

P A P E R S O N
P R I N T I N G A N D T H E B O O K T R A D E
I N T H E W E S T I N D I E S

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INTRODUCTION

The series of 'Working Papers on West Indian Printing' was developed at the Department of Library Studies of the University of the West Indies, initially to provide suitable material of Caribbean content for those students studying for the optional course on the history of the book. At first the research undertaken for these papers was limited to the resources available in Jamaica (The Jamaica Archives, the West India Reference Library of the Institute of Jamaica, the University of the West Indies) and the series was intended for internal use only. However the discovery of much valuable and hitherto unexploited research material in the Jamaica Archives led to the realisation that it merited publication to a wider audience, and the Working Papers were made available for sale. In some cases (for example numbers 3 and 4 in the contents of this present volume) it was thought desirable to seek publication in an established bibliographical journal to augment the more localised circulation of the Working Papers.

The policy I adopted was to seek such publication when the research had produced reasonably definitive results, and to restrict to the Working Papers series those papers which were truly reports of work in progress, or work in which only partial research had been undertaken: work too incomplete to merit 'full' publication. Number 7 is an instance of the tentative work appropriate in a working paper; number 15 represents the development of research on a Trinidad newspaper whose very existence was unknown in Trinidad at the time number 7 was prepared.

The research for these publications, limited originally to Jamaican repositories and Jamaican topics, was subsequently extended to other Caribbean territories: Belize, the Turks Islands, Trinidad and St Bartholomew in particular. It has been based on archival and printed sources in the West Indies, the United States, and Europe. In the West Indies, as well as the Jamaican sources named above, the Belize National Library Service and Archives, the Trinidad Archives, the Trinidad Public Library and the Trinidad & Tobago Government Printing Office were used at first hand. In the United States, the resources of the American Antiquarian Society, Harvard University Library, the John Carter Brown Library

and the Massachusetts Historical Society have been used personally. Further material from the Library of Congress, Yale University Library, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the New York Public Library and the Bancroft Library at the University of California has been consulted in microfilm or electrostatic copies. The principal British repositories used have been the British Library Reference Division, Bodley, Rhodes House, the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland, and Bristol Public Library, plus the Scottish Record Office and the Public Record Office, where the Colonial Office papers are a particularly rich source of material. In addition, smaller collections of West India in other repositories have been identified through the National Register of Archives and some of these (the Fulham Papers at Lambeth Palace, the Church Missionary Society, the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine) have been investigated in person or by correspondence.

Apart from material obtained in microfilm from Uppsala, Stockholm and Copenhagen and a brief personal examination of the collections of the Royal Tropical Institute at Amsterdam, continental collections important for the history of printing in the Caribbean have not yet been consulted at first hand. For this reason most of the research reported in these papers is that undertaken on the British and Swedish West Indian colonies. However sufficient information was available from the resources already named to make possible the general surveys of West Indian printing to be found in numbers 6 and 12.

The significance of this work lies in the importance of the West Indian colonies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They were early centres of colonial printing, and their societies accounted for a considerable proportion of British book exports at the height of the sugar planters' prosperity. Little work has previously been undertaken by bibliographers on the records preserved in the islands; the wide scatter of surviving copies of early West Indian printing -- more often to be in Britain or New England than in the islands themselves -- has made it difficult for the island-based historian to survey the products of the island press.

Papers 2 and 10 review in detail the output of the earliest printers in Jamaica (the first of the West Indian islands into which printing was introduced in 1718) and their methods of work. Paper 13 provides a more complete list of Jamaican work of the eighteenth century -- of surviving work, of work known to have been published, and of projected books which probably were never published -- than had existed previously, and in addition is the first account of the spread of printing throughout the island. The surveys of printing in Belize and in the Turks Islands (numbers 8 and 9) are the first studies of printing in these settlements. This work is now being developed into a history of printing and the booktrade in Jamaica and its dependencies, 1718-1865.

Subsequent research, developed from some of the Working Papers which are not included here, will permit the same kind of detailed study as applied to the Swedish colony in number 11 for several of the other West Indian territories, e.g. Grenada, St Kitts, St Lucia, Tobago. As the work already written on these territories in the Working Papers is tentative in its conclusions, it has not been included with the more complete publications here submitted.
