

JAMES DAVIS:  
NORTH CAROLINA'S FIRST PRINTER

by  
Scott Aaron Reavis

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty  
of the School of Information and Library Science  
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in  
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

July, 2000

Approved by:

---

Advisor

© 2000 by Scott Aaron Reavis

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Like so many of the major accomplishments in my life, I could not have written this master's paper without the help of many people. I would like to thank the following people for their assistance: Dr. Jerry D. Saye, for his cheerful encouragement and support; Dr. David Carr, for helping me find a topic that I find interesting and enjoyable; and Robert Anthony, for his knowledgeable advice.

Most importantly, I want to thank my partner Jim, without whose support, encouragement and patience I would never have been able to attempt a second masters degree.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>James Davis: North Carolina's First Printer</b> .....	<b>4</b>
NORTH CAROLINA IN THE ANTE-PRINTING ERA.....	5
ESTABLISHING THE ORIGINS OF JAMES DAVIS .....	7
PUBLIC PRINTING ARRIVES IN THE “OLD NORTH STATE” .....	12
THE FIRST NEWSPAPER IN NORTH CAROLINA .....	16
THE FIRST BOOK WRITTEN BY A NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE.....	18
A MAN OF MANY HATS .....	19
THE POLITICS OF REAPPOINTMENT .....	20
OF STORMS AND DESTRUCTION .....	23
THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE AND THE BATTLE AGAINST INSOLVENCY.....	24
CONCLUSION .....	26
<b>Appendix: Annotated Bibliography of All Known Printings by James Davis</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>50</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

	PAGE
Figure 1 - Comparison of Typefaces Used by Davis and Parks .....	11
Figure 2 - £3 Note, Authorized in 1748, Printed by James Davis in 1749 .....	14
Figure 3 - The Revisal of 1773 .....	23

## ABSTRACT

Scott Reavis. James Davis: North Carolina's First Printer. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. July 2000. 52 pages. Advisor: Jerry D. Saye.

North Carolina was one of the last colonies to have a printer working within its borders. In 1749, the North Carolina General Assembly hired James Davis, of Virginia, to become the first printer in the state. His duties were to print the public laws and distribute them to the proper officials. His first printing, *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*, was published in 1749 and was the first book printed in North Carolina. He also performed private printing, with his press turning out the colony's first newspaper in 1751 and the first book by a North Carolina native in 1753. His career was rocky at times, but he continued printing for thirty-two years until his retirement in 1781.

This paper examines the origins and the career of James Davis, and the effect he had on North Carolina. An annotated bibliography of all of his known works is also included.

Headings:

Davis, James, 1721-1785

Printers

Printing – Bibliography

Printing – History - North Carolina

## INTRODUCTION

The population of North Carolina in the early eighteenth century consisted of only a few hardy families, spread along the eastern coast of the province. There were no towns, no schools, and very few of the rudiments of civilization. Nearly all North Carolina families at that time were engaged in farming, creating a life for themselves in a fruitful but extremely isolated land. With such a small population having few needs for reading material, a printer was a luxury the province did not need.

At the midpoint of the eighteenth century, the population had grown enough that the province's government realized printing would be a much more efficient means of disseminating information than by the old methods of handwriting and word of mouth. In 1749, the North Carolina government hired James Davis of Virginia, to move to New Bern and set up shop there. Within months he had published his first work, the 1749 edition of the *Journal of the House of Burgesses*.

Two years later, he began publishing the first newspaper in North Carolina, *The North Carolina Gazette*, and in 1753, he published the first book written by a North Carolina native, *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved*, written by Clement Hall. This book was a first in other categories, being the first privately printed book, and also the first non-legal book, printed in North Carolina. By the end of his career, Davis had printed over one hundred books, pamphlets, and broadsides, most for the North Carolina government.

While James Davis was a hard working printer and served his adopted state well, his career path was occasionally filled with obstacles. In 1752, he was called before the General Assembly, charged with neglecting his duties by not delivering copies of his printed documents to government officials around the state. His defense was that he could not afford to deliver the documents on the salary the General Assembly paid him. The General Assembly did not agree with his excuse, so he was fined.

Davis was reappointed to his position at regular intervals, but his popularity slowly faded until 1764, when dissatisfaction reached all the way to Governor Arthur Dobbs. The governor, dissatisfied with Davis' work, sought to have him replaced with another printer from Virginia. Amidst intense political wrangling, the effort eventually failed and Davis was once again appointed as printer.

James Davis remained as printer for many more years, but his troubles did not end. Around the time of the American Revolution, paper and delivery costs rose dramatically due to inflation. Davis asked the General Assembly for more money to print their laws. They did not have the money needed, however, to keep his printing establishment solvent. Davis found it necessary to resign his position, rather than to continue to lose money.

After Davis' resignation, the General Assembly found a replacement for the printer, but the replacement died only weeks after arriving in the state. They searched diligently for another printer, but they could not find one who was willing to work for the amount of money the General Assembly was willing to pay. Upon seeing the General Assembly's difficulties, and perhaps feeling a patriotic responsibility to his country and



state, James Davis offered to take up the state's printing once again, with payment being made when possible.

Davis did not receive payment for most of his work for the next few years. Because of the financial stress from the state's non-payment of salary and from encroaching ill health, Davis retired as printer in 1782. He lived a three more years and died in New Bern in 1785. Thomas Davis, his son, took over his father's printing business, but he also died shortly thereafter.

The effect of James Davis's career on North Carolina is immense and incalculable. Before he arrived in 1749, there was no printing press in the colony and all communication was done by handwriting. Laws were copied by hand, with the end result being that no two copies of North Carolina's laws were identical. Also, there were no newspapers, and almost no way to get news from other colonies or overseas.

By the end of James Davis's thirty-two years as printer in 1781, the state was very different. Lawmakers could rest assured that the laws were given to the citizens of North Carolina just as they had passed them--there were hundreds of copies of the laws throughout the state, and they were all identical. Also, newspapers had become common throughout the state, and news from beyond North Carolina's borders was now available to nearly everyone.

## **JAMES DAVIS: NORTH CAROLINA'S FIRST PRINTER**

In April 1749, the General Assembly of North Carolina passed a resolution asking James Davis to become the government printer for the colony. He was required to move from his home in Williamsburg, Virginia, to New Bern, the center of government for North Carolina at the time. His appointment was for five years. He was paid an annual salary of £160 proclamation money<sup>1</sup> for his work, which was subsidized by an assessment of four pence on every taxable person in the colony. The position required printing the speeches given at each session of the Assembly, the journals and proceedings of the House of Burgesses, all of the laws, public proclamations, currency, and acts of government. He was also to deliver copies of these government documents to all of the county courts and other important officials. Copies were also to be sent to the proper officials in London.<sup>2</sup> Davis agreed to these conditions, and on June 24, 1749, he became the first printer to set up a press in North Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Proclamation money was named for Queen Anne's proclamation of 1704, which stated that one Spanish dollar (a large silver coin) was worth 6 shillings in colonial money or 4 shillings 6 pence in British sterling, and that it was illegal to pay more. The proclamation was necessary because colonists were willing to pay more than six shillings in paper money to buy hard coinage, which was difficult to obtain, and inflation would have resulted if not checked. Proclamation money was used from about 1750 until the beginning of the American Revolution in 1776 in North Carolina and several other North American colonies.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the only surviving copies of some of Davis' printings are those he sent to the Public Records Office, London, as part of his duties.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel A. Ashe, Stephen B. Weeks, & Charles L. Van Noppen, eds., *Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present* (Greensboro, NC: C.L. Van Noppen, Publ., 1917), 8:139-140; Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in North Carolina* (Springfield, Ill.: s.l., 1932),

## North Carolina in the Ante-Printing Era

The reasons for hiring a printer date back several decades before 1749. As early as 1715, the public laws of North Carolina were revised and codified. There was no printer available at the time, so the laws were copied by hand and distributed to the appropriate county officials throughout the state. Because it is nearly impossible to create a correct handwritten copy of any large manuscript, errors occurred in the copies of the laws circulating about the colony. In 1736, Governor Gabriel Johnston commented upon the condition of the laws:

If you turn your eyes upon the laws . . . which ought to be the Guardians of your lives and fortunes, I'm afraid you will find them in very bad scituation; upon the strictest enquiry I can't find that there is one compleat Copy of them in any one place, neither have I yet seen two copies of them which perfectly agree, some of them seem plainly calculated to promote fraudulent practices, and I dare say have prevented many honest fair dealing People from settling in the Province . . . most of them either appear under ridiculous titles, are full of contradictions, or their language and style is childish, ridiculous and against the common rules of grammar. As the happiness of every private man depends on the law, I think this is a grievance which can never too soon be redressed.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately for the colony, these grievances were not addressed for many more years. In 1746, the Assembly finally appointed Edward Moseley, Samuel Swann, Enoch Hall, and Thomas Barker to a commission to revise the laws and find someone to print them. After three years, the commission advised the General Assembly that the laws had been revised, and that they had found a printer. The General Assembly examined the

---

reprinted from *National Printer Journalist* 50 (November 1932); and William Powell, "Introduction," in *Journal of the House of Burgesses* (1949), viii.

<sup>4</sup> William L. Saunders, ed. *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols. (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, Printer to the State, 1886-90. Reprint, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1993), 4:227.

proposal, and in April of 1749, they passed a resolution to hire James Davis of Virginia as the colony's first public printer.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1740s, the population of North Carolina had suddenly began expanding at a rapid pace as German and Scots-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania immigrated in large numbers to North Carolina. The central section of North Carolina was quickly settled as people left their tired, over-worked farms in the north and settled the rich, fertile lands of the Piedmont. By 1750, the population of North Carolina had grown to approximately 50,000, a five-fold increase from twenty years before. New centers of population quickly sprung up in the North Carolina Piedmont. Hillsborough, Salem, and Salisbury grew into towns where no Europeans had lived just a few years earlier. The sudden growth in population of the colony brought with it an increasing need for printed matter, especially correct and current versions of the laws of the colony.<sup>6</sup>

One reason it took so long to hire a printer for North Carolina was that until the 1740s, there simply were not enough people in the colony to support one. There were only a few hundred families in North Carolina throughout much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was a largely rural colony, and the first town, Bath, was not incorporated until 1704. By 1728, the population had grown somewhat, but there were still only 10,000 people in the entire colony. A consequence of such a small population was that there were few opportunities for education, and therefore very few people knew

---

<sup>5</sup> Douglas C. McMurtrie, "The First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1760," *North Carolina Historical Review* 10 (July 1933): 214-215.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen B. Weeks, "Libraries and Literature in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Complement and Supplement to 'The Press in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century,'" *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1895* (Washington: GPO, 1896): 171-174. The population of North Carolina continued to explode throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century. Between 1750 and 1790, the population rose from 50,000 to almost 400,000.

how to read. It is also very difficult for a small population to financially support a printer. Even in the 1760s, when the population had grown many times over, James Davis still had to supplement his income with other non-printing jobs in order to survive.<sup>7</sup>

Charles Crittendon, in *North Carolina Newspapers Before 1790*, agrees with the idea that the population was too small to support a printer until the mid to late eighteenth century. He gives several reasons for the late appearance of newspapers in North Carolina, but the primary one was too few people in the colony to economically support one. Crittendon theorized that printing was a product of cities and towns, and that sparsely settled areas could not support a newspaper. Before 1790, there were no cities in North Carolina with a white population of more than one thousand people. With so few people, the services of a printer just were not needed and would have been an expensive luxury.<sup>8</sup>

### **Establishing the Origins of James Davis**

According to a broadside James Davis printed in 1766, he was born in Virginia on 21 October 1721.<sup>9</sup> Nothing else is positively known about him until the mid 1740s, when he was living in Williamsburg. Virginia's first public printer, William Parks, had a press in Williamsburg and was the only printer in the colony at the time. Since it is known that Davis lived in Williamsburg prior to moving to New Bern in 1749, it is logical to assume

---

<sup>7</sup> Weeks, "Libraries and Literature in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century," 171-174.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Christopher Crittendon, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*. James Sprunt Historical Studies, Vol. 20, no. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1928), 8-10.

<sup>9</sup> James Davis, *James Davis Sen. was born the 21st of October, in the Year of Our Lord MDCCXXI. Prudence Davis was born the 22d of November, MDCCXXV ...* ([New Bern: James Davis, 1766]).

he worked with William Parks, and probably even learned the trade of printing from Parks. However, supposition is inadequate when solid evidence is required for accurate history, and accordingly, an examination of the facts is necessary to determine the origins of James Davis.

In order to understand where James Davis learned the printing trade, one needs to examine the career of William Parks, his probable predecessor and teacher. Parks started his printing career in 1719, at Ludlow, Shropshire, England. After several years of printing Shropshire's first newspaper, *The Ludlow Post-Man*, he petitioned the Maryland General Assembly in 1726 to print their laws and journals. Parks soon moved to Annapolis, where he set up shop and began publishing the *Maryland Gazette*, the first newspaper in that colony. He applied to become Virginia's first public printer in 1730, and after his application was accepted, moved to Williamsburg to set up shop. Parks tried to simultaneously operate both presses in Annapolis and Williamsburg, but he soon found it impossible to properly run two presses in such distant locations. With his business in Annapolis suffering, and business commitments going unmet, he decided in 1737 that it would be best to close the Maryland press.<sup>10</sup>

In 1736, Parks began publishing the *Virginia Gazette*, the first newspaper in Virginia, and only the second south of Maryland. His newspaper influenced the creation of dozens of newspapers in Virginia with the same name, and probably led James Davis to name his newspaper the *North Carolina Gazette*.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Douglas McMurtrie, *The Beginnings of Printing in Virginia* (Lexington, Va.: [Journalism Laboratory, Washington & Lee University], 1935), 7-14; and Lawrence C. Wroth, *William Parks: Printer and Journalist of England and Colonial America* (Richmond, Va.: The William Parks Club, 1926), [9]-15.

<sup>11</sup> McMurtrie, *Beginnings of Printing in Virginia*, 15.

For the next decade and a half, William Parks continued in his role as Virginia's public printer. In the spring of 1750, he embarked on a voyage to England in the interests of business. Unfortunately, he was not destined to survive the trip. He contracted a case of pleurisy, from which he died on 1 April, 1750. He was buried at Gosport, England, at the end of the voyage.<sup>12</sup>

A clue to the mystery of where and from whom James Davis received his training is in the pre-eminent North Carolina historian William Powell's<sup>13</sup> analysis of typefaces used by both William Parks and James Davis. Powell found that two of the type designs used in Davis' first book, *The Journal of the House of Burgesses* (1749), were identical to those used as a tailpiece in William Parks' work, *A Charge to the Grand Jury* (1730), which, perhaps significantly, was one of the first books Parks printed in Virginia and is the earliest existing imprint known in that colony. Figure 1 on page 11 shows the similarity between the typefaces used in both Davis's and Park's works.<sup>14</sup>

Powell also compared the typeface of individual letters used by both Parks and Davis. While he could not determine if they were actually the same type, he did come to the conclusion that they bore a "most striking similarity."<sup>15</sup> Also, it may be more than mere coincidence that, shortly after Davis left Virginia, supposedly with his newly-acquired type, Parks left on a business trip to England. Perhaps Parks knew he would not need the type while overseas, and sold it to Davis, or perhaps Parks was making the trip

---

<sup>12</sup> Wroth, *William Parks*, 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> William Powell is a well-known North Carolina historian who has researched James Davis. Powell was once head librarian of the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>14</sup> Powell, "Introduction," ix.

<sup>15</sup> Powell, "Introduction," ix.

to replace the type he had sold Davis. Of course, this is mere speculation, but the timing of events easily leads one to such conclusions. By careful examination of this circumstantial evidence, William Powell theorized that James Davis acquired his type from William Parks before Davis came to North Carolina.

William Parks' type was similar to one that William Caslon<sup>16</sup> developed around 1734. Since Parks was using his type as early as 1730, it couldn't have come from Caslon. He had developed his type from examples manufactured in Holland. The similarity of type and the fact that it was used in 1730, four years before Caslon's type was developed led Powell to believe that Parks' type was manufactured in Holland.<sup>17</sup>

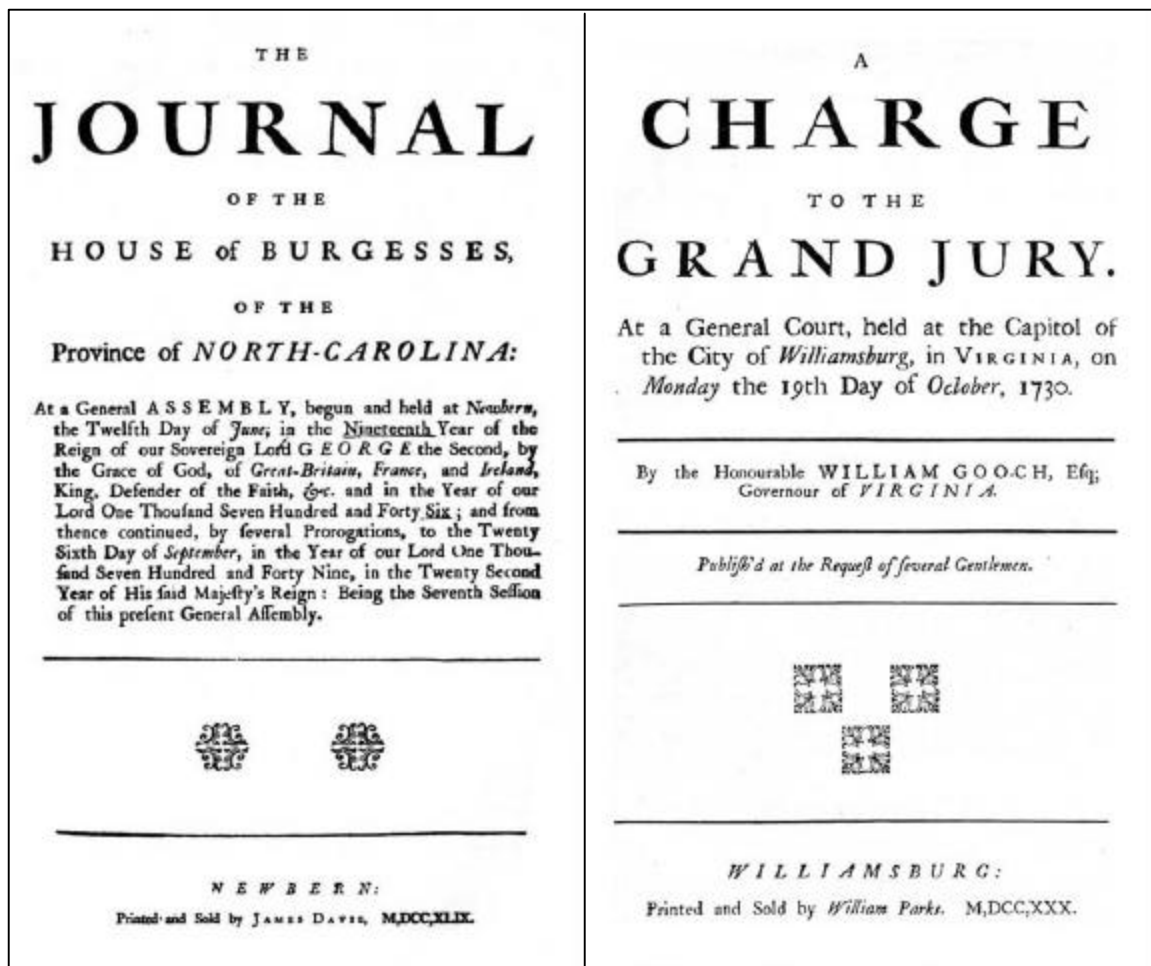
Powell gives more intriguing evidence about the typeface James Davis used. William Parks had died on his 1750 voyage to England, but his printing business continued without him. His assistant, William Hunter, took over Parks' printing duties, and Powell compared the type used by Hunter after Davis had left for North Carolina. Interestingly, Powell found that the type Hunter used was not similar to that used by Davis. In other words, a type very similar to James Davis' was used at the press in Williamsburg until Davis' departure, but after that time a different type was used. This only adds to the speculation that James Davis received his type from William Parks before setting up a press in North Carolina.

---

<sup>16</sup> William Caslon was born in 1692 in Cradley, Worcestershire, England. At age 28, Caslon began his career in type design by accepting a commission to create a typeface for the New Testament. His subsequent roman typeface, usually called Caslon in his honor, was an instant success, and set the standard for beauty and readability of type that endures to this day.

<sup>17</sup> Powell, "Introduction," xi.





**Figure 1 - Comparison of Typefaces Used by Davis and Parks**

On the left is a facsimile of *The Journal of the House of Burgesses* (1749), printed by James Davis. On the right is *A Charge to the Grand Jury* (1730), printed by William Parks. The relative sizes of these title pages have been adjusted so that the two title pages may be better compared. Note the similarity in the large types at the top, especially the *A* and the *R*. Also note the italic *W* in Newbern and Williamsburg in the imprints at the bottom. The layouts of the title pages are also similar, especially the title, the design elements near the bottom, and the imprints.

By looking at the evidence of the similarity of typefaces used by both William Parks and James Davis, the design elements used in the first of both Parks' and Davis' works, and the ease with which the lives of the two men interconnect, it is easy to conclude that James Davis learned the printing trade from William Parks, probably as an apprentice. Even if Parks was not the person who taught Davis to print, there must have

a professional connection on some level between the two men. Though circumstantial, a preponderance of the evidence leads quite easily to this conclusion.

### **Public Printing Arrives in the “Old North State”**

The North Carolina General Assembly sought to fulfill the need for current and correct printings of its laws by bringing James Davis to the colony. They brought him to North Carolina specifically for the purpose of printing a revision of the colonial laws. In the two years it took him to publish it, he also printed the first book in North Carolina, *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. It covered the proceedings of the House of Burgesses between 26 September and 18 October 1749.<sup>18</sup> The only surviving copy of this book is in the Public Records Office in London. It had been lost to historians until well into the twentieth century. Being a milestone in the history of North Carolina, the book was reproduced in 1949 for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of printing in North Carolina. One thousand copies of this edition were printed, with an introduction by William Powell, writing about the career of James Davis and the history of the first years of printing in North Carolina.<sup>19</sup>

The General Assembly gave another project to Davis in his first few months as public printer, that of printing currency for the colony.<sup>20</sup> The General Assembly had

---

<sup>18</sup> North Carolina, General Assembly, House of Burgesses, *Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina* (New Bern: James Davis, 1749).

<sup>19</sup> North Carolina, General Assembly, House of Burgesses, *Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives & History, 1949, reprint of New Bern: James Davis, 1749).

<sup>20</sup> Eric P. Newman, *The Early Money of America* (Iola, Wisc.: Krause Publications, 1997), p. 9-10. Newman says the colonies deliberately avoided using the term "currency," because the British crown did not allow them to issue their own money. Instead, they called it "bills of credit," implying that the

passed an act on 4 April 1748 to issue £21,350 of currency in various denominations, but no action occurred until James Davis' arrival. On 17 October 1749, several months after his move to North Carolina, the General Assembly passed a resolution to pay Davis a six month advance on his salary of £80, in order to print the bills authorized the year before. Apparently the printing plates for the currency were not designed or set by Davis, although he used the plates to print the currency. See Figure 2 on page 14 for an example of the 1749 currency.<sup>21</sup>

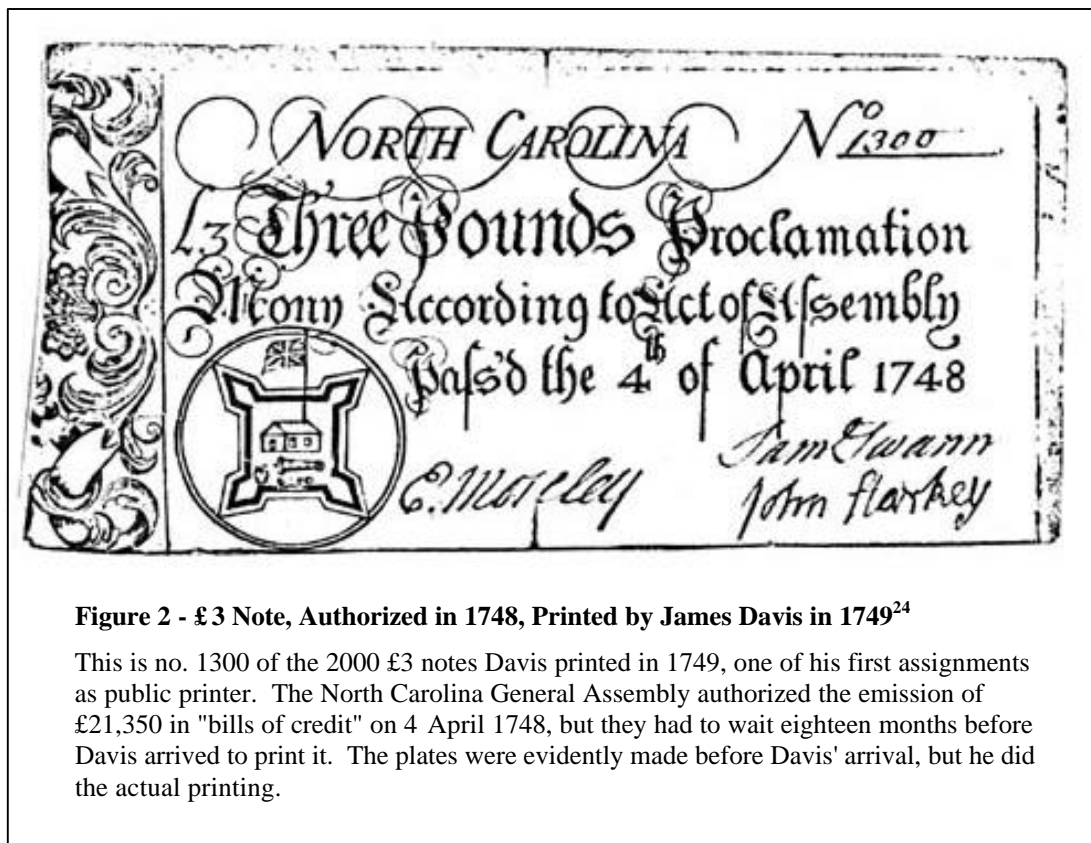
Only one item is known to have been printed by James Davis in 1750, his annual *Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*.<sup>22</sup> Like the 1749 edition, only one copy, archived in the Public Records Office in London, is known to exist. No records survive of what he did with the rest of his time that year, but undoubtedly he continued to work on his revisal of the public laws. In 1751, he finally published the revisal under the title, *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly of the Province of North-Carolina: Now in Force and Use, Together with the Titles of all such Laws as are Obsolete, Expir'd, or Repeal'd*. It is also known as *Swann's Revisal*, named for the head of the committee appointed in 1746 to revise the colony's laws. Until *The Journal of the House of Burgesses* (1749) was found early in the twentieth century, *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* (1751) was believed to have been the first book printed by Davis. Stephen Weeks, the first major bibliographer of Davis' works,

---

circulating pieces of paper were actually promissory notes instead of legal tender. The end result was the same to the public, however.

<sup>21</sup> Newman, *Early Money of America*, 312; and Mary L. Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," *North Carolina Historical Review* 21 (July 1944): 184; and *Colonial Records* 4:1023.

<sup>22</sup> North Carolina, General Assembly, House of Burgesses, *Journal of the House of Burgesses* (New Bern: James Davis, 1750).



was unaware of Davis' 1749 work, stating in his writings that the first book printed by Davis was his *Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* (1751). Sadly, Weeks died in 1918, shortly before the 1749 *Journal* was discovered in London.<sup>23</sup>

James Davis' printing of *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* (1751) is one of his most important works. He reprinted it the following year, along with a few updates from the 1751 session of the General Assembly. This edition of *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* (1752) is also known as the "Yellow Jacket," because of

<sup>23</sup> Stephen B. Weeks, *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century, with Biographical Sketches of Printers, an Account of the Manufacture of Paper, and a Bibliography of the Issues* (Brooklyn, NY: Historical Publishing Co., 1891), 10; and Stephen B. Weeks, "Pre-Revolutionary Printers - Davis, Steuart, and Boyd." *The North Carolina Booklet* 15, no. 2 (October 1915): 109, 116-117.

<sup>24</sup> Facsimile of image in: Newman, *Early Money of America*, 312.

the leather in which it was bound. Apparently, the leather used to cover the book was improperly tanned, causing it to turn a distinctive shade of yellow over the years.<sup>25</sup>

Mary Thornton, author of "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," which appeared in the July 1944 issue of *North Carolina Historical Review*, believes that the 1752 edition was published in much larger numbers than the 1751 edition. She bases her theory on there being more surviving copies of the 1752 edition than of the 1751 edition. A quick examination of the OCLC Worldcat database<sup>26</sup> and McMurtrie's "First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1760,"<sup>27</sup> shows a total of five extant copies for the 1751 edition, and eight to ten copies for 1752. The print run for each edition was probably one hundred or more, but because the number of surviving copies is so low, it is difficult to make an estimate of the number originally printed. The fact that there are half as many surviving copies of the 1751 as the 1752 edition lends credence to Thornton's assertion. Because this was the first revision of the colonial laws since 1715, and the very first printed version, it could be that Davis had no good way to gauge demand for *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* in 1751, which was so great that he had no choice but to publish another edition the following year.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina," 185; and Weeks, "Pre-Revolutionary Printers," 108.

<sup>26</sup> Online Computer Library Center, Inc., an online union catalog of over 44,000,000 items from most major libraries across the US and many other countries. Available only by subscription.

<sup>27</sup> McMurtrie, "The First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina," 214-234.

<sup>28</sup> Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina," 185.

## The First Newspaper in North Carolina

While James Davis was working on *The Journal of the House of Burgesses* and *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly* for the government of North Carolina, out of financial necessity he supplemented his income by private printing. In 1751, Davis began publishing the first newspaper in the colony, the *North-Carolina Gazette*, which had the motto, "With the freshest advices, foreign and domestick." The earliest known copy of the newspaper, numbered 15 and dated 15 November 1751, is located in the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh. It was issued weekly, so if 15 November was the fifteenth issue, the first issue probably appeared fourteen weeks earlier on 9 August 1751. Davis published this newspaper for approximately eight years, after which he suspended publication for unknown reasons.<sup>29</sup>

The *North-Carolina Gazette* was a quite different from most of the newspapers with which we are familiar today. The size of the paper varied, depending on what paper was available for purchase by the printer. There were rarely any illustrations, no headlines to call attention to items of special newsworthiness, and the articles were often copied verbatim from other newspapers. Most of the news came from the other colonies and from Great Britain. It often took months for news of events in Europe to arrive in North Carolina. There was also a great number of what today we would call philosophical treatises, since most of the literate people of the day who read newspapers

---

<sup>29</sup> Crittendon, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*, 11; and William S. Powell, "Bicentennial of Printing in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 27 (April 1950): 197.

also knew Latin and had studied the ancient philosophers in school. These same, learned readers often wrote long, involved letters, which appeared in the newspaper.<sup>30</sup>

James Davis received financial returns from the newspaper in the form of paid subscriptions and advertisements. A subscription to the *Gazette* cost sixteen shillings a year, while an advertisement cost three shillings for the first installment and two shillings every subsequent weeks. There are no surviving records to indicate the circulation of the *Gazette*, however, an examination of the advertisements reveals that it was read well beyond the town of New Bern. Advertisements for land, runaway slaves, and imported products from all over the state (mostly from what we would call the coastal area today) demonstrate that the *Gazette* was widely read.<sup>31</sup>

A widely read newspaper does not necessarily provide a well-paying subscriber base. Newspapers were too costly for many of North Carolina's citizens at the time, so each issue was passed along among many family and friends. One subscription could provide a newspaper for a large number of readers. Also, it was the custom in those days for publishers to sell subscriptions on credit, with subscribers paying them off in installments at a later date. Unfortunately for the publisher, quite often these bills did not get paid. There are examples of eighteenth-century North Carolina newspapers going out of business because of the delinquency of its subscribers. Most notable of these was *The North Carolina Chronicle or Fayetteville Gazette*, which ceased publication on

---

<sup>30</sup> *The North-Carolina Gazette* (New Bern: James Davis, 1751-1759); and Crittendon, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*, 24.

<sup>31</sup> Crittendon, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*, 16-23, 40-42.

7 March 1791. It is not inconceivable that the same reason forced Davis to stop publishing his *Gazette* in 1759.<sup>32</sup>

### **The First Book Written by a North Carolina Native**

Two years after Davis began publishing the *North-Carolina Gazette*, he made North Carolina printing history once more by printing in 1753, *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved*,<sup>33</sup> by the Reverend Clement Hall. This was the first book written by a native of North Carolina, and it was also the first privately printed, non-legal book published in the colony. Surviving copies of the book are rare, and McMurtrie could find no copies of the book in 1933. Today, one of the few known copies is at Duke University.<sup>34</sup>

William Powell, in his article “Bicentennial of Printing in North Carolina,” which appeared in *The North Carolina Historical Review* of April, 1950, made an intriguing connection when he found that James Davis had purchased some paper, parchment, and pasteboard from Benjamin Franklin in 1752 and 1753. Powell speculates that Clement Hall's book, published in 1753, may have been made up of materials supplied by Franklin. This is more interesting when viewed in the light of the belief by some early historians that James Davis had studied under Benjamin Franklin. While today we know this relationship is unlikely to have occurred, perhaps it is significant that a connection

---

<sup>32</sup> Weeks, *Press of North Carolina*, 45; and Crittendon, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*, 16-23.

<sup>33</sup> Clement Hall, *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved* (New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1753).

<sup>34</sup> McMurtrie, “The First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina,” 220-222. McMurtrie heard of the existence of this work through Stephen Weeks, but could not locate a copy.



has been made between them. A comparison of the paper and pasteboards used in the construction of the books of Clement Hall and James Davis' books with those books printed by Franklin in the same years would be of great value in determining the extent of Davis' professional ties to Franklin.<sup>35</sup>

### **A Man of Many Hats**

With the amount of work Davis performed in his capacity as printer, it may be surprising to learn that he had time for other public roles. It is even more surprising to learn about the number of roles he filled. He held a variety of public offices throughout his years in North Carolina, and was a prominent leader in New Bern and Craven County. He was elected to represent New Bern in the General Assembly in 1754, but since he was Sheriff of Craven County at the time, the General Assembly ruled him ineligible. He was elected for a seat in the General Assembly again in 1755. As his preference was to sit in the General Assembly, this time he resigned as sheriff. He was elected again to the General Assembly in 1756, 1757, and in 1760.<sup>36</sup>

In 1755, he was appointed postmaster of New Bern, and held this position for at least three years. He was a justice of the peace from 1768 through 1778, which influenced him to write and publish *The Office and Authority of a Justice of Peace* in 1774.<sup>37</sup> This was one of the first manuals for a public office in North Carolina and was

---

<sup>35</sup> Powell, "Bicentennial of Printing in North Carolina," 197.

<sup>36</sup> Ashe et al., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, 8:147.

<sup>37</sup> James Davis, *The Office and Authority of a Justice of Peace* (New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1774).

widely distributed. According to OCLC Worldcat, at least nine copies still survive today.<sup>38</sup>

James Davis held many more public offices. These include commissioner of Harlow's Creek Canal in 1766, foreman of a grand jury in 1771, commissioner of exports for New Bern in 1775, and judge in the Oyer and Terminer Court for the New Bern District in 1777. In 1781, he served on the Council of State. He performed many patriotic duties in the American Revolution--he signed the Craven County Address on Liberty in 1774, and served as a member of a committee to arm and supply a vessel of war. Additionally, he was a member of the Provincial Congress in New Bern, a member of the Hillsboro Congress, and a member of the Council of Safety in Newbern, all in 1775. With so many responsibilities outside of his print shop, it is surprising that he was able to print as much as he did. It is also evidence that James Davis was an important figure in his community and North Carolina.

### **The Politics of Reappointment**

In spite of his achievements as printer in North Carolina, and perhaps because he spread himself so thin with his other responsibilities, Davis sometimes ran into trouble with the Assembly and occasionally even with the Governor. On 13 April 1752, less than three years after his initial appointment as public printer, Davis was called before the Assembly and asked to account for his neglect in sending copies of the laws and journals to the proper officials in the several counties of the colony. This was one of his duties, and the expenses for sending copies was supposed to be paid out of his salary. In his

---

<sup>38</sup> Ashe et al., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, 8:147.

defense, Davis skillfully turned the problem around and made the Assembly appear to be at fault. He replied that he had printed the copies of the laws and journals as required, but that his small salary necessitated that he not send the copies by express messenger but by regular post. Thus, he could not say whether the various county officials actually received the copies. Davis' defense did not work, and the General Assembly reprimanded and fined him for his negligence.<sup>39</sup>

His original contract was renewed in 1754, and then again in 1757 and 1760. In 1762 he was again up for reappointment, but some members of the General Assembly were growing displeased with Davis and nominated Alexander Purdie, of Williamsburg, Virginia, as the next public printer. In spite of the movement against him, Davis won reappointment, but his popularity continued to fade.<sup>40</sup>

In 1764, James Davis' appointment was once again up for renewal, and this time dissatisfaction with his work went all the way up to Governor Arthur Dobbs. In considering the matter, on 5 March 1764, Dobbs said of Davis,

I can never approve of the late Printer appointed by the Assembly upon Account of His negligence in not Printing the Laws, Journals, and other Public Orders or dispersing them in proper numbers for the use of the Province and Consequently deserves no favour. I must therefore recommend it to the Assembly to appoint a Sum to encourage a Printer to Reside where he can attend the Government and Assembly and do his duty to the Public and not barely consider his own Profit and Conveniency.<sup>41</sup>

The General Assembly formed a committee to find a replacement for Davis, and settled on Andrew Steuart, a printer from Philadelphia. Steuart arrived in June, but the

---

<sup>39</sup> Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina," 187; and Weeks, *Press of North Carolina*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina," 187.

<sup>41</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 6:1200, in Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina," 187-188.

General Assembly could not agree to the committee's recommendation. Governor Dobbs grew impatient with the slow pace of the process, and in November 1764, he took action on the matter by appointing Andrew Steuart as "His Majesty's Printer" for North Carolina. This usurpation of power from the General Assembly significantly angered them enough to pass the following resolution:

The appointment of a printer under the sounding Appellation of His Majesty's Printer . . . is of an unusual nature, truly unknown either to our Laws or Constitution, and as it appears to us a most extensive stretch of Power, and may in its tendency establish a New Office, to exact new Fees . . . We the Assembly of this Province therefore to guard the Liberties of the Subject and our indubitable Rights Do Resolve that we know no such Office as His Majesty's Printer of this Province and of no Duties, Fees, or Emoluments annexed or incident to such Office and that the said appointment is of a new and unusual nature unknown to our Laws, and is a violent stretch of power.<sup>42</sup>

The General Assembly was so angry with Governor Dobbs that they overlooked their problems with Davis and reappointed him to the office of public printer, paid Steuart £100 for his time and trouble, and passed a law that the governor could not order the treasurer to disperse money to Steuart without the agreement of the House.<sup>43</sup>

After this incident, Davis easily won periodic reappointment for the next nine years. He published some important works during this time, including yet another badly needed revision of the laws in 1764, the first since 1751. He reprinted this revision again in 1765, with a few additions. He started another newspaper in 1764, called *The North Carolina Magazine, or Universal Intelligencer*, but it only lasted four years. In 1768, he resumed publication of *The North-Carolina Gazette*, which lasted at least ten years before ceasing publication for the last time.

---

<sup>42</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 6: 1256 & 1311, in Weeks, *Press of North Carolina*, 20.

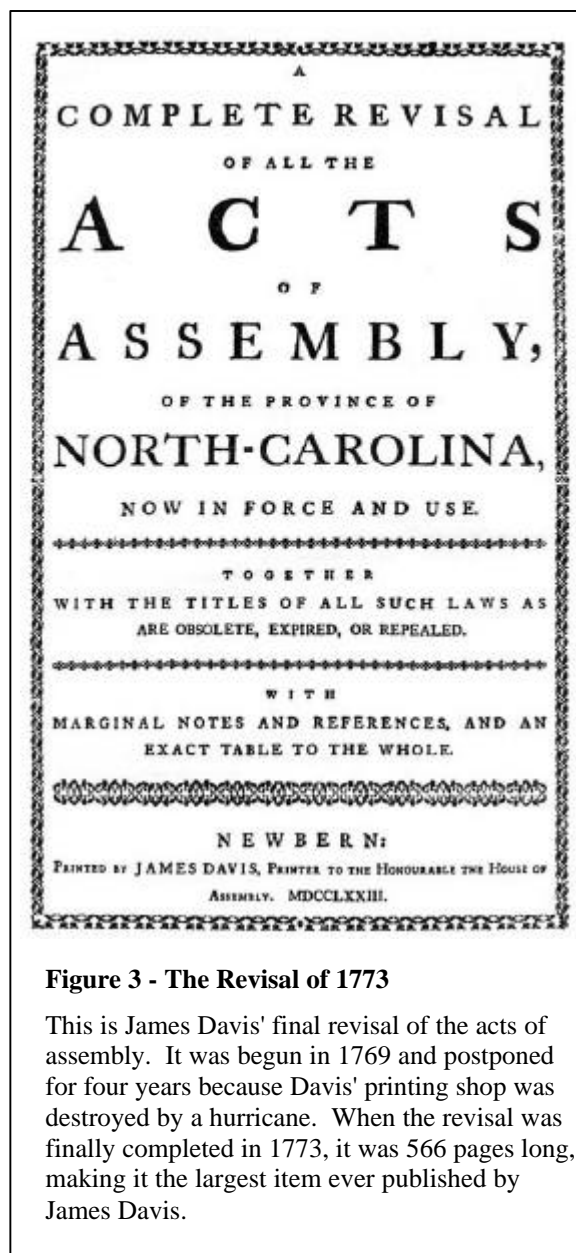
<sup>43</sup> McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in North Carolina*.

## Of Storms and Destruction

The revisions of the acts of General Assembly of 1764 and 1765 were so successful, that in 1769 Davis planned to update it once again and print another revised edition. He was in the midst of working on this revisal when a hurricane struck New Bern on 7 September 1769. His house was destroyed along with the manuscript of the revisal and his print shop. His types were scattered about and buried in the sand, making work impossible. Davis' work was disrupted for at least a year, with very little done in 1769 and 1770, mostly due to the hurricane (see Appendix, page 28). In the *North-Carolina Gazette* of 10 November 1769,

Davis describes the incident:

These proposals [for a revisal of the laws] were published some time ago, and the books were to have been delivered this fall; the work was accordingly carried on, every sheet of it was lost in the ruins of the Printing-Office which was swept away in the late storm.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 3 - The Revisal of 1773**

This is James Davis' final revisal of the acts of assembly. It was begun in 1769 and postponed for four years because Davis' printing shop was destroyed by a hurricane. When the revisal was finally completed in 1773, it was 566 pages long, making it the largest item ever published by James Davis.

<sup>44</sup> *North-Carolina Gazette*, 10 November 1769.

James Davis' plan to publish this revision was postponed, but not canceled, by the hurricane of 1769. His output had returned to normal by 1771, but there is no record of anything published by his press in 1772. Most likely, this is because he had started working on the revision again, which he was finally able to print in 1773. It was the largest work he ever printed, at 566 pages. See Figure 3 on page 23 for a facsimile of the title page of the 1773 revision.<sup>45</sup>

### **The War for Independence and the Battle against Insolvency**

For most businessmen, the American Revolution was a time of high inflation and scarce supplies. It was no different for James Davis, who struggled to maintain his business with money that was constantly losing value and with few sources of paper for printing. The General Assembly did not seem to understand the situation, and in 1777 they voted to replace Davis with a printer from Virginia, John Pinkney. The reason was an old one against Davis, neglect of duty. Although the General Assembly probably thought they made a reasonable decision at the time, it quickly became apparent that they made a major mistake. After hiring John Pinkney, they discovered that he was bankrupt, and his creditors would not allow him leave Williamsburg without security on his debts. Governor Richard Caswell had confidence in Pinkney and posted a £100 security so the new printer could depart for Halifax, North Carolina, the provincial seat of government at the time. Unfortunately, within six weeks Pinkney was dead, and Governor Caswell lost his money, a large sum at the time.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Powell, "Introduction," xi.

<sup>46</sup> Powell, "Introduction," xii-xiii.

The state of North Carolina was now without a public printer, and with no new prospects to fill the empty position. James Davis, perhaps feeling guilty for his neglect of duties and the situation that it had caused, made a move that was the most generous of his career, which more than made up for any negligence over the years. In spite of the fact that he had been ousted as public printer, after the death of John Pinkney, Davis saw that the state was in dire need of a printer. At his own expense, he took it upon himself to print the acts of the General Assembly for that year. The General Assembly was so impressed with his patriotic action that they forgave Davis' previous neglect, and reappointed him as printer the following year.<sup>47</sup>

Davis' newspaper, *The North-Carolina Gazette*, continued until 1778, when his son Thomas was drafted into the army to fight in the American Revolution. This resulted in the elder Davis having too few assistants to fulfill all of his printing obligations while simultaneously publishing his newspaper. By necessity he ceased publication of the *Gazette*, but continued his printing for the government. After halting publication of his newspaper, Davis tried periodically to retire, but the General Assembly talked him into staying every time. Finally in May 1782, advancing age and worsening health left him no choice but to retire. He turned his business over to Thomas, who had by then returned from the war.<sup>48</sup>

James Davis died three years later, probably in February 1785, although the exact date is unknown. His will was probated in the Craven County court session of March 1785, indicating that he probably died the month before. He died a wealthy man, leaving

---

<sup>47</sup> Powell, "Introduction," xiii; and Ashe et al., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, 8:144.

<sup>48</sup> Powell, "Introduction," vii.

behind a great deal of property and many slaves. However, his greatest legacy is that of North Carolina's first printer and publisher of over one hundred titles.<sup>49</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Some events in history almost seem inevitable. By 1749, when the population of North Carolina had grown to a critical size, some means of efficiently and accurately communicating laws, news, and literature became a necessity. To meet this need, the General Assembly brought James Davis, a printer from Williamsburg, Virginia, to the capitol of North Carolina. His duty was to print the laws of the state, and to distribute them amongst the proper officials.

Perhaps unwittingly, by bringing James Davis to the colony the General Assembly established a major cultural institution and changed North Carolina forever. No longer would citizens be unsure of the accuracy of their copies of the colony's laws because of handwriting mistakes, and no longer could people with criminal intent change the laws as they made their own transcriptions. Because of James Davis' printing press, the laws could be distributed to many people at once and with accuracy.

Another aspect of the cultural institution of the printing press is that it fosters the spread of ideas. When James Davis established North Carolina's first newspaper in 1751, he instituted a major line of communications between North Carolinians, and between North Carolinians and the other colonies, the mother country, and then rest of the world. A great number of the colony's citizens gained an unprecedented access to news, philosophical ideas, and advertisements about services from other citizens, where

---

<sup>49</sup> Powell, "Introduction," xv.



before they were almost totally isolated. People in the many counties and towns of North Carolina became more closely tied together as information flowed more freely among them, and the colony began to solidify as a single political entity instead of the amalgam of isolated, frontier areas it once was.

It must be remembered that just a small portion of the population really enjoyed the benefits of a printing press in North Carolina in the eighteenth century. Only the wealthy had the luxury of spending time learning how to read, and only they could afford to buy the books and newspapers that came off the press. Usually, only men were taught to read, and it was considered a waste of time, and perhaps even dangerous, to teach slaves to read. So, essentially only wealthy white males could read the newspapers and books that Davis printed.

Nonetheless, James Davis created a very important aspect of the intellectual life of North Carolina when he established his printing press in 1749. Today, there are local newspapers in nearly every county, and in many small towns, throughout the state. Scores of North Carolina towns have had a printing press at some point in their history, and one of the most important academic presses in the country is the University of North Carolina Press, in Chapel Hill. As common as printing is today in the state, it is hard to imagine that at one time, there was no printing in North Carolina. James Davis changed that, and looking back at the industry he started over two hundred and fifty years ago, it is easy to give him the appellation of “The Father of the North Carolina Press.”

**APPENDIX:**  
**Annotated Bibliography of All Known Printings by James Davis**

*Including Books, Pamphlets, Broad­sides, Newspapers, and Currency*

This bibliography includes every known printing done by James Davis, including several with questionable origins but reasonably believed to have been done by Davis. Books, of course, are listed, as are broadsides and newspapers. No other historian has included currency in their bibliographies, but the amount of currency he printed was large, and listing it gives a better impression of the quantity of work he did.

The major sources of this information are: Morris L. Cohen, *Bibliography of Early American Law*, 6 vols. (Buffalo, NY: William S. Hein, 1998); Elliott, Robert N., Jr. "James Davis and the Beginning of the Newspaper in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 42 (January 1965): 1-20; Charles Evans, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and Including the Year 1820* (New York: P. Smith, 1941-59); Eric P. Newman, *The Early Money of America* (Iola, Wisc.: Krause Publications, 1997); Joseph Sabin, *A Dictionary of Books Relating to America, from Its Discovery to the Present Time*, 29 vols. (New York: Mini-Print Corp., 196-); Mary L. Thornton, *Bibliography of North Carolina, 1589-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958); and Stephen B. Weeks, *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century, with Biographical Sketches of Printers, an Account of the Manufacture of Paper, and a Bibliography of the Issues* (Brooklyn, NY: Historical Publishing Co., 1891).

References to McMurtrie are from two different sources. McMurtrie 1-32 are in: McMurtrie, "First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina," 214-234; and McMurtrie 35-102 are in: McMurtrie, "Bibliography of North Carolina Imprints," 47-86. "Powell's update to McMurtrie" refers to: William S. Powell, "Eighteenth-Century North Carolina Imprints: A Revision and Supplement to McMurtrie." *North Carolina Historical Review* 35 (January 1958): 50-73.

The annotation for each citation includes the physical description and then references to other bibliographies, both in italics. Following that is any other interesting or pertinent information about that work.

**1749**

1. North Carolina. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1749.

*14 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 1.* The first book printed in North Carolina, and the first printed by James Davis. The only known copy is in London in the Public Records Office. Reprinted in facsimile in 1949 by the State Dept. of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC, with an introduction by William Powell.

2. North Carolina. General Assembly. £21,350 in Bills of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1749].

*Newman, p.312.* This is the first currency printed by Davis in North Carolina, although the colony's currency had been printed elsewhere since 1734. The General Assembly authorized this printing on 4 April 1748. The bills were printed on copper plates not designed by Davis, but used by him in the printing of the bills. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 4d, 8d, 1s, 1s6d, 2s, 2s6d, 3s, 5s, 6s, 7s6d, 9s, 10s, 15s, 20s, 30s, 40s, £3.

**1750**

3. North Carolina. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1750.]

*4 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 2.* The only known copy is in the Public Records Office, London.

**1751**

4. *North (No<sup>th</sup>) Carolina Gazette*. Weekly. New Bern: James Davis, 1751-1759.

The first newspaper printed in North Carolina. Robert Elliott states that the earliest extant copy is number 15, dated 15 November 1751, and the last surviving copy is from 18 October 1759.

5. North Carolina. General Assembly. *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly of the Province of North-Carolina: Now in Force and Use*. New Bern: James Davis, 1751.

*353 p., 28 cm. McMurtrie 5, Weeks 4.* Also known as *Swann's Revisal*. Powell's update to McMurtrie mentions that the copy at the University of North Carolina lacks p.331-353, lending strength to McMurtrie's claim under no. 4 that these pages were issued separately. Until the early twentieth century, was believed to be the earliest existing copy of Davis' work, until the 1749 *Journal of the House of Burgesses* was found in the Public Records Office, London.

6. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1751.]

20 p., 33 cm. *McMurtrie 3*. The only known copy is in the Public Records Office, London.

## 1752

7. North Carolina. General Assembly. *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly of the Province of North-Carolina, Now in Force and Use*. New Bern: James Davis, 1752.

371 p., 28 cm. *McMurtrie 8, Weeks 5, Evans 6903*. Also known as the *Yellow Jacket*, because the leather used for binding this edition was not tanned correctly, and thus turned a distinctive yellow over time.

## 1753

8. Hall, Clement. *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved*. New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1753.

51 p., 11 cm. *McMurtrie 6, Weeks 7*. This was the first non-legal book to be written by a native North Carolinian, and the first to be published in North Carolina. Duke University holds the only known original copy. It was reprinted at Raleigh, State Dept. of Archives and History, 1961.

9. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, the Twenty Seventh Day of March ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Three*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1753.]

p.373-384, 31 cm. *McMurtrie 11*. This work is a supplement of, and has pagination continuous with, *A Collection of All the Public Acts* (1752).

10. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1753.

16 p., 31 cm. *McMurtrie 9*. This edition of the *Journal* covers the session from 31 March to 15 April 1752.

11. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1753.]

18 p., 33 cm. *McMurtrie 10*. This edition of the *Journal* covers the session from 28 March to 12 April 1753.

## 1754

12. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, held at Wilmington, the Nineteenth Day of February ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1754.]

*p.385-410, 31 cm. McMurtrie 13.* This work is a supplement of, and has pagination continuous with, *A Collection of All the Public Acts* (1752) and *At a General Assembly* (1753).

13. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Draught of an Act Proposed to the Assembly of North Carolina, for Establishing a Paper Credit, for 80,000 Pounds, Currency.* New Bern: James Davis, 1754.

*15 p., 26 cm. McMurtrie 15.*

14. North Carolina. General Assembly. £39,650 in Bills of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1754].

*Newman, p.313.* The General Assembly authorized this printing on 9 March 1754. The bills were printed on copper plates not designed by Davis, but used by him in the printing of the bills. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 4d, 8d, 1s, 2s8d, 4s, 5s, 10s, 15s, 20s, 26s8d, 30s, 40s.

15. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina.* New Bern: James Davis, 1754.

*16 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 12.* This edition of the *Journal* covers the session from 19 Feb to 9 Mar 1754.

16. North Carolina. Governor (Arthur Dobbs). *A Message from His Excellency Arthur Dobbs, Esq.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1754].

*4 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 14.*

## 1755

17. [*Franklin's Plan of Union.* New Bern: James Davis, 1755].

*McMurtrie 17, Weeks 9.* The *Colonial Records of North Carolina* 5:251 alludes to the existence of an edition of *Franklin's Plan of Union* printed by Davis, however, no copy has been located.

18. North Carolina. General Assembly. *An Act, for Erecting that Part of Rowan County Called Wachovia, into a Distinct Parish*. [New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1755.]

*Broadside, 21 cm.* Weeks and McMurtrie did not know this broadside existed. It had been discovered by 1958, when Powell wrote his update to McMurtrie. The only known copy is located at the University of North Carolina.

19. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four: Being the First Session of this Assembly*. New Bern: James Davis, 1755.

*63 p., 27 cm. McMurtrie 18.*

20. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Second Session of this Assembly*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1755.]

*30 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 19.*

21. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *Journal of the House of Burgesses*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1755].

*16? p., 30 cm. McMurtrie 16.* Covers the session from 13 December to 23 December 1754. The only known copy is at the Public Records Office, London, but is incomplete and lacks the title page.

## 1756

22. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Third Session of this Assembly*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1756.]

*38 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 20.*

23. North Carolina. General Assembly. £3,400 in Public Notes of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1756].

*Newman, p.313.* On 13 September 1756, the General Assembly authorized these notes, to be paid in proclamation money at 6% interest on 10 November 1757. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: £5, £10, £20, £50.

24. Smith, Michael. *To Sermon, Preached in Christ-Church, in Newbern, in North-Carolina, December the 27th, 1755, Æra of Masonry, 5755, before the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons*. New Bern: James Davis, 1756.

*19 p., 15 cm. McMurtrie 21 (1936 list, not the same as 21 in the 1933 list). The title is misprinted, and should read A Sermon, Preached ...*

## 1757

25. Murray, James, and John Rutherford. *I Promise that this Bill, for Twenty Shillings Proclamation Money, shall be accepted from the Bearer, by the Receiver-General, or his Deputy, in Payment of Quit-rents and Arrears due to his Majesty, in the County of New-Hanover, Bladen, Duplin, or Cumberland, for Value Received of [Mess<sup>rs</sup> Gibson & O'Bryan]*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1757].

*12 x 6 cm. McMurtrie 21 (1933) Newman, p.313. McMurtrie knew of only one example of this note, located in the Public Records Office in London. Newman states that £320 of these notes were issued without authorization by James Murray, and was certified by the NC Receiver-General, John Rutherford. Governor Dobbs declared these notes invalid in his proclamation of 5 December 1757, which is number 30 in this bibliography, and relieved Murray and Rutherford from their government positions.*

26. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Fourth Session of this Assembly*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1757.]

*5 p., 30 cm. McMurtrie 22.*

27. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Fifth Session of this Assembly*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1757.]

*15 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 24.*

28. North Carolina. General Assembly. £5,306 in Public Notes of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1757].

*Newman, p.314. On 28 May 1757, the General Assembly authorized these notes, to be paid in proclamation money at 6% interest on 29 September 1758. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 10s, 20s, 40s, £5.*

29. North Carolina. General Assembly. £9,500 in Public Notes of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1757].

*Newman, p.314.* On 21 November 1757, the General Assembly authorized these notes, to be paid in proclamation money at 6% interest on 10 December 1758. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 10s, 20s, 40s, £5.

30. North Carolina. Governor (Arthur Dobbs). *His Excellency Arthur Dobbs, Esq., Captain-General, Governor, and Commander in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina. A Proclamation: Whereas the Honorable James Murray and John Rutherford, Esqrs. Have issued a great Number of Notes ...* [New Bern: James Davis, 1757.]

*Broadside, 19 cm. McMurtrie 23.* Refers to the illegal issuance of bills of credit by John Rutherford and James Murray. The currency was also printed by James Davis and is listed as number 25 in this bibliography.

## 1758

31. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Sixth Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1758.]

*8 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 25.*

32. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Seventh Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1758.]

*31 p., 33 cm. McMurtrie 27.*

33. North Carolina. General Assembly. £7,000 in Treasury Notes. [New Bern: James Davis, 1758].

*Newman, p.314.* On 4 May 1758, the General Assembly authorized these notes, to be paid in proclamation money at 6% interest on 12 December 1759. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 10s, 20s, 40s.

34. North Carolina. General Assembly. £4,000 in Treasury Notes. [New Bern: James Davis, 1758].

*Newman, p.314.* On 22 December 1758, the General Assembly authorized these notes, to be paid in proclamation money at 6% interest on 10 June 1761. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 10s, 20s (£1), 40s (£2).



35. North Carolina. Governor (Arthur Dobbs). *By His Excellency Arthur Dobbs, Esq., Captain-General, and Governor in Chief, in and over his Majesty's said Province. A Proclamation.* [New Bern: James Davis?, 1758.]

*Broadside, 31 cm. McMurtrie 26.*

36. Steward, Alexander. *The Validity of Infant Baptism.* New Bern: James Davis, 1758.

*40 p., 16 cm. McMurtrie 29 (1936), Sabin 91624.* Harvard University holds the only known copy of this book.

### 1759

37. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Eighth Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1759.]

*3 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 28.*

### 1760

38. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, on the Twelfth Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Four ... : Being the Ninth Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1760.]

*19 p., 27 cm. McMurtrie 29 (1933).*

39. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, the Twenty-fourth Day of April ... in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty : Being the First Session of this Present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1760.]

*32 p., 26 cm. McMurtrie 30.*

40. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, the Twenty-fourth Day of April ... in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty : Being the Second Session of this Present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1760.]

*14 p., 30 cm. McMurtrie 31.*

41. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, the Twenty-fourth Day of April ... in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty, to be then Held at Wilmington : Being the Third Session of this Present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1760.]

*7 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 32.*

42. North Carolina. General Assembly. £12,000 in Bills of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1760].

*Newman, p.315.* On 14 July 1760, the General Assembly authorized these bills. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 4d, 6d, 8d, 1s, 2s, 2s8d, 5s, 10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, £3.

## 1761

43. [Camp, Rev. Mr. *Sermon preached before the General Assembly on April 12, 1761, by the Rev. Mr. Camp.* New Bern: James Davis, 1761.]

*McMurtrie 35, Weeks 23.* North Carolina Colonial Records show Davis printed 400 copies, but no extant copies are known today.

44. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts passed by the General Assembly during the session of November and December, 1760.* New Bern: James Davis, 1761.]

*McMurtrie 36.* McMurtrie claims they were undoubtedly printed, but no copy is known today.

45. North Carolina. General Assembly. £20,000 in Bills of Credit. [New Bern: James Davis, 1761].

*Newman, p.315.* On 23 April 1761, the General Assembly authorized these bills. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 4d, 6d, 8d, 1s, 2s, 2s6d, 3s, 4s, 5s, 10s, 15s, 20s, 30s, 40s, £3.

## 1762

46. Nicholson, Thomas. *An Epistle to friends in Great Britain, to whom is the Salutation of My Love in the Unchangeable Truth.* [New Bern : James Davis, 1762.]

*4 p., 20-23 cm. McMurtrie 37, Evans 9221, Sabin 55234.* Copy at Library of Congress is signed & dated 9/15/1762 by the author.

47. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly, begun and held at Newbern, the Third Day of November ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-two, being the First Session of this present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1762.]

28+ p., 26 cm. *McMurtrie 40, Weeks 24.* The only known example is an imperfect copy at the University of North Carolina, which lacks all after p.28.

48. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly, begun and held at Wilmington, the Third Day of November, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-two ... Being the Second Meeting of the present Assembly.* New Bern: James Davis, 1762.]

*McMurtrie 39, Weeks 24.* No copies known to exist, however both *McMurtrie* and *Weeks* assumed it was printed. Title is based on the format of previous titles.

49. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Journal of the House of Assembly. At an Assembly, begun and held at Wilmington, the Thirteenth Day of April, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-two ... Being the First Meeting of the present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1762.]

28 p., 26 cm. *McMurtrie 38.*

## 1763

50. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *An Act for the More Effectual Observing of the Queen's Peace and Establishing a Good and Lasting Foundation of Government in North Carolina.* New Bern: James Davis, 1763.]

*McMurtrie 41, Weeks 26.* No are copies known to exist, however both *McMurtrie* and *Weeks* reference *North Carolina Colonial Records* 6:1013, which states that the governor ordered it printed on April 22, 1763, and it was distributed with the latest copy of laws. Title is based on the format of previous titles.

51. [Reid, James. *Sermon Recommending the Establishing Public Schools for the Education of Youth, preached before the General Assembly in November, 1762.* New Bern: James Davis, 1763.]

*McMurtrie 42, Weeks 25.* No copies are known to exist. Both *Weeks* & *McMurtrie* cite *North Carolina Colonial Records* 6:955, which states that Reid was asked to furnish a copy to Davis for printing.

## 1764

52. North Carolina. General Assembly. *A Collection of all the Acts of Assembly, of The Province of North-Carolina, In Force and Use, Since the Revisal of the Laws in the Year 1751.* New Bern: James Davis, 1764.

386 p., 25 cm. *McMurtrie 45, Weeks 29, Sabin 55601.* This publication is commonly known as *Davis's First Revisal.*

53. *North Carolina Magazine, or Universal Intelligencer.* Weekly. New Bern: James Davis, 1764-1768.

Vol. 1, no. 1 was published 8 June 1764, and it probably ceased sometime in 1768.

## 1765

54. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly begun and held at Wilmington, the Third Day of February ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-four ... and from thence continued, by several Prorogations, to the Third Day of May ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Five; to be then held at Newbern: Being the Third Session of this present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1765.]

p. 387-393, 27 cm. *McMurtrie 48, Weeks 30, Evans 10107.* Pagination is a continuation of *A Collection of all the Acts of Assembly*, 1764, showing that it was a supplement to that work.

55. North Carolina, General Assembly. *A Collection of All the Acts of Assembly of the Province of North-Carolina, Now in Force and Use...* In two Volumes. New Bern: James Davis, 1765.

2 vols., 176 & 393 p., 24 cm. *McMurtrie 49, Weeks 31.*

56. North Carolina, General Assembly. *Journal of the House of Assembly.* New Bern: James Davis, 1765.

18 p., 30 cm. Not mentioned in Weeks, *McMurtrie*, or Powell. Only known copy is at the University of North Carolina.

## 1766

57. Davis, James. *James Davis Sen. was born the 21st of October, in the Year of Our Lord MDCCXXI. Prudence Davis was born the 22d of November, MDCCXXV ...* [New Bern: James Davis, 1766.]

*Broadside, 13 cm.* Not mentioned in McMurtrie, but a copy was discovered by the time of Powell's update in 1958. The only known example was listed in Powell as owned by T.L. Davis of Wilson, NC.

58. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly begun and held at Newbern, the Third Day of November ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-six, Being the First Session of this present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1766.]

*p. 395-438, 28 cm. McMurtrie 50.* Pagination is a continuation of *A Collection of all the Acts of Assembly, 1764 & At an Assembly begun and held at Wilmington... Third Session, 1765*, and was issued as a supplement to these publications.

59. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Journal of the House of Assembly. At an Assembly begun and held at Wilmington, the Third Day of February ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-four; and thence continued, by several Prorogations, to the Third Day of May ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-five ... Being the Third Session of this present Assembly.* New Bern: James Davis, 1766.

*18 p., 29 cm. McMurtrie 47.* McMurtrie listed this as a probable publication, but he did not know if one actually existed. Powell's update to McMurtrie mentions a single known example at the University of North Carolina.

## 1767

60. North Carolina. Council. *To His Excellency William Tryon, Esq., His Majesty's Captain-General, and Governor in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina; the humble Address of his Majesty's Council.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1767.]

*Broadside, 32 cm. McMurtrie 51.*

61. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *Journal of the House. November 20-24, 1766.* New Bern: James Davis, 1767.]

*44 p., 20 cm.* Not mentioned in McMurtrie, but Powell's update lists a single imperfect copy with pages 1-36 missing.

62. North Carolina. General Assembly. *To His Excellency William Tryon, Esq., His Majesty's Captain-General, and Governor in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina; the humble Address of the House of Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1767.]

*2 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 53.*

63. North Carolina. Governor (William Tryon). *The Speech of his Excellency William Tryon, Esq., His Majesty's Captain-General, and Governor in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1767.]

*3 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 52.*

## 1768

64. Davis, James. *North Carolina Gazette.* Weekly. New Bern: James Davis, 1768-1778.

The Library of Congress online catalog (<http://www.loc.gov/catalog/>) indicates this second incarnation of Davis's newspaper began 27 May 1768, was suspended for several months between 1769 and 1773 and again in 1776, and probably ceased in 1778.

65. Micklejohn, George. *On the Important Duty of Subjection to the Civil Powers. A Sermon Preached to before his Excellency William Tryon, Esquire, Governor, and Commander in Chief of the Province of North-Carolina, and the Troops raised to quell the late Insurrection, at Hillsborough, in Orange County, on Sunday, September 25, 1768.* New Bern: James Davis, 1768.

*15 p., 18 cm. McMurtrie 54, Weeks 33, Evans 10977.*

66. North Carolina. General Assembly. £20,000 in Debenture Bills. [New Bern: James Davis, 1768].

*Newman, p.316.* On 5 December 1768, the General Assembly authorized these bills, payable in proclamation money after 10 June 1772. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: 2s6d, 5s, 10s, 20s, 40s, £3, £5.

67. North Carolina. Governor (William Tryon). *A Proclamation... [by] William Tryon.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1768.]

*Broadside, 30 cm. McMurtrie 55.*

**1769**

68. North Carolina. Governor (William Tryon). *The Speech of his Excellency William Tryon, Esquire, His Majesty's Captain General, Governor, and Commander in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina; To the General Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1769.]

*3 p., 26 cm. McMurtrie 56.*

**1770**

69. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *An Act for authorizing Presbyterian ministers, regularly called to any Congregation within this Province, to solemnize the Rites of Matrimony, under the regulations therein mentioned.* New Bern: James Davis, 1770.]

*McMurtrie 60.* No copy has been located, but a printed copy was mentioned in *North Carolina Colonial Records* 9:5, 6.

70. North Carolina. Governor (William Tryon). *A Plan for Keeping the Public Accounts.* New Bern: James Davis, 1770.

*McMurtrie 59.* McMurtrie had only surmised the printing of this document from a reference to it in *North Carolina Colonial Records*, 8:317. By the time of Powell's update in 1958, four copies had been discovered.

**1771**

71. Burgwin, John, comp. *North Carolina: A Table for the Number of Taxables in this Province from the Year 1748 inclusive, with the Taxes laid for each Year, and an Account of the Sums that should Arise by the Sinking Tax Yearly to the Year 1770.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1770.]

*Broadside in 2 sheets, 41 & 46 cm. McMurtrie 61.* The only known example is at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston.

72. North Carolina. General Assembly. *At an Assembly began [sic] and held at Newbern, the Fifth Day of December ... one Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy, being the first Session of this present Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1771.]

*74 p., 33 cm. McMurtrie 63.*

73. [North Carolina. Grand Jury. *Presentment of the Grand Jury, approving the proposal by Governor Tryon to go in person to suppress the insurgents, together with the association.* New Bern: James Davis, 1771.]

*McMurtrie 62.* No examples are known to exist. This work is assumed to have been published because of a reference to it in *North Carolina Colonial Records* 8:547.

## 1772

There are no known printings in 1772.

## 1773

74. North Carolina. General Assembly. *A Complete Revisal of All the Acts of Assembly of the Province of North Carolina, Now in Force and Use.* New Bern: James Davis, 1773.

*566 p., 30-31 cm. McMurtrie 64, Weeks 34, Evans 12904.*

## 1774

75. Davis, James. *The Office and Authority of a Justice of Peace.* New Bern: James Davis, 1774.

*404 p., 19-21 cm. McMurtrie 65, Weeks 35, Evans 13236, Cohen 8432, Thornton, 3179.* Davis was a justice of the peace in Craven County and wrote this book as a manual for other justices.

76. *The First Book of the American Chronicles of the Times.* New Bern: James Davis, 1774.

*15 p., 18 cm. McMurtrie 66, Evans 13107, Sabin 24404.* Only one copy is known, located at the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island.

77. North Carolina. General Assembly. *The Acts of Assembly of the Province of North Carolina, Passed At an Assembly, begin [sic] and held at Newbern, the Second Day of March ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Four; being the Second Session of this present Assembly.* New Bern: James Davis, 1774.

*p. 567-612, 32 cm. McMurtrie 68.* Page numbers are a continuation of *A Complete Revisal of All the Acts of Assembly*, 1773, indicating it is a supplement.



78. North Carolina. Governor (Martin, Josiah). *Advertisement. Whereas it appears that many Persons have settled in the District of this Province, granted by his late Majesty to the Right Honourable John Earl Granville, deceased ...* [New Bern: James Davis, 1774.]

*Broadside, 19 cm.* Not mentioned in McMurtrie, but Powell's update mentions a single example at the University of North Carolina.

79. *To the Freeholders of Craven County.* Newbern, August 9, 1774. [New Bern: James Davis, 1774.]

*Broadside, 14 cm. McMurtrie 67, Bristol 3782.* Signed by James Davis and at least eight others. The only known copy, held by the Public Record Office in London, is mutilated.

## 1775

80. [Broadside signed by Samuel Jarvis, Solomon Perkins, and Nathan Poyner of Currituck County, and Isaac Gregory and Jonathan Herring of Pasquotank County, defending the withdrawal of Thomas MacKnight of Currituck, and explaining their own reasons for withdrawing from the Provincial Convention held at Newbern, April 3-7, 1775.] [New Bern?: James Davis? 1775.]

*Broadside, 36 cm.* Not known to McMurtrie, however, Powell's update mentions two copies, one at the University of North Carolina and one owned by Mrs. J.G. Wood of Edenton, NC.

81. Craven County NC Committee. *At a Meeting of the Committee for the County of Craven, and Town of Newbern, on the 4th Day of March, 1775.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*Broadside, 30 cm. McMurtrie 71.* The only known copy is held by the American Antiquarian Society in Boston.

82. [*The Crisis.* New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*64 p., 8vo. McMurtrie 72.* No copies are known to exist. It was advertised in the *North Carolina Gazette* of 14 July 1775 as, "A periodical paper lately published in London, in 8 numbers."

83. North Carolina. Governor (Josiah Martin). *By his Excellency Josiah Martin, Esq., Captain-General, Governor, and Commander in Chief, in and over the said Province. A Proclamation ... the 10th Day of February ... 1775.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*Broadside, 44 cm. McMurtrie 75.*

84. North Carolina. Governor (Josiah Martin). *By His Excellency Josiah Martin, Esq., His Majesty's Captain-General, Governor, and Commander in Chief, in and over the said Province. A Proclamation, Whereas I have received certain information ... the 16th Day of June, 1775.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*Broadside, 33 cm. McMurtrie 76.*

85. North Carolina. Provincial Congress. *Advertisement: Perquimans County, Feb. 11, 1775. The respective Counties and Towns in this Colony are requested to elect Delegates to represent them in Convention, who are desired to meet at the Town of Newbern on Monday the 3d Day of April next.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*Broadside, 10 cm. McMurtrie 74.*

86. North Carolina. Provincial Congress. *At a General Meeting of the Delegates of the Inhabitants of this Province in Convention, at Newbern, the Third Day of April, ... one thousand seven Hundred and Seventy-five.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*4 p., 31cm.* Not mentioned in McMurtrie, however, Powell's update mentions two copies, one at the University of North Carolina and one owned by Mrs. J.G. Wood of Edenton, NC.

87. North Carolina. Provincial Congress. *The Journal of the Proceedings of the Provincial Congress, of North-Carolina. Held at Hillsborough on the 20th day of August, 1775.* New Bern: James Davis, 1775.

*40 p., 21 cm. McMurtrie 77, Weeks 37, Evans 14354.*

88. [Pitt, William, Earl of Chatham. *The Speech of the Right Honourable the Earl of Chatham, in his House of Lords, January 20, 1775.* New Bern: James Davis, 1775.]

*McMurtrie 78.* No copies are known to exist, however, it was advertised for sale in the *North Carolina Gazette*, 30 June 1775.

89. [United States. Continental Congress. *Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, on the fifth day of September, 1774.* New Bern: James Davis, 1775]

*McMurtrie 80.* No copies are known to exist, however, it was advertised for sale in the *North Carolina Gazette*, 24 February 1775.

**1776**

90. North Carolina. Provincial Congress. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Provincial Congress of North-Carolina, Held at Halifax on the 4th Day of April, 1776*. New Bern: James Davis, 1776.

*46 p., 22-23 cm. McMurtrie 83, Weeks 38, Evans 14948, Sabin 55631. Reprinted: Raleigh, NC: Lawrence & Lemay, 1831.*

**1777**

91. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1777.

*38 p., 31 cm. McMurtrie 85, Weeks 40, Evans 15487.*

92. North Carolina. Provincial Congress. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Provincial Congress of North-Carolina, Held at Halifax, the 12th day of November, 1776*. New Bern: James Davis, 1777.

*84 p., 18-19 cm. McMurtrie 86, Weeks 39, Evans 15489, Sabin 55632.*

93. United States. *Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia*. Lancaster: printed. New Bern: reprinted by James Davis, 1777.

*9 p., 29-30 cm. McMurtrie 87, Weeks 42, Evans 15626, Sabin 2142.* The only known example of James Davis's printing of the *Articles of Confederation* is located in the Library of Congress.

**1778**

94. *An Act for Raising Men, to Complete the Continental Battalions belonging to this State. April 27, 1778.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

*Broadside. McMurtrie 93, Weeks 45, Evans 15945.*

95. [Dyche, Thomas. *Dyche's Spelling Book; or a Guide to the English Tongue*. New Bern: James Davis, 1778?]

*McMurtrie 88, Weeks 49, Evans 15789*. No copies are known to exist. An advertisement in the *North Carolina Gazette* of 7 November 1778 stated that this work "in a few weeks will be published."

96. North Carolina. General Assembly. *An Act For confiscating the Property of all such Persons, as are inimical to the United States*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

*Broadside, 33 cm*. Not mentioned in *McMurtrie*, but Powell's update states there is a copy in the Public Records Office in London.

97. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina Passed at a General Assembly begun and held at Newbern on the Fifteenth Day of November ... One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven ... Being the Second Session of this Assembly*. New Bern: James Davis, 1778.

*84 p., 33 cm. McMurtrie 91, Weeks 43, Evans 15943*.

98. [North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina Passed at a General Assembly begun and held at Newbern on the 14th Day of April ... 1778 ... Being the first Session of this Assembly*. New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

*20 p. McMurtrie 92, Weeks 44, Evans 15944*. Title is assumed, since no extant copy has a title page. There are at least five known copies.

99. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Hillsborough on the 8th Day of August ... 1778 ... Being the Second Session of this Assembly*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

*4 p., 32 cm. McMurtrie 94, Weeks 47, Evans 15946*.

100. North Carolina. General Assembly. £850,000 (\$2,125,000) in Bills of Credit. [New Bern]: James Davis, 1778.

*Newman, p.319*. On 8 August 1778, the General Assembly authorized these bills, payable in Spanish milled dollars. An example of the \$1/8 note is in the Public Records Office in London. Davis could not finish printing this issue because of smallpox. The remainder, £29,876 (\$74,700), was printed in 1780. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: \$1/8, \$1/4, \$1/2, \$1, \$2, \$4, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$25, \$40, \$50, \$100.

101. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Commons. *Journal of the House of Commons. State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern on the 14th Day of April ... 1778 ... Being the first Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

36 p., 30 cm. *McMurtrie 89.* A copy at the Library of Congress is the only known example.

102. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Commons. *Journal of the House of Commons. State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Hillsborough on the 8th Day of August ... 1778 ... Being the second Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

24+ p., 28 cm. *McMurtrie 90.* A single, imperfect copy at the University of North Carolina is the only known example, consisting of the first 24 pages.

103. Ruddiman, Thomas. *The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue: or a plain and easy Introduction to Latin Grammar.* New Bern: James Davis, 1778.

*Weeks 48.* Not mentioned in *McMurtrie*. It was advertised in the *North Carolina Gazette* of 28 August 1778, as "just published and to be sold at the Printing Office in Newbern."

104. [United States. *Treaty of Friendship and Alliance Concluded between France and the United States.* New Bern: James Davis, 1778.]

*McMurtrie 95, Weeks 46, Evans 16148.* No copies are known to exist. This publication was advertised in the *North Carolina Gazette* of 29 May 1778 as, "Immediately published here."

## 1779

105. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly begun and held at Newbern on the 14th Day of April ... 1778, and from thence continued by Adjournments and Prorogations to the 19th Day of January, at Halifax, in the Year of our Lord 1779, being the third Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1779.]

38 p., 30 cm. *McMurtrie 97, Weeks 50.*

106. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Smithfield on the third Day of May ... 1779 ... Being the first session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1779.]

4 p., 31 cm. *McMurtrie 98, Weeks 51.*

107. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Halifax on the eighteenth day of October ... one thousand seven hundred and seventy nine ... Being the second session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1779.]

34 p., 24-27 cm. *McMurtrie 99, Weeks 52, Evans 16418.*

108. North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Commons. *Journal of the House of Commons. State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Smithfield on the third day of May ... 1779 ... Being the first Session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1779.]

33 p., 20 cm. *McMurtrie 96.*

## 1780

109. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Newbern on the seventeenth day of April ... one thousand seven hundred and eighty ... Being the first session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1780.]

16 p., 30 cm. *McMurtrie 100, Weeks 53, Evans 16913.*

110. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Hillsborough on the fifth day of September ... one thousand seven hundred and eighty ... Being the second session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis, 1780.]

11 p., 24 cm. *McMurtrie 101, Weeks 54, Evans 16914.*

111. North Carolina. General Assembly. £29,876 (\$74,700) in Bills of Credit. [New Bern]: James Davis, 1780.

*Newman, p.321.* On 17 April 1780, the General Assembly reauthorized the remainder of the bills that James Davis could not print in 1778 due to smallpox. This issuance consisted of the following denomination: \$50.

112. North Carolina. General Assembly. £1,240,000 (\$3,100,000) in Bills of Credit. [New Bern]: James Davis, 1780.

*Newman, p.321.* On 10 May 1780, the General Assembly authorized these bills. This issuance consisted of the following denominations: \$25, \$50, \$100, \$200, \$250, \$300, \$400, \$500, \$600.

**1781**

113. North Carolina. General Assembly. *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina. At a General Assembly, begun and held at Halifax on the eighteenth day of January ... one thousand seven hundred and eighty one ... Being the third session of this Assembly.* [New Bern: James Davis?, 1781.]

*16 p., 28 cm. McMurtrie 102, Weeks 55, Evans 17278.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ashe, Samuel A., Stephen B. Weeks, & Charles L. Van Noppen, eds. *Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present*. Greensboro, NC: C.L. Van Noppen, Publ., 1917. 8:139-148.
- Cohen, Morris L. *Bibliography of Early American Law*. 6 vols. Buffalo, NY: William S. Hein, 1998.
- Crittendon, Charles Christopher. *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790*. James Sprunt Historical Studies, Vol. 20, no. 1. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1928.
- Davis, James. *James Davis Sen. was born the 21st of October, in the Year of Our Lord MDCCXXI. Prudence Davis was born the 22d of November, MDCCXXV ...* [New Bern: James Davis, 1766.]
- . *The Office and Authority of a Justice of Peace*. New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1774.
- Elliott, Robert N., Jr. "James Davis and the Beginning of the Newspaper in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 42 (January 1965): 1-20.
- Evans, Charles. *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and Including the Year 1820*. New York: P. Smith, 1941-59.
- Hall, Clement. *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved*. New Bern, N.C.: James Davis, 1753.
- Library of Congress Online Catalog*. <http://www.loc.gov/catalog/>.
- McMurtrie, Douglas C. *The Beginnings of Printing in Virginia*. Lexington, Va.: [Journalism Laboratory, Washington & Lee University], 1935.
- . "Bibliography of North Carolina Imprints, 1761-1800." *North Carolina Historical Review* 13 (Jan., Apr., July 1936): 47-86, 143-166, 219-254.
- . "First Twelve Years of Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1760." *North Carolina Historical Review* 10 (July 1933): 214-234.



- . *Pioneer Printing in North Carolina*. Springfield, Ill.: s.l., 1932; reprinted from *National Printer Journalist* 50 (November 1932): 21-27, 84-85.
- Newman, Eric P. *The Early Money of America*. Iola, Wisc.: Krause Publications, 1997.
- North (No<sup>th</sup>) Carolina Gazette*. Weekly. New Bern: James Davis, 1751-1759, 1768-1778.
- North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1749.
- North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*. [New Bern: James Davis, 1750.]
- North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina, 1749*. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1949. Reprint of North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1749.
- Powell, William S. "Bicentennial of Printing in North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 27 (April 1950): 193-199.
- . "Eighteenth-Century North Carolina Imprints: A Revision and Supplement to McMurtrie." *North Carolina Historical Review* 35 (January 1958): 50-73.
- . "Introduction," in North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina, 1749*. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1949. Reprint of North Carolina. General Assembly. House of Burgesses. *The Journal of the House of Burgesses of the Province of North-Carolina*. New Bern: James Davis, 1749.
- Sabin, Joseph. *A Dictionary of Books Relating to America, from Its Discovery to the Present Time*. 29 vols. New York: Mini-Print Corp., 196-.
- Saunders, William L., ed. *Colonial Records of North Carolina*. 10 vols. Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, Printer to the State, 1886-90. Reprint, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1993.
- Thornton, Mary L. *Bibliography of North Carolina, 1589-1956*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958.
- . "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815." *North Carolina Historical Review* 21 (July 1944): 183-191.

Weeks, Stephen B. "Libraries and Literature in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Complement and Supplement to 'The Press in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century.'" *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1895*. Washington: GPO, 1896. Pp. 169-267.

----- . "Pre-Revolutionary Printers - Davis, Steuart, and Boyd." *The North Carolina Booklet* 15, no. 2 (October 1915): 104-121.

----- . *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century, with Biographical Sketches of Printers, an Account of the Manufacture of Paper, and a Bibliography of the Issues*. Brooklyn, NY: Historical Publishing Co., 1891.

Wroth, Lawrence C. *William Parks: Printer and Journalist of England and Colonial America*. Richmond, Va.: The William Parks Club, 1926.