

549 BOYD, JAMES M.

Bookbinder, Publisher

Winchester

Winchester bookbinder and publisher who partnered with printer Jonathan Foster (168) in a bookstore there in 1818.

James M. Boyd is an enigmatic figure in the Virginia print trade. He was only briefly involved in late 1818 as partner to Jonathan Foster, publisher of the *Republican Constellation*, in his bookstore there. He is seen in advertising notices in that journal for that joint firm during the fall of that year, apparently succeeding John T. Sharrocks (376) in that concern. But once Foster began seeking buyers for his ten-year-old business in December, Boyd disappears entirely from the record of the print trade.

That brevity makes Boyd's identity uncertain. There are two viable options in identifying him further. One is the Boyd who died in an 1855 gas-light explosion in Lynchburg; he built on his role as postmaster – a patronage plum for many Republican print-tradesmen of that era – at a tavern on the Albemarle/Rockingham county line in 1820 to establish a sizeable stage-line business between Richmond and Lynchburg in the ensuing two decades.

But the more likely candidate here is the Rev. James McClean Boyd (1759-1846), a Monroe-County-based Methodist itinerant who traversed all of western Virginia. The Boyd who was associated with Foster is last seen advertising his publication of *The Virginia Sacred Musical Repository* (1818.A09) in December 1818. That item was the last in a series of religious titles that issued from Foster's press after 1815, when he began concentrating his non-newspaper printing on such imprints. Boyd is described therein as a "Teacher of Sacred Music," a role that conforms to the long ministry of the Methodist preacher. However, no clear evidence has been found connecting the teacher with the minister, so making such an identification speculative. Hence, the lack of specificity in this Index.

Still, Boyd's Winchester publication became an influential work. It was a shape-note hymnal employed in the ministries of many itinerant preachers in the Jacksonian era. The work was, according to its subtitle, "*a complete collection of psalm and hymn tunes, original and carefully selected from the most celebrated modern authors, both European and American, and designed for the use of the different religious denominations, musical societies and schools in the United States.*" And as such, it was widely distributed, as was the similarly-formatted *Kentucky Harmony* series published by Ananias Davisson (129) in Harrisonburg, making shape-note songsters the standard form seen among evangelical congregations throughout the antebellum South and West.

No Definitive Personal Data yet discovered.

Sources: Imprint; Hatchett, *Companion to the New Harp of Columbia*; and notices in [Winchester] *Republican Constellation* (1818). Identification of stage-line owner drawn from Richmond newspapers (1820-56).