

064 BURKE, DAVID

Printer, Publisher, Proprietor

Richmond

Final publisher of the *Virginia Argus* (1816), as partner to John Burke (065), his brother.

David Burke is an entirely unknown individual, except for his brief business relationship with his brother in 1816-17. The fact that John brought him in as a partner in a job-printing firm to replace a trained printer suggests that David was one as well, but such is far from certain.

For the most part, it seems that Burke was a casualty of his brother's overextended plan to acquire the assets and so the business of the late Samuel Pleasants (331) between 1814 and 1817. John had purchased the entire *Virginia Argus* office in December 1814 in conjunction with Philip DuVal (155); in March 1815, the two then sold off the paper's printing plant to a partnership of John Burke and Arthur G. Booker (041) and its book-store-and-bindery to a partnership of DuVal and Frederick A. Mayo (284), while John Burke bought DuVal out of the *Argus* itself. However, the acquisition plan began to unravel with Booker's withdrawal from the printing business in December 1815 and DuVal's from the book-selling business in April 1816, so threatening bankruptcy for both of Burke's enterprises from the debt load taken on to initiate the project.

John brought David in as a partner in the book-and-job-printing firm in place of DuVal; but the firm's survival depended on more revenue than was generated by printing the *Argus* alone. In an attempt to cut their losses, the brothers ceased production of the *Argus* in October 1816, but it had little effect on their ability to pay their debts. In January, the two left town without notice, one step ahead of their creditors. How much of this affair resulted from free choice on David's part, and how much resulted from a sense of familial obligation is essentially unknowable. What is evident is that David Burke's reputation was ruined by his connection to his brother's affairs; their creditors pursued them both until at least 1822.

No Personal Data yet discovered.

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Hubbard on Richmond; notices in *Virginia Argus & Richmond Enquirer*, 1816-22.