

Caleb Wall (1837-1898)

Like John Milton Earle, for whom he worked at the *Spy*, Wall was a Quaker from Leicester. He spent most of his working life at the *Spy*, retiring upon the sale of the paper by the Baldwins in 1897. He also was publisher of the *Daily Transcript* for two years during the 1860s, after which it was purchased and converted to the *Evening Gazette*. In 1877 he published the book *Reminiscences of Worcester*, a historical sketch of the town from its earliest days.

The *Spy*, Oct-29-1898

TOBER 29, 1898.

A VETERAN Of High Note Gone.

AN OLD JOURNALIST

Who Was Known All Over
New England.

Caleb Arnold Wall, the oldest newspaper man in New England, and for nearly 60 years employed on *The Spy*, died this morning shortly after 2 o'clock.

Mr. Wall's connection with *The Spy* dates back to 1837, and ever since that time he has been actively connected with the paper with the exception of a few years, in various capacities in the



CALEB A. WALL.
The Oldest Newspaper Man in New England.

Editorial, reportorial and composing rooms of the paper. At one time he was an owner of the paper.

Mr. Wall retired from active newspaper work only a few months ago. Failing health led him to give up active work, and ever since his retirement he has been gradually breaking up. His death had been anticipated for several days.

The veteran newspaper man belonged to the abolitionist party, and was one of the participants in the founding of the free soil and republican parties. He enjoyed the close acquaintance of many prominent men in national life, and was a particular friend of Senator George F. Hoar and other leading republicans.

Caleb A. Wall was born June 21, 1820, and had his first taste of schooling in the old red school house standing on the corner of the road leading by the Baptist church to the town parsonage. Among his teachers was the late Prof. Samuel Stillman Green of Brown University.

He traced his ancestry back to the time of the Norman invasion of England by William the Conqueror.

His great-grandfather was William Wall, who came to this country from Upton, Devonshire, and settled on Prudence Island, Narragansett bay, in 1725. Here a son, Thomas, was born.

Thomas married Prudence Arnold and by this union Caleb's father was born, whose name was also Caleb. Caleb senior moved to Greenville, Leicester, in 1798, and was engaged in the saw and grist mill business and the manufacture of scythes.

In 1836 the family moved to Worcester. A brother of Caleb was James H. Wall for many years a prominent resident of Boston and largely interested in real estate.

In the winter of 1833-34 he attended school in Mulberry grove, in the north part of the town, then the Quaker village, where was the old Friends' meeting house, in whose enclosure he so many rustic forefathers of the hamlet.

From August, 1833, to the spring of 1837, he had the advantages of the school maintained by the yearly meeting of the New England Friends, now called the Friends' school of Providence.

This was a noted Quaker family and Caleb was brought up in the faith to which he always remained loyal.

April 17, 1837, young Caleb began what proved to be his life-long work in the *The Spy* office, then under the direction of John Milton Earle.

Fifty years afterward the semi-centennial of the event was fittingly celebrated at the Lincoln house.

He very early began to contribute to the columns of the paper, having decided opinions of his own on the subjects then agitating the public mind. He was very pronounced in his ideas on the slavery discussion, annexation of Texas, Mexican war, repeal of the Missouri compromise, fugitive slave bill, Kansas-Nebraska matter, trial by jury, tariff, etc.

From August, 1855, to December, 1858, Caleb was practically editor of the paper during the period, sinking \$3000 in raising money - to carry it on after its sale in 1858 to Augustus Baldwin. Baldwin purchased the plant in 1859. In 1844 Mr. Wall left the *Spy* office with Albert Tyler, now of Oxford, to start the *Barre Patriot*. He remained in *Barre* a year and a half.

Returning to the *Spy*, he had continued until recently, save two years during the war, when he published the *Worcester Daily Transcript*, of which he was proprietor, editor and reporter. This he sold Jan. 1, 1866, to the predecessors of the present proprietors of the *Worcester Evening Gazette*.

In politics, Mr. Wall advocated that phase of republicanism in which the party was formed - the protection of human rights, irrespective of color, at the ballot box and everywhere, and for the advancement of such needed reforms.

Mr. Wall married June 4, 1869, Ellen, daughter of James and Jane (Stevens) Tucker, born in Bridgeport, Enn. His wife died many years ago, and a few

years later Mr. Wall married a second time, and is survived by his widow.

Caleb Wall was a careful student of the early history of the town and city of Worcester. He had given many entertaining addresses before various clubs and organizations, most of which have been published in pamphlet form.

One of the most valuable publications is an account, "The Puritans Versus the Quakers," read before the Society of Antiquity.

Mr. Wall's greatest work is his "Reminiscences of Worcester," published in 1877.

During the presidential campaign of 1858, Mr. Wall, being a Tippecanoe veteran, called all the old surviving voters of those old days together, and during that year held several field days.

CALEB A. WALL DEAD.

Newspaper Experience Ripened as the City Grew.

EXTENDED OVER 60 YEARS.

Postmaster Greene's Tribute to His Character.

The death of Caleb Arnold Wall, at his home, 298 Pleasant street, at 2.45 o'clock this morning, removed one of the oldest newspaper men in the country in the point of continuous service. Death resulted from a general breaking-down of the system, as he had been in poor health for a long time. He had, however, been able to be around until a short time ago, but it became evident that he would not live, a few days ago. He was employed on the Spy for nearly 60 years, serving in the various capacities, from reporter and type-setter to editor and proprietor. When that paper recently passed into new hands, Mr Wall retired from the position which he had faithfully and conscientiously filled for so many years. During that period he had seen many changes in the city, and in fact the last article contributed by him to the Spy was in relation to the old City Hall, giving an account of some of the famous Worcester men who had been sheltered under its roof. In his active career, Worcester had grown from a town of 7000 inhabitants and 1596 polls to a prosperous city of over 100,000 population and 30,000 polls; from a valuation of \$4,000,000 to more than \$100,000,000 now.

He remembered the time when the old canal to Providence was in operation, and there was no railroad except to Boston, which had been opened the year previous; he had not been here long before the railroads were extended so that communication was opened between this city and Norwich and Springfield, and later to Gardner and Providence. There was no paid police officer at the time Mr Wall came, and only 12 schoolhouses, with a corps of 27 teachers and 1200 pupils. Now there are 60 school buildings, with 466 teachers and over 20,000 pupils. Indeed, in a word, the city is now entirely different from the town of the past. In those days there was no public library, no sewer system, no city hospital, and the fire department was run for about \$500 a year. The newspaper offices were not equipped with the two great essentials for news gathering, the telegraph and the telephone, and people in those days were content to see in print a report of an event that happened a week previous.

Only two months had elapsed after Mr Wall became associated with the Spy when Queen Victoria ascended the throne of England, and among his first work in setting type during his apprenticeship were the English letters from Dr Pliny Earle, which gave accounts of the coronation exercises. While he was working at the case he was brought into contact with many men who afterwards became prominent newspaper men.

Mr Wall was born in Leicester June 11, 1820, and attended the old school-house near the Baptist church. He finished a course of study in the New England Friends' boarding school at Providence. His parents removed to this city in 1836 and resided at the corner of Front and Canal streets. He entered the office of the Weekly Spy as an apprentice April 17, 1837, but was not with it when it became a daily, as he was in Barre, where he advocated Whig and anti-slavery principles through the columns of the Barre Patriot, which he helped to start. This was afterwards merged into the present Barre Gazette. Mr Wall remained in that town until January, 1846, when he returned to the Spy.

At that time he made contributions to its columns and was employed on the repertorial staff, and continued on the staff as reporter and editorial writer until 1864, when he bought the Daily Transcript, which later became The Gazette. Here he filled about all the important positions himself. He was practically the editor of the Spy from 1855 to 1858, and during that period the paper was sold to Foss & Farnum, who in turn disposed of the plant to John D. Baldwin in 1859. After his experience on the Transcript he again returned to the Spy, and had been there for 30 consecutive years.

Mr Wall, in addition to writing a local history, was a contributor to the Society of Antiquity and other historical societies. A feature of his historical work was the practice of giving field lectures, taking his audience to some spot of ancient associations and telling them of the events that had transpired there. These were often of considerable historical value. Last year he observed the 60th anniversary of his entrance into newspaper work, and at that time met a large party in Salisbury hall. A brother, James H. Wall, for many years a resident of Boston, was a large real estate holder here. Mr Wall was married June 4, 1863, to Ellen Tucker, who was born in Bridgeport, Eng. and who survives him.

Caleb A. Wall

Evening Gazette
Oct-29-1898

Postmaster J. Everts Greene, who was for years the editor of the Spy, said of Caleb Wall, this morning: "I have known Mr Wall well for many years, as a newspaper worker and a collector of materials for local history and biography. I had a great respect and regard for him. He was earnest and sincere in his work, giving to it his best efforts, sparing neither the time nor the labor necessary to do his task thoroughly. He had, I suppose, more knowledge of the people of Worcester in its early days, of the estates they occupied, the business they pursued and the successors they pursued than any other person. Much of this information is preserved in the books and pamphlets he published, but much, doubtless, has perished with him.

"On most questions of morals and politics Mr Wall had positive and strong convictions, which he was always ready to defend with such energy of manner as seemed to imply a hot temper; but if he ever provoked anger by his sharp words and vehemence of expression he cherished none himself. He was a single-hearted, honest man, who lived a long life in this community, opposing strenuously whatever seemed to him wrong, and upholding with all his strength what he believed to be good. His was a useful life, blameless and without guile."