

313 NEWTON, JOHN

Publisher

Leesburg

Publisher of the short-lived *Republican Press* (1810-11) at Leesburg.

Newton is an enigmatic figure in the Virginia print trade as his participation is only known by indirect evidence in contemporaneous imprints. Those sources report that he published the *Republican Press* at Leesburg from at least March 1810 through May 1811, with that town's Federalist paper, *The Washingtonian* of Patrick McIntyre (289), taking particular delight at skewering its partisan editor. However, Newton is not named in those concurrent accounts; rather his linkage to the *Republican Press* was established by Isaiah Thomas in his *History of Printing in America*, which listed the newspapers published in Virginia in 1810, including Newton's in Leesburg. The brief existence of his journal can be attributed to the popularity of McIntyre's *Washingtonian*, which better suited the tastes of Loudoun County readers, as was the case with all Republican papers attempted there before 1817.

Who Newton was is more difficult to establish. Circumstances suggest two possibilities in a like-named father and son pairing, though such an attribution is purely speculative, and not proven. In July 1811, one John Newton, "late of Stafford County," died at the nearby home of Anthony Strother in Jefferson County; his daughter Elizabeth had married Strother about 1790, so he had died at her residence. The elder Newton had operated a grocery concern in Fredericksburg until his wife died in 1806, retiring to Loudoun County sometime thereafter. Five of Newton's six sons, including John Claiborne Newton, moved to Loudoun between 1790 and 1810 as well, essentially moving the family away from its Stafford County base, as well as from their tribal roots among the Patawomeck people. In his days in Fredericksburg, the father was part of the Republican circle there, signing a remonstrance to John Adams in 1798 protesting his policy against France; that affiliation extended to his wife, Mary Thomas, who was sued in 1805 for slander by a Federalist merchant in the town. So given the family's known political perspective, either father or son could have been the John Newton behind the *Republican Press*, although it is most likely that the forty-three-year-old son would have taken on the publication rather than his seventy-year old father. Still, the lack of any evidence supporting this supposition makes this identification tentative at best.

No confirmed Personal Data yet found.

Sources: Brigham; Thomas, *History of Printing*; notices in Alexandria newspapers (1810-11); genealogical data from "The Patawomeck Newton Family" in *Patawomeck Tides* 15:1 (2012).