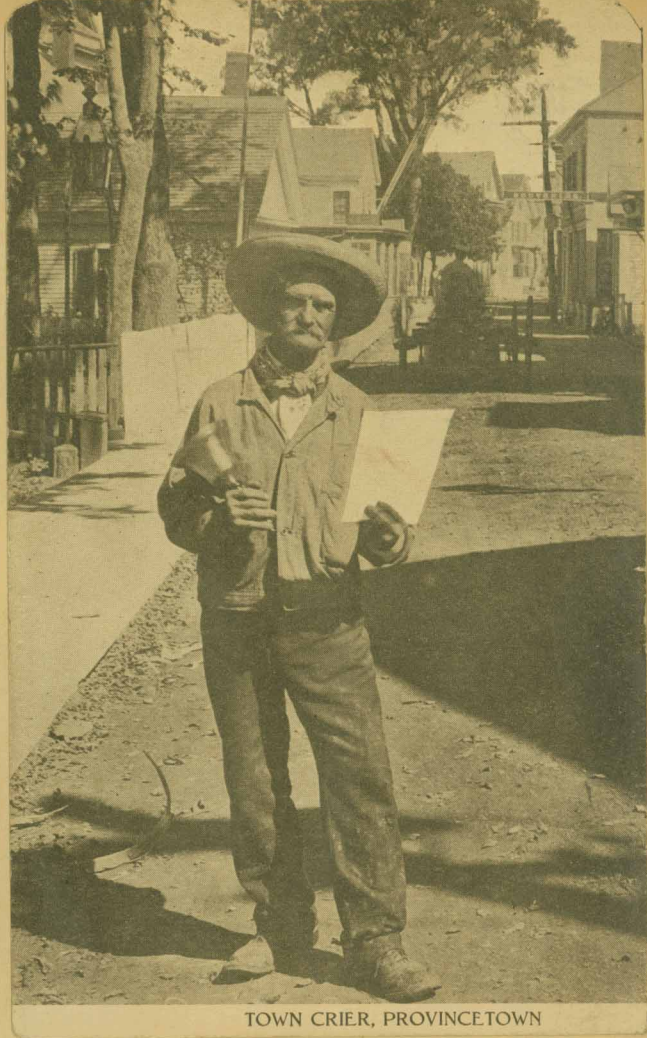


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TOWN CRIER, PROVINCETOWN

Another of George Washington Reedy

LAST TOWN CRIER IN NATION DEAD

Boston Post

Walter Smith of Provincetown Gave Folk News and Time; Favorite of Thousands

Special Dispatch to the Globe

PROVINCETOWN, Dec 4—Walter Smith, 83, the last town crier in the United States, died today of pneumonia at the town infirmary. It is five years since Smith, ringing his three-pound silver bell, last walked the streets of Provincetown, crying his announcements of social meetings, auctions and town happenings, but even in retirement, he had remained a familiar and picturesque figure to the Summer visitors and residents of this Cape Cod community.

Smith was born here and succeeded the late George Washington Reedy as town crier many years ago. With

advancing years he became rather infirm and was obliged to use a cane in making his rounds. Eventually he abandoned the heavy bell and substituted a small whistle as a means of attracting the attention of his "audience." The bell is now included among the relics in the historical museum here.

Favorite of Visitors

Smith never married and leaves no near relatives. His friends, however, were numerous enough to fill a city directory. All of the Summer residents in the art colony knew and liked the old man and the visitors, coming down on the Dorothy Bradford from Boston, always looked for his familiar figure hobbling along Commercial st with the notes of his big bell sounding a welcome.

Before he became town crier in his own right Smith served for some time as assistant to George Washington Reedy, who is well remembered by some of the older inhabitants of the town.

Before Reedy there were, in the long list of town criers, Frankie Atwood, Barney Briggs, Ambrose Hill, Billy Clark, Frank Howard, Archie McCurdy, Barry Turner and a host of others, "all good Yankees, and how they could ring the bell!"

Scoffed at Competitor

Near the end of his career, Smith frequently commented on the fact that the art of bell-ringing, of town crying, was as dead as the whaling industry. There was a young fellow who came to Provincetown one Summer and attempted to compete with Smith, but, according to the latter, "you couldn't make out a word he said, and besides he carried a mean little dinner bell."

Smith said that when he became town crier and made his first trip down the old boardwalk on Commercial st, crying the news between strokes of his bell, he realized an ambition he had entertained since boyhood. As a youngster he used to follow Ambrose Hill on his rounds, and the notes of the silver bell always cast a kind of spell over him.

At the end of the Summer season, Smith always made a trip to Boston, even though the sail invariably made him seasick. He liked Boston a lot, but Provincetown was his pride and joy.



WALTER SMITH



Worcester Post

Last of Town Criers Resigns

Gives Up Post on Account of
Lameness

1927

PROVINCETOWN, June 13 (AP) —The last town crier has resigned. A modest notice in the local weekly paper tells the story. "Notice—Walter T. Smith, town crier for 27 years, has retired from the town crying business on account of his lameness. Mr. Smith is now 78 years old." His resignation probably marks the passing of the quaint office in this country. It is the first time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant that Provincetown has been without its crier and his clanging bell. Smith remembers 12 town criers. The first one was Ambrose Hill back 73 years ago.

Worcester Gazette PROVINCETOWN'S TOWN CRIER DEAD

PROVINCETOWN, Dec. 4 (AP) —Walter Smith, 83, the last of the succession of Provincetown town criers, died today.

Smith quit his job five years ago, principally, he said, because his feet got sore when they substituted cement for board walks. He was found dead across a bed in the local infirmary, where he was being treated for pneumonia.

For more than a decade Smith had strolled through the town streets as in stentorian voice he announced church suppers, dances, lodge meetings and theater programs, interspersed with bits of news.

Smith was of the line of town criers that produced George Washington Reedy, who one day astounded the populace with a story that a monster sea serpent with eyes as large as barrels and spurting fire had drawn a charred path across an adjacent sand dune.