

A List of Williamsburg Apothecaries

This list includes only those medical practitioners of eighteenth-century Williamsburg who operated apothecary shops. It does not include physicians who may have made up and dispensed their own prescriptions but did not operate a shop.

Andrew Anderson (1768-1771)

Anderson studied medicine in England after serving an apprenticeship with Dr. James Carter. Anderson returned to Williamsburg in 1768 and formed a partnership with Dr. Carter and they purchased the shop of William Biers. Anderson moved to New Kent County in 1771 and in 1774 married Betsey Burnet, "an agreeable young Lady, with a handsome Fortune."

Robert Anderson (1764)

Anderson advertised his apothecary shop in Williamsburg in 1764.

William Biers (1765-1768)

Biers operated a druggist shop in Williamsburg from about 1765 to 1768 when he sold his business to Dr. Carter and Dr. Anderson. In 1769 Biers announced his intention to leave the colony.

James Carter (1751-1779)

Dr. Carter opened his apothecary shop, "the Unicorn's Horn," in Williamsburg in 1751 and operated it until 1779 when he sold it to his brother William Carter. James continued to practice medicine in Williamsburg until his death in 1794.

William Carter (1773-1784)

In 1771 William Carter established his medical practice in Gloucester County. In 1773 he came to Williamsburg and formed a partnership with his brother James. Six years later he purchased his brother's share of "the Unicorn's Horn," and in 1784 he moved to Richmond where he opened another apothecary shop.

Robert Davidson (1737-1739)

Dr. Davidson, mayor of Williamsburg, operated a druggist shop in partnership with Thomas Goodwin from 1737 to 1739 when Davidson died.

John Minson Galt (1769-1808)

After studying medicine in England, Galt opened his apothecary shop in 1769. From 1775 until 1778 he operated a shop in partnership with Dr. William Pasteur. In 1795 Galt was appointed

visiting physician to the hospital for the insane and in 1799 he was appointed a member of the court of directors for the hospital.

George Gilmer, Sr. (1731-1757)

A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Dr. Gilmer established an apothecary shop in Williamsburg in 1731. He operated the shop in connection with a successful medical practice until his death in 1757.

George Gilmer, Jr. (1766-1771)

After completing his medical studies in England, Gilmer returned to Williamsburg in 1766 and opened his apothecary shop. In 1771 he moved to Charlottesville and established a successful practice.

Thomas Goodwin (1735-1739)

Goodwin owned a druggist shop in Williamsburg and apparently did not engage in a medical practice. From 1737 to 1739 he conducted the shop in partnership with Dr. Robert Davidson.

Peter Hay (1744-1766)

Dr. Hay conducted an apothecary shop in Williamsburg from 1744 until his death in 1766 when he was described as "one of our most eminent physicians."

Kenneth McKenzie (1732-1755)

Dr. McKenzie owned an apothecary shop in Williamsburg from 1732 until his death in 1755.

Alexander Middleton (1776)

Dr. Middleton operated an apothecary shop in Williamsburg in 1776. Middleton, a tory, was forced to leave Virginia during the Revolutionary War.

Robert Nicolson (1779-1783)

Dr. Nicolson served his apprenticeship with Dr. Pasteur and then studied medicine in England. He returned to Williamsburg in 1779 and opened his apothecary shop. After the Revolutionary War he moved his shop to Yorktown where he practiced medicine until his death in 1798.

William Pasteur (1757-1791)

After the completion of his apprenticeship with Dr. George Gilmer, Sr., Pasteur studied in England for about a year. He returned to Williamsburg in 1757 and established an apothecary shop. From 1775 to 1778 he operated the shop in partnership with John Minson Galt.

George Pitt (1744-1768)

Dr. Pitt, born in 1724 in England and “bred a Surgeon,” established his apothecary shop in Williamsburg in 1744 at the “Sign of the Rhinoceros.” In 1768 he closed his shop and returned to England. He later came back to Virginia but no longer engaged in medicine or pharmacy. In 1776 Pitt, a tory, left Virginia again. He died later that year in England.

Thomas Wharton (1735-1746)

Wharton arrived in Virginia about 1703 as an indentured servant to Dr. Richard Wright. By 1735 Wharton had established an apothecary shop in Williamsburg, which he operated until his death in 1746. He left his drugs, medicines, and shop utensils to Dr. McKenzie.

Source: The Apothecary in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg by Thomas K. Ford