

169 FOSTER, THOMAS

Printer & Publisher Winchester

Publisher of the *Republican Constellation* (1810) at Winchester with Jonathan Foster (168), his father; then a journeyman printer there until at least 1833.

Foster has left a lesser trace in the historic and bibliographic record than his father. When a child, he travelled with the family as his printer-father moved from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to Frederick, Maryland, to Alexandria, Virginia, and then to Winchester, apparently picking up his trade skills along the way. When Jonathan began issuing the *Republican Constellation* in January 1810, the paper listed the firm of "J. Foster & Son" as its proprietors; as his eldest son, then nineteen years old, Thomas was the son mentioned. The business affiliation lasted until the following summer when Jonathon dropped "& Son" from the paper's masthead and began soliciting financial partners in the business. Hence, that summer was the point that Thomas commenced a long career as a journeyman printer in Winchester. For a short time during the War of 1812, he was called to active service, alongside his brother John, as a captain in Frederick County's militia regiment.

Foster likely remained with his father through the sale of the *Constellation* office in 1819; he was still working in the city when he married another resident in 1830, probably working then for Samuel H. Davis (126), and was a central figure in an 1833 parade there featuring the local manufacturing community. But that was his last recorded appearance as a printer in Winchester. By 1841, he was in Alexandria conducting an exchange and commission business much as his father had done after 1819. In 1850, the aging Foster was appointed a messenger in the Treasury Department in the new Fillmore administration. He still held that position when he died at his Washington residence in October 1870. His wife of forty years immediately filed for a widow's pension due from his earlier military service.

Personal Data

Born:	in	1791	Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
Married	Nov. 22	1830	Nancy Brown @ Winchester, Virginia.
Died:	Oct. 2	1870	Washington, District of Columbia.
Children:	At least one daughter, Anna, who died at his D.C. home in 1849.		

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Morton, *Winchester*; War of 1812 Pension Application Files; notices in *National Intelligencer* (1833) and *Alexandria Gazette* (1841-55); obituary in Harrisburg [Pa.] *Patriot*, 6 Oct. 1870; genealogical data from Foster family charts posted on Ancestry.com (October 2012).