

512 ROBERT, LOUIS

Copperplate Printer

Norfolk

Copperplate printer in Norfolk in 1814.

The only indication of Robert's participation in Virginia's print trade is an advertisement that announced his purchase of the copperplate press of Charles Branda (473), to wit:

Copper Plate Printing.

The Subscriber informs his friends and the Public, that he has purchased the Copper Plate Press of Mr. Charles Branda, and intends to carry on *the Copper Plate Printing* with neatness and dispatch, at the most reasonable prices, next door to Mr. John Johnson's, hatter, where he continues the Jewellery [*sic*] Business in its various branches.

Louis Robert.

That purchase was tied to the previously publicized intention of Branda to leave Norfolk for Philadelphia. By selling his press, Branda evinced the reality of his announced intent; but it seems that he did not actually leave Norfolk until after the end of the War of 1812, probably stymied by the concurrent invasion of the Chesapeake Bay by the British force that burned Washington later that month. Branda returned to Norfolk in April 1818 and he resumed his jewelry & engraving business, as before. However, copperplate printing was not reported among his advertised services, suggesting that he did not reclaim his press from Robert.

Accordingly, the fate of that press and its new owner remains unknown. The notice of its purchase by Robert is the sole appearance of the printer known in an American newspaper. And the many possible variations of his name – Lewis or Louis & Robert or Roberts – makes it essentially impossible, without clear evidence of a connection, that the person mentioned elsewhere is this individual.

No Personal Data yet discovered.

Sources: MEDSA Index no. 30924; *Norfolk Herald* (1814).