial interest for the information it contains about the amount of type wanted and, more important, for the current prices of type in December 1782:

> The following is a Memorandum given me by Mr Goddard to be forwarded to you—I just copy it verbatim—
>
> A Fount or two of Printing Types, suitable for a News Paper, new or half worn, from 300 to 750wt—the larger quantity the better—the price of such Types from 1/6 to 2/6 sterling when new———
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | Brevier | 2/6 | These are the Names & Prices when new—[335] |
> | Burgeois | 2/2 | |
> | Long Primer | 1/6 | |
> | Small Pica | 1/1 | |

The type in this country at the beginning of the war which was still in use was deteriorating so rapidly that if the war had continued for a few more years, the shortage of type would have become much greater. Complicated methods of importation, the few domestic typefoundries, and surreptitious trading with the loyalists could not have supplied type in quantities sufficient for replacement. Luckily for the printers

[334] McCulloch, p. 103.

[335] Lux to Greene, Dec. 3, 1782, Nathanael Greene Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

—and the nation—the useful life of these bits composed of lead, antimony, and tin just about equaled the length of the war.

The long-deferred shipments of type so badly needed began to arrive after the signing of the preliminary articles of peace. In August 1783, James Rivington, in occupied New York, who had 'two printing offices on the passage to me for two persons,' told Isaiah Thomas that he would include 'the Letter you may require' amongst the books shipped to him.[336] The flow of type, ordered by printers or by import agents, greatly increased during the following year. Practically all of it came from Great Britain. One exception worthy of note is an order sent to Enschedé, the Dutch typefoundry, by Boinod & Gaillard, of Philadelphia, in January 1784. The first part was shipped from Haarlem in the following September.[337]

Mathew Carey, establishing his Philadelphia shop, was able to purchase 508½ pounds of type for £63 11s. 3d. from Moore & Rhea, importers, on the day before he bought his press in December 1784.[338] Isaiah Thomas's import agents, S. & S. Salisbury, billed him for £191 for type imported between April and December 1784 and on December 30, 1784, he announced the arrival from England of 'a beautiful set of Musical Types, by which he is enabled to print any kind of Church and other Music.'[339] This was only the beginning of what Thomas later called his 'type frensy.'[340] In 1785, he celebrated the assemblage of recently acquired new type by is-

[336] Rivington to Thomas, Aug. 11, 1783, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

[337] This information was kindly supplied in a letter from Miss Drs. A. J. Flipse, Curator, Museum Enschedé, Haarlem, July 14, 1975.

[338] Silver, 'Costs,' p. 96.

[339] Isaiah Thomas, *Extracts from the Diaries and Accounts of Isaiah Thomas*, ed. Charles L. Nichols (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1916), pp. 5–7; Charles L. Nichols, *Some Notes on Isaiah Thomas* (Worcester: Charles Hamilton, 1900), p. 6.

[340] E. T. Andrews to Isaiah Thomas, Jan. 4, 1791, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

suing *A Specimen of Isaiah Thomas's Printing Types. . . . Chiefly Manufactured by that great Artist, William Caslon, Esq; of London.*[341] It contains a series of Caslon fonts, characters for mathematics, geometry, algebra, physics, astronomy, Greek and Hebrew type, music, as well as ornaments. Thomas was not yet satisfied; he persisted in importing more type, noting in a copy of the specimen that £2,000 sterling and upwards were added to the specimen in type from Fry, Caslon, and Wilson.[342] The 'type frensy' at least once was almost beyond control, as seen in this letter of December 8, 1785, from Thomas to Hudson & Goodwin, of Hartford: 'I have several fonts of Types for sale, among others, a beautiful font of Minion, &c. neatly dressed and made for my use by Mr Caslon; but my demands for Cash are so great that to obtain a little of that necessary article, I would sell either that or some other fonts exceeding reasonable. Some of the fonts arrived a few days since and are not yet opened.'[343] In a postscript, he offered 'a few Casks excellent Printing Ink.' Thomas, affected by the postwar depression, reduced his purchases until economic conditions improved. Then, in 1790, he began negotiations for the type and composition of his most ambitious project, the 1797 'Standing Bible.'[344]

Of the nine printers submitting bids in 1785 for a new edition of the Journals of the Continental Congress, five gave the origin of the type to be used. Charles Cist, of Philadelphia, submitted the 1783 specimen of Alexander Wilson, of Glasgow, as an example of his type and Isaac Collins stated that his came from Glasgow.[345] James Adams, of Wilmington, declared that he had 'lately imported from London a

[341] Evans 19272.

[342] Nichols, *Some Notes*, p. 6.

[343] New-York Historical Society, Miscellaneous MSS.

[344] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The Isaiah Thomas 'Standing Bible'* (Chicago: Privately printed, 1928), pp. 5–11.

[345] NA, 1:242–43, 263.

general Assortment of Types.'[346] Shepard Kollock, of New York, said that he would use type cast under the direction of Benjamin Franklin, and Francis Childs, of New York, stated that he expected his type from Franklin in the next French packet.[347] As early as 1780, Franklin planned to bring type back to America. He had purchased several thousand pounds of type, including a shipment from London in 1779.[348] However, the type received by Childs was certified for customs by Franklin's statement that it was cast in his house at Passy by his servants and was never the property of any European letter founder, manufacturer, or merchant.[349]

While at Passy, Franklin engaged a master typefounder to instruct his cherished fifteen-year-old grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, so that he could eventually enter the trade. After five months of this training, Franklin arranged to have young Benjamin work in the Didot typefoundry where in April 1785 he cut his first punch.[350] The termination of Franklin's mission soon required young Benjamin's return to Passy to help with the packing. Their shipments home included the equipment for a typefoundry, punchcutting apparatus, several sets of matrices, and a sizeable amount of type.[351] Grandfather and grandson returned to Philadelphia in 1785; the typefounding equipment arrived in March 1786.[352] Resettled at home, Franklin intended to manage the typefoundry until Benjamin graduated from college. He set up in Franklin Court, Market Street, and proceeded to sell his type. Probably tired by the pressures of his complex interests and impatiently marking time until his grandson could take over,

[346] Ibid., p. 217.

[347] Ibid., pp. 187, 205.

[348] Livingston, *Franklin and His Press*, pp. 121–22.

[349] Ibid., p. 136.

[350] Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Benjamin Franklin, Typefounder* (New York: Privately printed, 1925), pp. 7–8.

[351] Ibid., p. 8; Wroth, *Colonial Printer*, p. 112.

[352] Livingston, *Franklin and His Press*, p. 118.

Franklin failed to make the typefoundry thrive. There were deficiencies of sorts and a general lack of acceptance. Isaiah Thomas wrote of the unhappy period: 'Although the materials of this foundery enabled the proprietor to make Greek, Hebrew, Roman, and all other kinds of types in use in Europe or America, the foundery was but little employed. The implements for making roman and italic types, especially, would not produce handsome specimens.'[353] Franklin tried to improve the design by hiring an excellent punchcutter, but by the time, about 1787, when Benjamin assumed management, the situation was irreversible.[354]

Opportunities for success in the new nation prompted British typefounders to think about moving across the Atlantic. Prosperous or better-known typefounders remained at home, but several of the less important did come to America. The first of these was a Scotsman, accompanied by his grandson, who arrived in July 1787:

> It is with pleasure we inform the fraternity of printers, throughout the United States, that, on the 4th instant, Mr. John Baine, sen. and Mr. John Baine, jun. Letter-founders, arrived in this city, from Edinburgh, in Scotland; and that they intend here to establish their Type-foundery. We also learn that they will vend their types much cheaper than can be imported, should they be encouraged by the printers in this country, which it is believed they will be from patriotic as well as convenient motives.[355]

Toward the end of August, the Baines announced their decision to establish their typefoundry at Philadelphia and offered, for ready cash, sterling, three fonts of type left in New York: 373 pounds small pica @ 1s. 2d., 363 pounds long primer @ 1s. 6d., 276 pounds brevier @ 2s. 6d.[356] The elder Baine, about seventy-four years old, had been, in the 1740s, a

[353] Thomas, 1:30.

[354] Ibid.; Wroth, *Colonial Printer*, p. 112.

[355] *Daily Advertiser* (New York), July 20, 1787; *New-York Journal*, July 19, 1787.

[356] *New-York Journal*, Aug. 23, 1787.

partner of Alexander Wilson.[357] His choice of Philadelphia was very sensible; it surpassed New York in volume of printing and afforded good transportation facilities. Within a few years, the firm built up a steady business. Isaiah Thomas said that they 'were good workmen, and had full employment.'[358] Soon other professional typefounders would immigrate to the United States and build bigger typefoundries. It may be said that typefounding in this country as a permanent industry began with the arrival of the Baines on the fourth of July, 1787.

Printers under Attack

When divided opinion within the country erupted into mob violence, the printer was liable to be the victim of his fellow Americans. In 1776, Samuel Loudon, in New York, announced the publication of *The Deceiver Unmasked*, an answer to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.[359] A local organization of extremely patriotic mechanics invaded his office on the following evening, carried off the 1,500 completed pamphlets, and burned them on the Common. During the next day, every printer in the city received a threat of death and destruction if he printed 'anything against the rights and liberties of America, or in favor of our inveterate foes, the King, Ministry and Parliament of Great Britain.'[360] No New York newspaper referred to the destruction of the pamphlets and efforts to print an answer to Paine in New York ceased.

At Baltimore, members of the Whig Club, in 1777, forcibly brought William Goddard from his house to their club room in an effort to make him reveal the name of the author of an ironic article which they took literally. After he refused, he was presented with a notice banishing him from the town by

[357] Talbot Baines Reed, *A History of the Old English Letter Foundries*, ed. A. F. Johnson, rev. and enl. (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 258–59.

[358] Thomas, 1:31.

[359] Alexander J. Wall, 'The Burning of the Pamphlet "The Deceiver Unmasked," in 1776,' *American Collector* 3 (1926): 106; Bristol-Evans B4238.

[360] Wall, 'Burning of the Pamphlet,' p. 107.

the next noon and from the county in three days. Goddard went to Annapolis where a committee of the legislature approved his position. His defense, *The Prowess of the Whig Club,* written and printed soon after his return to Baltimore, reignited the hatred of the club.[361] Several members, armed with sticks and cutlasses, invaded the printing office, manhandled Goddard and two of his workmen, and then escorted Goddard to the club room where they decided that Goddard must leave town. Again he went to Annapolis and again he returned to Baltimore, this time protected by resolutions of the Assembly and Governor Johnson's proclamation.[362] Goddard changed his tactics in a similar situation two years later. Overpowered by a mob, he identified Gen. Charles Lee as the author of an article and agreed to write and publish a recantation—which he did. He also went to Annapolis and appealed to the governor and Council for protection. On the conclusion of a hearing which was favorable to him, Goddard published a retraction of the recantation.[363]

Benjamin Towne, in Philadelphia, did not identify the author of an article in his *Pennsylvania Evening Post* of 1779 until dragged to a meeting of the Constitutional Society where a noose was placed around his neck.[364] In New York, James Rivington's Tory policy created so much antagonism that his shop became the objective of repeated visits by groups under the direction of Isaac Sears, a leader of the Sons of Liberty. The second raid of 1775 ruined the printing equipment and removed the type. A visit in December 1783, warning him to stop publishing, was followed by a window-smashing visit in the next month. As Hewlett points out, it was an unnecessary gesture; Rivington had already advertised his presses, type,

[361] Evans 15315.

[362] Miner, *William Goddard,* pp. 152–62.

[363] Ibid., pp. 169–72.

[364] Dwight L. Teeter, 'Benjamin Towne: The Precarious Career of a Persistent Printer,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 89 (1965): 326.

and supplies for sale.[365] These overt instances of interference with the press are only the tip of the iceberg; the number of printers who were intimidated remains unknown.

Resolute patriot printers who remained near the lines of battle occasionally found themselves under fire or in direct confrontation with the enemy. Just before the British landed at Newport in 1776, Solomon Southwick buried his press and type. As the army entered the town, soldiers saw Southwick, his wife, and eldest son leaving the shore in an open boat. Southwick's loyalist brother-in-law purposely detained the soldiers long enough for the boat to move far enough from shore to avoid the enemy cartridges shot at it but a younger child and its nurse were captured.[366] In 1777, John Holt's effects were pillaged or burned in enemy action at Danbury and James Adams lost a portion of his type when it was seized from a wagon by the British as he moved from Wilmington to Doylestown for safety.[367] Timothy Green III removed most of his type at the time the enemy fleet threatened New London in 1779, but he retained enough to issue his newspaper in a half-sheet. When the devastating attack did occur two years later, his shop escaped damage. The issue of the *Connecticut Gazette*, half-printed before the conflagration and completed with news about the attack, appeared three days late.[368]

Every printer faced his moment of truth because he could not be neutral in a civil war. Resolute patriots moved their presses with the fortunes of the patriot forces. Resolute loyalists emigrated or moved with the British forces. Other printers changed sides as the prospect of victory or as the

[365] Leroy Hewlett, 'James Rivington, Tory Printer,' in *Books in America's Past*, ed. Kaser, pp. 173, 178.

[366] Thomas, 1:198–99; Brigham, 2:998.

[367] *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. 'Holt, John'; McCulloch, p. 132.

[368] Meder, 'Timothy Green III,' pp. 112–15.

occupation of their city changed. All of them were businessmen, trying to earn a living.

Epilogue

When the war was won and the new nation established, printers joined their fellow Americans in celebrating the ratification of the Constitution in each of the states. Each 'Federal Procession' in 1788 included a contingent of printers marching and proudly reminding the onlookers of their share in achieving independence. At Boston, Benjamin Edes, one of the 'trumpeters of sedition,' led fifteen printers 'with a stand, drawn on a sled, and compositors at work.'[369] John Markland and the printers in Charleston paraded with a stand on which there were compositors and pressmen at work.[370] The Baltimore printers, led by William Goddard and John Hayes, marched with a figure of Gutenberg and carried 'Volumes, American Productions.' Accompanying them were 'Mercuries, distributing Copies of the new Constitution, *without Amendments*.'[371] The procession at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, exhibited a new press:

> Printers, preceded by two lads with open quires of printed paper, followed with Cases and Apparatus decorated, Compositors at work; Pressmen, with Mr. Benjamin Dearborn's new invented Printing-Press, (named the American Press) employed during the whole procession, in striking off and distributing among the surrounding multitude, songs in celebration of the ratification of the Federal Constitution by the State of New-Hampshire.
> Motto — — *A Government of Freemen never knows*
> *A Tyrants shackles on the Press t'impose*.[372]

[369] *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), Feb. 14, 1788; *Boston Evening-Post*, Sept. 19, 1774.

[370] *State Gazette of South-Carolina*, June 2, 1788.

[371] *Maryland Journal*, May 6, 1788.

[372] *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), July 3, 1788. According to the late Ralph Green, Dearborn's press was also used at Newburyport, Mass. (letter to author of Mar. 19, 1947). No other instances of its use have been found.

Hugh Gaine and Samuel Loudon, on horseback, led the printers, bookbinders, and stationers in New York. The standard, on which there was a medallion of Benjamin Franklin, preceded a stage, drawn by four horses. On the stage, compositors worked at the cases and, at the press, pressmen struck off many hundred copies of a song and an ode, adapted to the occasion.[373] These were distributed as the procession moved along. Mounted on the back of the press was John Loudon, representing a herald, 'dressed in a flowing robe, and a cap, on which were written the words, "The Liberty of the Press"; with a brazen trumpet in the right hand, proclaiming "The epocha of Liberty and Justice" ' and in his left hand was 'a parchment scroll representing the New-Constitution.' Then followed the master printers, booksellers, and bookbinders, with their journeymen and apprentices, decorated with blue sashes, marching four abreast.[374]

The display of the printers, bookbinders, and stationers in Philadelphia was the most elaborate. On a stage, nine feet square, drawn by four horses, men were working in a printing shop. The pressmen struck off copies of an ode composed by Francis Hopkinson, which, with copies of an ode in German, were thrown to the people.[375] Also on the stage was a man 'in the character of *Mercury*, in a white dress, ornamented with red ribbands, having real wings affixed to his head and feet, and a garland of blue and red flowers round his temples.' Ten small packages, containing an ode and the toasts for the day, 'were made up and addressed to the Ten States in Union respectively; these were tied to ten pidgeons, which at intervals rose from Mercury's cap, and flew off, with the acclamations of an admiring multitude.' William Sellers bore the standard, followed by the masters, journeymen, and appren-

[373] Bristol-Evans B6726 (ode).

[374] *New York Packet*, Aug. 5, 1788.

[375] Evans 21151.

tices, each carrying a scroll tied with blue silk, showing the word 'Typographer,' illuminated by ten stars in union.[376]

These exultations fittingly concluded a period of war and of postwar economic depression. The printers returned to their shops with contentment and anticipation of a peaceful, prosperous life.

[376] *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 9, 1788.