

THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE. NEW YORK, S

OLD "LIBERTY BELL" RINGER DIED OF JOY

Samuel Barber Suggests Tablet in Honor of William Hurry, Patriot.

DIED ON OCTOBER 22, 1781.

First, It Is Believed, Rang Out the News of Cornwallis' Surrender.

"The Old Liberty Bell Ringer" is the title of an interesting memorial addressed to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania by Samuel Barber of Brooklyn.

"The Liberty Bell, immortalized by Sousa, and exhibited," says Mr. Barber, "in a glass case at the San Francisco Exposition, is ever dear in its association to the heart of every American, yet it might recall the bell ringer, honored, but unknown.

"The Liberty (Old State House) Bell that once rang in Independence Hall has been called the 'greatest of all orators.' Its tongue is now still and its tones silent, while atmospheric corrosion has blackened the surface. Its peals rang out on the Fourth of July, 1776, proclaiming 'Liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof,' when the gray-headed patriots awaited the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the voice of a bright-eyed youth shouted: 'Ring! Ring! They have signed and our country is free!' The United Colonies were free and independent States. The same bell ringer, five years afterward, on October 22, 1781, was again summoned by the words, 'Past 12 o'clock, Cornwallis is taken!' and then soon received the last summons. Philadelphia was thrown into intense excitement. Husbands, daughters, wives and sons, raising the windows, saw crowds running wildly about the streets, giving vent to expressions of delight. Every eye was sleepless that night, and congratulations were exchanged on every side, blending with prayers of gratitude to Almighty God. When the news was officially brought to the city—on the 24th—by one of Washington's aids, flags were raised and salutes fired in the square and from the vessels in the harbor. In the afternoon Congress walked in procession to the Dutch Lutheran Church, where a service of Thanksgiving was held, the Rev. Dr. Duffield (one of the chaplains of Congress) officiating. In the evening there was a grand illumination, every house being lighted, and the next evening a display of fireworks. The dwellings of a number of citizens, brilliantly lighted, presented an unusual appearance. The window of Alexander Quesnay de Glovay, a French teacher, in Second street, between Chestnut and Walnut, displayed pictures of Washington, Count de Grasse and Rochambeau, with mottoes, emblems, etc. At the house of Mr. Peale, on the northwest corner of Third and Lombard streets, the 'Surrender' was pictured, with portraits of Washington and Rochambeau and the inscription, 'For our Allies. Huzza! Huzza!'

"On the authority of Quackenbos it may be added: 'The old bell ringer died of joy!' Who was the old bell ringer? A close search elicits the following:

"There is no authentic record as to who rang the 'State House Bell' on the various occasions. There is a stone in the graveyard of the Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church to Andrew McNair, doorkeeper of the period, but no local records show that the State or city employed a bell ringer. There was a doorkeeper of the Assembly, who was paid for washing the building, etc., but nothing indicates that he, or any other person, ever rang the bell.

"The State House was where the courts met, and it was customary whenever the court met, or the Assembly, and later Congress, to ring the bell a few minutes before the hour of meeting, also for public assemblies. There are a number of traditions, but no facts. William Hurry, who lies in the graveyard where a very old monument is inscribed:

'In Memory of William Hurry Who departed this life October 22, 1781. Aged 99 years and 2 months.'

"Other members of the family also buried are: Titus Owens, who departed this life August 12, 1806, aged 26 years and 6 months'; also 'Margaret, his daughter, who died July 24, 1800, aged 18 months.'

All the epitaphs appear on the same stone. The history of the Pine Street Church contains the name of William Hurry as 'Bellman and Janitor at the old State House,' and who—the reputed bell ringer—according to the inscription, died on the day the news of 'the surrender of Cornwallis' first reached Philadelphia.

"This would seemingly prove the assertion of Quackenbos. If this evidence is sufficient, would not a tablet, suitably inscribed, in honor of this ardent patriot, and erected on the wall of Independence Hall, bearing the words, 'The Old Bell Ringer Died of Joy,' be most appropriate?

MISS HOWLETT ENGAGED.

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Miss Clare Marie Howlett, of 1280 Dean street, to William A. Tollner, of 421 Franklin avenue. Miss Howlett is a sister of Miss Edythe Howlett, Thomas J. and J. Redmond Howlett. Mr. Tollner is an officer of the Twenty-third Regiment.

Old Bell Ringer Died of Joy

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