

**061 BURCH, ELISHA****Publisher****Fredericksburg**

Publisher of *Virginia Express* (1804-05) at Fredericksburg with brother Isham Burch (062).

Elisha Burch was born in Caroline County in 1773, evidently the older brother of Isham, who was born in neighboring Hanover about 1780. Unlike his printing brother, Elisha was a middling planter who had apparently benefitted from their father's land holdings there.

In May 1804, Elisha became a financial partner in Isham's Fredericksburg paper, the *Virginia Express*, replacing Samuel Chiles (092), a well-to-do planter also from Caroline County. That change was apparently driven by a need to create a single paper that advocated Jefferson's re-election from two Republican papers then issuing there.

However, the Burch brothers' conciliatory effort appears to have had little effect on the outcome of the election in either Fredericksburg or Virginia, as Jefferson easily defeated Pinckney that fall, carrying 15 of the 17 states then in the Union. Rather, that unproblematic re-election seems to have undermined financial support for the *Virginia Express*, probably because of its criticisms of a popular favorite son in the Chiles period that might soon reappear in its pages. As the erosion of their paper's fiscal foundation became evident after the November election, the Burch brothers decided to close the journal once Jefferson was inaugurated for a second time. And so the *Virginia Express* ceased publication at the end of March 1805, some three weeks after that event.

While Isham remained in the area for some time, Elisha moved to southern Virginia shortly after their failed journalistic venture. By 1808, he resided in Powhatan County, south of the James; and in 1820 he resided in Pittsylvania County with a wife and four children younger than fifteen. In 1850, the seventy-seven year-old Burch was still living there, now in his son's household near the North Carolina border; he died there shortly thereafter.

***Personal Data***

Born:	about 1773	Caroline County, Virginia
Married:	July 15 1808	Mary Markham @ Powhatan County, Virginia
Died:	about 1852	Pittsylvania County, Virginia
Children:	Three sons & one daughter, including Peter Lafayette (b. 1817)	

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; federal decennial censuses for 1820 & 1850; genealogical data from family charts posted on Ancestry.com (August 2012).