

042 BOSSLER, FREDERICK**Engraver****Norfolk, Richmond**

Engraver and Copperplate Printer in Norfolk (1803) and Richmond (1805-07).

The only trace that Bossler has left on the historical record is through his engravings, and that record extends for but four years. His first appearance is in Norfolk in 1803, where he advertised his services, and a similar trace is evinced in Philadelphia in 1806. But a longer Richmond presence is advertised between 1805 and 1807. It was during that period that Bossler (also spelled Bosler) produced plates for two well-known Virginia imprints. First came the illustrations for *Amoenitates Graphicae* (approximately "picturesque images"), an educative monthly attempted by Louis Hue Girardin (180) in 1805. While the effort was well regarded among the city's nineteenth-century memorialists, Girardin's journal issued only once, in its prospectus form. Then came the component plates of "Bishop Madison's Map" of Virginia; issued in 1807, the six-sheet map was commissioned by Rev. James Madison, president of the College of William & Mary (and a first cousin of President James Madison), who engaged William Prentis (340), the mayor of Petersburg who formerly published the *Petersburg Intelligencer* (and son of a surveyor), to supervise the project; Prentis, in turn, employed one William Davis in 1805 to conduct a survey and draw maps, and then Bossler in 1807 to engrave and print the sheets; the engraver's contributions are credited within those images.

Beyond these brief glimpses, no further trace of Bossler has yet been found anywhere in the American printing trade or its imprints. Nor is he found in the era's census records. Given the growth of the engraving trade in the early 1800s, that absence suggests that he either was dead shortly after his Richmond residence, or else he was a European tradesman who returned home after a brief American sojourn.

No Personal Data yet discovered.

Sources: Imprints; MEDSA Index; Mordecai, *Bye-Gone Days*; not in Stauffer's *American Engravers*.