

364 ROSE, WILLIAM

Publisher

Petersburg

Publisher of an imprint in Petersburg in 1816 regarding Federalists and the War of 1812.

Rose was the contractor for a book-printing job executed by Marvel W. Dunnivant (154) in Petersburg in 1816. His further identity is obscured by his relatively common name. As the content of the book was intended as an attack on the Federalists' opposition to the War of 1812, this Rose may be the William Rose (ca.1735-1817) who was the long-time keeper of the Richmond/Henrico County Jail, one of the state's earliest Republican officeholders. But the absence of a definitive link in the text makes that suggestion purely speculative.

The work itself was a reprint of an 1814 tract authored by Isaac Hillard (1737-1823), a Revolutionary War veteran then of Poughkeepsie, New York, reveling in the "victory" of the United States in the War of 1812, and denigrating the New England aristocrats who had opposed the war and impeded its conduct. Long a scathing critic of "the Boston machine," here Hillard argued that

"a close comparison [can be] drawn, between the ancient Jews, who were the persecutors of Christian Religion and the modern Federalists, who persecute the American Government."

He deepened his link to Christianity by his choice of a title for the work – *A Wonderful and Horrible Thing is Committed in the Land* – by drawing from the closing lines of Chapter 5 in the Old Testament book of Jeremiah:

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

The passage concludes Jeremiah's critic of the apostasy of the Jewish nation, making it a fitting metaphor in his mind for the Federalists and their recent Hartford Convention in their departure from the principles that had produced the Revolution. His commentary no doubt fell on deaf ears, as Hillard's "strong but uncultivated mind" had long been judged by his targets to make him either "an idiot, or a lunatic, or a brute."

That Rose chose to republish Hillard's tract through Dunnivant's Petersburg press was likely a commentary on the town's merchant elite who were bridling at the continued strength of Republicans in the area around the town. Yet modern observers cannot ascertain the tract's popularity or effect because of an absence of contemporaneous references and a dearth of surviving copies that may have had reader annotations in them.

No definitive Personal Data yet discovered.

Sources: Imprint (S&S 37836); Dunnivant misspelled the author's name as "Isaac Hillyard." Title reference from Jeremiah 5:30-31 (King James Version). On Hillard: *Marriages in Dutchess County* and the [Danbury, Conn.] *New England Republican* (Aug. 29, 1804).