

American Bibliographical Notes

THE PRINTING OF *The Honduras Almanack*

The British colony of Belize, or British Honduras as it was called until 1973, is an English-speaking enclave on the Spanish Main, tucked between the Mexican territory of Quintana Roo to the north and Guatemala to the south and west. The Baymen (as the English mahogany cutters and their Negro slaves were known) were governed via Jamaica until 1862, and it was natural that the printing needs of the Bay were met by Jamaican printers for a considerable time.

Belize itself was almost the last of the various British colonial territories in the Caribbean into which printing was introduced. In the first study of printing in the settlement¹ I concluded that the first printer in British Honduras, James Cruickshank, was responsible for the production of *The Honduras Almanack* for 1826 which was published in March of that year. The evidence to be found in the National Archives of Belize tended to support this conclusion, which was strengthened by the similarity of the types used in the *Almanack* and by Cruickshank in his semiofficial paper *The Honduras Gazette*.

Examination of the copies of *The Honduras Almanacks* for 1826, 1827, 1828, and 1830 in the American Antiquarian Society² shows conclusively, however, that they were *not* printed in the settlement at all, but were produced in Boston, Massachusetts.

The AAS copies of the 1826 and 1827 *Almanacks* are bound

¹ Roderick Cave, 'Printing in Nineteenth-Century Belize,' *Library Quarterly* 46 (1976):20-37.

² This research was made possible through a Fred Harris Daniels Fellowship at the Society, July-August 1976.

together. They had³ three receipted bills loosely tucked into the volume, and these are very clear on the printing of the *Almanacks*.

The bills, addressed to Messrs. Brown & Ellis, Boston, are as follows:

[1. From Annin & Smith]

1826	To engraving a view of Honduras Church		
Feb.	including the drawing	\$35.00	
—	Engraving the arms of the settlement		
	of Honduras, including the drawing	25.00	
—	Engraving the Private Signals of the		
	merchants of Honduras	8.00	
—	Copper for the whole, 84 inches		
	@ 4 cts.	3.36	
—	Printing 333 impressions of the Church		
	@ 6/	3.33	
	Printing 333 impressions of the Arms		
	@ 80¢	2.67	
—	Printing 333 impressions of the Signals		
	@ 80¢	2.66	
—	8 2/16th French Plate Paper (for the		
	whole @ 50¢	4.06	
		<u>\$84.08</u>	
March 10	Eng. bill of lading, T. Pickstock	\$50.00	
	Printing 700 inc. paper & pressing	11.50	61.50
		61.50	145.58
	Received payment Annin & Smith		

[2. From Annin & Smith]

1826	To engraving a Plate of Private		
Sept.	signals for the merchants of		
23	Belize including Copper	\$11.00	
Oct. 7	To printing 300 impressions		
	from signal plates	2.25	
	Paper for same	.81	14.06

³ They have now been transferred to the Book Trades Collection, Department of Manuscripts.

"	Engraving a plate representing the manner of trucking Mahogany in Honduras	50.00	
	Reducing the drawing for the same	8.00	58.00
"	Printing 300 impressions from the manner of trucking Mahogany in Honduras	3.00	
"	Printing 300 impressions of the plate of Arms	2.40	
"	3 10/16th French Plate Paper @ 3/	1.81	
	Altering the plate of Arms	2.00	9.21
			<u>\$81.21</u>

Received payment Annin & Smith

[3. From Edgar W. Davies]

1827	306 copies Honduras Almanack		
Nov. 17	288 pages @ 7/		\$336.00
	Discount 5 per cent		16.80
			<u>\$319.20</u>

	Binding of Honduras Almanack & 2 reams Letter Paper for interleaving		35.00
	Binding 12 copies elegant-morocco, gilt, lettered &c		18.00
	1 ream Letter Paper for interleaving of Honduras Almanack throughout		3.50
	Box & Packing		1.00
			<u>\$376.70</u>

Received Payment, by Note
Edgar W. Davies

William B. Annin (1791?-1839) and George G. Smith were partners in an engraving business in Boston as Annin & Smith from 1820 to 1831. The items for which they were charging Brown & Ellis in February 1826 were the copper engraving plates used in the 1826 *Almanack*, the Arms ap-

pearing on the title page. Thomas Pickstock, for whose Bill of Lading a total of \$61.50 was charged on March 10, was a Belize merchant and one of the seven magistrates to whom the Public Meeting of Baymen deputed the government of the settlement. He was very much involved in the editorial compilation of the *Almanacks*⁴ and with *The Honduras Gazette*. Clearly he acted as the agent in Belize through whom the commission for printing these plates was passed (via Brown & Ellis) to Annin & Smith.

The second invoice from Annin & Smith refers to the plates in the 1827 *Almanack*: the title leaf suitably amended, a fresh plate of signals plus the drawing of mahogany-hauling by Andrew Baynton, public notary, assistant to the clerk of the courts, and keeper of the records in Belize.

The invoice from Edgar W. Davies⁵ for printing and binding refers to this same 1827 *Almanack*. The binding on the AAS copy is, one presumes, identical with that of the 'elegant-morocco' copies, and bears the name 'Charles Brown' blocked in gold in the center of the front board. The 1830 volume is similarly blocked; that for 1828, though unblocked, bears the signature of Nathaniel Brown on the endleaf. 'Nathaniel Brown of Boston' appears in the subscription list for 1828, 'Brown & Ellis, Boston' among the subscribers to the 1830 volume.

Although the invoices refer only to the 1826 and 1827 *Almanacks*, the very close similarity in paper and typographic dress of the 1828, 1829, and 1830 volumes to these earlier issues suggests that Pickstock probably arranged through Brown & Ellis to have these also printed in Boston. Annin & Smith may have been involved in the production, since the 1829 volume contains an engraved title leaf apparently modified from their plate. The other illustrations are all litho-

⁴ And with its physical production also. The 1829 volume contains lithographs after drawings by Pickstock of 'A View of Fort George' and of 'The Honduras Lighthouse.'

⁵ I have not been able to trace Davies otherwise.

graphs, save for one plate by Baynton in the 1830 volume, which is a rather crude aquatint.

The high technical quality of the plates and variety of processes used in the *Honduras Almanacks* would have been very surprising had they been printed in the settlement, rather than in Boston, since they were produced at a level of technical accomplishment far higher than that possessed by printers elsewhere in the British Caribbean at that time, or by Belize printers later in the 1830s. In the period before 1776 it had not been uncommon for the West Indian colonies to have work printed in New England, and by the late 1840s the American domination of the West Indian printing trade was beginning to show,⁶ but U.S. commissions were very unusual in the period around 1830. In this, as in so many aspects of its history, Belize was different from the sugar colonies.

Roderick Cave

⁶ Note, for example, the inclusion of the Bruce Typefoundry's advertisements in the *San Fernando Gazette* (Trinidad) of May 1851 and in the *Antigua Weekly Register*, September 1849.

MASSACHUSETTS PRINTERS AND THE COMMONWEALTH'S NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT TAX OF 1785

On July 2, 1785, the General Court of Massachusetts passed an act that, among other things, placed a duty or tax on all private (i.e., non-official) advertisements inserted in the newspapers of the Commonwealth.¹ The tax was scaled at sixpence per insertion for each advertisement of twelve lines or less, figuring eight words a line; one shilling each in-

¹ 'An Act for Repealing a Law of this Commonwealth, Entitled, "An Act Imposing Duties on Licensed Vellum, Parchment and Paper," and for Imposing Other Duties on Certain Papers, Commissions, Instruments and Processes,' *Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* [1784-85], repr. ed. (Boston, n.d.), pp. 458-62.

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