

**046 BOYCE, JOHN**

**047 BOYCE, JOSEPH JR.**

**Bookbinders & Booksellers**

**Richmond, Lynchburg**

Stationers and Bookbinders in Richmond (1809-13) and Lynchburg (1812-19) who branched into Bookselling as a sideline.

The inextricable linkage of these two Boyces suggest that they were brothers; Joseph Boyce, Sr. apparently died in Richmond about 1800, leaving a house in such disrepair that it could be bought "for less than its value—on two or three years credit" in 1802. So it seems that his sons were bound out to apprentice in the bindery trade at about that time. The two established an independent business together in early 1809 as John & Joseph Boyce.

In the fall of 1810, the Boyces moved their business to a larger and more visible location on Main Street opposite the business office of mill-owner Joseph Gallego. At that time, the pair began offering a variety of legal, religious, and school books from Philadelphia suppliers to be sold at "Philadelphia prices" – meaning, without a mark-up for transport. They also were now a part of that city's subscription printing network, advertising the coming publication of a new edition of a French language textbook (*Nature Displayed in her Mode of Teaching Language to Man* by Nicholas Gouin Dufief) and a guide book to Philadelphia (*The Picture of Philadelphia* by James Mease), both projects of smaller publishers there. They must have invested heavily in the French reader as they launched an advertising blitz in February 1811 for Dufief's oeuvre, works endorsed by testimonials from the now retired Thomas Jefferson and two Richmond schoolmasters, Louis Hue Girardin (180) and William Burns.

This expansion of their business in 1811 brought a further one in 1812. In January, the pair announced another relocation, evidently to a less expensive space in town, in conjunction with the opening of a new Lynchburg store. The Boyces told their patrons that John would remain in Richmond and offer the same services and products as usual, while Joseph had removed to Lynchburg to conduct the new store on the same terms. That same notice also stated that they then expected shipments from the north that would sustain the expansion; such dependence would now be problematic as war with Great Britain loomed.

The Boyces' Richmond store ceased advertising in Richmond papers during 1813; whether this void represents its closing, John's retirement from their business, or both, is unknown. Joseph continued with the Lynchburg store through at least 1819, but by then the company had become simply Joseph Boyce & Co. Moreover, his advertised goods were more limited than what the pair had listed in 1811 and again focused more on the stationery and bindery business than it did bookselling. This fragmentary evidence suggests that the Boyces had expanded at just the wrong time, consolidated at their more profitable venue during the war, and slid into insolvency thereafter – not an uncommon fate for booksellers in this era.

***No Personal Data yet discovered.***

Sources: Imprints; MEDSA Index; advertisements in Richmond (*Virginia Argus*, 1802, *Virginia Patriot* 1809-13, and *Enquirer* 1812) and Lynchburg (*The Press*, 1818).

