

Night Watchman Announced the Capture of Cornwallis



Night Watchmen

In Philadelphia one October evening of 1781, the old watchman's cry was heard echoing along the deserted streets: "Two-o'clock-and-Cornwallis's-captured!" The first newspaper published in America was the Boston News-Letter in 1704. It was a weekly, a brown sheet hardly more than a foot square. News traveled slowly, for there was little communication between city and city. Travelers were few, and conveyances were slow.

A stage-coach that made forty miles a day between New York and Philadelphia was called, on account of its great speed, the "flying machine." In other colonial cities, news was announced in the daytime by the public crier, who walked the streets ringing a large hand-bell, and pausing at the

corners, where he recited his message of any important event. In the night the town watchman, with rattle and lantern, paced the streets, stopping every person he met after nine o'clock to demand his name and business. He also called aloud the hours of the night in a sing-song tone: "Twelve-o'clock-and-all-'s-well." Out in the countryside, plantation owners sent people up to the road to stop strangers and get the news. It was a friendly situation, and strangers were welcome to spend the night in a special room on the porch. This is the time for War! Patrick Henry, the Eloquent Patriot 1776. The Battle of Fort Washington Our Precious Freedom Won by our Ancestors American Rebels Show British Prisoners Great Humility Revolutionary War Pensions Provide Interesting Family Stories The Battle of Long Island Flats The Suffering of Prisoners Imposed by the British 1781 Map of Seige of Yorktown Revolutionary War Pensions on this website