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No. 11

DISTRICT OF MAINE IMPRINTS IN THE COLBY COLLEGE LIBRARY

By R. WEBB NOYES

COLBY's collection of Maine imprints, that is things *printed* (not necessarily published) in Maine, extends from 1793 (the earliest anywhere recorded is 1785) to 1850. The College, of course, has considerable material printed in Maine since then, but its interest in this development of printing ends in 1850. This short account is confined to the period before statehood during which Maine was known as the District, and is concerned with roughly one third of the entire number of imprints in the library. The latest date, therefore, to which we can refer is 1820.

It is difficult to say just how many items were printed in Maine during this period, but it is estimated that over 800 (exclusive of newspapers), good, bad, and indifferent, saw the light of day. Over 100 remain unfound. Some are rare and scattered. Others, likely as not of indifferent value, are plentiful enough, so far as practical considerations are concerned. Colby has about 170, some of which are still uncataloged but are now in process of becoming formally recorded. Compare this with 367 for the American Antiquarian Society, 154 in the Boston Athenæum, 139 in the Harvard College Library, and 129 as far away as the Henry E. Huntington Library, in California, which was the count as long ago as 1929. Today these libraries presumably have even more, but the purpose of this enumeration is to show that in the development of printing in Maine before state-

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hood as represented here at Colby there is still hospitable room for further accessions from interested donors. A quarter of a century ago even Bowdoin College and the Maine Historical Society reported only 133 and 126 titles respectively, so it can be seen that no apology is needed for the size of our collection. Indeed we are justified in regarding the Kennebec Valley as an important source of information about our earlier printing.

What is the nature of the Colby imprints? Forty-three of them are sermons, including Jesse Appleton's *Immutability of religion*, several ordination sermons, some Thanksgiving, and a few pedobaptist, sermons, e.g. Daniel Dow's *Pedobaptist catechism*. There are nine or ten other religious tracts, besides sermons. The Minutes of at least five Baptist associations are represented, most outstanding among them being the *Minutes* of the Bowdoinham Baptist association, of which the College has all except that for 1795. There are some orations, including some Fourth of July orations, which seemed to be necessary in those days. Mark Akenside's *Pleasures of imagination* and Thomson's *The Seasons* are among the poems, the inaugural address of Joseph McKeen, first president of Bowdoin College, represents education, and "letters" from John Quincy Adams and Timothy Pickering illustrate the political scene. The prolific Eliphalet Gillet is represented by a Thanksgiving *Discourse* and a *History of the Bible and Jews*, both printed by Peter Edes, and Kiah Bayley, nearly as famous, contributes a *Discourse* of his own, along with two other minor works. Here are some other interesting titles:

Cook, Thomas. *The New Universal Letter Writer* . . . (Hallowell, Ezekiel Goodale, 1812)

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress* . . . (Hallowell, N. Cheever, 1817)

Goldsmith, Oliver. *The Grecian History from the Earliest State, to the Death of Alexander the Great* . . . (Hallowell,

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S. K. Gilman, 1818); and an Abridgement of the same (Gilman, 1819)

Murray, Lindley. *English Grammar* . . . (Hallowell, Goodale and Gilman, 1819)

Whipple, Joseph. *The History of Acadie, Penobscot Bay and River* . . . (Bangor, Peter Edes, 1816)

Worcester, Noah. *A Solemn Review of the Custom of War* . . . (Portland, A. & J. Shirley, 1815)

Who were the printers in the early days of this Massachusetts District? In the first and foremost of printing centers, Portland's leading printer, so far as Colby is concerned, is John McKown, with fifteen titles. Then, in order, the Shirleys, Thomas B. Wait, and Francis Douglas, with others meagrely trailing, Benjamin Titcomb, Maine's first printer, among them. Hallowell is next, as indeed it actually is in the complete story of Maine's earlier printing. Hallowell's Nathaniel Cheever (twenty-seven titles) is more amply represented at Colby than any of his rivals. Samuel K. Gilman is next, with thirteen titles, and Ezekiel Goodale follows him with eight. Peter Edes, redoubtable pioneer printer of Maine, about whom there is an interesting biography, spreads out over Hallowell, Augusta, and Bangor, and Colby is fortunate in having eight products of his press. Besides these notables, other printers appear sparsely in our collection. Besides Portland and Hallowell printers, we have others from Bangor and Augusta, Castine (David Waters, and Hall), Kennebunk (Sewall, and Remich), Wiscasset (Babson & Rust, and Loring), Saco (Weeks), Buckstown, now Bucksport (Clapp & Holland), Eastport (Folsom), and Brunswick (Joseph Griffin, editor of *The Press of Maine* [1872]).

Now of what value are these imprints? Allowing for variations of definition and of personal opinion, probably of very little value, as such, except as *curiosa* and for those interested in the devolpment of printing in the District

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of Maine. Granted that the inaugural address of President Appleton and President Adams' letter to Otis are important, each in its own sphere of influence, and that James Thomson's *The Seasons* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are entertaining or edifying, why are they more so by virtue of being printed in Maine within a certain span of time? Is the Maine edition of Thomas Cook's *New Universal Letter Writer* or Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* nearly so important to Maine as Sullivan's *History of the District of Maine* and Moses Greenleaf's *Statistical View of the District of Maine*, both of which were printed in Boston during the period under review? Nevertheless, the writer of this article confesses to a certain glow of satisfaction at having in his own library a weather-beaten and scotched copy of *Wait's York, Cumberland, and Lincoln Almanack for the Year 1794* (Portland) and a copy of the first book printed east of Portland, in Maine, the romantic and prolix *Female Friendship, or, The Innocent Sufferer. A Moral Novel . . .* printed by Howard S. Robinson, in Hallowell, 1797. He has Sullivan's *History* and Greenleaf's *Statistical View*, too, but it is nice occasionally to take in one's hands these "cradle books" of Maine and think to one's self, "These were *born* in the District of Maine!" or even, "These are a part of it!"



ADDITIONS TO THE JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE COLLECTION

A Supplementary Check List Compiled by
ROBERT E. DYSINGER

THE February 1957 issue of this quarterly contained what purported to be a complete check list of the Synge Collection presented to the Colby College Library by Mr. James A. Healy. Part III of this list, however,