

ANDREW BRADFORD: A PIONEER PRINTER OF PENNSYLVANIA

BY WALTER L. FERREE*

THE morning dawned clear and cool, and that sense of impending rain which had oppressed the good people of Philadelphia and the surrounding country for the past week had lifted. The preceding day, which for all good Christians had been one of rest, had given no indication that the morrow would bring the sun. Such, however, was not unusual in October.

The "Sign of the Bible" in Second Street had early given evidence of the industry of its owner, Mr. Andrew Bradford. Even before the sun shed its autumn rays over the restless surface of the Delaware, the occupants were astir. By mid-morning the printing shop, which was located on part of the ground floor, was the scene of activity which, despite its apparent disorderliness, was productive of results. The street outside had been carefully swept clear of mud, and its partial paving made the progress of a seedy, apprentice-looking young man less annoying than would otherwise have been the case.

Benjamin Franklin had arrived in Philadelphia on a cool October Sunday after the flight from his irate brother in Boston. He had spent the night at the inn of the "Crooked Billet" in Water Street from which he found his way to the printing establishment of Andrew Bradford. His impression, as he entered the shop, is concisely expressed in his *Autobiography* as follows:¹

I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, traveling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who reciv'd me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately

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¹Smyth, Albert Henry (ed.), *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin Collected and Edited with a Life and Introduction*, 10 vols. (New York, 1905-1907), I (*Autobiography*), 249-257; Van Doren, Carl, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1938), pp. 38-41.

suppli'd with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till further business should offer.

Andrew Bradford, born at Philadelphia in 1686, was at this time thirty-seven years old and was the second Bradford to print at that place. His father, William Bradford, had established a press there in 1685 and found himself in trouble with the Pennsylvania authorities almost from the first. As a result of his arrest and imprisonment in 1692-1693, he had gladly accepted the suggestion of Benjamin Fletcher, Governor of both Pennsylvania and New York, to leave Philadelphia and establish his printing house on the Hudson.²

Thus Andrew, although a native of Pennsylvania, grew up and received his training in the neighboring colony. There is no record of his having received any formal education, but tutors were obviously available, for his later literary efforts and his handwriting, several specimens of which are extant, indicate nothing like illiteracy.³ After he had served his apprenticeship in the family print shop, he and his father apparently formed a partnership which lasted a little more than a year. At least two books were published by them before the partnership was dissolved because of the moving of the younger member to Philadelphia in 1712.⁴

The general reason for Bradford's return to the place of his birth is clear enough, but the details are not entirely obvious. In 1712, the Pennsylvania Colonial Assembly decided that the laws of the province ought to be printed, so William and Andrew Bradford came from New York to bid on the work.⁵ The latter secured the contract, since his type was vastly superior to that of either

² McMurtrie, Douglas C., *A History of Printing in the United States: The Story of the Introduction of the Press and of its History and Influence during the Pioneer Period in each State of the Union*, Vol. II (*Middle and South Atlantic States*) (New York, 1936), II, 1-9; 14.

³ Jones, Horatio Gates, *Andrew Bradford, Founder of the Newspaper Press in the Middle States of America* (Philadelphia, 1869), p. 13; see also a receipted bill, "Andrew Bradford to Thomas Frame & Company, a receipted bill for Stationery," May 7, 1735, Society Collection, Hist. Soc. Pa.

⁴ McMurtrie, *op. cit.*, II, 14; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14; Thomas, Isaiah, *The History of Printing in America with a Biography of Printers and an Account of Newspapers*, 2 vols., second edition (Albany, 1874), I, 227.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 224-225.

Jansen or Taylor, the other printers who had submitted bids.⁶ The price agreed upon was £100, exclusive of paper, for five hundred bound copies. The faith of the Assembly was pledged to sustain his efforts and the work, known to the legal profession as "Bradford's Laws of 1714," a folio volume of 184 pages, was issued in the year mentioned.⁷

Bradford's first printing venture in Pennsylvania did not, however, prove profitable to him. The laws were printed in the order in which the provincial assembly had passed them, and many of them had already been voided by action of the Board of Trade and of the Privy Council. Consequently, in August of the same year, the Speaker of the Assembly issued his warrant for the amount of £50 so that Bradford could be reimbursed for the loss he had incurred.⁸

In 1714 Bradford also printed sixty copies of the laws of the Province for the current year for £34 7s. 6d., and in 1718 a similar contract was consummated.⁹ Then in 1728 he again published the collected laws of Pennsylvania.¹⁰

The work undertaken for the Assembly was only part of that which engaged Bradford's attention. He is said to have taken over the press which the Society of Friends had installed on the second floor of their school house. The rent for the press and printing-office was £10 per year.¹¹

In addition to the above, Bradford could be termed the official printer for the colony of Maryland since he did the printing for that province until the establishment of a press there in 1726.¹² It is also possible that he printed an issue of paper money for the province of New Jersey in either 1726 or 1727.¹³ He also printed the usual number of tracts, almanacs and pamphlets one could expect from a printer in his position.¹⁴

⁶ Scharf, J. Thomas and Thompson, Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1884), I, 224; Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 223-227.

⁷ Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

⁸ Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 226-227.

⁹ Scharf and Westcott, *op. cit.*, I, 224.

¹⁰ McMurtrie, *op. cit.*, II, 14.

¹¹ Smith, Joseph, *Short Biographical Notices of William Bradford, Reinier Jansen, Andrew Bradford, and Samuel Keimer, Early Printers in Pennsylvania* (London, 1891), pp. 17-18.

¹² Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 320.

¹³ Watson, John F., *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the Olden Times*; . . . (Philadelphia, 1900), III, 440.

¹⁴ Scharf and Westcott, *op. cit.*, I, 224.

Supplementary to his printing, Bradford could be considered a merchant in his own right. Connected with his printing establishment which, as has been noted, was "The Sign of the Bible" on Second Street, was a typical early eighteenth century general store. There one might buy whalebone, live geese feathers for bed-ticks and pillows, pickled sturgeon, chocolate, Spanish snuff, lamp black, beaver hats, silk goods, Bohea tea, and, as the wealth of the colony increased, more luxurious and expensive items. Blank books, pamphlets, re-bound Bibles, etc., bound in his own bindery, were also available as well as other examples of the stationer's trade.¹⁵

The names of only a few of Bradford's apprentices can be ascertained. In 1719-1720 he had at least two young men working for him: Reyner Johnson worked as a bookbinder and Henry Coulton as a printer. Another probable apprentice was Isaiah Warner.¹⁶ After Bradford's death, Warner formed a partnership with his former master's widow, Cornelia, and for a short time the *Mercury* was published jointly by them. Undoubtedly the most noted of Bradford's apprentices was Aquilla Rose. He became the principal workman in the printing house as well as the secretary to the General Assembly, and was a young man of excellent character.¹⁷ His death, which occurred in the summer of 1723,¹⁸ occasioned the journey of Benjamin Franklin to Philadelphia.¹⁹ It was Aquilla Rose who aided materially in launching the *American Weekly Mercury*.

Number one of the *Mercury* appeared on Tuesday, December 22, 1719. It was the fourth newspaper, in point of time, published in British North America and the first issued in the Middle Colonies.²⁰ The imprint was as follows: "Philadelphia Printed, and sold by Andrew Bradford at the Bible in the Second Street and John Copson in the High Street, where advertisements are taken in."

¹⁵ Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 227-228; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18; *American Weekly Mercury*, *passim*, 1719-Nov., 1742.

¹⁶ Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 245.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 230.

¹⁸ Scharf and Westcott, *op. cit.*, I, 228.

¹⁹ Smyth, *op. cit.*, I, 249-257.

²⁰ Thomas, *op. cit.*, II, 132-133, states that the *Mercury* was the third paper published in British North America, but Ingram, John Van Ness, *A Check List of American Eighteenth Century Newspapers in the Library of Congress* (Washington, 1936), calls it the fourth in America.

The AMERICAN Weekly Mercury,

December 22, 1779.

From the NORTH.

HAMBURG August, 29. All Our Letters from Sweden, are full of the Dismal Ravages committed by the Muscovites there. Those *Semi Christians* have burnt the five Towns of *Nydröping, Nordköping, North Yelle, South Yelle, Ödell, Ölfhamner, Öreggrund, Fästena, Orfela, &c.* with all the Castles and Gentlemen Seats near them & ruined all the Mines, utterly Destroy'd the Copper and Salt Works, burnt the Woods and carried Thousands of the People on Board their Gallies in Order to Transport them into *Russia*. the Damage is computed at several Millions, and a Hundred Years wont Receive the Loss the Country has Sustained in their Woods and Mines.

Whatever the End proposed by the Muscovite in the present Ravage of Sweden, may be, we think they have neither pursued the Maxims of Christianity or Human Policy.

It was the Maxim of *Augustus* the greatest and mightiest *Cesar* that ever reigned on the Earth, that Princes who would be truly great should conquer for the Good of Mankind, and triumph only over themselves. The present *Cesar* triumphs not over himself, but lets his rage triumph over his Reason, his Passion triumph over his Christianity, and his Revenge over his Humanity; he is far from Conquering for the good of Mankind, that he seems to make the Destruction of Mankind the Design of his Conquests.

And we cannot but think that the *Cesar* has Acted a most Impolitic as well as Unchristian part, in making a brave Warlike Nation the Hereditary Enemies of his Country by his Barbarous Usage. In short he has made a powerful Nation Desperate, and a Severe Revenge is become the popular Vow in *Sweden*. Princes often vow Revenge in their own or other people's Names and are restrained even by their own people, but when whole Nations Vow Revenge, they seldom give it over.

If it be not ridiculous prudence to make a private Enemy or Army desperate, much less is it to make a Nation desperate. The *Sweeds*, left in Possession of their Estates and Land, Houses and Towns, though reduced and brought low, nay, though even conquered, had been a Nation of Christians still; and being brought low by their Misfortunes, would, as it is most natural, to all People, have been the more humble and apt to submit to the Conqueror; but the *Sweeds* ruined, starved, beggar'd, irretrievably impoverish'd, strip of all, their Houses, Towns, and Ships burnt and destroyed, the whole Country laid waste, and themselves exposed to Hunger, Want, Nakedness, and all the Horrors of an approaching Lapland Winter; what will this make them, but an enraged Nation of meer desperate distracted Men? and that is, in plain English, a Nation of wild Beasts for without any Reason against the *Sweeds*, who are a brave and gallant as well as generous and Christian Nation, a Man made desperate is more raging, more furious, more fierce than a Lion; a Man Strip'd naked, injured, starved, oppressed, as a Bear robbed of her Whelps, and the braver and more daring he is, the more furious raging he grows, made mad by Oppression.

Letters from *Paris* are still surprizingly filled with the Progress of *Monsieur Law*s and his new Company; the Subscription of fifty Millions in New Actions, which the King gave them Liberty to add to their Stocks, was filled up, in a few Hours; the Price it was filled up at being a thousand Livres for every Share of one hundred Livres of Original

Stock, has brought the Company in such an immense Sum in Specie, that it is no Wonder they should be able to pay off the King's Debts of twelve hundred Millions, seeing they are Gainers by that particular Subscription, no less than four hundred and fifty Millions at one Blow in ready Money, and 'tis now said they will still have Leave to advance and enlarge their Subscription for fifty Millions more, and so on to fifty more, if they please, in which Case they may easily pay twelve hundred Millions; and it is said already from *Paris*, that they have eighteen hundred Millions in Cash now by them, in order to pay the publick Debts, if the People demand their Money, which it is thought no Body would do. They are now, it is talked there, to buy all the Place with the old Specie, and bring it into the Mint, and to oblige the People to part with it. *Mr. Law*s, they say, has found out a miraculous Expedient for this, so advantageous that no Body will be able to resist it.

They write us further from *Paris*, that the Joy of the People there is not to be expressed: it is impossible to describe it. The poor find themselves all discharged at once from their Taxes and Provisions, which pinched them severely; and when the Turn-Pikes and Watch Houses which were set up at all the Out-Parts of the City were taken down, as they were begun to be the 23d, the People went dancing and jumping about Streets as if they were distracted for Joy. They now pay not one Farthing Tax for Wood, Coal, Iron, Oats, Oil, wine, Beer, Bread, Cards, Soap, Cattle, Fish, or, in a Word, for any thing; and a middling Family can now live cheaper in *Paris*, than they could a Week ago by a fifth Part, at least, of their Expence. The 23d the *Maréchal D'Espre* coming to see the Regent at the Opera, told him in publick, that he came to acquaint him with the good News which he had just received Advice of, that the Company's Ships had actually seized upon the Spanish Port of *Penafela*, at the most Navigable mouth of the Mississippi River in the Gulph of *Mexico*; which News the Regent received with great Satisfaction.

Among all their good News at *Paris* they have one affliction, which is very heavy upon them, that the Small-Pox makes terrible Havock amongst their great People; the *Marquis de Lamoignon*, Grandson to the famous Minister of State of that Name, Counsellor and Secretary of State to the late King, is dead of it; his Regiment of Horse is given to *Monsieur de Amon*, and his Office of Captain of the Band of a Hundred Swiss, is given to his Son, tho' at present, he is not above six Months old.

It Causes some Speculations at *Paris*, that the *Marquis de Scoti* who, it was said, had Proposals of peace to make from *Spain*, and to whom the Regent Refused to give Passports to go to the *Hague*, because he would not make known those Propositions, has at length, obtained the Passports without communicating his Propositions; and notwithstanding the *Emperor* opposed the receiving that Minister, as a person not acceptable to his Imperial Majesty.

They continue to say at *Paris*, that the Duke of *Sarwick* pursues his March with the French Army towards *Catalonia*; but they talk now, that he will not attempt the Siege of *Rosès*, but will march directly into *Catalonia*, where the *Miqueles* are, as they say, in a Readiness to revolt, and take up Arms in favour of the French; chiefly having promised to procure them the Restoration of all their Privileges whenever a Peace shall be made, and that no Peace shall be made with the King of *Spain*, but upon the express Condition of satisfying those Miqueles.

For the better part of the first two years of its existence Copson was associated with Bradford in the publication of the *Mercury*.²¹ The following advertisement appeared in the first number:

This paper will be Publish'd Weekly, and shall contain an Impartial account of Transactions, in the Several States of *Europe*, *America*, etc. All Persons that are willing to Encourage so Useful an Undertaking at the Moderate rate of Ten Shillings a Year for the City of PHILADELPHIA Fifteen Shillings for *New-Jersey*, *New-York*, and *Maryland*. Twenty Shillings for *Virginia*, *Rhode-Island*, and *Boston* Proclamation Money, (To be paid Quarterly) are Desired to send their Names and places of Abode to any of the following Persons. Viz. . . .

Men were then named in New York, Annapolis, Williamsburg, Hampton, Va., New Castle, Salem, Amboy, Burlington, and "Mr. ANDREW BRADFORD, at *Philadelphia*."²²

The dividends paid by the paper were obviously small, since John Copson soon withdrew from the partnership and in 1721 opened the first insurance business in Philadelphia. The May 21, 1721, issue of the *Mercury* omits his name from the imprint. From May, 1721, to December, 1725, William Bradford, father of Andrew, had his name included in the imprint to the effect that he was selling the *Mercury* in New York. The imprint was again altered in January, 1730, to include the following: "Price 10s per Annum. All sorts of Printing Work done cheap, and old Books neatly bound." In 1738 Bradford moved his place of business from Second Street to Front Street, and the imprint was changed accordingly.²³ Another alteration occurred in 1739. At that time his nephew and foster son, William, became his partner; this arrangement lasted about eleven months.²⁴ From that time until his death in 1742 Bradford published the paper alone.²⁵

The *Mercury* was printed on a pot half-sheet, although sometimes a whole sheet of pot was used. It was printed on type of various sizes such as small pica, pica, and English. In Number

²¹ Thomas, *op. cit.*, II, 132-133.

²² *Am. Mercury*, Dec. 22, 1719 (# 1). This advertisement also appeared in Numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7.

²³ Thomas, *op. cit.*, II, 132-133; *Am. Mercury*, *passim*.

²⁴ Thomas, *op. cit.*, II, 227-228.

²⁵ McMurtrie, *op. cit.*, II, 16.

22, two cuts were introduced, each of which was rather crudely engraved. The one on the left, at the top of the first page, represented Mercury carrying his caduceus; he was represented walking with his wings outspread. The other cut represented a postman riding at full speed. The heading of the *Mercury* remained unchanged until September 11, 1740, when it appeared with three cuts. On the left was Mercury; in the center, a town, most likely supposed to represent Philadelphia; and, on the right, a postman on horseback.

On two occasions Bradford's conduct of the *Mercury* caused him to run afoul of the provincial authorities. The first was in 1721, when, under Governor William Keith, the public finances had become confused and Bradford published a seemingly innocuous item in the *Mercury*.²⁶ He was summoned before the Council and warned. In 1729 the reprimand was more severe. The occasion this time was his publishing of Number 31 of the "Busy Body" on the tendency of political power to perpetuate itself. Bradford was bound over for court, but the decision reached is not known. In neither instance did his paper suffer any interruption.²⁷

In general, the typography of the *Mercury* was equal to that of Franklin's *Gazette*. Anyone perusing both papers will observe a great lack of uniformity in their individual appearance. The addition of new type, the care and cleaning of the type itself, and attention to other small technical details make it difficult to condemn the one and praise the other.

The problems attending the publication of a newspaper in the early part of the eighteenth century in America were not confined to producing a page typographically presentable. Presses were expensive, difficult to obtain, and all of Bradford's press materials and repair parts came from England. He was fortunate in having a convenient source for his supply of paper, the Rittenhouse Mill in Roxborough.²⁸ The best paper, however, still came from England and other European countries. As with the paper, the best ink was also imported from abroad. Bradford, however, manufactured some of his own, but all of his finer work was done with the im-

²⁶ *Am. Mercury*, Jan. 2, 1721/2 (# 107).

²⁷ Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26.

²⁸ Jones, H. G., *Historical Sketch of the Rittenhouse Paper Mill, the First Erected in America, A. D. 1690* (Philadelphia, 1863), p. 27.

ported product. These material obstacles were as nothing in comparison with the inertia of the average American: the colonists were definitely not a reading people. Thus Bradford had no public to which he could readily cater; he not only had to print his paper but he had the much more difficult task of teaching the average American to lay aside his provincial ways and become a person of moderate culture.

This, no doubt, was partly responsible for the type of news which dominated the pages of the *Mercury*. A greater part of the various issues of the paper were invariably devoted to a discussion of foreign news, which, of a necessity, was several months old. Local news was generally confined to announcements concerning the arrival and departure of ships. In addition to this type of commercial news there was nearly always a section devoted to the prices of various staples, such as flour, sugar, meats, lumber, tobacco, etc. Conditions of navigation were generally noted—was the Delaware free of ice? were the pirates particularly bad in a certain region?—and other facts of interest to merchants and their friends. What we would call purely local news went almost unnoticed. Perhaps Bradford did not deem it worthy of his attention, or he may have felt that a discussion of such prosaic things would be a “tale twice told” and that the public would not, in general, patronize a paper devoted to that which was supposed to be common gossip. An occasional murder is mentioned, the activities of highwaymen and other thieves are given considerable spread, but when it comes to any connected story of the happenings of Philadelphia and vicinity, very little is inserted.²⁹

The advertising columns of the *Mercury* not only present a panorama of early eighteenth century society but also contain elusive hints as to the ideas and methods of its editor. One becomes aware that slaves and apprentices frequently ran away and that handsome rewards were offered for their return;³⁰ that the Indians were neither immune to smallpox nor slavery;³¹ and that it was quite usual for indentured servants to flee from their masters.³² Mercantile and real estate notices appeared in nearly every issue

²⁹ *Am. Mercury*, *passim*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1719 (# 2), Jan. 5, 1719/20 (# 5).

³¹ *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1720 (# 14, also in # 15 and # 17).

³² *Ibid.*, Mar. 1, 1719/20 (# 11, also included in a shortened version in # 12 and # 13).

New York March 1. On the 25th past arrived here Capt *Gilbert* in a Sloop from *Madera*, the left that place about the 18th of *Novem. N. S.* and brings no News from thence. The Master and all the sailors were taken with the small Pox, which caused them to put in to *Bermuda*, from whence they have been 28 days to this Port. There were no Vessels blown off this Coast put in there. The Prize carried into that Island by Capt *Craeft* is acquitted by the Court of Admiralty, and his and the Captors have appealed. The *New York* Sloop Retaken from the *Spaniards* by a *Bermuda* Privateer, was sentenced by the same Court to pay one half for Salvage, having been eleven days in the Enemy's possession before her Recaption.

Letters from *Curacao* via *Bermuda* give advice of the arrival of the *Hunter Gally* from this Port, and a Sloop from *Rhode Island*.

Capt *Barrington* is still here. He talks of sailing for *London* in a day or two.

Capt *Trot* who left *London* in *August* last, bound for *Bermuda*, was not arrived.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

The Post sets out from *New York* and *Boston* the 15th Day of this Instant *March*, and are to perform their Stages Weekly till *December* next. Which alteration of the Post will occasion this News Paper to come forth every *Thursday*, on which Day the Post sets out from *Philadelphia*.

RUN away from *Philadelphia* in *October* last a Servant Man of Capt. *Joseph Mackintosh*; his Name is *Will. Minneman*, a Burcher by Trade. He is a lean Man, pretty Tall, Long thin ill shaped Legs, something Pock-frecked, he is about 25 years of Age, & speaks broad *Scotch*. Whoever can take him up and bring him to *Andrew Bradford* in *Philadelphia*, or *William Bradford* in *New York*, shall have Four Pounds Reward.

RUN away from the Forge at *Monmouth*, in the County of *Philadelphia*, a *Wellsman* middle sized about 21 Years of Age, of a clear Complexion, and a fresh Cullour; Full Faced, with hollow Eyes and bottle Nose short brown hair a Little Curled; Full Shouldered, and when he Walks he stamps down his Feet; his name is *Thomas Kay*, but has gone some time by the name of *Thomas Price*. Whoever can Secure the said Person and gives notice thereof to *William Branfon* in the Market place in *Philadelphia*, or to *William Coats* in the said City shall have Forty Shillings Reward and Reasonable Charges.

Philadelphia Printed, and sold by *Andrew Bradford*, at the Bible in the *Second Street*. and *John Copson* in the *High Street*, where Advertisements are taken in.

From the AMERICAN MERCURY

of the paper, and usually according to a fixed pattern. Bradford obviously gave special rates to those patrons who inserted advertisements in three separate issues, since that number of repetitions was most frequent. Sometimes they were written by the sponsor, but more often either Bradford or one of his assistants actually prepared the copy. This is demonstrated by a uniformity of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation—a uniformity which is occasionally broken by the introduction of a “foreign” touch.

The literary department is the only other section of the *Mercury* which deserves our attention; it was creditable and in no way inferior to that in Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Neither journal contained much that was editorial; and, contrary to what is generally supposed, Franklin wrote very little for his own paper. Probably the best of his newspaper compositions were those articles which, as a group, are known as the “Busy Body” and which appeared in the *American Mercury*. Many times the literary merits of Bradford's *Mercury* and Franklin's *Gazette* “are brought into immediate comparison by articles from week to week responding

to each other." The *Mercury* articles are usually superior to those of the *Gazette* in vigor and are never inferior in the nicety of language and the elegance of phraseology. The philosophical tendencies of the two editors colored their work and added decided tone to their respective papers.³³

After Bradford's death, the *Mercury* was continued by his widow, Cornelia. She conducted the paper alone, with the exception of a period of about twenty months (March 1, 1743, to October 18, 1744),³⁴ during which time Isaiah Warner was her partner. The final publication date for the *Mercury* is unknown but it was probably early in 1747. The last issue that has been located is that of May 22, 1746.³⁵

During the first eleven years of Bradford's stay in Philadelphia, he had a practical monopoly of the printing business. It was not until the autumn of 1723 that Samuel Keimer established his press and began to compete with Bradford for the patronage of the city and province. With the arrival of Franklin the stage was set for a three-way rivalry. At first it existed only between Bradford and Keimer; then, when Franklin became a factor in local affairs, Keimer was gradually forced out of business. Of the remaining two, fate permitted Franklin to outlive his rival.

Keimer and Bradford first became competitors over the printing of William Sewel's *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress, of the Christian People Called Quakers*. Bradford's aunt, Tacy Sowle Raylton, had published the first edition of this book in London in 1722, and the second edition shortly thereafter. About 1725, the Friends' Committee on the Press in Philadelphia requested Bradford to print the *History*. . . . Because, however, of numerous delays and misunderstandings, the contract was given to Keimer. In the meantime, Bradford, who saw an opportunity not only to make a quick profit but also to weaken a business rival, purchased a large number of the London printing. Even though Keimer had secured five hundred subscribers for his, as yet, uncompleted third edition, Bradford addressed the yearly meeting of the Friends and asked for aid in disposing of the seven hundred

³³ Jones, *Andrew Bradford* . . . , pp. 32-34.

³⁴ Ingram, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

copies of the imported edition. The Friends' reply was, of course, a resounding "No."³⁶

The feud growing out of the publishing of the *History* . . . , and of a subsequent almanac, was still in evidence in 1728 when Keimer started his newspaper, *The Universal Instructor*. . . . In this venture he showed that he was a braggart of no mean proportions as well as being of "eccentric mind."³⁷ The prospectus for his paper contained the following comments about Bradford's *Mercury*:

Whereas many have encouraged me to publish a paper of intelligence; and whereas the late *Mercury* has been so wretchedly performed as to be a scandal to the name of printing, and to be truly styled non-sense in folio, this therefore is to notify that I shall begin November next, a most useful paper to be entitled the Pennsylvania Gazette or Universal Instructor. [Since I have] dwelt at the fountain of intelligence in Europe, [I will be able to publish a paper which will please all and give offense to none].³⁸

After publishing only thirty-nine numbers of *The Universal Instructor in All Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette*, Keimer sold the paper to Franklin. The latter was largely responsible for the journal's early demise, since Keimer's uninspiring extracts from *Chamber's Encyclopaedia* stirred him to write the "Busy Body" series. These articles, designed in part to ridicule the *Universal Instructor*, began to appear in the *Mercury* on February 4, 1728/29, and in less than a year Keimer left Philadelphia.³⁹ Some time later, i.e., in 1734, the latter directed some poetic jibes at Bradford, who was postmaster in Philadelphia, and at his father, who was prospering in New York, viz.:

In Penn's wooden country Type feels no disaster.
The Printers grow rich; one is made their Post Master;
His father, a Printer, is paid for his work,
And wallows in plenty, just now, at New York,
Though quite past his labour, and old as my Grannum,
The Government pays him, pounds sixty per annum.⁴⁰

³⁶ McMurtrie, *op. cit.*, II, 17-19.

³⁷ Smyth, *op. cit.*, I (*Autobiography*), 257-258.

³⁸ Watson, *op. cit.*, II, 395-396.

³⁹ Smyth, *op. cit.*, II, 100-103. Franklin continued the publication of the *Universal Instructor* . . . under the shorter name of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

⁴⁰ Watson, *op. cit.*, I, 546.

The withdrawal of Keimer from newspaper activity in Philadelphia cleared the stage for the rivalry between Franklin and Bradford. Within the space of five to eight years they clashed over the government printing contract in Pennsylvania—Franklin secured it; over the position of postmaster in Philadelphia—Franklin replaced Bradford; and, finally, over the publication of America's first magazine.

About the middle of 1740 Franklin decided to execute his long-contemplated plan for a literary magazine. A tentative agreement was made with John Webbe, a lawyer and minor literary figure, to serve as its editor. The latter, who was on very good terms with Bradford, disclosed the plans in hopes of making a better arrangement for himself. It would appear that Bradford had also been toying with the idea of publishing a magazine, and when the opportunity of forestalling Franklin presented itself, he decided to bring his plans to fruition—with Webbe as editor. In the *Mercury* for October 30, 1740, Bradford printed a prospectus for a publication to be called the *American Magazine, or Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*. Franklin decided to bring his plans for *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for all the British Plantations in America* to maturity, and a race ensued to determine which journal would be presented first. Bradford's periodical was issued three days before Franklin's and thus became the first magazine to be published in the colonies. In contrast to Franklin's *General Magazine . . .*, which was written by and for Anglo-Americans, the *American Magazine . . .* paid little or no attention to provincial literary affairs; rather, it regaled its readers with reprints from popular English publications. Neither venture lasted out the year because of the parochialism of the reading public.⁴¹

The clash between Bradford and Franklin over the launching of their respective magazines merely intensified the friction which already existed as a result of the post office controversy. Bradford had been appointed postmaster for the city of Philadelphia some-

⁴¹ McMurtrie, *op. cit.*, II, 16; Van Doren, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120; Adams, James Truslow, *Provincial Society, 1690-1763* (vol. III of *A History of American Life*) (New York, c. 1927), pp. 268-269. The first number of the *American Magazine . . .*, i.e., the January issue, was published on Feb. 13, 1741.

time in the spring of 1728,⁴² but that title does not appear in the *Mercury* imprint until June 29, 1732. He succeeded Henry Flower in that position and remained in office for nine years.⁴³

Franklin was quite dissatisfied with Bradford's conduct of the post because the latter had the privilege of sending his papers free of postage but refused to give the *Gazette* the same right. Eventually, in 1735, Franklin received permission from Colonel Spotswood, the Postmaster General, to send his paper postage free.⁴⁴ He charged, however, that Bradford continued to forbid it and that in order to send his papers he had to bribe the riders.⁴⁵ It is little wonder, then, that Franklin connived to secure the dismissal of Bradford and the appointment of himself. Bradford's failure to render his accounts punctually placed Colonel Spotswood in an embarrassing position with the result that Franklin secured the office, effective April 1, 1737.⁴⁶

Obviously, Andrew Bradford was not punctual in meeting his financial obligations. Neither was he aggressive in collecting the amounts due him. In settling his estate after his death in 1742 it was discovered that Thomas Penn owed Cornelia Bradford £6 15s. 8½d. for postal services her late husband had rendered the proprietor between August 16, 1732, and March 30, 1737. Penn also was obligated to the Bradford estate to the extent of £19 1½d. for stationer's supplies, which amount had accumulated over the years 1737-1740.⁴⁷

In spite of Franklin's opinion of Bradford, his fellow citizens obviously entertained a high respect for his character and integrity. He was elected to the City Council of Philadelphia on October 3, 1727, which position he held until his death fifteen years later.⁴⁸ He served as a vestryman of Christ Church for at least eleven

⁴² This statement appeared in the *Mercury*, Apr. 4, 1728, "[Hereafter] the Post Office will be kept at the house of Andrew Bradford."

⁴³ Jones, *Andrew Bradford* . . . , p. 20; Scharf and Westcott, *op. cit.*, I, 206; "Account of Thomas Penn with the Estate of Andrew Bradford," Penn Papers, III, 292 (HSP).

⁴⁴ Lee, James Melvin, *History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1917), pp. 75-77.

⁴⁵ Smyth, *op. cit.*, I (*Autobiography*), 308-309.

⁴⁶ "Account of Thomas Penn with the Estate of Andrew Bradford," Penn Papers, III, 292 (HSP).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 229; Jones, *Andrew Bradford* . . . , p. 26; Watson, *op. cit.*, III, 441.

years,⁴⁹ having been elected to that position on Easter Monday, April 11, 1726.⁵⁰ In 1739, when Christ Church was being enlarged, considerable money was needed. Out of more than two hundred subscribers, Bradford ranked among the first ten in generosity.⁵¹

Bradford was without reserve, "rather easy in his circumstances," and, as Franklin points out, "not very anxious about the business."⁵² Judging by the advertisements in the *Mercury*, he did a flourishing business at his store. Consequently one is entirely justified in considering Bradford one of the "first" citizens of early Pennsylvania.

Bradford's home life was eminently congenial during most of his active life. He had no children, but his first wife was an affectionate companion and a kindly foster mother to her husband's nephew, William, whom they adopted and reared as their own. Unfortunately for both William and his uncle, Mrs. Bradford died in December, 1739. Bradford did not remain a widower long, since in 1740 he married Miss Cornelia Smith, a relative of his father's second wife. The second Mrs. Bradford was, according to repute, a rather handsome and capable woman, and one who seemed determined to manage both the person and business of her spouse. She was desirous that the adopted nephew should, when he came of age, marry her adopted niece. William's affections, however, were engaged elsewhere and her plan was frustrated. She became prejudiced against him and her unkind treatment forced him to leave the house of his foster father. She also prevailed upon her husband to revoke the will that he had made in William's favor and to name her as the chief beneficiary. It was also due to her machinations that the partnership between William and his uncle, which had been formed in December, 1739, was terminated in December, 1740.

Thus Andrew Bradford's last years were not replete with that domestic happiness which is the ambition and dream of every man. He fell ill during the first part of November, 1742, and died the night of November 23 at the age of fifty-six.⁵³

⁴⁹ Washburn, Louis C., *Year Book and Remembrancer of Christ Church, Philadelphia: 1695-1912*, p. 11. Other distinguished Vestrymen (1717-1761) were acting Governors Gookin, Keith, and Palmer, several members of the governor's council, Charles Willing and other Mayors of Philadelphia.

⁵⁰ Jones, *Andrew Bradford . . .*, p. 26.

⁵¹ Dorr, Benjamin. *A Historical Account of Christ Church, Philadelphia . . . A. D. 1695, to A. D. 1841*, pp. 71-72.

⁵² Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 229; Smyth, *op. cit.*, I (*Autobiography*), 308.

⁵³ Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, 241-242.