

## 505 PESCOD, ROBERT

### Apprentice

### Richmond

Apprentice printer in Richmond office of Augustine Davis (119) in 1796; elder brother of Edward Pescud (324) and a cousin of Thomas P. Manson (278).

Robert Pescud has only an apparently brief association with the Virginia print trade from his service in the Richmond press office of Augustine Davis in the 1790s. Still, that employment makes him the first of three family members who were a part of that trade.

Born in York County, Pescud was part of a well-connected old Virginia family. He was the second son of Thomas Pescud (1727-81), a mill-owning planter, county-court justice, and vestryman there. His elder brother, also named Thomas (1771-1820), succeeded to many of their father's roles, adding a long tenure in the House of Delegates to that list; his oldest sister, Elizabeth, married the rector of Charles Parish, Rev. Thomas Camm, son of the Rev. John Camm, president of the College of William & Mary; his youngest brother was Edward Pescud, who forged a long career as the publisher of the *Petersburg Republican*; and his only half-sister, Mary, was the mother of Thomas Pescud Manson, later a noted Richmond-based Republican printer. His mother brought her own deep connections to that marriage as a daughter of the ancient Chisman family there.

The only proof of this Pescud's tenure as a printer is an entry in a tax census for Richmond in 1796, wherein he was recorded as an apprentice in Davis's office. Given that he reached twenty years-of-age that year, his job title could easily be inaccurate, having passed the age that most printer-apprentices finished their training. But then again, Pescud may have been bound out until the age of twenty-one, as some apprentices were. And as Davis was known for maximizing his investments, he might have followed that stricter course here.

Pescud's apprenticeship, and its length, may also be tied to the known increase in the workload in that office when Davis was appointed "printer to the Commonwealth" in April 1791, succeeding the late John Dixon (140); then being fifteen, and the land-less second son of a deceased father, such an assignment would have been one filled with promise; moreover, Davis was himself a native of York County, and so likely knew of many young men there in similar circumstances. But absent other evidence, the suggested timing of his indenture is purely speculative.

Family records report he died a bachelor, making him an elusive figure in contemporaneous records. There is a record of his having enlisted as a sergeant in a Hampton volunteer militia company during the mobilizations that ensued from the Chesapeake-Leopard affair in June 1807 – Henry Howard's Company of the 115th Virginia Militia Regiment. Yet, despite that prior service, Pescud is not listed on any Virginia militia roster from the War of 1812, when men with military experience were particularly prized. While his age, then thirty-six, may have been a factor, it seems most likely that Pescud died sometime in that interval. But no record of his passing, or of any other event in his life, has yet been found.

***Personal Data***

Born: Oct. 5 1776 Charles Parish, York County, Virginia.

Died: After 1808 probably in York County, Virginia.

Reported to have died unmarried and without issue.

Sources: Hubbard on Richmond; U.S. Compiled Service Records, 1784-1811; genealogical data from articles on Pescud, Manson, and Chisman families in *William & Mary Quarterly* (1905-06).