

**The Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser.**

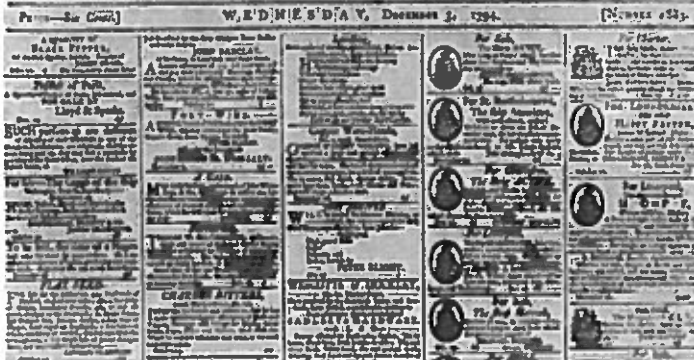


**The MAIL; or, Claypoole's DAILY ADVERTISER.**



Presented here are a variety of newspapers that were published by Claypoole and Dunlap (clockwise from upper left): *The Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser*, Friday, October 31, 1788; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, Saturday, April 28, 1792; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Wednesday, December 3, 1794; *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Friday, April 7, 1797.

**Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser.**



**Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser.**



# DAVID C. CLAYPOOLE . . . Patriot Printe

During a distinguished publishing career, his newspapers were the first to print the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution and President George Washington's "Farewell Address".

*By Compatriot Gary A. Trudgen*

Colonial newspapers stimulated the political, economic and cultural growth of the American people. But more importantly these early gazettes promoted unity among the colonists. Patriot publishers used their papers to fight for colonial economic and political independence from England. And when war came, the newspapers were a powerful propaganda medium used by the Patriots to arouse the people against the British.

There were many patriotic newspapers published during the Revolutionary War era. In the Philadelphia area, one of the more popular was *The Pennsylvania Packet and General Advertiser*. John Dunlap, an Irish-born immigrant, began the publication of

this newspaper on October 28, 1771 at his Market Street printing shop. Dunlap took on young David Chambers Claypoole as his apprentice.

Claypoole, who had been born on June 14, 1757, came from a prominent Philadelphia family. His great-grandfather, James Claypoole, had enthusiastically supported William Penn's "Holly Experiment." James was a prominent London merchant who emigrated with his family in 1683 to help Penn develop the new City of Philadelphia. David's parents were James and Mary Claypoole. After his first wife died in 1747, David's father remarried in 1750. His second wife was Mary Chambers. When David was born, he was christened with his mother's maiden

name as his middle name. His father, who operated a paint shop, is credited as being Pennsylvania's first native artist. Also, David's father was a staunch Patriot during the Revolutionary War. He served as High Sheriff of the City and County of Philadelphia from 1778 to 1780 and was a member of the Philadelphia Committee of Safety.

#### JOINS ARMY IN 1775

Young and impressionable, David was caught up in the spirit



LEFT: This engraving of David C. Claypoole was rendered from a watercolor by James Peale. (Courtesy The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.) RIGHT: This depiction of John Dunlap is on display at the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry Collection at the Frick Art Reference Library.

of the times, as the colonists protested the tyrannical actions of the mother country. After hostilities began with the Battle of Lexington and Concord (on April 19, 1775), there was a general call to arms. Probably with the reluctant permission of his parents, David, age 18, and an older brother, joined the militia. They were among the first to enroll as privates in Captain Thomas Mifflin's Company of Infantry, located in the City of Philadelphia. They equipped themselves at their own expense and converted their fowling pieces into muskets by adding bayonets and iron ramrods.

Claypoole relates that his company was trained regularly every morning and evening during the spring and summer. When his company had received sufficient training, they were incorporated



Historian of the Empire State Society's Binghamton Chapter, Compatriot Trudgen is proud of the act that the subject of this article is his great(4)-uncle. He has been employed for the past 28 years as an electrical engineer by IBM, where he has specialized in analog circuit design and helped develop printers, banking machines and medical equipment; he holds four U.S. patents. Compatriot Trudgen has an ardent interest in the copper coinages that were produced by several states during 1785 through 1789; his research here has resulted in numerous stories published by the numismatic press.



into the Third Battalion of Philadelphia Militia, commanded by Colonel John Cadwalader. David received an ensign's commission. During the forthcoming months, he was occasionally called upon to act as a guard for prisoners and supplies. And once, he was mustered in an attempt to capture a British man-of-war. The 44-gun "Roebuck" had run aground in the Delaware River near Wilmington, Delaware. However, before they marched, the ship got off. David didn't see combat that day, but his first and only taste of combat was soon to come.

#### "YEAR OF THE HANGMAN" — 1777

Superstitious folk considered 1777 to be the "Year of the Hangman." The figure seven was symbolically considered a hangman's gibbet and this year contained a triple mark of death. This unreal fear added to the gloom of reality because the war was not going well for the Patriots. The days ahead were ominous as Sir William Howe, the British Commander-in-Chief, prepared to take the Patriot capital of Philadelphia.

In July, Sir William provisioned 15,000 British soldiers and placed them on board 260 ships in New York Harbor. They then sailed down the Jersey coast into Chesapeake Bay and landed at the Head of Elk on August 25. In an effort to block the British

from Philadelphia, Washington marched his troops to meet the enemy. The Patriots made their stand along Brandywine Creek, southwest of the city. A battle raged on September 11 and although the Americans fought bravely, the British took the day. After the Battle of the Brandywine, Howe outmaneuvered Washington and marched into Philadelphia on September 26.

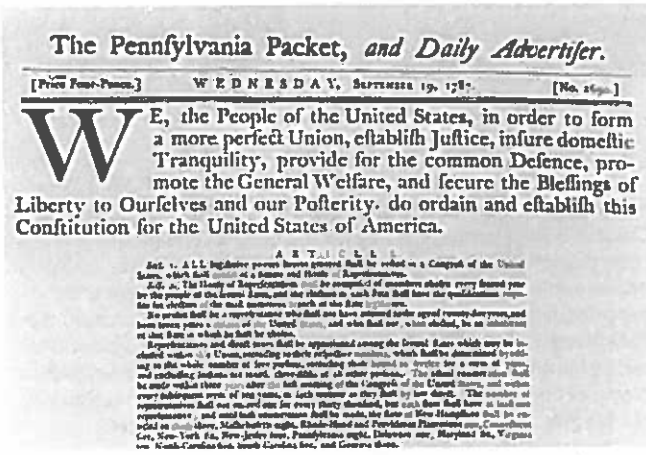
In order to maintain control of Philadelphia, the British required access to the Delaware River as a supply route. Before the British entered Philadelphia, Claypoole's battalion left the city to garrison the river defenses. They marched on September 19 to an unfinished fort at Billingsport, on the New Jersey shore. Located five miles downstream from the principal defenses of Forts Mercer and Mifflin, this redoubt protected the chevaux de frise that had been placed on the river bottom between the redoubt and Billingsport Island. The purpose of this underwater defense was to block ships from coming up the river. It consisted of iron-tipped timbers, placed just below the surface, facing downstream at an angle of 45°.

### BATTALION FORCED TO RETREAT

After the British took the Patriot capital, they sent a strong detachment to open the Delaware River for their use. Even though Washington was determined to make a strong stand, Claypoole's battalion of 300 men was too weak to defend Billingsport. They spiked their guns and burned their barracks as they evacuated their defenses on October 2 and retreated up the river to Fort Mifflin. On October 10 the British began bombarding this fort from upstream. The artillery fire was directed at the rear of the fort, where the defenses were the weakest.

The fort had been built to challenge vessels coming up the river. After bravely enduring a terrible pounding, Claypoole and his comrades withdrew on the night of November 15-16 to Fort Mercer, across the river on the New Jersey shore. Five days later they were forced to abandon this fort as the British became masters of the river.

Claypoole's battalion retreated through New Jersey to Washington's headquarters at Whitemarsh, in Pennsylvania. Here they participated in patrols that were sent out to reconnoiter the enemy's lines around Germantown. At the end of the campaign his unit was discharged as the regulars were moved into winter quarters at Valley Forge.



The September 19, 1787 issue of *The Pennsylvania Packet* featured the first printing of the United States Constitution. (Photo taken by the author of a facsimile of the original newspaper he owns.)

Upon being discharged, Claypoole traveled to Lancaster, Pennsylvania to continue his apprenticeship. John Dunlap had removed his printing press to this interior town, when it became painfully obvious that the British would gain control of Philadelphia. Here they continued to back the Patriot cause through the publication of *The Pennsylvania Packet*. Claypoole wrote later that this effort "... contributed essentially to the



This composite photograph shows John Dunlap's broadside of the Declaration of Independence along with the Journal of Congress rough document. (Courtesy The Library of Congress Collections.)

forwarding of the great and good cause [American Revolution] in which we were all so heartily engaged."

### BRITISH LEAVE, NEWSPAPER MOVES BACK

After the British evacuated Philadelphia on June 18, 1778, Dunlap quickly re-established his newspaper in the city at his old Market Street location. Claypoole continued as his apprentice until his indenture expired. Well pleased with David's work, Dunlap then took him into partnership on October 17, 1780. Claypoole also continued in the militia, receiving a lieutenant's commission in the 5th Regiment of Foot. Later he served as a lieutenant in the 1st Battalion of Colonel James Reed's Regiment. The war was chiefly in the south during the final years of the Revolution and David was seldom called to active duty. When he was, it was for either garrison or guard duty.

With the war over, and the United States now an independent nation, Dunlap and Claypoole continued the publication of their newspaper. Under their leadership and hard work, beginning on September 21, 1784, their gazette became a daily newspaper, the first successful one in the United States. They also hold "bragging rights" to a couple of other very important firsts in American journalism. Working from Thomas Jefferson's manuscript of the Declaration of Independence, John Dunlap was the first to print this historic document in the form of a broadside that was distributed on July 5, 1776. Then on July 8th the Declaration appeared on the front page of his newspaper. Over a decade later, Dunlap and Claypoole did it again. This time, on September 19, 1787, they became the first to publish the newly created Constitution of the United States of America. Also, *The Pennsylvania Packet* was a favorite of George

Washington. He read it when he was in Philadelphia and subscribed to it at Mount Vernon.

#### ESTABLISHED OWN NEWSPAPER

Dunlap and Claypoole published *The Pennsylvania Packet* until New Year's Eve 1790. Their partnership dissolved, Dunlap continued the newspaper under the title *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*. Striking out on his own, Claypoole established his own gazette on June 1, 1791. It was titled *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser* and was published in Philadelphia at South Third Street. The two old partners continued along separate paths until a devastating yellow fever epidemic struck the city in the fall of 1793.

They both suspended publication of their papers during the darkest days of the epidemic. When the pestilence subsided, they resumed their partnership and published *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* at the Market Street address, starting on December 9, 1793. Their new partnership existed until Dunlap retired at the end of 1795. Claypoole continued the newspaper, now in association with his brother Septimus, under the name *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*. When Septimus died on October 15, 1798, David published the paper alone until September 30, 1800, when he sold out to Zachariah Poulson, Jr.

#### PRINTS "FAREWELL ADDRESS"

In September 1796 Claypoole was honored by President Washington. The President, who had decided to retire from public life, called David to his office and requested that he print his Farewell Address to the American people. Claypoole was given a 32-page manuscript copy of the address, written in the President's own hand, from which he prepared a proof copy. He returned to the President with the proof copy for alterations, of which few were made. After he published the Address on September 19, 1796 (another first), David returned the manuscript to Washington and asked if he might keep it. Washington graciously handed it to him and Claypoole proudly

kept the manuscript for the remainder of his life.

During the last decade of the century, Claypoole continued to serve his country in the military. His partner, John Dunlap, had founded a city cavalry unit, known as the Philadelphia First Troop of Light Horse. As a private in this unit, David was called to help suppress the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. Western Pennsylvania farmers considered a federal excise tax, passed by Congress in 1791, to be an unfair discrimination against their region. An insurrection resulted in which it became necessary for President Washington to call up 15,000 militia. The rebellion was subdued without bloodshed. David was called again to active duty with the cavalry in 1799, this time to put down an uprising of several hundred men led by John Fries in northeast Pennsylvania. Again the complaint was taxes. Fries opposed a federal property tax that was established in 1798, in anticipation of a war with France. Fries was arrested, condemned to death and then pardoned by President Adams.

David C. Claypoole lived a long and useful life. He took an active role in our country's fight for independence, both in the military and through his journalistic efforts. He acquired fame in American journalism by being the first to print three of America's most historic documents and he was the co-publisher of America's first successful daily newspaper. Claypoole married three times and had 13 children. A hardy soul, he outlived his wives and children, before dying at the age of 92 on March 9, 1849. He is interred in the Rockhill vault of St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia.

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