

**BRITISH ROYAL
PROCLAMATIONS RELATING TO
AMERICA, 1603-1783. BURT
FRANCLIN: BIBLIOGRAPHY AND
REFERENCE SERIES # 56**

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British Royal Proclamations Relating to America, 1603-1783. Burt Franklin: Bibliography and Reference Series # 56 by Clarence S. Brigham

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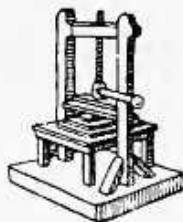
**BRITISH ROYAL PROCLAMATIONS
RELATING TO AMERICA
1603-1783**

Gr. Brit. Sovereigns, etc.

BRITISH ROYAL PROCLAMATIONS
RELATING TO AMERICA,
1603-1783,

EDITED BY
CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM, A.M.

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BURT FRANKLIN
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Introduction.

THIS volume is the outgrowth of action taken by the Society at its annual meeting in October, 1906, when a committee consisting of Mr. Waldo Lincoln, Professor William MacDonald, and Dr. J. Franklin Jameson was appointed to arrange for a new volume of the Society's Transactions. At the April meeting, 1907, the committee was given power to proceed with the publication of the British Royal Proclamations relating to America, and in October following appointed the writer to edit the volume. The editor spent the summer of 1908 in England engaged in this undertaking.

The present volume includes all English Royal proclamations which concern North and South America, from 1603 to 1783. Only those proclamations are printed which emanated directly from the King. The numerous declarations and proclamations issued by provincial and colonial governors, the unauthorized proclamations of minor English officials serving in America, the proclamations of the governors-general of Canada and the Thanksgiving and Fast-Day proclamations of the New England governors have all been omitted. They are documents of another class, and exist in such profusion as to be quite beyond the scope of this volume. These colonial proclamations, furthermore, are practically never entered in the English records. As original broadsides, they are very rarely found in English depositories, but are scattered throughout the libraries and archives of America. Enough of these exist to form the basis of another volume. Limiting the present field to royal proclamations allows the subject to be covered with reasonable completeness.

Proclamations only are included, under which heading would come manifestos and declarations of the King. In a few cases proclamations were issued by the Lords Justices during the King's absence from England. The great mass of orders in council, which were occasionally issued as broadsides, but generally are found only in manuscript entries, are not included. These are now being printed in the "Acts

of the Privy Council, Colonial Series," the third volume of which has progressed as far as the year 1745. Another class of proclamations rejected are those of the Lords Lieutenants of Ireland, which repeat verbatim the English orders in council.

From the early days of English history, proclamations were issued by the Crown to make known to the people new acts or regulations or declarations of public importance. Distributed for public view in printed broadside form, they have been familiar to twenty generations of English-speaking people. Yet, in spite of their frequency of issue and in spite of their occasional importance as public documents, there has been scarcely a book upon the forms of English government or upon the history of records, which gives a detailed account of the method of issuing, entering, and publishing proclamations. It remained for Mr. Robert Steele to compile during the past year, "A Bibliography of Royal Proclamations, 1485-1714, with an Historial Essay on their Origin and Use." This work, in two folio volumes, forms volumes five and six of the Earl of Crawford's splendidly published series, the *Bibliotheca Lindesiana*, and in this country can be consulted at most of the large libraries. Mr. Steele so thoroughly treats of the issuing, enforcement, and history of proclamations, that more than a brief allusion to their method of publication is unnecessary in this place.

Proclamations, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at least, usually underwent the following routine. They were drawn up by the Attorney General upon instructions from the Privy Council, then engrossed on vellum and signed by the King. After having been printed as broadsides in an edition of a thousand or more by the King's printer, they were sent by messengers to the sheriffs of the various counties and towns, by whom they were posted. A document of the period of Charles II preserved in the Public Record Office shows the method of issuing a proclamation:

"Proclamations how passed. — Proclamations are usually drawn by the Attorney Generall and assented to by the Council and brought down to a Secretary of State to be engrossed in vellum and soe signed by the King (without any attestation of the Secretary), then being dated they are sent (sealed in a paper) to the King's Printing House by a messenger, who of course receives for their service 2s. 6d. of the Printer. Then are printed off such a number as is judged convenient, and of them some Copys furnished on the K.'s and to the Secy^s to the Councell, &ca.; and 1250 are carried to the Clerk of the Crown

to be distributed under the Great Seal, together with the original Proclamation signed by the King, which is there kept upon a File for the Clerk of the Crown's discharge and warrant. There are made up by the Clerk of the Crown, 66 writs directed to so many Sheriffs; each containing a certain number of proclamations tyed up with a Label, and then sealed. These writs are delivered over to the 4 Riding Messengers, whose office it is to distribute them, and for their pains have among them £40 out of the Hanaper paid by Bill, if it be y^e King's business (as generally they are), or else £50 if it be a private man's concern. His fees for the 66 writs are £22 at 6s. 8d. per writt. The Printer has, by old Rates & Custom, 1d. per sheet for what he prints at the King's charge which comes to £15 for a Proclamation, and upon bills exhibited to the Lord Chancellor is paid in the Hanaper. His bills for quantities furnished to the Secretary's office are attested by the Secretaries respectively & those to the Council office by the Clerks there." (S.P.D. Entry Book 72, p. 219, quoted by Steele.)

Another interesting side light upon their method of distribution is shown by a quotation from the records of the Privy Council:

January 10, 1678-79. "Whereas his Majesty did this Day in Council take notice of some Proclamations that have issued whereof no notice has come into severall parts of the Kingdome than what happens to be given by the Gazet, notwithstanding the great charge that is brought unto his Majesties accompt for the sending and Dispatching all Proclamations that issue, therefore to reform this abuse, and to settle for the future a method of lesse expence, and more certainty and expedition in the publique Service, It is this day ordered by his Majesty in Council that the Right honorable the principall Secretaries of State do call before them Phillip Frowde Esq. Governor of the Post office, and settle a method for sending all Proclamations to the respective Sheriffs, so as the next Postmaster to such Sheriff be charged with the Delivery of the same, and send up the Sheriffs receipt for his Discharge. The clerk of the Crowne is also to be summoned, and orders given him, that as soon as Proclamations passe the Scale, he do deliver them the next post day into the Post office and take a receipt thereof for the Discharge of his Duty herein, And the messengers of the Exchequer who have formerly been intrusted with this Service to his Majesties Damage and Expencc are to be summoned and acquainted with the Rule that is now to be established, and that they desist hereafter from intermeddling with this matter." (Privy Council Register, II Chas., 14112.)

This new order, however, took away much of the revenue of the messengers and after a formal complaint had been made and duly heard, the Council concluded not to alter

"the ancient Course of Dispersing Proclamations, but leaves the Same to the Execution of the messengers of the Exchequer as formerly and that they take care that no Complaints be brought against them hereafter for not timely delivering of Proclamations. And his Majesty is graciously pleased to Command that the said Order of the 10th Instant be, and the same is hereby Superseded." (Idem, p. 39.)

With the reform of the postal service in 1709, the Privy Council discontinued the use of riding messengers and ordered that in future proclamations should be sent out by post.

Proclamations when signed by the King were termed "signed bills" and most of them are now preserved in the

Public Record Office among the Privy Seal bundles. During the period covered by this volume, proclamations were generally copied on the backs of the Patent Rolls, and can be found through the Indexes. The eighteenth century proclamations were furthermore noted in the Crown Office Docquet Books, which are in the Public Record Office. Since proclamations were first ordered in the Privy Council, they were duly entered in its records and are to be found in the Registers in the Privy Council Office. After 1665, proclamations were generally published in the *London Gazette*, and before that date occasionally in London newspapers, such as the *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Kingdoms Intelligencer*.

It would seem as if there would be in England at least one official collection of broadside proclamations, yet no depository — the Public Record Office, the Privy Council Office, or the British Museum — possesses more than a fair share of the total number. Private collections are often the most valuable for certain periods, and as Mr. Steele's work shows, it requires a canvass of all existing collections to insure anything like completeness.

The principal depositories of proclamations have the following distinguishing characteristics:

The British Museum collection, although but sparsely represented for the eighteenth century, is notably full for the seventeenth century issues. Scattered in many different volumes, however, a comprehensive search requires a considerable amount of time. The Museum also has excellent files of the newspapers in which many of the proclamations were printed.

The collection of proclamations in the Public Record Office is contained in eight folio volumes, and is also less strongly represented for the eighteenth century. Here the Indexes to the Patent Rolls and the Crown Office Docquet Books are invaluable.

At the Privy Council Office is the best collection of proclamations for American reference and one which is especially good for the eighteenth century. The long, bulky series of Privy Council Registers, which is full of interest to students of American affairs, contains the entries of most proclamations.

Other London libraries, where the collections of proclamations were examined for this volume, were the Guildhall and

the Society of Antiquaries. Each of these depositories had large numbers of the earlier proclamations and possessed certain issues which existed in no other place. At the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the Public Record Office in Dublin, and the Register House in Edinburgh, valuable collections were consulted.

Of the private collections, easily the most comprehensive is that gathered by the Earl of Crawford and described in the Bibliography of Royal Proclamations before referred to, in which volume other collections, both private and public, are noted at length. There is no large collection of broadside proclamations in any one American library, although many of the larger public and historical libraries possess occasional issues, and these, so far as found, have been noted.

There are one hundred and one proclamations entered in this volume. They have been carefully transcribed from the printed broadsides, except in the few instances where the broadside could not be found and some other source had to be used. Above each proclamation the date is given, and also a descriptive heading supplied by the editor and enclosed in brackets. The notes serve chiefly to explain obscure points, or to refer to original sources for certain Acts printed in the text. The bibliographical information entered at the end of each document gives the size of the original broadside, a list of libraries where it is to be found, a reference regarding the entry of the proclamation upon the Patent Roll, Crown Office Docquet Book, or Privy Council Register, and a note of the fact as to whether it is reprinted elsewhere. A list of the libraries referred to as containing the broadsides, and a chronological list of the proclamations precede the body of the text. The frontispiece reproduction of a proclamation of 1688 is from an original broadside owned by the John Carter Brown Library.

The editor's indebtedness to many English officials and librarians for courtesies extended to him in the course of his work is hereby gratefully acknowledged, especially to Mr. Hubert Hall of the Public Record Office and Sir Almeric FitzRoy, Clerk of the Privy Council. Professor W. L. Grant, then editing the "Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series," made many helpful suggestions. To Mr. Robert Steele above all others the Society is most deeply indebted.