

## 460 WORKS, ARIEL

### Publisher

### Richmond

Publisher of a literary collection (1816) and several religious titles (1828-30) in Richmond.

Works was a part of the Virginia printing trade at times between 1816 and 1830, largely as a result of his religious inclinations. But he lived the bulk of his life in New England and New York, far from Richmond, where he published his first book.

A native of Connecticut, Works appears to have obtained his printer training there, likely before the War of 1812. He was working as a journeyman in Richmond in 1816, likely part of the annual influx of transient printers attending the winter meetings of the state's General Assembly; that year was also when the Presbyterian evangelical John Holt Rice (354) began his missionary publishing efforts in Richmond in a circle of print tradesmen that included printers Arthur G. Booker (041), Nathan Pollard (335) and Philip DuVal (155), bookbinder William Lownes (271), and bookseller John Boyce (047).

In this environment, Works published his first book, a collection of items printed by Lydia Bailey in Philadelphia, most of them for the Johnson & Warmer almanacs for 1816: *The Virginia intelligencer for 1815*; while the title page was the only part of the work produced in Richmond, Works evinced an overt intention to remain in the Commonwealth in that collection's subtitle – *Designed to be published each year*; he likely was a part of Booker's new printing office that was then publishing Rice's *Christian Monitor* weekly, so requiring extra hands such as Works'. But sometime before 1820, Works returned to Connecticut. That relocation was probably associated with either the changes in frequency and title of Rice's periodical, or in the ensuing transfers of Booker's press. Rice converted his weekly to a biweekly in mid-1816 and then to a retitled monthly – the *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* – in early 1818; meanwhile, Booker retired and sold his office to William Waller Gray (193) in May 1816, who later published Rice's monthly; Gray, in turn, sold the office in late 1819 or early 1820 to Nathan Pollard, creating the Franklin Press, the city's primary religious publisher in the 1820s. By then Works was working in Hartford, not Richmond.

Remarkably, the nearly thirty-year-old printer enrolled as an undergraduate in Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, in 1821; Works evidently sustained the effort by working in the printing offices of nearby Utica. While at Hamilton, he was both a member of the Union Society, one of the college's literary societies, and a monetary contributor to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Sunday-School Union. After four years at Hamilton, Works graduated in the class of 1825, though his discipline was not recorded, and promptly set up a job-printing business in Utica. Over the next three years, he published about a dozen religious imprints, suggesting his studies were in literature and religion. Those imprints were largely classic sermons from the colonial era, such as Jonathan Edward's *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741).

In 1828, Works returned to Richmond as a publisher, likely as part of an effort to take the place of the Franklin Press bookstore, which had closed earlier in the year following Nathan Pollard's retirement, financially embarrassed in his business. Over the ensuing three years,

Works published a series of religious texts – similar to the productions from his Utica office previously – through the presses of John Macfarlan and Thomas Willis White (442), printers that he no doubt knew from his earlier residence there. But Richmond's religious press was far more developed and professional in 1828 than it had been in 1816; Rice's Presbyterian monthly had been joined by a weekly *Richmond Family Visitor* edited by Amasa Converse (1795-1872), while the Baptists were served by the *Religious Herald*, conducted by William Sands (1793-1868); Converse would add the *North Carolina Telegraph* of Fayetteville to his *Visitor*, creating the formidable *Southern Religious Telegraph* in 1830. In the face of such competition, Works left Richmond again in early 1830, returning to Connecticut.

On his return north, Works married Sarah Bowers Parker of Billerica, Massachusetts, and became a part of her family's business there – suggesting an acquaintance from before his second Virginia sojourn. Her father, Samuel (1772-1841), was a third generation descendant of the town's earliest English settlers, all sons and grandsons of the founders of Cambridge, Massachusetts; he was a talented machinist who invented a device for splitting leather, and who profitably fabricated his patented mechanism at his machine shop in South Billerica. It appears that Works was a good fit in a family that had daughters who married missionaries and ministers, as he became "an active and devoted member of the Congregational Church" there. So the one-time printer and publisher lived out his days at Billerica, dying there in late 1874, never having published another work after leaving Virginia.

### ***Personal Data***

Born:	June 4	1792	Ashford, Connecticut.
Married:	Sept. 9	1830	Billerica, Massachusetts.
Died:	Nov. 28	1874	Billerica, Massachusetts.
Children:	No record of children yet found.		

Sources: Imprints; *Checklist of Utica Imprints*; *Documentary History of Hamilton College*; notices in *American Sunday School Magazine* (1824-30), and *American Sunday School Magazine* (1821-23); Hazen, *History of Billerica*; obituary in *Utica Morning Herald*, July 1, 1875, reprinted in *Hamilton College Necrology for 1874-75*.