

*New Jersey's
Revolutionary Experience*

I

*The Press
in Revolutionary
New Jersey*

RICHARD F. HIXSON

New Jersey Historical Commission

NEW JERSEY'S REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE

Larry R. Gerlach, *Editor*

This series of publications is dedicated to the memory of Alfred E. Driscoll, governor of New Jersey from 1947 to 1954, in grateful tribute to his lifelong support of the study and teaching of the history of New Jersey and the United States. He was a member of the New Jersey Historical Commission from 1970 until his death on March 9, 1975.

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**THE NEW JERSEY AMERICAN REVOLUTION
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The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. John R. Anderson, whose manuscript, "The Rebel Press of Shepard Kollock, Chatham, 1779-1783," was consulted for portions of this pamphlet. Other portions were taken from my book, *Isaac Collins: A Quaker Printer in 18th Century America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1968). Additional references appear in the text and the bibliographical essay.

Foreword

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is a Bicentennial pamphlet series published by the New Jersey Historical Commission with a grant from the New Jersey Bicentennial Commission. The twenty-six numbers and two teachers' guides are intended to acquaint secondary school students and the general public with the state's history during the era of the American Revolution. Some titles treat aspects of the Revolution in New Jersey, while others show how important themes of the colonial period developed during the revolutionary years; some bring together the results of existing scholarship, while others present the findings of original research; some are written by professional historians, and others by laymen whose investigations of Jersey history exceed avocation. Because the series is directed to a general audience, the pamphlets have no footnotes but contain bibliographical essays which offer suggestions for further reading.

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is the product of a cooperative venture by numerous individuals and agencies. On my behalf and that of the pamphlets' readers, I accord recognition and appreciation to the individual authors for their contributions to New Jersey history, to the New Jersey American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration Commission and the New Jersey Historical Commission for their support of the project, to Hank Simon, president, Trentypo, Inc., for his invaluable suggestions and cooperation in producing the series, and to the staff of the Historical Commission: Richard Waldron, Public Programs Coordinator, who as project director supervised the series from commencement to completion; Peggy Lewis, Chief of Publications and Information, and Lee R. Parks, Assistant Editor, who edited and designed each number; and William C. Wright, Associate Director, who contributed valuable suggestions at every stage of production.

Larry R. Gerlach
University of Utah

Americans in the twentieth century find it difficult to imagine their country without newspapers. But that was the case until 1704, when the first regularly published paper appeared "by Authority" in Boston. Before then, however, there had been other attempts at journalism. In 1689 Samuel Green II printed the *Present State of the New-English Affairs*, a single-issue broadside that resembled a newspaper in content if not in appearance. A year later Benjamin Harris, an English printer who had recently moved to Boston, issued *Public Occurrences both Forreign and Domestick*. But it was promptly suppressed by the government for carrying "Reflections of very high nature" and "sundry doubtful and uncertain Reports." The next American newspaper did not appear for fourteen years. It was called the *Boston News-Letter*, authorized by the government and published by the postmaster of Boston, John Campbell. First issued on April 24, 1704, the *News-Letter* survived until the Revolution. These early newspapers marked the beginning of what one contemporary historian called "the age of periodical publications," for by the end of the 1700s the country had nearly two-hundred fifty newspapers in operation.

"Newspapers appeared in this country as new devices to satisfy old needs," wrote Alfred McClung Lee in *The Daily Newspaper in America*, a pioneer study of the evolution of journalism as a social institution. "They partially replaced services rendered by coffee-houses and taverns, by preachers and postmasters, and by town gossips. Their immediate forerunners included personal letters, the handwritten newsletters produced commercially in this country and abroad, notices posted in public places, broadsides and pamphlets, and newspapers sent to

America. Printing equipment, supplies of paper, printers, readers who could afford to subscribe, and freedom or permission to print, as the immediate prerequisites, effected the change."

Printers, with their presses and their newly acquired skill, appeared in America almost simultaneously with the first permanent settlements. Printing offices, which flourished along the Atlantic coast and moved westward with the spread of population, were among the most important businesses in centers of commerce, literature, religion, and government. The printers of colonial America, therefore, moved into a position of power which their descendants in the mass media hold to this day.

Just as it is difficult to imagine a country without newspapers, it is hard to imagine the American struggle for independence apart from the printers who helped so much to facilitate it. John Adams's rhetorical question is still relevant: "But what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American war?" He responded: "The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people. This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution."

Prior to the war itself Americans in ever increasing numbers had discussed the basic political concepts for self-governance. Many times their debates were conducted in the weekly newspapers, as well as in churches and taverns. By the middle of the eighteenth century, aided and abetted by the newspapers, the colonists had formulated sufficient ideas and goals to confront the serious differences that had begun to divide America from Great Britain.

The printed media played a vital role in what the "average colonist" thought about public affairs, and, of the various media available, the newspaper most clearly reflected public opinion and attitudes. As one writer concludes: "The high degree of literacy in the colonies, coupled with the wide circulation of newspapers, indicates that the press was of utmost importance in the process of focusing and defining political attitudes." Colonial America was provoked into a radical stance that would have taken longer to jell were it not for the press. Conversely, colonial America also gave legitimacy to the press, the "Fourth Estate," whose own liberty and responsibility was, and still is, widely discussed.

While the newspapers were a major force in solidifying the colonies politically, the colonists, in turn, fought for freedom of the press, because, as one historian notes, “they knew only too well that its liberty of publication was closely connected with the achievements of their own political and economic rights in the conflict with the crown. It was then that the slogan ‘freedom of the press’ was born to become a part of our deeply rooted American tradition.”

There is little fundamental difference between newspapers of the eighteenth century and those of the twentieth. To be sure, the former had few pages or pictures, and their columns did not report on news from around the world. Their presses were smaller and slower. Their paper was coarser and harder to manufacture. Their shops were dimly lighted and cramped. But their purpose was the same—to report and pass judgment on public affairs, the events that affect at least a majority of citizens.

What follows is the story—small but important—of the beginnings of journalism in New Jersey. It is presented mainly from the standpoint of the politicians and the printers who helped create the state’s first newspapers. It is a prelude to our time.

New Jersey was one of the last of the original colonies to have a newspaper, although nearly forty were being published when war broke out in the spring of 1775. Of the available papers, two were in New Hampshire, seven in Massachusetts, four in Connecticut, two in Rhode Island, four in New York, seven in Pennsylvania, two in Maryland, four in Virginia, two in North Carolina, three in South Carolina, and one in Georgia.

New Jersey was so late in having its own newspaper largely because most New York and Pennsylvania papers printed news of interest to New Jerseyans and circulated widely in the colony. Tory as well as Whig journals were available to New Jersey residents. James Rivington’s pro-British *New-York Gazetteer*, to use the most obvious example, boasted a larger circulation than any other colonial newspaper for the critical years of 1774 and 1775; a large part of that circulation was in New Jersey. Another predominantly Tory sheet, Hugh Gaine’s *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, was even printed in New Jersey for a brief time in the fall of 1776.

Citizens were so aroused over the conflict with Great Britain

that they eventually boycotted and publicly burned Rivington's paper in New Jersey as part of an intercolony campaign to force the printer out of business. In Newark a citizens' group resolved "henceforth to take no more of his papers, pamphlets, or any other public performance of his press." Residents of Morris County called Rivington an enemy of his country and vowed to discourage the circulation of his newspaper in their county. In Woodbridge they said he was "a person inimical to the liberties of this country, and cordially recommended to all our constituents to drop his Paper and have no further dealings with him."

The movement against Rivington reached into the center of New Jersey, where perhaps the most graphic demonstration took place. Whigs in New Brunswick hanged the printer in effigy and described him as a "noxious exotick plant, incapable either of cultivation or improvement in this soil of freedom." Rivington was apparently amused, for he published a drawing of the event in his *Gazetteer*. Such expressions of indignation continued, and in November of 1775 a party of Connecticut raiders, led by the New Yorker Isaac Sears, entered his shop and destroyed his type and equipment. Rivington fled to England but returned when the British army held the city.

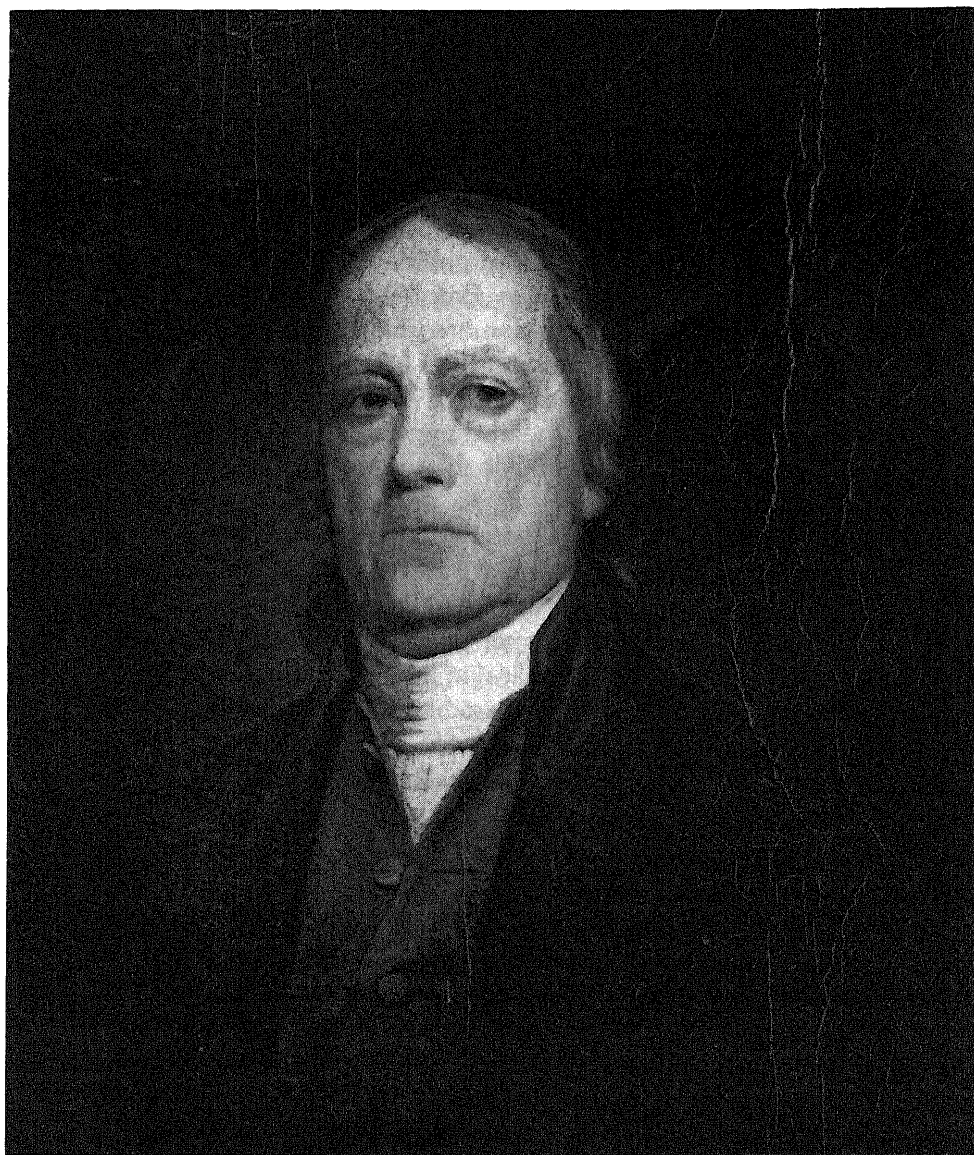
Rivington's experiences show that freedom of the press then, as perhaps now too, was more a matter of expedient operation than of cherished tradition. Printers were subject to the attacks of extremists who, in the words of Arthur M. Schlesinger, believed that "liberty of speech belonged solely to those who spoke the speech of liberty." A more sweeping condemnation is Leonard W. Levy's: "The American people simply did not understand that freedom of thought and expression means equal freedom for the other fellow, especially the one with hated ideas." Ironically, New Jersey had been the only province to register opposition to the Stamp Act as an infringement upon the freedom of the press. On November 30, 1765, the assembly drafted a series of resolutions on the crisis with England, stating at one point "that any Incumbrance, which in Effect restrains the Liberty of the Press in America, is an infringement upon the Subjects Liberty." By the 1770s, however, this kind of rationale had apparently ceased to serve the cause of independence.

Feuds between the pro-British Tories and the anti-British

Whigs suggest a basic motive for establishing a newspaper in New Jersey: political education of the people. If Rivington's paper enjoyed as much influence as the reprisals against him seem to indicate, then clearly the colony needed its own journal of information more in harmony with Whig, or patriot, ideas. There were other reasons, too. As the patriot cause reached a crucial stage during the winter of 1776-1777, several papers serving New Jersey from neighboring colonies ceased publication. Others were moved to distant points to escape British suppression. Also, the manufacture of paper lagged more than ever behind printers' needs, thus forcing subscription prices beyond what many people could afford to pay. Particularly exasperating was the uncertainty of delivery by post-riders, the method printers used to transport their publications to subscribers outside the towns. For these reasons the need for a means to disseminate news and other information became more urgent by 1777, during the last month of which Isaac Collins, the official government printer whose shop was in Burlington, began publishing the *New-Jersey Gazette*.

Prior to Collins's newspaper, however, there had been other attempts at publishing a periodical in the colony. James Parker, the printer who had set up the first established press in New Jersey in 1751 in Woodbridge, published the *New American Magazine* between 1758 and 1760. It contained mostly historical commentary, reprints from British periodicals, and poetry. Parker later planned to publish a New Jersey newspaper from Burlington, but in a letter to Benjamin Franklin, in which he alluded to the repressive Stamp Act, he said that "the News of the Killing Stamp, has struck a deadly Blow to all my Hopes on that Head." On September 21, 1765, William Goddard, a Providence printer, issued from Parker's Woodbridge shop the first and only number of the *Constitutional Courant*, a vigorous protest against the Stamp Act. The *Courant* looked like a newspaper, but it was not meant to last more than one issue.

As for the Stamp Act itself, newspaper printers generally abhorred the new British law because it taxed the paper they used. The statute also called for the assessment of two shillings for each advertisement, which amounted to a real hardship since the publishers earned but three to five shillings for the first insertion of an ad, less for repeated ones. Job printing was hurt, too, for printers



Isaac Collins (1746-1817) in 1806. Oil by John Wesley Jarvis. Owned by Grellet N. Collins, Chestertown, Maryland. Photograph by Constance Stuart Larrabee.

had to pay a tax on pamphlets, almanacs, and legal and business forms. Moreover, the new law levied a toll on apprenticeship indentures, thus hitting the printing trade's basic source of labor. Yet, despite these economic handicaps, the Stamp Act proved politically advantageous—"fortunate for the liberties of America," as one historian wrote.

Another short-lived attempt at journalism in New Jersey was the "Plain-Dealer," which lasted for only eight issues between December 1775 and February 1776. The editors were four prominent New Jerseyans and avid patriots, Dr. Jonathan Elmer, Joseph Bloomfield, Dr. Lewis Howell and his brother Richard. Bloomfield and Richard Howell later served New Jersey as governors, and Elmer became president of the New Jersey Medical Society and a United States senator. The "Plain-Dealer," patterned after London publications that criticized the foibles of the day, was written in longhand and posted in Matthew Potter's tavern in Bridgeton, a center of patriot activity. It lacked current news and other traditional newspaper features, but it included articles designed to stir patriotic emotions among its readers. In their public notice, the editors admonished: "As the circumstances of the times loudly call on every Individual to exert himself for the good of his Country and fellow creatures, several persons . . . have concluded, that the most Important Service that they can render to Society, will be to communicate—Weekly to their neighbors the result of their enquiries and Speculations on political occurrences and other important Subjects particularly calculated to suit this place." Had a press been "within reach" they would have used it, they said.

For a few weeks in 1776 still a third newspaper called New Jersey its home. Hugh Gaine, who had worked for James Parker in New York before Parker moved to Woodbridge, published his *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* from Newark, where he issued seven weekly editions beginning on September 21. He had moved across the Hudson just prior to the British occupation of New York, but when he could not escape the familiar hindrances to printing, he abandoned any plan he may have had for establishing a paper in New Jersey. After the edition of November 2, Gaine returned to New York and became the city's leading Royalist publisher in the absence of the exiled James Rivington.

The fourth publication to appear in New Jersey was the *New-*

Jersey Gazette, endorsed by the new governor, William Livingston, subsidized by the legislature, and issued by the government printer.

Governor Livingston was annoyed by Gaine's paper, in which editorial observations, often tainted with Royalist propaganda, appeared frequently. He also was disturbed by the general lack of enthusiasm in New Jersey to fight for, let alone talk about, independence from Great Britain. In short, the governor yearned for a way to combat the influence of the Tory press without always having to rely on out-of-state Whig newspapers.

During an extensive exchange of letters with Governor Livingston, General Washington expressed worry about what he called the "pemicious tendency of falsehood and misrepresentation" in so-called news reports. The military commander even appealed to Congress for a "camp press" to bolster the morale of his soldiers. But what Washington seemed to regret most was the necessity of using distant Philadelphia newspapers to dispatch military orders to his troops in New Jersey.

Livingston, meanwhile, put the weight of his office behind a plan to disseminate reliable information and help bolster the spirits of citizens and soldiers alike. The governor proposed to the assembly that the state immediately subsidize the establishment of a weekly newspaper. On November 5, 1777, the assembly ordered a committee to take up the proposal with the state's public printer, Isaac Collins. They found Collins "readily disposed . . . provided the Legislature will agree to give him some Encouragement and Assistance." With the Council's concurrence, the first edition of the *Gazette* was pulled from Collins's press in Burlington on December 5, 1777.

Protests from "those persons who are ever ready to censure" greeted the first number of the *Gazette*. The printer had carried an article under the paper's regular London heading that some readers believed harmful to the patriot cause. After describing the problem to Governor Livingston, Collins said: "He who undertakes to print a News-Paper at any Time, and more especially at the present, need not expect to escape it, however well he may have meant."

Collins, as editor as well as printer of the *Gazette*, usually tried to piece together in the same stories distant news about the war and news of actual fighting in and around New Jersey, which he probably received from persons who had seen the fighting. In a typical

dispute in the *Gazette* for December 10, he reported under the regular Burlington heading that on the previous Thursday night the British army, which had occupied Philadelphia since late in September, had begun to march out of the town and that in skirmishes "between the pickets of the two armies" about twenty men had been killed or wounded.

In this issue Collins also informed his readers on developments in London. From the *London Gazette* he extracted part of a letter from General William Howe, in command of British troops in Philadelphia, to Lord George Germain, a member of the British supreme command, regarding troop movements and making suggestions for the defense of Perth Amboy. Although such distant reports always reached *Gazette* readers long after the fact, Collins was doing what he could to provide what he had promised, "a faithful Account of remarkable Occurrences whether foreign or domestic."

The issue also announced that the "PIECE signed HORTENTIUS, is come to hand, and will be inserted in our next." This marked the beginning of a long series of essays written by Governor Livingston under that pseudonym to avoid confusion between his official proclamations, which appeared regularly in the paper, and his personal tirades, some of which were leveled against legislators.

The *Gazette* for December 24, 1777, contained military and economic news as well as advertising. It included a legislative act for procuring "certain Articles of Clothing for the Use of the New-Jersey Regiments on the Continental Establishment." Another act called for regulating and limiting prices of certain critical commodities in order to curb wartime inflation and the depreciation of currency. The issue reported the appointment of John Witherspoon, Abraham Clark, Jonathan Elmer, Nathaniel Scudder, and Elias Boudinot as New Jersey delegates to the Continental Congress.

The Burlington column of this issue contained a message from General Washington's headquarters near Philadelphia, in which the commander in chief expressed his appreciation to the New Jersey officers and soldiers "for the fortitude and patience with which they have sustained the fatigues of the campaign." Collins also reported that three New Jersey commissioners had

been appointed to attend a convention in New Haven, Connecticut, “to form a plan of general regulation respecting the limiting prices of sundry articles of produce, manufacture and trade.”

Finally, this issue announced that the Burlington almanac for 1778 was “in the Press, and speedily will be Published.” Collins advertised for clean linen rags to use in making paper and cited the prices for advertising in the *Gazette*—advertisements of “moderate length” cost seven shillings and sixpence the first week and two shillings sixpence thereafter, and “long ones in Proportion.”

Besides serving as a week-to-week medium of topical news, the *Gazette* helped to circulate the text of important documents. In the April 29, 1778, issue Collins printed the text of the “Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union,” the nation’s first constitution. The *Gazette* acted, too, as a kind of public guardian. On at least one occasion Collins warned the public of counterfeit thirty dollar bills circulating in the area of Burlington and told how to detect them.

Of the *Gazette*’s contents, none are more interesting today than the letters addressed “To the Printer” or to “Mr. Collins.” Unlike the present-day “Voice of the People” columns, these highly personal essays were seldom brief and were often continued over several issues of the paper. Since the life of the *Gazette* covered the period of the Revolutionary War and the first critical years of the new national government, these letter writers were concerned with military battles and political events.

A test of Collins’s editorial judgment came in October 1779, when the upper house of the state legislature registered a complaint against a satirical article by “Cincinnatus.” Upset over what amounted to an anonymous attack on Governor Livingston and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), the council demanded of Collins the true name of the author. The council professed the belief that “the Freedom of the Press ought to be tolerated as far as it is consistent with the Good of the People, and the Security of the Government established under their Authority” and resolved that the *Gazette*’s editor should be forced to reveal the author’s name. Collins refused. He was supported in his stand by a seventeen to eleven vote in the assembly, which thereby set an early legal precedent for freedom of the press in New Jersey.

Collins stated his reason for not disclosing the author's identity in a letter to the council: "Were I to comply with the requisition contained in this resolution, without the permission of the author of the piece alluded to, I conceive I should betray the trust reposed in me, and be far from acting as a faithful guardian of the Liberty of the Press."

In reporting developments of the war and other timely news Collins was of course hampered by slow communications, but news items appeared in the paper shortly after they reached his office. Geographical proximity was always a factor, as was the case in 1778 when a large force of British and Hessian soldiers, having vacated Philadelphia, started moving across New Jersey to New York. A small party of Continentals managed to check its advance toward Trenton, but several troops got close enough to frighten the townspeople. Collins had to stop the printing of the issue in progress when the soldiers threatened the town. The Collins printers sought temporary safety, as did the rest of Trenton's inhabitants. By the next issue Collins was convinced that the story would not be news by the time it reached print. He reported the event in the *Gazette* in this way: "The near approach of the enemy prevented the publication of this paper last week."

Conversely, an "extraordinary," or special supplement to the *Gazette* of July 8, 1778, was given over entirely to a letter from General Washington to the president of Congress that described in detail the battle of Monmouth ten days earlier.

There was also room in the paper for less ponderous commentary. For example, readers of the Trenton column no doubt mused over this item:

A correspondent, who is a friend of the fair sex, observes, that the malignant and thoughtless make a practice of stigmatizing female weakness. We are told that the ladies dress their heads extravagantly large, but do not the men do the same? It is said, and with an air of triumph too, that ladies use lotions to make their skins fair, and do not the men do the same? In short, ransack every female imperfection, display them to view, exaggerate their extravagance—and then dispassionately examine the imperfections of men, and you will find them no less absurd.

Subscribers probably breathed easier after reading the

following report in the paper: "At a special court lately held in Burlington, a certain Joseph Mulliner of Egg-Harbour, was convicted of high treason and is sentenced to be hanged this day. This fellow had become a terror of that part of the country. He had made a practice of burning houses, robbing and plundering ALL who fell in his way, so that when he came to trial it appeared that the whole country, both Whigs and Tories, were his enemies." Mulliner, a legend in his time, was seen by some as a roguish Robin Hood, by others as a treacherous, crafty scoundrel. He was of that breed known as "Refugees," supposedly loyal to the king, who ravaged the countryside and terrorized housewives while their men were off at war.

In February 1779, a little over a year after Collins had begun New Jersey's first established newspaper, there appeared a rival New Jersey patriot newspaper. The publisher of the *New-Jersey Journal*, printed in Chatham in the north-central part of the state, was Shepard Kollock, a long-time friend of Collins's who had recently left the military service to resume his career as a printer. Tradition has it that Kollock was released from service at the behest of General Henry Knox, his commander, to start another patriot paper in the north to help offset Tory propaganda. What is more likely, however, is that after failing in repeated attempts to be promoted beyond the rank of lieutenant the printer sought separation himself. Kollock publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the military.

Whatever the reasons behind the printer's departure from military service and his establishment of the *Journal*, Kollock enjoyed close contact with and assistance from the army when it was encamped at nearby Morristown. Not only was the *Journal* a staunch Whig paper; its editor became one of the Revolution's fieriest patriots. With the British occupation of New York the Whigs found themselves faced not only with Hugh Gaine's ambivalent publication and the triumphant return of James Rivington but also with two more Royalist journals. Thus, Kollock's work as a Whig propagandist was cut out for him.

The *Journal*, like the *Gazette*, included proclamations by the Continental Congress and the acts and resolutions of both Congress and the state legislature. Terms of treaties between field commanders, extracts of letters written by people on the spot, and military and naval movements were also a part of its news coverage.



Shepard Kollock (1750-1839). Courtesy Elizabeth Daily Journal.

In addition, Kollock often printed speeches in the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland, taken from British newspapers.

Military items included notices to soldiers and officers on furlough to report to their units. One of these appeared during March 1779 from Camp Middlebrook and requested absent personnel to report before “the first of May next” unless their furloughs expired sooner. Desertions from the British forces always received ample space. During the summer of 1779, Kollock noted that “twelve grenadiers, lately deserted from the enemy . . . inform us that desertions are very frequent, and may be constantly expected.”

Hardships endured by Loyalists were especially tasty items for Kollock’s personally written Chatham column. At the same time, of course, he reported on the well-being of the patriots. During the winter of 1780, for example, his column carried news that New Yorkers were “so necessitated for fuel, that near 100 of them perished during this inclement season for want thereof.” Kollock then said it is “with pleasure we promulgate to our readers, that our army is now exuberantly supplied with provision and every other necessary to make a soldier’s life comfortable.” Such news, though designed to combat contrary Tory propaganda, no doubt surprised the Continental troops, whose encampment in the Morris County hills was anything but “comfortable.”

Kollock frequently identified the cause of American independence with that of antigovernment movements elsewhere in the British empire. Judging from an editorial in the *Journal* for March 8, 1780, Kollock hoped for a full-scale revolt in Ireland. He felt certain that freedom would come to the Irish as well as to the Americans. In this particular edition, news of the Irish situation occupied all four pages of the paper. Two years later Kollock printed on page one the entire *Irish Declaration of Rights*, which listed the causes of the discontent in that country. The similarity between the Irish grievances and those of the American colonies made provocative copy for Kollock’s newspaper.

“Extatic joy” greeted any reversal for the British in the *Journal*. Kollock appeared jubilant over Cornwallis’s defeat and capture. “When all was dark and gloomy . . . both in the political and natural Atmosphere; when a series of misfortunes to the southward had blackened our annals; we darted an eye through the cloud, and . . .

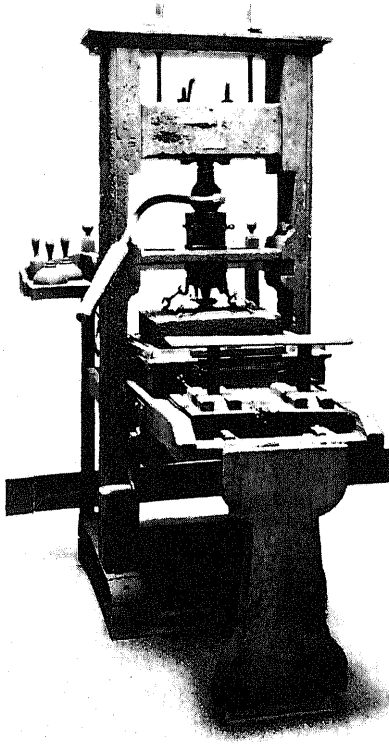
ventured to predict, "That good would come out of evil.'" He said that the defeat of Cornwallis bore out "that honour to human nature and reproach to royalty, our illustrious WASHINGTON, who, like the meridian sun, had dispelled those nocturnal vapours, that hung around us." Kollock also reported the celebration in Chatham upon hearing confirmation of the surrender. "Twenty gentlemen of this place and the neighbourhood, met on Monday evening last, at Mr. Day's tavern, where they supped, and spent a few hours in convivial mirth and jocund festivity. Illuminations and bonfires were exhibited on the occasion."

Just as Collins's printing shop in Trenton once shut down when enemy troops came too close for comfort, Kollock's shop in Chatham was frequently exposed to danger. During the battle of Springfield in June 1780, enemy troops penetrated the eastern end of town and Kollock was forced to move his press into hiding to avoid capture or damage to his equipment. He reported that the printing shop had "been removed in the late alarm, hence the paper was not published last week."

Collins and Kollock dutifully reported the military engagement at Springfield, the battle which ended more than five years of active warfare in New Jersey. Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, put an end to British offensive efforts in North America, but the diplomats took another year to agree at the conference table, and even after the preliminary articles of peace were signed in Paris on November 30, 1782, several months passed before they appeared in New Jersey's two newspapers. In the meantime Collins and Kollock did publish Governor Livingston's proclamation declaring the war ended. Collins also reported the signing of the definitive Treaty of Paris, which took place on September 3, 1783, and ratification by the United States on January 14, 1784.

Although the *Gazette* and the *Journal* were unique among eighteenth century periodicals in that they were founded and edited almost exclusively for the patriot cause in New Jersey, they were not particularly unusual in other ways. Their names, for example, were among the most common of early newspaper titles. Their four pages, printed on both sides of one sixteen-by-twenty-inch folio leaf, measured half that size and were called small folio. Their columns offered news of general interest clipped from American

and foreign papers as well as an abundance of local material such as essays, letters, and poems. The type of material printed depended upon what the editors believed to be of interest to their readers.



Wooden press from the printing house of Isaiah Thomas of Worcester, Massachusetts. Presses of this type were in common use throughout America during most of the eighteenth century. Courtesy American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The frequency of publication (each Wednesday for both papers) greatly increased the printers' problems of labor and paper. Almost immediately upon starting their papers, Collins and Kollock had to look for apprentices and journeymen. On December 10, 1777, the second week of publication, Collins advertised for "a lad about 14 years of age, who can read, and write a fair hand, and can be well recommended for his honesty and sobriety." Kollock advertised in the *Journal* for "one or two good Journeymen" and

“an apprentice to the printing business.” Wages for printers were comparatively high. In Philadelphia printers commanded as much as £100 currency (£60 sterling) “found” (that is, when the worker was given food or lodging). Carpenters, by contrast, could expect from £45 to £90 sterling, not found, or £30 to £60 found. If, indeed, Collins and Kollock could have hired the workmen they needed, a major undertaking in itself, they would have been forced to pay handsomely.

Apprenticeships in eighteenth century America served not only to alleviate the problems of rearing large families and introducing young people to the crafts in their communities but also to supply cheap labor for the various trades and professions. In the printing trade the apprentice was often the master printer’s despair. The assignments were difficult and menial, allowing for few hours away from the job, and it was not uncommon for the youngsters to run away.

Paper supply was an equally serious problem. Made by hand from rags, preferably linen, it had to be imported from Great Britain until domestic mills were started. By 1777, however, Collins, and later Kollock, could buy stock from several mills in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. But since the mills were wholly dependent upon available rags, they were almost always behind the expanding printing trade. So great was the problem that it was common for newspapers to be late in delivery or suspended outright “for want of Paper.” Nearly each week in the *Gazette* and *Journal* this appeal appeared: “A GOOD PRICE AND READY MONEY Is given by the Printer hereof, for CLEAN LINEN RAGS.”

Such were the trials and tribulations of America’s early printing business. Printers, with their hand-operated presses, their desire for craftsmanship, and, above all, their impact on political thought and action, lived and worked during the pioneering period Benjamin Franklin called the “age of experiments.” Simple printers like Collins and Kollock were men of destiny in that everything they achieved, every innovation, however small, was to have a lasting influence on American journalism.

Immediately after the first copy of the *Journal* reached Collins, he sought to renew Governor Livingston’s confidence in the *Gazette*. Livingston assured the publisher that “the blaze of our

Eastern Comet 'The New Jersey Journal' has not diverted my attention from the western light, the *Gazette* which I heartily wish will continue to shine with its primitive lustre." Livingston said he thought the *Journal* would "shortly go out like a meteor, while the other luminary increases in strength and splendor."

The *Gazette* lived through the year 1786. The *Journal* was issued from Chatham until November 12, 1783, when Kollock moved to New York and then to New Brunswick to publish other papers; he resumed publication of the *Journal* in 1785 in Elizabethtown. Still published today, the *Journal* is New Jersey's oldest newspaper and the fourth oldest in the country. It is interesting that two printers who apprenticed with James Adams in Wilmington and worked for William Goddard in Philadelphia, Collins and Kollock, were also the publishers of New Jersey's first two established newspapers. Kollock's *Journal* received support from the army and Collins's *Gazette* from the state; New Jersey's first newspapers were conveyed at the instance of the new government.

For Further Reading

The reader who wishes to learn more about early American journalism than this pamphlet provides may turn to a vast number of books on the subject.

Among the several histories of colonial New Jersey, the best are: Donald L. Kemmerer, *Path to Freedom: The Struggle for Self-Government in Colonial New Jersey, 1703-1776* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949); Leonard Lundin, *Cockpit of the Revolution; The War for Independence in New Jersey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940, reprinted 1972 by Octagon Books, New York); Richard P. McCormick, *New Jersey from Colony to State, 1609-1789* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964); and Larry R. Gerlach, *Prologue to Independence: New Jersey in the Coming of the American Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975). The McCormick volume is a small, readable, but authoritative analysis of the period written for New Jersey's Tercentenary observance by one of the state's leading historians.

Narrowing the focus somewhat is Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (New York: New York University Press, 1950). Written for the "casual reader," it deals with skilled workmen, such as printers, their economic progress, and the products of their labors. It is illustrated with reproductions of engravings in the French *Encyclopédie* of 1762-1776. A scholarly study of the economic class structure of the new nation is Jackson Turner Main's *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

Isaiah Thomas's two-volume *The History of Printing in America*, 2nd ed. (Albany, 1874) and Lawrence C. Wroth's *The Colonial Printer* (Portland, Me.: Southworth-Anthoensen Press, 1938) are the standard guides to the printer's trade in early America. Thomas's work includes biographies of printers and accounts of newspapers in all the colonies and in some of the states after independence. Wroth's book includes thirty plates and drawings and more than sixty pages of notes, bibliography, and index. It shows the close connection of journalism, religious printing, almanac publication, legal and medical texts, handbills, and politics. The most thorough single bibliography on early American journalism is Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1947). It includes sketches of founders and facts on newspaper histories, libraries in which extant newspapers are available, holdings of some foreign repositories, and an index to 2,820 printers, publishers, and editors.

Of the many smaller narrative books, another Brigham volume, *Journals and Journeymen: A Contribution to the History of Early American Newspapers* (Philadelphia: Greenwood Press, 1950), discusses early newspaper names, circulation and subscription problems, the time lag in news coverage, early newsrooms, and colonial newspaper collections. An important pamphlet, one of a series published by Colonial Williamsburg, is August Klapper, *The Printer in Eighteenth Century Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, Va., 1964), which describes in detail the printing trade as it was practiced throughout the colonies.

Arthur M. Schlesinger captures the journalistic drama of the period in *Prelude to Independence; The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), as does Philip Davidson's pathbreaking study, *Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1941). Schlesinger's book assesses the role of the newspaper "in undermining loyalty to the mother country and creating a demand for separation." Other worthy studies are: Elizabeth C. Cook, *Literary Influences in Colonial Newspapers, 1704-1750* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912; reprinted by Kennikat Press, Port Washington, N.Y. 1966); Sidney Kobre, *The Development of the Colonial Newspaper* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960); and Lyon N. Richardson, *A History of Early American Magazines, 1741-1789* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966). Cook analyzes typical literary efforts in several influential weeklies. Richardson takes a detailed look at nearly forty colonial magazines, including a number published in New York and New Jersey, among them William Livingston's *Independent Reflector*, published in New York City, 1752-1753.

Works that pertain specifically to New Jersey printing and publishing are: George C. Rockefeller, "The First Testaments Printed in New Jersey," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 45 (1951); William Nelson, "Some New Jersey Printers and Printing in the Eighteenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, new ser. 21 (April 1911), pp. 15-56; and Kenneth Q. Jennings, "The Press of New Jersey," in *The Story of New Jersey*, ed. William Starr Myers (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1945), vol. 2, ch. 3. Jennings reviews the press from colonial times to the 1940s, including the state's foreign language papers and the establishment of the New Jersey Press Association.

For the reader who wishes to investigate colonial press freedom in some detail there is Leonard W. Levy's "revisionist" study, *Legacy of Suppression; Freedom of Speech and Press in Early American History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960). Levy examines the background and original meaning of the First Amendment. He believes that libertarian theory from Milton to the First Amendment tended to support the government's right to suppress seditious libel.

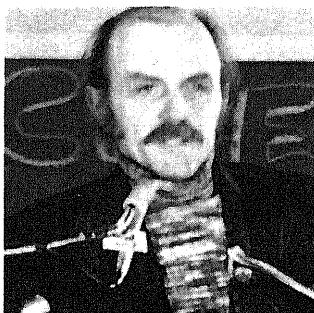
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and a master's degree in English and American Studies from Case Western Reserve University in 1960. His publications include *Mass Media: A Casebook* (T.Y. Crowell, 1973), *Isaac Collins: A Quaker Printer in 18th Century America* (Rutgers University Press, 1968) and numerous articles in specialized journals.



T.M.