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John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection - Scrapbook 3

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Boston Herald.
First Edition.

Monday, Morning, July 7.

The Balloon Ascension

There is always a great interest manifested by the public in a balloon ascension. Those who have seen them the most frequently seem to be the most interested in every fresh announcement. It was anticipated that the balloon ascension from the Common would be one of the most, if not the most, interesting features of the day, but thousands upon thousands were doomed to disappointment. At about 2 o'clock pilot balloons were sent off, which took a direction straight out to sea. Shortly after, the heavy shower came up, and it was not until nearly 5 o'clock, that the populace again began to assemble upon the Common.

At that time the sun was shining brightly, and the heavens were clear; but it was announced as though it came from authority that no balloon ascension would take place; that it was postponed until Monday afternoon, and that the Balloon and Fireworks would be exhibited on the afternoon and evening of that day. Upon this announcement immense numbers left the common, but their places were supplied by a fast accumulating crowd.

At about half past 5, Mr. Wise came upon the ground with his balloon, and after sending off several pilot balloons, which went in the direction of Hingham and the South shore, he commenced the process of inflation from pipes which had been laid by the Gas Company for that purpose. The balloon was ready by quarter after 7 o'clock, the oar was attached, and every arrangement made for the departure of the aeronaut. At 25 minutes past 7 o'clock the cord was loosed, and the balloon rose slowly and majestically amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the immense concourse who witnessed this beautiful and most successful ascension.

The Aeronaut passed over the Common towards the South, in full view of the spectators, waving his flag, and seeming to be as much at home as though his feet were pressing terra firma. The balloon sailed on majestically, until at last, in the distance, it seemed no more than a speck floating in space.

Mr. Wise descended at 10 minutes past 8 o'clock in the southerly part of Braintree, 14 miles from Boston, on land of Hon. Benj. V. French. Our Braintree agent, Mr. Mellis, was the first to reach him in a carriage, and took charge of the balloon, which he brought to the city this morning. J. H. D. Blake, Esq., of the firm of Blake, Barnard & Co., Agricultural Warehouse, 22 and 24 Merchants' Row, was promptly on hand, rendered valuable assistance and conducted the intrepid aeronaut to his house, where he enjoyed the hospitality of a Boston merchant. Mr. Wise returned to the city, this morning, in company with Mr. Blake.

A good deal of dissatisfaction has been expressed, that such contradictory statements were made with regard to the time of the ascension. But we understand that there is no blame attaching to anybody in this matter.

We are authorized to announce officially, that, in consequence of the



disappointment of large numbers of the citizens, Mrs. Wise will make an ascension on Monday afternoon next, under the patronage and direction of the City authorities.

Boston Daily Times
Tuesday, July 8, 1856.

Balloon Ascent.

In accordance with the arrangement made with the City authorities, and in order to furnish those of our citizens who were disappointed in not seeing the Balloon Ascent on Friday, the fourth of July, Mr. Wise ascended from the Parade Ground on the Common yesterday afternoon.

The crowd present was larger than we have seen on any occasion of late. It covered, densely, at least a quarter of a mile square, and was composed of at least three fourths of ladies and children. The pressure was very great in some places, and the heat overpowering, although a hearty breeze from the east blew during the whole of the afternoon. Faintings were not scarce anymore than their exciting causes, and these had generally to be treated on the spot. It was calculated that not fewer than 30,000 people were on the ground. The same authority estimated that there was about 10 acres of parasols and sunshades! Everything passed off in good order, and no accident occurred so far as we heard.

The inflation commenced precisely at 4 o'clock-the hour appointed, but, much to the annoyance of the bulk of the spectators, the time required to fill the balloon was two hours and a half instead of one hour. The fatigue consequent on being forced to stand so long (at least four hours) caused much grumbling among many. The process of inflation has nothing about it demanding special description. It was effected about half past six, and the car attached. As the wind blew briskly from the east and as the inflation took place near the trees on Charles street mall, it had to be carried further on to the Common. Mr. Wise, the younger, prepared for the trip-we believe on account that the gas used on this occasion was not buoyant enough to sustain the weight of Mr. Wise senior. Very little ballast was used,

[see Notes on Transcribing this page]

He then issued his command to throw off, and the immense machine moved upwards with a slow and graceful motion, amid the shouts of the multitude. It took a north-western course, in the direction of East Cambridge but as it rose the balloon encountered a directly contrary current of air, and traversed its course in a south-easterly direction, and at a moderate altitude, giving the mass of spectators a magnificent view of its movements. When nearby above the Providence Railroad depot it had encountered another current of the atmosphere, and sailed away to the north-east, across the city, in the direction of East Boston. Here Mr. Wise lowered himself into the first current he had encountered, and the balloon bore away to the north-west, in the direction of Medford, and became lost to sight. At the hour of going to press we had not heard where the descent was made.

The ascent was a very successful and satisfactory one to the spectators. At any point on the route we have described Mr. Wise could

be seen waving his flag from the car.

Boston Daily Times
Monday, July 7, 1856.

The Balloon Ascent.

Immediately after the shower in the afternoon it was officially announced that the balloon excursion, as well as the fireworks, was postponed to Monday. Mr. Wise, Jr. who had met with some unanticipated delays, expressed so great a desire to go up, that the Committee of Arrangements assented and rendered him every necessary assistance. The chains, stakes, and other fixtures were immediately conveyed to the Common, and a posse of thirty policemen were detailed to maintain order. At about half-past six the inflation of the new and magnificent balloon, "Young America," was commenced and completed. At 7 o'clock the chains and ropes which held the great silken globe to the earth were cast off, as soon as Mr. Wise had entered the car, and the balloon rose gracefully and beautifully amidst the shouts of the admiring thousands. The cheers were returned by Mr. Wise, bowed his thanks, at the same time waving a small American flag. The ascent was almost perpendicular until the balloon reached an altitude of several hundred feet, when it took an easterly direction and floated above the city, giving to all a view of the magnificent globe. Getting into a different current of air the aeronaut and his beautiful car turned and went away in a southerly direction, rising higher and higher and floating into the distance, growing less and less until it appeared no larger than a man's hand, and faded and melted into the waning light of the dying day.

The Aeronaut.
Monday, 4 o'clock, P.M.

Mr. Wise has just informed us that he was obliged to descend, when in the neighborhood of Coates street, owing to the fact, that when in the yard at Filbert street, at the time of sending up one of the small balloons, previous to the ascent of the large one, a boy threw a stone, which fell upon the balloon, and rent a hole therein. Although mended by Mr. Wise as well as circumstances permitted, yet when he had ascended to a considerable height, he found himself suddenly descending rapidly, owing to the escape of the gas through the hole above mentioned. He landed or rather dipped, into the water and mud, at the foot of Coates street, the balloon entangling itself in the rigging of the vessel, and causing Mr. Wise to be suspended for a while in a very uncomfortable situation. Every sympathy was manifested in favor of our friend, who, we are glad to learn, has not gone unrewarded in his attempts to add to the investigations of science. Our paper of tomorrow will contain a full account of his ascent and perilous descent from his own lips.

The Wises and Ballooning -- John Wise is a balloonist, and Henry Wise a politician. Yet it is asserted that the former never made so high an ascent as did the Virginia Democratic leader after writing his late Tammany Hall letter. One thing is certain the balloonist never fell half so hard as did his Virginia friend, and in so innocent a profession we hope he never may -- Cin. Times

A novel and amusing scheme has been propounded for exploring the vast unknown interior of Australia. Mr. Charles Green, son of the veteran aeronaut of that name, proposes, in conjunction with J.J.O. Taylor, who

has invented a screw propeller, to explore the interior of Australia by means of the famous Nassau balloon. Scientific men are invited to witness experimental ascents, and their patronage is solicited. June 1857.

Boston:
Saturday, July 5, 1856.

The Balloon Ascension.

Owing to the state of the weather, the arrangements for the ascension of Mr. Wise from the Common in his "Young America" Balloon, were somewhat delayed. The crowd, also, was not so great as it would otherwise have been, has the weather in the early part of the afternoon been more favorable. The requisite amount of gas having been obtained, Mr. Wise took his seat in the balloon, and all being ready, the cords were cut at nearly half past seven. The ascension was a most beautiful one, the aerial car darting upwards nearly in a perpendicular direction. The wind was light from the W.N.W., and after attaining a height of about a mile and a half, the aeronaut floated off in a South East direction, being at the time plainly visible to thousands upon thousands, who anxiously watched him in his course and prayed for his safe deliverance from what seemed to them a most dangerous position. Mr. Wise, however, was perfectly cool and self-possessed. In his course he passed over Neponset River, at no greater distance from the Bay. A remarkable fact, which he relates, is the great distance from which the most minute objects can be plainly seen, while in the air. At his greatest height, which he estimates at a mile and a half, he could see the bottom of the river, and even small fishes sporting about. While crossing the river, he threw out ballast, and increased his distance from the earth; but soon after, fearing that he should fall in with a current which would drive him towards the sear, he took measures to descend, by allowing the gas to gradually escape. While this process was going on, it seemed to the people on the earth who were watching him, that the balloon was on fire, the escaping gas, in the partial dusk of the evening, emitting a flaming light. His balloon having approached to within a short distance of the earth, Mr. Wise commenced to look out for a good spot to land. Coming to a place in Braintree called Narrow Lane, he threw out his line and called to some boys to catch hold of it; but they supposing that it was his intention to draw them into the balloon, refused his request and ran off. He then went up a little and passed over some trees a distance of forty or fifty rods, to an open space, where he called to several boys, who, according to his directions, took hold of the rope of the balloon and held it until a number of men arrived. By the directions of Mr. Wise they drew down the balloon until they could take hold of the meshes. The gas was then allowed gradually to escape, and in about twenty minutes he was safely landed upon the farm of Hon. B. V. French of South Braintree, every thing having passed off to his satisfaction. Near the place where he landed, was a pond of a mile in extent, upon which were several boats ready to pick him up, in case he came down into the water. The balloon was given in charge to Mr. J. H. Mellus, the well known Expressman, who was one of the first to reach the spot, and who brought safely to his city, this morning. Mr. Wise spent the night with Mr. J. H. D. Black of Braintree, who followed the direction of the balloon, in his wagon, for three or four miles. Mr. W. reached this city safely this morning. In less than fifteen minutes after he landed, there were several hundred people, men, women, and children, gathered at the spot. The women, especially, were quite anxious to see the man who had gone up on the air, and would not leave until they had shaken hands with him.

Mr. Wise states that he would have remained in the air much longer, had it not been for the approach of night and his apprehension of being carried out to sea. From his ascent to his descent was about forty minutes, the time of his landing was about ten minutes past eight. The distance is about fourteen miles.

Mr. Wise, in his own account of the matter says:

I started from Boston Common on my fifth voyage, at 25 minutes past 7 o'clock, slowly ascending for about five minutes, when I passed over South Boston and the reservoir where they were firing cannon. I could see the flash of the powder about one minute before I heard the report--every one of which would jar the balloon considerably.

The next object of interest which attracted my attention was the cars on the Old Colony Railroad, which passed directly underneath me, blowing the whistle in fine style, but I did not get out of their road, but took a flying jump over them. This was half-past 7 o'clock.

I now commenced to ascend rapidly, having dispensed with two and a half bags of sand. The sun now appeared to me above the horizon, large and red, and kept in view for some 15 minutes.

At 18 minutes of 8 o'clock, I passed over part of Massachusetts Bay, about 2 1/2 or 3 miles broad, the schooners and sloops not appearing to me so large as the boats which the boys sail on the pond in Boston Common. At this time, 10 minutes of 8 o'clock, another train of cars passed underneath of me, and making as much noise as possible.

I was now at my highest altitude, between 1 1/2 and 2 miles, my feet and body being very cold, my ears ringing, and night coming on, I commenced my descent. I was now above Quincy, but coming down very slowly, could not make the descent in the vicinity, and seeing another large place some four or five miles ahead of me, I thought I would make my descent at that place.

The account of his descent, as given, is in the main similar to the account above.

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