

# SKETCH OF WILLIAM GREER.

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William Greer and a Mr. McDowell published a newspaper called the Hive, on East King street, opposite the sign of William Pitt, in 1804. It was continued until 1805, in June, when the paper was enlarged and called the True American. About the year 1811 "Billy" Greer moved his printing office to Columbia, Pa., and occupied part of Dr. Eberley's dwelling at the southeast corner of Second and Locust streets.

On December 10, 1814, Greer was elected "Printer of the Bills" in the Senate at Harrisburg (see Journal of House of Representatives, page 37), and boarded at John Shock's, on Front street, Harrisburg, where a number of members of the Legislature also boarded. Mr. Shock went on Greer's bond. John Shock was the father of the late Col. Samuel Shock, of Columbia. Mr. Greer's bill for the session of 1814-15 was \$927.50, at the rate of \$1.50 per page. Mr. Greer got behind with his work and a committee was appointed to inquire into the cause of the delay. On December 22 the committee reported "that when Mr. Greer was elected Printer of the Bills of the House he resided in Columbia, that he had employed hands and hired a press in Harrisburg until he could remove his office; that while he was engaged in the removal of his press some of the hands employed left work, thereby putting it out of the power of those who remained to complete it. The bills are now nearly brought up and Mr. Greer, on his part, assures your committee that no fur-

ther delay shall take place." (See p. 101, Journal of House of Representatives.)

It is presumed that Lancaster county members gave "Billy" their cordial support. The delegation was a very strong one, composed of Christian Brenneman, of Columbia, afterwards President of the Columbia Bank and Bridge Company; James Buchanan, Emanuel Reigart, Joel Carpenter, Jacob Grosh, of Marietta, and Henry Hambright.

After the close of the session of 1815, "Billy" Greer returned to Columbia, and in the year 1819 founded the newspaper called the Columbian. During the War of 1812-15 there was great prosperity, particularly among the towns along the river. A boom had struck them, but it was followed by a period of great depression in business. "Billy" Greer could not have selected a more inappropriate time. He had to stop the publication of his paper for lack of patronage, and he afterwards moved his printing plant to Washington, D. C.

Greer refused to insert advertisements for the arrest of runaway slaves. I recall that a member of the Historical Society is a descendant of John Shock, and that her grandfather taught school in Columbia and also kept tavern in the building where "Billy" Greer had his printing office. Greer was a Quaker, and while at Harrisburg became a great favorite with the members of the Legislature.

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