

Flagg's Collection of Psalm Tunes, 1764

A *Collection of the Best Psalm Tunes*, by Josiah Flagg, Boston, 1764, has an interesting title-page engraved by Paul Revere. Since the title is reproduced, the exact wording is not here repeated.

The title-page is highly ornamental, with its Chippendale border, but it is not an original design. It is almost an exact copy of the Henry Dawkins title-page of James Lyon's *Urania*, Philadelphia, 1761. The only changes made by Revere are the omission of the shell designs at the upper right and left corners and of a series of inner border lines, and the substitution of a basket of fruit and flowers in place of a seated female figure. Both title-pages are here reproduced, Plate no. 3.

The collation of the book is as follows: Title-page on first leaf, with verso blank; Preface on second leaf, with recto blank; Index on third leaf, with verso blank; Introduction on fourth leaf, numbered page 4, with recto blank; Analysis of music, numbered page 5 and signature B, with verso blank; Different Moods of music, no page numbering, but evidently page 6, with recto blank. All of these preliminary pages are engraved except the leaf of Preface, which is set in type. Then follows pages 7 to 66 of engraved music, with the backs of each page, facing each other, all blank. The signatures are apparently A in four, B in two, C to I in eight, and K in four. The size of the book is $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, by $8\frac{5}{8}$ inches wide.

In the Preface is the following statement: "It is hoped, it will not diminish the Value of this Book, in the Estimation of any, but may in some Degree recommend it even to those who have no peculiar Relish for the Musick, That however we are oblig'd to the other Side the Atlantick chiefly, for our Tunes, the Paper on which they are printed is the Manufacture of our own Country." The Index lists the titles of the tunes through page 66. The water-mark is a fleur-de-lis, with the letters "IV" underneath. Mr. Dard Hunter informs me that although the paper-maker cannot be identified, "the paper is American made and the moulds upon which it was formed were made in this country."

The announcement of the publication of the book is in the *Boston Gazette* of November 5, 1764, as "Just Published." The same advertisement appears in the *Boston News-Letter* of November 8, and is continued in the newspapers as late as February 4, 1765.

According to E. H. Goss's *Life of Paul Revere*, 1891, Volume 1, page 54, a charge is entered in Revere's Day Book against Josiah Flagg: "To one half of Engraving Copper Plates for Singing Book — £ 150-0-0." The account is accompanied by other charges and has every appearance of being correctly copied. Yet it cannot be found in either of Revere's Day Books, and may have been copied from a separate document or from some other Day Book now unlocated.

Josiah Flagg, described in early life as a jeweller, was well known in Boston as a publisher of psalm-books, a musician, and a concert master. He was born in 1737, the son of Gershom Flagg, and married Elizabeth Hawkes, April 7, 1760. He took a prominent part in the Revolution serving as Lieutenant-Colonel in the Rhode Island line. He died in December, 1794 (see *Massachusetts Magazine*, December, 1794, Volume 6, page 764, *Flagg Family Records*, 1907, page 156, and J. T. Howard's sketch in *Our American Music*, third edition, 1946, page 64.

At least six copies of this book have been located, as follows:

American Antiquarian Society. Title-page and part of page 19 reproduced. Acquired from the Rev. Charles L. Atkins, Boxford, Massachusetts, 1955.

Newberry Library. Page 34 missing, and title-page torn and mended. Presented by Jessie F. Root of Evanston in 1935.

Library of Congress. Index leaf, and pages 8, 41, 44, and 54 missing. Purchased at Libbie Sale of October 10, 1906, number 1534, for \$38.

Boston Public Library. Pages 25-28, 41-44, 57-60, and 62 missing; and several pages mutilated. Purchased at Libbie Sale, January 27, 1903, number 1322, for \$52.50.

Massachusetts Historical Society. Pages 7-8, 40-41, 45-47, and 49-53 missing, and pages 39 and 65 mutilated.

New York Public Library. Title-page badly mutilated, and pages 34 and 36 missing. It was accessioned in 1900, source not known.