

335 POLLARD, NATHAN

Publisher

Richmond

Proprietor of the Franklin Press in Richmond (1820-28), so publisher of the *Virginia Literary and Evangelical Magazine* (1820-28) and *The Family Visitor* (1822-28) in conjunction with the Rev. John Holt Rice (354).

Pollard was a Richmond schoolmaster who became involved in the printing trade as a result of his association with Presbyterian evangelicals in central Virginia. He arrived in Virginia after the War of 1812, apparently a native of Connecticut, joining with William A. Chapin, another Northerner lately graduated from Dartmouth College, to open a classical school in Richmond's Masonic Hall in 1817.

From the start, both men had a connection to the Rev. John Holt Rice, then pastor of the city's First Presbyterian Church, who offered published references for their academy. And when Rice started his Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond in 1819, both teachers were founding members of the society, with Pollard serving as its recording secretary. That role also provided Pollard with entre into the city's print trade: he was a part of publishing the society's proceedings that spring, and several print tradesmen were members of the society as well, including bookbinder William Lownes (271), publisher Philip DuVal (155), and bookseller John Boyce (047), who was the society's treasurer.

One result of these contacts was that Pollard came to control the press that produced those proceedings. The Franklin Press emerged in January 1818 from the remnants of the Argus Office of the late Samuel Pleasants (331), one of four job-printing concerns in Richmond so initiated. It was under the management of William Waller Gray (193), a journeyman printer who had conducted newspapers in both Richmond and Lynchburg; he operated this new press as an overtly non-partisan one, unlike most other printers in the capital, with two key patrons. The first was his maternal uncle, William Waller Hening (213); his publication of a collection of the laws of colonial Virginia – now well-known as *Hening's Statutes* – had been interrupted by Pleasants's death in 1814; Gray's new Franklin Press received a contract to produce volumes V (1819), VI (1819), and VII (1820), as well as a reprint edition of volume IV (1820), of that thirteen volume compendium. His other patron was Rice; the minister had begun issuing his monthly *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* in January 1818 as an adjunct to his myriad evangelical activities that came to include the Missionary Society the following year. But in mid-1820, Gray retired from the print trade with the non-tradesman Pollard promptly becoming the office's principal, a job he kept until June 1828.

Rice seems to have been behind the 1820 transition, as the production of the Franklin Press became almost exclusively Presbyterian imprints thereafter, with Pollard essentially acting as Rice's agent. The only legal titles issued by Pollard – office staples under Gray – came in the first eighteen months of his tenure, two reports of cases heard in Virginia's courts by Francis W. Gilmer and William Munford; both lawyers were long-time associates of Hening, and so their imprints were likely contracted projects still underway when Gray retired. Thereafter, the only non-religious imprints produced by Pollard were school books: one in 1820 and one in 1825. Now his office issued an annual catalogue for the Hampden-Sydney

College (1820-23), the Presbyterian school where Rice taught irregularly from 1808 onward, and the annual *Franklin Almanac* (1821-28). Pollard occasionally published sermons as well, including a posthumous collection of those by a mentor of Rice, the Rev. Moses Hoge, and the inaugural sermon that Rice gave upon being installed as the professor of Christian theology at the new Union Theological Seminary, detached from Hampden-Sydney in 1824.

Publishing religious periodicals, though, remained the primary function of the Franklin Press under Pollard. He would be responsible for the ensuing eight volumes of Rice's *Evangelical Magazine* (1820-28), editing the monthly until 1827 when he gave way to Amasa Converse. That change seems to have been dictated by the success of a second periodical Pollard had started in 1822, the weekly, non-denominational *Family Visitor*; in 1826, his paper absorbed the competing *North Carolina Telegraph* of Fayetteville to create the *Visitor and Telegraph*, evidently doubling the workload in his office. In mid-1828, however, Pollard relinquished his interest in both periodicals to Converse alone and left the Virginia print trade altogether; the reason for his retirement is uncertain, but he likely became either fiscally embarrassed by the rapid expansion, or saw a decline in his health – both common causes for tradesmen to leave such large projects. Converse, in turn, closed the lesser-circulating *Evangelical Magazine* at the end of 1828 in order to focus exclusively on the wider-circulating weekly, which became the long-lived *Southern Religious Telegraph*.

Pollard returned to teaching, taking a large residence in Richmond's Madison Ward, the heart of the city; there he could also board his female students as a part of his new school. But apparently he no longer engaged in any religious or civic endeavors, suggesting that his health was the cause of his retirement from the Franklin Press. Indeed, his second tenure as a schoolmaster was just five years, dying in 1836 at the age of just forty-three. While largely speculative, it seems that his devotion to religious publishing had shortened his life.

Personal Data

Born:	Apr. 19	1793	Connecticut [?]
Married	Jan. 30	1823	Sarah Rowland @ Richmond, Virginia,
Died:	Dec. 14	1836	Richmond, Virginia.

1830 census indicates a household of a wife, mother, sister, two sons under ten and three female domestic slaves; no names recorded.

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Cappon; Meagher, *Education in Richmond*; notices in Richmond newspapers (1817-31); genealogical data from Pollard charts posted on Ancestry.com (January 2013).