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AFFIDAVITS AND DOCUMENTS

RELATING TO THE

BURIAL,

IN THE

NORTHERLY PART OF TRINITY CHURCH YARD

OF

American Prisoners of War,

WHO PERISHED IN THE PRISONS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK DURING THE

REVOLUTION.



NEW YORK:

SAMUEL T. CALLAHAN, PRINTER, NO. 113 NASSAU STREET.

1855.





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Book A 18

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AFFIDAVITS AND DOCUMENTS

RELATING TO THE

Burial in the northerly part of Trinity Church Yard

OF

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR.

STATE OF NEW YORK, } ss.
City and County of New York, }

ANDREW S. NORWOOD, being duly sworn, doth depose and say that he was born in the city of New York, in Duke, now called Stone Street, and his father was also a native of this city. That deponent remained in the city from the time of his birth until a short time prior to its being taken by the British forces during the Revolutionary War, when his father's family removed to New Brunswick, New Jersey.

That his father espoused the cause of Liberty in the struggle with Great Britain, and was actively engaged therein; was twice taken prisoner; he was exchanged the first time; he

was the second time taken in 1779 while in command of a baggage-train in New Jersey, brought to New York and thrown into the Sugar House prison in Crown Street, now known as Liberty Street.

And deponent further says that he has a distinct and vivid recollection of many of the scenes and incidents in New York city during the period of our Revolutionary History; that his mother returned to the city shortly after his father was the second time taken prisoner, and brought her children with her—this deponent among the rest, since which time deponent has resided in the city of his birth continuously to the present time. That he remembers scenes incident to the Declaration of Independence and to the War; such as the evacuation of the city by the Revolutionary Citizens and their families prior to its occupation by the hostile forces; the fact of the conversion of various buildings, public and private, into prisons, military hospitals, and quarters for troops; and the final evacuation of the city by the British; also the entry of General

Washington and his army after peace was declared. That he distinctly remembers the Sugar House prison in Crown Street, as his father was there confined a prisoner of war. That his mother's relatives belonged to the Tory party, particularly one Major Creamer in the Royalist forces, through whose influence deponent's father was released from prison on his parole conditional that he should remain in the city ; that after his father was so released he frequently employed this deponent to carry provisions to his friends in the prison. Deponent particularly remembers one John Van Dyke to whom he often carried gifts of food. That the Hessian sentinels became somewhat familiar with deponent, and allowed him ingress and egress to and from the prison aforesaid ; that on one or two occasions, however, they struck him, but not so as to injure him seriously.

And deponent further says that the condition of the prisoners was abject in the extreme, and most distressing to witness ; they frequently tried to wrest from his possession the food with which he was sent ; they were frequently fed

with bread made from old worm-eaten ship-bread, which was reground into meal and then converted into bread, and deponent remembers that the bread so made was offensive to the smell even while still hot from the oven.

Deponent further says that he remembers that many of the prisoners died during their confinement in said prison ; that the bodies of those who died were placed in oblong boxes, sometimes two bodies in one box, and were buried in Trinity Church Yard, and deponent distinctly remembers having himself seen such interments.

Deponent further says that a part of Trinity Church Yard was at that time used as a common burying ground, as was also the yard of St. George's Church and the Swamp Burying Ground. That St. Paul's Church Yard was exclusive, and was not thus used for public purposes, and that only members of the Episcopal Church were there interred.

Deponent further says that a brother of his father, named Cliff or Clifford Norwood, was murdered during the period of the Revolution,

as was supposed by foreign soldiers, and his said uncle was buried in Trinity Church Yard.

And this deponent further says that he distinctly remembers the Rev'd. Mr. Inglis, the officiating Rector of Trinity Church at that period, and deponent verily believes, that Mr. Inglis had no power or influence and exercised or attempted to exercise none to prevent the interment of "rebels," as they were termed by the Tories and British, in the yard of Trinity Church.

Further says not.

A. S. NORWOOD.

Sworn to before me this 20th day }
of May, 1854, }

FREDERICK E. WESTBROOK,

Commissioner of Deeds.

The above deponent is a member of the Presbyterian Church, and resides at No. 155 West Fourteenth Street, in the City of New York.

No. 161, formerly 155 West 14th Street, }
 16th DECEMBER, 1854. }

DEAR SIR :

In answer to your question as to what part of Trinity Church Yard the American Prisoners of War were buried, I without hesitation designate the Northerly, or more particularly the Northwesterly portion of the yard, that part being directly in the line of Pine Street.

Very respectfully,

A. S. NORWOOD.

HENRY YOUNGS, Esq., }
 New-York. }

STATE OF NEW YORK, } ss.
 City and County of New York, }

I, JACOB FREEMAN, now of Woodbridge, in the County of Middlesex, in New Jersey, being duly sworn do depose and say : That I am the son of Amos Freeman, a native of said

Woodbridge, whose father was Henry Freeman, my grandfather, of the same place, both my said grandfather and my father, being now deceased.

That, in the lifetime of my father, I had many conversations with my father in relation to events of the American Revolution, and of the incidents and circumstances connected with himself, and that of my grandfather, in that Revolution. I remember his repeatedly relating to me the fact of his father and himself being with several others, inhabitants of Woodbridge, arrested and taken and put in prison, in New York, by the British, because they were attached to the American cause, and remember well his description of the sufferings of himself and my grandfather during their imprisonment. He told me, that his father, when arrested, was about sixty years of age, and knowing that he would, if taken alone, be in danger of extreme suffering, and believing that he, my father, might if with him, mitigate its severity, he, my father, though then concealed, surrendered himself, that he might accompany

my grandfather. He told me, that he and his father were among those who were confined in the Sugar House in Liberty Street, and were there several months. That, while there, every day, one or more of the prisoners there confined died, and, as he was then informed, and then and afterwards understood, were buried in the north part of Trinity Church Yard.

I am now about fifty-nine years old ; during my father's life, since my earliest recollection, and since his death, it was always understood as a fact, conceded and known in the family, and among the relatives of those at Woodbridge who were taken prisoners, and a circumstance of general notoriety among them, that the American prisoners who died in that Sugar House were buried in the north part of Trinity Church Yard. My father was an officer in the American army, a Lieutenant.

JACOB FREEMAN.

Sworn to before me this 8th day }
of June, 1854, }

ANDREW KOHLER,

Commissioner of Deeds.

LETTER FROM GEN. JACOB BARNITZ,

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

A Veteran of the War of 1812, and one of the Heroes of North Point.

YORK, *April* 11th, 1854.

DEAR SIR :

I received your letter of the 7th inst., desiring information as to the place of interment of the Revolutionary patriots whilst in captivity in the city of New York during its occupation by the British ; and in reply state that I am a son of Ensign Jacob Barnitz, who fell wounded in both legs when Fort Washington was lost, and that among others he was conveyed to New York, and there thrown into a Sugar House, and suffered to lay on the damp ground, where he continued with others in a suffering state until a kind friend had him removed to more comfortable quarters, and although he frequently related many circumstances respecting his captivity and sufferings to his children, I do not recollect his having mentioned the place of interment of those who died whilst in captivity.

But fortunately for the good cause you are engaged in, in protecting the ashes of those brave patriots who sacrificed their lives for our liberties, I rejoice that there is still one living amongst us (who although not one of those belonging to the York or Lancaster troops,) gave me, I think, a satisfactory account sufficient to establish the fact that those who died there whilst in captivity were interred in Trinity Church Yard.

The name of the old soldier is John Pennal (well known to my nephew J. B. Bacon, who I rejoice to see, has taken an active part in the proceedings with you), who answered to my questions as follows :

John, how were you engaged during the Revolutionary War ?

Answer. When in 1776 I was but 11 years old I was bound by my father, then residing in Philadelphia, to Capt. White of the Sloop of War Nancy, and continued with him until the Peace of 1783.

Did you at any time land at New York while you were in service ?

Answer. Yes, several times before the British occupied it and after its evacuation.

Tell me what you saw after the British left there?

Answer. I saw and heard how cruelly they treated our men; they kept them in the damp Sugar Houses where many of them sickened and died.

Do you know where those who died in the Sugar Houses were buried?

Answer. They were buried on the hill, they called it the holy ground, I saw where they were buried, the graves were long and about six feet wide, five or six were put into one grave.

What was the name of the church that the ground belonged to called?

Answer. They called it Trinity Church.

The above were all the questions I thought necessary to ask him, and he answered them readily and without hesitation.

Yours respectfully,

JACOB BARNITZ.

MR. PETER Y. CUTLER.

THE GRAVE OF THE PATRIOT.

To the Editors of the Courier and Enquirer :

It is with considerable interest I wait daily for the carrier to bring your paper, in which I may know all that is said and done relative to the desecration of Trinity Churchyard. In Chester County of this State, a few miles from where the Paoli Monument now stands, during the Revolution resided a farmer too far advanced in life to take part in the struggle for Independence then going on ; his son, however, at his expense, raised a company of eighty men, who fought at the battle of Brandywine, and being attached to General Wayne's Brigade, went with him to reconnoiter the enemy. A few nights after the battle of Brandywine was fought, the old farmer was waked up by several men at his door, who were wounded, and claimed his well known hospitality. The massacre of the Paoli had taken place, and these few were among those who escaped the butchery of that terrible night. Shortly after, their commander came home, and, after seeing the remnant

of his company fed and secreted from the foe, retired to sleep. While they were sleeping, *a girl of tender years* kept watch the whole night. The next day they started for the camp; when at the battle of Germantown the captain of this little band was wounded, taken prisoner, and carried to New-York,—died of his wounds, and was buried or pitched into the north side of Trinity Churchyard. This man was my great-grandfather; the little girl, my grandmother.

In June, 1853, in this city there was an old lady then in her 85th year, by her side stood a youth who said, "Grandma, I am going to New-York to-morrow, what shall I bring you home?" Putting her hand on his head she said, "Bring me a twig from one of the trees which overshadow in Trinity Churchyard the dust of my father, who died in defence of the blessings you now enjoy; he lies in that spot. Your father tells me the Church guards with a jealous care that sacred spot, and may Heaven reward them for the act. I will never see the spot again, for I will soon be called home to my Heavenly Father, but when you visit that city always go see the place where more

than one of your ancestors lies buried, and never forget what the heroes of the Revolution done for you and your country." This old lady was the little girl of the Revolution, the boy your humble servant.

I cannot help feeling a deep indignation for the men who would desecrate that which in my eyes is a holy spot, and hope you will never tire in your laudable efforts to show the Vandals in their true light, who would scatter to the winds the dust of those who gave up their lives and fortunes for the benefit these now enjoy by living in a prosperous and happy country, which they could not do, if they had remained where nature first cast them forth.

Yours truly,

J. WAYNE.

Philadelphia, March 28, 1854.

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