

## 357 RIND, JAMES

**Editor, Publisher**

**Richmond**

Editor of the Virginia law compilations of 1792 and 1801 issued from the Richmond presses of Augustine Davis (119) in 1794, and of Samuel Pleasants (331) in 1803; son of William (358) and Clementina (356) Rind; brother of William Alexander Rind (359); posthumously father-in-law of Daniel Trueheart (420).

Rind was a successful attorney who first became a part of the Virginia print trade as a result of his employment as clerk and indexer to two General Assembly committees that compiled "revisals" of Virginia's laws. Between those two projects, he was an essayist for Richmond's Federalist journals, including that of his brother, William Alexander Rind, which brought him into the partisan newspaper wars of that day and its legal repercussions.

Born in Williamsburg in 1771, Rind was the youngest son of William and Clementina Rind, the conductors of the first avowedly-political press established in Virginia. The untimely deaths of his parents – William in 1773 and Clementina in 1774 – left Rind orphaned at barely three years of age; he and his siblings were also left destitute, the result of the insolvency of their parents' business. The local Masonic Lodge, in which their father had been a member, provided the eldest sons (William and John) with an education, but the source of James' early schooling is uncertain. In 1784, when he was thirteen, Rind was recorded in Richmond's city census as being a clerk in the household of Edmund Randolph (1753-1813), then Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia and later Attorney General and Secretary of State in the Washington administration; that association suggests that he may have found refuge in Randolph's household when he was orphaned in 1774 and so gained his initial education there. Rind eventually studied for the law with St. George Tucker (1752-1827), who employed Rind's sister Maria as governess for his children after his first wife's death in 1788; so it may also be that the two youngest Rind orphans were taken into the Williamsburg household of Tucker's father in 1774, the year he was admitted to the bar there; after the war, Tucker practiced law in the Petersburg area, with a small cadre of students which included James Rind and John Coalter (1769-1838) of Rockbridge County, who married Maria Rind in 1791; she died in childbirth the following year.

In 1789 however, Rind left Tucker before completing his studies to take on a job with one "Col. N." in Kentucky; he was then fixated on acquiring wealth, as he wrote to Maria in May 1790 saying that "nothing can be expected without riches ... [for] however deserving of a better fate, the poor always meet with rudeness and contempt," a comment reflecting his experiences and motivations. But Kentucky proved an unprofitable adventure, and so he returned to Williamsburg to complete his legal studies; he was licensed to practice law in May 1791 and set up an office in Richmond that summer. By then Rind had also established a reputation as being a bellicose and combative individual; in October 1790, he circulated "a libel on the inhabitants of Charlottesville and neighborhood" in that town, one demeaning Thomas Jefferson as well; Garland Jefferson, one of his nephews, challenged Rind to a duel over the published broadside, and though accepting the challenge, cooler heads intervened before Rind and Jefferson could meet. It was a harbinger of future problems.

In June 1791, shortly after he was admitted to the bar, Tucker asked Rind to serve as clerk to a committee appointed by the Assembly in its last session to complete a "revisal" of Virginia's laws – an irregularly-issued compilation of the laws then still in force in the state; his mentor chaired a group that consisted of himself, Arthur Lee, Joseph Prentis, Henry Tazewell, William Nelson, and James Madison, some of the more prominent lawyers in the Assembly. That eminence, however, meant that all were committed to other concerns at the same time, leaving the actual transcription of the legal texts and the correction of page proofs from the press of the public printer to Rind alone. He labored intermittently over the project for fully three years before the volume was finished; and it took another two years before the Assembly fully paid him the compensation he had been promised. But in that time, he forged a relationship with the incumbent public printer, Augustine Davis, and his shop foreman, Samuel Pleasants. Thus when Pleasants was asked to reprint the work in 1801, he engaged Rind to complete a new, more-detailed index for the compilation; in taking on the task, Rind was able to make the 1803 edition fit his initial plans for the work, plans derailed by the deadline imposed by the Assembly on the 1794 edition.

Rind's relationship with Davis led him into journalism. Between 1795 and 1803, he wrote frequently as an anonymous correspondent for Richmond's various Federalist newspapers, starting with Davis's *Virginia Gazette*, then his brother's *Virginia Federalist*, and finally the *Recorder* of Henry Pace (319). It was work that placed Rind at the center of two scandals.

The first came out of the ongoing assaults published in the pages of the *Virginia Federalist* and the *Recorder* which targeted Meriwether Jones (242), the Republican politician who had replaced Davis as public printer in late 1798; in early 1800, after an exchange of insults by Rind in the *Federalist* and Jones in his *Examiner*, Jones challenged Rind to a duel; the two met on the morning of April 8th, with Rind suffering a non-fatal, but incapacitating bullet wound to his abdomen; carried from the field, he never fully recovered from the injury.

The second involved the polemicist James Thomson Callender (075). The Republican writer had been convicted in Richmond of "seditious libel" for publishing the controversial *The Prospect Before Us* in early 1800; once Jefferson was inaugurated as president in 1801, Callender expected to be rewarded for his service and compensated for his imprisonment; when neither expectation was met, he turned on the Republicans generally, and Jefferson specifically, joining Henry Pace as editor of his *Recorder*. In December 1802, Callender was assaulted by George Hay, the man who served as his defense attorney in the 1800 sedition trial, over the writer's repeated attacks on his friends and associates. Callender sought Hay's arrest, but found himself and Pace brought before the city's Hustings Court to answer for a breach of the peace instead. The attorney Rind defended Callender in the ensuing trial, one which found that Hay was justified in assaulting Callender for his scandalous behavior, and required Callender and Pace to post bond ensuring their good behavior. It was a victory for Rind, in that Callender remained free when many Richmonders wanted him jailed again.

While his involvement in these scandals and his partisan epistles defined Rind in his day, modern scholars know him from his role in the trials of the enslaved men arrested and tried as part of "Gabriel's Rebellion" in 1800. Coming five and six months after his wounding by Jones, his assignment as defense counsel for the accused slaves seems an exercise in charity

by the Henrico County Court – which included his friend and business associate Pleasant Younghusband. While Rind was able to save a few of his clients, the guilt of most was a foregone conclusion, as were their convictions and executions; so Rind was given a financial benefit from the process by the court's justices, at just the moment when his prolonged recovery was keeping him away from regular practice in the area's courts. Subsequently, Rind used his newly-established reputation as a defender of individual rights to campaign for election as Richmond's representative in the Assembly in 1802 and 1803, though losing each time to Federalist John Adams, the city's sometime mayor. But he did succeed in being elected to the city's Common Council, representing the Jefferson Ward alongside his long-time publishing associate Samuel Pleasants.

Those campaigns were Rind's last appearance on the public stage however. In the wake of the 1803 elections, he and his wife Sally departed Richmond for the medicinal springs of the Virginia mountains, leaving their children in the care of Sally's brother, John Seabrook, in Hanover County. Neither of them returned home again, with James Rind dying in Augusta County in August while still enroute, and Sally dying at Warm Springs in October. Family lore holds that Rind was lost as a result of his dueling wound, though contemporary accounts do not report the cause of his early death; still, Pleasants reported in the preface to the 1803 revisal that its production had been delayed by Rind's prolonged illness.

In their premature deaths, the couple repeated Rind's early experience, leaving a brood of three young children orphaned; while they were not left destitute as Rind had been, the parents still died intestate, so complicating their children's future. The youngest, Samuel, was sent to the care of Rind's brother, William Alexander, in Georgetown (D.C.) where he would eventually join the print trade as well in about 1815. Meanwhile, John Seabrook constructed tenements on the undeveloped lots that Rind had owned in Richmond in order to provide continuing support for older son Nicholas and daughter Maria; Seabrook was assisted in the project by Rind's counselor friends, Edmund Randolph and William Marshall. Ironically, Maria married a Republican journalist in 1814, one Daniel Trueheart, then a journeyman working in the *Richmond Enquirer* office of Thomas Ritchie (360); she too died in childbirth in 1817, just as her namesake aunt had in 1792.

### ***Personal Data***

Born:	In	1771	Williamsburg, Virginia.
Married:	Nov. 5	1794	Sally Seabrook @ Hanover County, Virginia.
Died:	Aug. 4	1803	Clover Dale, Augusta County, Virginia.
Children:	Nicholas Brown Seabrook (b. 1796); Maria Dutches (b. 1798); Samuel Seabrook (b. ca. 1801); Elizabeth (1802-03).		

Sources: Imprints; Hubbard on Richmond; The Brown, Coalter, Tucker Papers, Swem Library Special Collections, College of William and Mary; *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*; *Bulletin of the Virginia State Library*; notices in Richmond papers (1795-1803); Shepherd, *Statutes at Large*; genealogical data from Seabrook family notes in Stillwell, *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: New York and New Jersey*, Vol. IV (1916).