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STORIES of New Jersey

virtually to a standstill, and the ancient art of writing was kept alive only by monks who copied by hand the writings of the ancient philosophers and historians at the rate of 25 pages a day. By the eleventh or twelfth century trade revived and schools and universities reappeared. Soon books were being copied in large numbers by private publishers as well as in the monasteries.

Against this background Gutenberg invented the printing press and movable type; and production of paper, which replaced the extremely costly parchment, made possible less expensive books in greater number.

Printing came first to the Americas not in Boston or Philadelphia or New York but in Mexico City, where by 1540 religious books were being turned out for the use of the Catholic church in teaching Christianity to the natives. Before printing presses appeared in the English cities of Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham, they were already operating in Massachusetts, Maryland and Pennsylvania. On the press in Massachusetts, the first in British America, a broadside called *The Freeman's Oath* was printed in 1639. The following year the Bay Psalm Book appeared, the first American publication of which copies exist.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century colonial governors were ordered to see "that no person keep any press for printing, nor that any book, pamphlet or other matters whatsoever be printed without your especial leave & license first obtained." Governing officials had the right of censorship, but government printing was the printers' main source of income. The government's need for printing is considered the chief factor in the establishment of printing shops in the colonies.

The first trial for violations of a colonial press law came in Pennsylvania in 1692. William Bradford, one of America's earliest printers and member of a famous printing family, published an anonymous pamphlet supporting the minority sect in an internal quarrel among the Quakers. For issuing a publication without a license he was arrested but never convicted.

New Jersey's first press belonged to Bradford, who shifted his plant to Perth Amboy temporarily to print an issue of currency in 1723 and at the same time printed a set of New Jersey laws. Benjamin Franklin came to New Jersey to print money, too. In 1727 he built a copper-plate press, "the first that had been seen in the country," and set it up in Burlington for Samuel Keimer, who had just obtained a government printing contract. Keimer had called Franklin to assist him on the job because only Franklin could supply the necessary type and engravings. Like Bradford, Franklin and Keimer also printed an issue of Jersey laws.

The first permanent press in New Jersey was set up in 1754 at Woodbridge by James Parker, a former New York printer. The first of his many government printing jobs was *The Votes and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Province of New Jersey*, but his most significant work, perhaps, was the *New American Magazine*, a 40-page monthly that offered a varied diet of essays, stories, verse, history and current events. Brought out in 1758, it lasted only 27 issues, though it was the only publication of its kind in the colonies.

Samuel Smith's history of New Jersey, the first book printed in the colony, also came from Parker's press. At a branch shop in Burlington, where the author lived, Parker spent six months turning out 600 copies of the 570-page work. He also aspired to be a newspaper publisher, but the Stamp Tax on printed matter made success doubtful. Parker felt so strongly about the impending tax that in 1758 he permitted William Goddard, later a prominent editor, to use the Woodbridge press to print a violent attack on the Act. The papers were taken secretly to New York, where the newsboys hawked them on the streets. Called "The Constitutional Courant, containing matters interesting to Liberty--but no wise repugnant to Loyalty," the paper stated that it had been published "by An-