

GENEALOGICAL
AND
PERSONAL HISTORY
OF
BEAVER COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF

JOHN W. JORDAN, LL. D.

Librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

ILLUSTRATED





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All that pertains to the early history of the "Art and
 BRADFORD Mystery" of printing in America is of exceeding interest,
 not only to the antiquarian, but also to the student of
 general history. Tracing the generations of the Bradford family of New
 Brighton, Pennsylvania, back to the American ancestor, leads to William
 Bradford, the first printer in the province of Pennsylvania and publisher
 of the first newspaper in the Colony of New York. The first issue from
 Bradford's press was an almanac called on the title page:

KALENDARIUM PENNSYLVANIENSE

or

AMERICA'S MESSENGER

being an

ALMANACK

For the year of grace 1686

By SAMUEL ATKINS

Printed and sold by William Bradford

The following notice aids in settling the question as to the time when
 the press was first set up in Philadelphia county:

THE PRINTER TO THE READERS.

Hereby understand that after great charge and Trouble, I have brought the
 great Art & Mystery of printing into this part of America, believing it may be
 of great service to you in several respects; hoping to find encouragement not
 only in this Almanack, but what else I shall enter upon for the use & service of
 the Inhabitants of these Parts. Some irregularities there be in this Diary which
 I desire you to pass by this year; for being lately come hither, my materials
 were misplaced and out of order, whereupon I was forced to use, Figures and
 Letters of various Sizes, but understanding the want of something of this nature
 & being importuned thereto, I ventured to make public this; desiring you to
 accept thereof & by the next (as I find encouragement) shall endeavor to have
 compleat. And for the ease of Clark's, Scriveniers Warrants etc. & what else
 presents itself wherein I shall be ready to serve you; and remain your friend.

W. BRADFORD.

Philadelphia the 28th.
 10th Month 1685.

(1) William Bradford, the first printer in Pennsylvania, was born
 in Leicestershire, England, May 20, 1660, son of William and Anna Brad-
 ford. He served his apprenticeship and learned the printer's art with Wil-

liam Sowle, printer and publisher of Quaker books, in Grace Church street, London, a friend of William Penn and George Fox. William Bradford came to America in the "Welcome" with William Penn, arriving at Newcastle-on-the-Delaware, 10 27, 1682, and on September 12, 1683, was living at or near Philadelphia. In August, 1685, he was in London, returning there to obtain his bride, Elizabeth Sowle, daughter of Andrew Sowle, the printer and publisher who although a subscribing witness to Penn's Charter of Liberties for Pennsylvania and a "First Purchaser" of Pennsylvania Land, one thousand acres in Upper Dublin township, county of Philadelphia, never came to Pennsylvania. While in London, William Bradford received a letter from George Fox, recommending him to prominent Friends in America, "As a sober young man who comes to Pennsylvania to set up the trade of printing Friends' books" etc.

He married, in Devonshire Friends Meeting, April 2, 1685, and on his return to America brought with him his bride and the printing press on which the Almanack was printed. He brought with him a certificate of Devonshire House Monthly Meeting recommending "William Bradford and Elizabeth his wife as members of the Society of Friends," which was read in Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, held the 4th of the 11th month, 1685, and accepted. He seems to have been successful in his business until 1692 when he became involved in the dissension that finally caused an open rupture in the Society of Friends. He printed some of the writings of George Keith, with whom he seems to have sympathized, and as a result was arrested and imprisoned. When tried the jury disagreed, but Bradford, having incurred the displeasure of the dominant party in Pennsylvania and receiving offers to settle in New York, removed in 1693 to that city, set up his press and became printer to the government. The first book from his press in New York was a small folio volume of the laws of the Colony, bearing date of 1693. In the imprint he styles himself "Printer to their Majesties" and directs to his printing house "At the Sign of the Bible." He continued to print for the government of New York and during thirty years was the only printer in the colony. During this same period he was also printer to the government of New Jersey. On October 16, 1725, he issued the first number of *The New York Gazette*, the first newspaper printed in New York. Benjamin Franklin mentions that when he visited New York about 1723, William Bradford was a printer and the only one in the city. Franklin applied to him for work, Bradford then having little to do could not employ him, but recommended him to his son Andrew, then a printer in Philadelphia. William Bradford continued his residence in New York, retiring from business several years prior to his death, making his home with his son William, in Hanover Square. He was also intimately associated with the early manufacture of paper in America, having been one of the builders and owners of the first paper mill on the Wissahickon and was owner of a paper mill in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, as early as 1728, these mills being the first erected in America for the manufacture of paper. He continued the publi-

cation of *The New York Gazette* until 1743, when it was sold to James Parker and *Post Boy* added to its title.

Although a Friend in England and Philadelphia, William Bradford was for many years a vestryman of Trinity Church, New York (Episcopal), and in the old burying ground near the north wall of that church his tombstone may be seen. The original monument over the remains of William Bradford and his wife in Trinity Church grounds was badly broken and defaced at the time the present church edifice was erected. A new one of marble was placed over the graves by the church vestry in May, 1883. He died May 23, 1752, aged eighty-nine years. On the morning of that day he took a long walk. The *New York Gazette* which announced his death on the Monday morning following said:

He came to America seventy years ago, was printer to the Government of New York upwards of fifty years, was a man of great sobriety and industry, a real friend to the poor and needy and kind and affable to all. His temperance was exceedingly conspicuous and he was almost a stranger to sickness all his life. He had left off business several years past and being quite worn out with old age and labor, his lamp of life went out for want of oil.