

CANAWLERS AT REST

ELISHA LONG

**b. May 1794
d. Oct. 2, 1842**

By Charles A. Whiting Jr.

Elisha Long was born in Henry County, Virginia in May 1794 to Christopher and Sarah Turner Long. He was one of 8 children. His siblings were Rueben Long (1773-1826), Ellis Long (1778-1863), Ellen Long (1780-1860), Dicy Long Humphries (1786-1864), Gabriel Long (1789-1815), Benjamin Long (1791-1854), and Joel Long (1797-1817).

Elisha moved to Ohio. During the War of 1812 he served in two militia units for short periods. He was a Private in the 2nd Regiment of the Ohio Militia under Capt. Issac Butler from August 9 to October 9, 1812. He later was a Private in Womeldorf's Mounted Regiment of Ohio's volunteers and Militia under Captain John Roadanour from August 1 to September 4, 1813.

Elisha married Malinda Hale on January 14, 1814. Through the years they had 10 children. They migrated to Henry County, Indiana in 1822. In 1823 he served as a Colonel in the 37th Regiment of the Indiana Militia. He also served as a Colonel in the 48th Regiment from 1823 to 1831.

Politics became a part of Elisha's life. In Henry County, Indiana, he was an associate judge from 1822 to 1826, seminary trustee in 1827, marshal in 1828, and presidential elector in 1828. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1826 to 1830 and in the Indiana Senate from 1831 to 1835. He was a pro Jackson Democrat.

Elisha and his family moved to Franklin County, Indiana around 1839. There he was a farmer, a merchant, an assistant engineer for the Whitewater Canal, an engineer on the Richmond and Brookville Canal, a canal commissioner and a member of the State

Board of Internal Improvements from 1836 to 1839. An interesting incident with Colonel Long follows as written in the Papers of Erasmus Gest found in the Indiana Magazine of History of June 1977, Vol. LXXIII No. 2.

"Colnl. Elish Long — was the Acting Commisson of the State — the go between the Chief Engineer and the Resident Engineers on the Canals. He was probably 55 [He died at age 48.] years of age when I knew him, was pleasant company, plain, put on no airs, but quiet in manner. He new how to appreciate us young fry, in our ups and downs, in good humor or bad. I certainly never shall forget a night he spent with the Party in what we supposed was in a nice White frame house with its Green shutters &c — it had been sellected specially for its seductive looks, supposing it was something better than the ordinary — things past well enough until we went to bed if thirteen tired chaps like us lying on the floor with a single blanket for Feathers under us (the Colonel in the only bed in the room in one corner) for Pillows each his coat rolled up in a ball. Not more than ten minutes elapsed after the light was put out, than the more sensitive began to show restiveness, a while after commenced exchanging views and become unanimous that there were Bed Bugs about, some said they smelt them others that they felt some thing crawling over them all the time, others that they could feel them with their hands. By mid night every body was wider awake than ever before in their lives. As for myself being the hot head of the crowd and not given to withholding truthful deserving opinions, had by my oaths attracted Col. Longs especial attintion, and he came over to where I was and insisted on exchanging places, which he did as he thought I would not swear so bad, but good lord — the Bugs were so thick in the bed that they over ran me at once and it [was] impossible to put my hand any where either on my body, or the bed but what it rested on bugs. It was from the Frying pan into the Fire, and the change by the Colonel, as he said, as I could do the most and loudest swearing, it was not more than right that I should have the most cause. Such a night. I never experienced and hope no human being ever will have to undergo again. The Coln never let me forget it when we met. After leaving Indiana I never saw him again nor heard of him. I [he] took great fancy to me and gave me a very rare book."

During this canal period, General Elisha Long commanded the Ben Franklin, the first canal boat to

reach Brookville from Lawrenceburg on the Whitewater Canal. No record has been found to explain the title General that was used at this time. It is believed to be an honorary title.

In the census of 1840 Elisha was living in Franklin County, Indiana, with his wife and five of the children. From 1841 to 1842 Elisha was the treasurer and collector of Franklin County, IN. He died on October 2, 1842, in Brookville, IN. He is not listed in the Old Brookville Cemetery records but the list doesn't cover those with missing or unreadable markers. References only say that he was buried in Indiana.

OBITUARY

Brookville American - October 7, 1842

"As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth:—For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.—*Psalms*.

DIED—In this town, on Sunday evening the 2d October, 1842, after a painful illness of one week, General Elisha Long.

The subject of this brief notice was born in Henry county, Va., in the year 1794, and, after having served some time in the Army during the late war, emigrated to Henry county, Indiana, in the year 1822, since which time he has sustained a high character for integrity, and the warm affection of those whose fortune it was to become intimately acquainted with all the phases of his character.

As an evidence of the estimate placed upon his worth, he was perhaps entrusted with a various and as important offices as any other man in Indiana;—having been as associate Judge in Henry county; superintendent of a portion of the National Road, an appointment conferred upon him by the General Government, and which he held for two years during which time he gained honors to himself and rendered satisfaction to the Government. He was elected by the Indiana Legislature, a member of the Board of Internal Improvements, which office he held for three years; and although immense sums of money passed through his hands, while occupying this situation, and alto in his private business he was unfortunate, yet *every dollar* of the public money entrusted to his care was appropriated to its legitimate object; and though much censure has been cast upon the Board (as well as all connected with the Improvement system in Indiana,) yet it is due to the memory of the deceased to say, that he acted in accordance with his convictions of duty, and as most men in like times and under similar circumstances, would have done.

Gen. L. served ten years in the councils of Indiana, as Senator and Representative—in the Legislature he stood high, as an honest man, and one faithful to his constituents. At the

time of his death he held an important office in the County (Treasurer,) which was given to him by the people because he was believed to be deserving.

As a man, Gen. L. was gentlemanly, courteous, humane, generous, and so urbane in his deportment that his society was agreeable to his friends and courted by strangers. As a politician, when in the field, he was active, untiring and unconquerable;—possessing a strong mind, added to a vast knowledge of human nature, he could contend, successfully in a canvass, with men apparently superior in point of talents. His enemies were few, but his friends were many.

Although never associated with any Church, nor observing the outward formula of any peculiar sect, yet his life shows that he practised many of the Divine precepts, and he was always gratified to see others pursuing the path of virtue.

In every point of his character there was much to admire, (doubtless he had his faults, and who has not?) but if any one trait stood out pre-eminent above the rest, for beauty and deserving of praise, it was in the capacity of Husband and of Father. Was he a fond, affectionate husband? Go ask the weeping sharer of his toils, "mourning as a dove," and her looks will tell

—"—from Love's shining circle,
The gem hath dropp'd away."

Was he a kind, indulgent Parent? The telltale tear drops gently, mutely but rapidly streaming from the eyes of the bereaved orphans, tell but too plainly how dear to them was the lost, the buried, Father.

He is gone? But O,"mourn not as those who have no hope—" He truly remarked the evening prior to his death, "this is the last night we shall spend on earth together." But be of good cheer; there is hope beyond the tomb"
Though

"His bright locks all in the vault are hid—
"His brow concealed by the coffin lid;

Yet there are promises of an immortality beyond the grave; there is provided a place

"Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

J.

Sources:

Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly
Brookville Public Library listing
Erasmus Gest Papers, Indiana Magazine of History
Brookville American. Obituary, October 4, 1842.
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