

**117 DAVIDSON, JOHN**

**Bookseller**

**Richmond**

Partner in Richmond bookstore (1795-99) with William Prichard (343).

Davidson was apparently a Richmond area merchant who acquired a financial interest in the bookselling and stationery business of William Prichard. Yet despite the mercantile visibility, he remains an obscure figure in the city's history.

The two men formed their partnership in mid-1795. Prichard had come to Richmond from Philadelphia in 1792 in order to escape the destructive competition then developing there. In Virginia, he found sufficient success and profit to then consider expanding his business into a chain. In advance of establishing a new branch office in New York, he took Davidson into partnership in order to maintain his Richmond base in his absence. However, Prichard's northern sojourn lasted less than a year; he returned to Richmond in financial distress in early 1796. It would take him three years to accrue the funds needed to repay the debts he incurred in New York and then to reclaim his Richmond store as a solo operation. The slow process came to an end on April 15, 1799, when the firm of Prichard & Davidson was finally dissolved, once Prichard purchased Davidson's interest in his struggling business.

With the sale of his share of Prichard's business, Davidson disappears from both the historic and bibliographic record, evidently a result of having a considerably common name.

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

Sources: Advertising notices in Richmond newspapers (1795-99).