

18th; at the house of Col. Jacob Slough, in Lancaster, and at the house of Col. Street, in Hartford county, on the 20th; at the house of Joseph Sample, in Strasburg, on the 21st; and at Philip House-keeper's on the 26th.³

It is quite certain that the commissioners were unable to secure sufficient capital, as another bridge was not erected. Subsequent issues of local papers contain no references to the company.

¹ The Pennsylvania Gazette, March 31st, 1818.

² Lancaster Journal, April 13th, 1818.

³ The Pennsylvania Gazette, May 5th, 1818.

John Rannie, Celebrated Ventriloquist in Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

The Lancaster Journal, of Saturday, June 26th, 1802, contained a brief announcement as follows:

“We are desired to inform the public that Mr. Rannie, the celebrated ventriloquist, will be in Lancaster in a few days.”

The next issue of the Lancaster Journal, dated Saturday, July 3rd, 1802, contained the following advertisement:

EXHIBITION

“On Saturday evening, July the third, at Mr. Fisher's long room, sign of the King of Prussia.

VENTRILLOQUISM,

BY MR. RANNIE, FROM EUROPE,

“Whose performances in New York and Philadelphia, from their singularity, have commanded the admiration of even the most enlightened characters. This natural curiosity, which has excited the greatest wonder in most parts of Europe, enables the performer to make an object appear to speak at any given distance which the dimensions of the room will admit of; he causes the voice of a child to be heard from various parts of the room, and to give responses to whatever questions he proposes. This singular power of ventriloquism will be displayed by Mr. Rannie without any deception or confederacy, in a manner beyond the power of words to describe. We have no account of any real ventriloquists but three since the woman of Endor. This extraordinary power of speaking from the belly is altogether a natural gift, and impossible to be acquired by anyone.

“Also will be displayed his surprising, imitations of birds and beasts, effected by the power of his own voice, and allowed by all to be a great curiosity.

“During the evening will be a curious dialogue with an old Scotchman molested at night.

"To conclude with philosophical and magical arts and delusions.

"Mr. Rannie begs leave to mention, that although many things in this advertisement may appear impossible to be done, yet ladies and gentlemen may rest assured that much more will be displayed than what is here particularized. The performances being so singular, and for the most part his own invention, are calculated to secure the admiration of the spectators. It is impossible to convey the faintest idea of these astonishing arts; suffice it to say that, in an age and country less enlightened, they would, without doubt, be counted supernatural. Perhaps neither nature nor art may produce the like again in a century. It is altogether worthy the attention of the curious, it comprehending a fund of elegant experiments by nature, and conveying to the mind important information, and will be found to be an useful lesson to youth against the fatal effects of gambling.

"Doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the performance to begin at half past seven. Admittance half a dollar. Evenings of performance, Saturday and Monday, till further notice."

The Lancaster Journal, of Saturday, July 10th, 1802, contained the following announcement:

CAUTION

"To the citizens of Lancaster: Mr. James Rannie, ventriloquist, who lately advertised to be in this place on Wednesday night, July 7th, is sorry to understand that he is impersonated by a man at present in Lancaster, who pretends to have the powers of ventriloquism.

"Therefore, to convince the worthy ladies and gentlemen of this place that the real ventriloquist has, from several unforeseen circumstances, been detained in Philadelphia longer than he expected,

"Mr. James Rannie purposes to perform in Lancaster next week."

Immediately beneath this notice, in the same issue of the paper, appeared another, under the heading, "Ventriloquism," which was as follows:

SEEING IS BELIEVING

"Caution to the ladies and gentlemen of Lancaster, that I, John Rannie, cannot omit the earliest opportunity of informing the public that my brother James has made it his study to obtain several acquirements from me; and now he intends to oppose me in the performing line. I am sorry that I have a brother I should be ashamed of, for such unmannerly behavior. I trust that the inhabitants of this town will pay no attention to his falsehoods, as I am of opinion that he shall not perform in this town, as it is his intention to deceive the public, in order to injure me if it laid in his power. His intention was to communicate to the inhabitants of this place that my name is not Rannie; but the ladies and gentlemen may rest assured that I can prove to the contrary by having certificates and diplomas from the grand lodge in Scotland.

"John Rannie."

From the foregoing, it appears that there were two brothers versed in the art of ventriloquism. John Rannie opened with a performance in Lancaster on Saturday evening, July 3rd; while

James, his brother, did not arrive here until after Wednesday, July 7th.

In addition to the announcements by John and James Rannie, the Lancaster Journal of Saturday, July 10th, 1802, contained an advertisement as follows:

EXHIBITION

On Monday evening, July 12th, 1802,

MESSRS. RANNIE AND DURANG,

"Most respectfully inform the ladies and gentlemen of Lancaster, that they have made a new arrangement of performances for Monday evening, which have excited the wonder of all Europe, and certainly cannot fail to be highly gratifying to the inhabitants of this town. Mr. Rannie, on the first evening's entertainment, will display his various and unparalleled imitation of all kinds of birds and beasts, almost ever known. This extraordinary power is displayed by the power of his own voice, and allowed by all to be a very miraculous curiosity. On the same evening Mr. Rannie will introduce many surprising deceptions and experiments, ancient and modern, by magnetic attractions with cards, eggs, birds, beasts, bells, funnels, gold rings, watches, pistols, sundry balls, copper, brass, silver and cloth, ropes and ribbons. Mr. Rannie is sorry that it is impossible to particularize all that will be exhibited. Mr. Rannie will make mention of a few of his deceptions: he will allow any lady to cut a large piece out of her gown, and in one minute Mr. Rannie, with his noted cement, shall cause the gown to become as sound and whole as ever: he will cause money to fly up and down through the table; he will break any gentleman's watch in company, and shall cause it to be the same as formerly; he shall allow any gentleman to cut the skirt from his coat, and Mr. Rannie, with his panegenestal, will make it to be the same as before. On the same evening's entertainment, Mr. Rannie will allow any gentleman at the performance to charge a pistol with powder and bullet, and Mr. Rannie will catch it on the point of a sword; he will also swallow several knives and forks, with great ease. Mr. Rannie will conclude the performance with the new arts of a balancing-master and Scots Shelly. It is also requested that Mr. Rannie will repeat his tumbling; together with singing and dancing, by Mr. Durang and company. A grand historical piece, told in action, called,

"The Valiant Soldier; or,
The Egyptian Robber.
Characters by the Company,
To which will be added
A farce, of two acts, called,
The Ancient Maid; or,
The Lovers of Old.

"The particulars will be expressed in the hand-bill.

"N. B. Mr. Durang invites particularly those young ladies and gentlemen who are lovers of the fashionable mode of dancing, as he means to give a general display of the steps and movements used at the assemblies, both in Europe and America, in cotillions, country dances, minuets, reels, allemands, quadrils, waltzes, strathpey, gavotte and horn-pipes, which he flatters himself will prove a lesson of amusement."

In view of the fact that it was stated in the advertisement that "Mr. Rannie will repeat his tumbling," indicates that John

Rannie, who started performing in Lancaster on July 3rd, entered into an agreement with Mr. Durang and his theatrical company to appear together. It is not stated in the advertisement where the performances were given, but we assume that John Rannie continued playing in Mr. Fisher's long room.

Whether James Rannie, his brother, gave any performances in Lancaster, as stated in the announcement, is not known, as subsequent issues of local papers do not contain any information.

One of the Rannies returned to Lancaster in the spring of 1816, although we do not know whether it was James or John, according to the advertisement which appeared in the Lancaster Journal of Monday, May 20th, 1816. It was as follows:

NEW EXHIBITION

LONG LOOKED FOR IS COME AT LAST.

"On Tuesday evening, the 21st instant, at the tavern of Mr. Hatz, sign of B. Franklin, Mr. Rannie, the truly celebrated performer from Philadelphia, by particular request, proposes exhibiting a grand display of various curiosities, never seen in this place before. The wonderful power of

VENTRILOQUISM

will be done. Also the great art of imitating all kinds of birds and beasts, with upwards of one hundred curious feats of ingenuity. To begin at half past seven o'clock. Good music. Admittance 25 cents. Tickets to be had at the bar. Smoking segars not to be allowed."

He continued in Lancaster until the evening of Wednesday, May 29th, when the last performance was given, according to the announcement in the Lancaster Journal.

In looking at this apparent conflict between these two brothers, through the mists of more than a century, the indications are that, after all, there was but one performer, and that the other "brother" was simply a fictitious character invented to arouse public curiosity.

Dinner Tendered to Postmaster General William T. Barry by Citizens of Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

THE Hon. William T. Barry, the able and efficient Postmaster General of the United States, arrived in Lancaster on Monday, October 17th, 1831, and took lodgings at Graeff's hotel, corner of North Queen and West Orange streets [site of the present Young Men's Christian Association]. He was visited during