

The Master Printers of Williamsburg 1730-1780

1730-1750 William Parks. Printer and publisher in three English towns and in Annapolis before he opened the first printing office in Williamsburg in 1730; founded the Virginia Gazette in 1736; died in 1750.

1751-1761 William Hunter. Probably learned printing as an apprentice to Parks, whose foreman he became; bought the printing office from Parks's estate in 1751; was jointly with Franklin deputy postmaster-general for the colonies from 1753 until his death in 1761.

1761-1766 Joseph Royle. Born in England; became Hunter's foreman about 1758 and married Hunter's sister; co-legatee, with Hunter's minor son, of the printing business; died in 1766.

1766-1773 William Rind. Came from Maryland to Williamsburg in 1766 on the invitation of Jefferson and other "hot Burgesses" who thought Royle too submissive to the governor; established a rival Virginia Gazette and continued it until he died in 1773.

1766-1779 Alexander Purdie. Born and trained in Scotland; was foreman to Royle, whose will bequeathed him an interest in the business along with Royle's minor son and William Hunter, Jr.; took John Dixon as partner, and himself stepped out when young Hunter came of age in 1774; established a new printing office and issued a third Virginia Gazette until his death in 1779.

1766-1780 John Dixon. Had been Royle's business manager before the latter's death, and thereafter married his widow; partner in turn of Purdie, William Hunter, Jr., and Thomas Nicolson; moved to Richmond in 1780.

1773-1774 Clementina Rind. Widow of William Rind; continued his printing business for one year—from his death in 1773 until her own in 1774.

1774-1777 John Pinkney. Continued the Rind printing business and Gazette on behalf of the Rind children from Clementina's death until some time in 1777.

1775-1777 William Hunter Jr. Natural son of William Sr., who bequeathed him the printing shop, lot, and half-interest in the business; on coming of age became active partner of Dixon; partnership dissolved in 1777; Hunter, a loyalist, followed Cornwallis to Yorktown in 1781 and thence to exile.

1779-1780 Thomas Nicolson. Succeeded William Hunter, Jr., as Dixon's partner in 1779;

the firm moved to Richmond the following year.

1779-1780 John Clarkson. Nephew of Alexander Purdie; continued Purdie's Gazette and printing business for about a year in partnership with Augustine Davis.

1779-1780 Augustine Davis. Had been one of Purdie's printers; with Clarkson continued as successor to Purdie until 1780.

Henry Bowcock, William Stark, and Robert Miller were connected with printing in Williamsburg during the years 1730-1780, but it is not known in what capacity.

Source: Title: The Printer in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg: An Account of his Life & Times, & of his Craft by Parke Rouse; Thomas K. Ford, Editor