

**039 BOND, THOMAS – [DR. THOMAS BOND, JR.]**

**Publisher**

**Alexandria**

Publisher of *The Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser* (1789-93) in partnership with Samuel Hanson (200).

Little would be known of Thomas Bond if the advertisements that he placed in Alexandria's newspapers in the 1790s were his only traces. Unfortunately, there were several like-named individuals in the area, particularly a large landowner in nearby Charles County, Maryland, all of whom advertised in those same local journals, so complicating any search for Bond's origins and fate in the Potomac Valley. Yet a recent family history shows that this Bond was not even from Virginia or Maryland but from Pennsylvania.

Thomas Bond was the son of a like-name Pennsylvania militia hero and a physician trained in Philadelphia, his home town, graduating from the College of Pennsylvania in 1763. He conducted a medical practice there until the start of the Revolutionary War when he was commissioned as a Surgeon's Mate in the Continental Army; by the war's end, Bond had risen to the office of Purveyor (i.e. Director) of the Military Hospital at Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Bond remained in Philadelphia long enough then to have been a charter member of the Pennsylvania branch of the Society of the Cincinnati, but moved to Alexandria soon thereafter. By 1786, he was using the Potomac River town as a base for a land-speculation business built on grants derived from his many military bounty warrants; he acquired over 76,000 acres in the neighborhood of Morgantown in Harrison County, and so split his residence between the two mercantile centers. By then, Bond was apparently also well-acquainted with Samuel Hanson, who had served on George Washington's staff in and around Philadelphia during the war; Hanson was the eldest son of a like-named Charles County, Maryland, planter who had an interest in developing Alexandria's commerce with the interior west; immediately after the war, he ran a dry-goods and forwarding business there with his brother Thomas, and so he may have influenced Bond's relocation in building alliances to pursue his commercial designs.

Central to Bond's land-office business was newspaper advertising, suggesting that he had had a hand, as likely had Hanson, in bringing printer George Richards (355) to Alexandria to set up a job-press there in 1782, and then to start a mercantile advertiser there in 1784, Virginia's first post-war newspaper outside of Richmond. The weekly was immediately successful, proving the need for such a journal in northern Virginia. Richards continued the *Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser* until his unexpected death in July 1789. A brief, three-week-long suspension ensued, while Bond joined with Hanson to purchase Richards's press and his *Advertiser* as the firm of Hanson & Bond; indeed, the two businessmen may have already been the unnamed partners in the proprietorship of George Richards & Co., given their prompt actions. As neither man was a trained printer, the brevity of the paper's hiatus indicates that the break continued only as long as it took for the new proprietors to find and employ a new tradesman.

Both Bond and Hanson would eventually be pulled away from their journalistic venture. Just after the pair took control of the *Advertiser*, Hanson was named Surveyor of Customs for

Alexandria in the new Federal government by now-president George Washington. At that same time, Bond married for a second time, taking a Morgantown resident as his new wife. So while their partnership continued until November 1793, Bond had only intermittent contact with their Alexandria printing office. In late 1793, Bond evidently decided to make Morgantown his permanent residence and began negotiating a sale of his interest in the *Advertiser* with Hanson; in mid-November, Bond sold out to Hanson, who moved the paper across the river to Georgetown, Maryland, where it then reappeared as the twice-weekly *Columbian Chronicle* on December 3rd. It was a part of Hanson's interest to developing the new capital district, as he also resigned his government position in Alexandria at that time to take on a role in forming the Bank of Columbia in Georgetown as well, leaving his former life and focus behind in Virginia – a choice that may again have influenced Bond's move.

Bond's choice to move his business to his new family base in Morgantown proved to be an unfortunate one. Within a month of his parting from Hanson, the "accomplished physician" developed a case of typhoid and died there a week before Christmas in 1793. He was buried in the yard of Morgantown's Presbyterian Church, but that was not his final resting place. A century later, in 1893, the church was razed and his unmarked grave discovered under its floor; his body was exhumed and transported to Philadelphia for reburial in the yard of the Christ Church there, the parish of his childhood and the church where he had married his first wife one-hundred-and-thirty years earlier.

#### ***Personal Data***

Born:	Aug. 10	1743	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Married:	May 10	1764	Ann Morgan @ Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Married:	in late	1789	Jane Ferris @ Morgantown, VA/WV.
Died:	Dec. 17	1793	Morgantown, VA/WV.
Children:	All by Ann: Mary (1765-1803), Sarah (1769-95), Thomas III (1770-74).		

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; *Artisans & Merchants*; Hall, *Revolutionary War Patriots*; McMurtrie, *District of Columbia*; advertisements in Alexandria newspapers, 1784-93.